

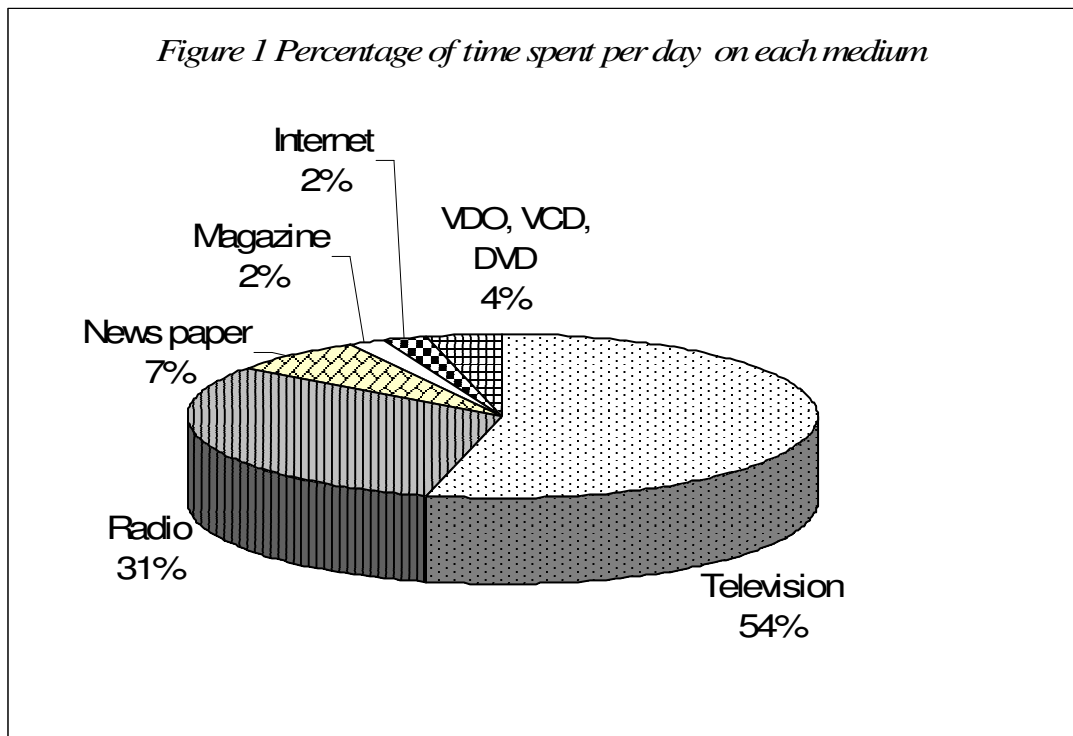
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

In the globalization era, news and information plays an essential role in bringing about changes in human life. Trying to use their income wisely, for example, earners with sufficient data about the financial market will learn how they should invest their money to gain a high return with acceptable risk. Similarly, in the case of job interviews, candidates who know about the corporation and position they are applying for will have a better chance of making a favourable impression on their future employers.

One of the most important messages concerning modern life is health information. This directly relates to population's quality of life, a fundamental aspect of a nation's prosperity. People's health awareness helps prevent serious illness. Nowadays, information appearing in mass media is a vital and powerful instrument for living a healthy life (Seale, 2002). Furthermore, people spend a lot of time each day exposing to mass media, whether for entertainment or information (Rayner, Wall & Kruger, 2001, p. 8). People are inclined to depend on are television, radio, newspaper, in the following percentages.



From: *Media Study: The Essential Introduction* (p. 8), by P. Rayner, P. Wall, & S. Kruger, 2001, London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Some evidence suggests that mass media has a remarkable effect on an audience's health-related behaviors, for example, multiyear anti-tobacco campaigns contribute to a significant decline of cigarette smokers (Bryant & Thompson, 2002). However, although the mass media, particularly newspaper, has been used as a health communication channel for a long time, it does not meet people's needs due to being dominated by the sender-oriented approach (วัชรพร กุลพิสิทธิ์เจริญ, 2542).

Because of their work and life style needs, working people, especially in Bangkok, increasingly rely on mass media. This can be seen in the growing number of print media such as magazines related to health, health food and life style like Health Today, Health and Cuisine or Slimming, and program like Aroka Party, Talui Rong Mor or Chevit Cheva. All of these indicate people's awareness of the need to maintain their physical health.

Moreover, according to the report by the Bureau of Policy and Strategy, Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Public Health, it is can be seen that the amount of patients suffering from non-communicate diseases such as cancer and diabetes is increasing. For example, the number of Thai people diagnosed with cancer rose from 59.58 per 100,000 in 2541 to 72.72 in 2548 (see Table 1.1). Such illnesses can be prevented by people's health behaviors whose details or information can be easily search for in the mass media.

Table 2 Age-Adjusted Death Rate by Causes per 100,000 of Thai Population

Illness	2541	2542	2543	2544	2545	2546	2547	2548
CVD	85.8	67.04	50.52	53.31	48.58	52.59	56.42	51.50
Cancer	59.58	59.25	63.85	67.29	70.37	74.70	74.06	72.72
Injuries	49.52	62.95	65.79	63.65	67.53	70.81	69.91	68.28
CVA	7.09	10.57	12.96	17.28	19.85	22.58	27.67	22.11
IHD	3.55	7.52	9.62	11.55	13.14	16.33	15.47	15.98
HT	3.38	4.49	4.97	5.39	4.32	3.23	3.20	3.15
DM	8.34	11.52	12.15	12.83	11.22	10.87	11.05	10.56

Note: CVD = Cardiovascular disease, CVA = Cerebrovas accident (stroke), IHD = Ischaemic heart disease, HT = Hypertension, DM = Diabetes

From: *Ministry of Public Health, Office of the Permanent Secretary, Bureau of Policy and Strategy*. Retrieved February 20, 2008, from http://www.thaincdinfo.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=27&Itemid=38

Considering working people's high risk of illness along with their frequent exposure to mass media for the sake of their own health, a study of behaviors and attitudes about receiving health news and information via mass media is worth conducting. The research will provide some useful data for those who want to publicize health information through the mass media, which will ultimately benefit the audience as well.

1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How do working people in Bangkok receive health news and information?
2. Which mass media do people rely on as sources of health issues they are interested in?
3. Which mass media are the most efficient, in respect of the number of people they can reach and in publicizing health information?
4. What are the most efficient mass media, in terms of their influence on people's behaviors, in spreading health information?

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study behaviors and attitudes about receiving health news and information via mass media among working people in Bangkok.
2. To find out which mass media working people in Bangkok choose as sources for each health-related subjects.
3. To find out which mass media are efficient, in terms of the number of people they can reach and their influence on people's behaviors, in publicizing health news and information to Bangkok working people.
4. To gain suggestions for improving mass media in publicizing health news and information to meet the needs and preferences of Bangkok working people.

1.4 VARIABLES AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

1.4.1 Variables

1.4.1.1 Independent Variables

The independent Variables of this study consisted of sex, age, education, occupation, marital status and income.

1.4.1.2 Dependent Variables of this study focus on the behaviors and attitudes about receiving health news and information via mass media among working people in Bangkok.

1.4.2 Definition of Terms

Table 3 Operational Definition of Variables

Variable	Operational Definition
Sex	Gender characteristics
Age	Amount of time an individual has lived
Education	Number of years of attending school
Occupation	Work that one does for a living
Marital status	Status indicated by whether one is married or not
Income	Money one gains in working for a living
Behaviors in receiving	-The frequency of receiving information -The media chose for receiving each health information
Attitudes in receiving	-The extent agreement with each statement -The efficiency of mass media in reaching the audience - The efficiency of mass media in influencing the audience

1.4.3 Indicator

Sex	Male, female
Age	25 years and below, 26-30 years, 31-35 years, 36-40 years, 41-45 years, 46- 50 years, 51-55 years, 56 years and above
Education	Primary school, High school or vocational, diploma, bachelor's, master's, doctorate
Occupation	Government official, state enterprise, private sector, self-employed
Marital status	Single, married, divorced or widowed, others
Income	10,000 baht and below, 10,001 – 15,000 baht, 15,001 – 20,000 20,001 – 25,000 baht, 25,001 – 30,000 baht, 30,001 – 35,000 baht, 35,001 – 40,000 baht, 40,001 baht and above

Frequency of exposure to mass media per week	Everyday, 5-6 days, 3-4 days, 1-2 days, none
Frequency of exposure to health-related information per week	Everyday, 5-6 days, 3-4 days, 1-2 days, none
Extent of agreement with each issue	Most strongly agree, strongly agree, agree, moderately agree, do not agree

1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

1.5.1 This study was conducted with working people in Bangkok only one.

1.5.2 The mass media stated in this study consisted of television, radio, newspaper, magazine and internet.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

1.6.1 Since this study examines behaviors and attitudes about receiving health news and information via mass media among working people in Bangkok. The results from this study will be beneficial to both the public and private sectors toward improving the publicizing of health-related information of this group of people.

1.6.2 This study will help promote media content with the objective of health awareness to be more receiver-oriented.