

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter is divided into 5 parts: a summary of the study, a summary of the findings, discussion, conclusion and recommendations for further study.

5.1 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

5.1.1 Objectives of the Study

The study was aimed at explore behaviors and attitudes about receiving health news and information among working people in Bangkok. It also aimed to find out find out which mass media working people in Bangkok rely on as sources health-related issues, which mass media they consider efficient in reaching and influencing audiences and how mass media can be improved to meet people's needs and desires regarding health information.

5.1.2 Subjects, Materials and Procedures

The subjects of the study were 153 working people in Bangkok.

The instrument used to collect data was a questionnaire which was divided into 5 parts: general information, behaviors in receiving health information via mass media, attitudes about receiving health information via mass media, efficiency of mass media and suggestions.

The study was cross-sectional design. The questionnaires were randomly distributed to working people who were asked to fill them in.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

The results of the can be summarized as follow:

5.2.1 General Information

The group of 153 subjects consisted of 54 men and 99 women. Most of them were 40 years old or below and had a bachelor's degree or higher. More

than half of them worked for private companies and were single. About 60% of the respondents made below 25,001 per month.

5.2.2 Behaviors in Receiving Health Information via Mass Media

Television is the mass medium working people accessed most; more than 70% of men, women, people aged 40 and below, and people aged over 40 watched it everyday. To gain health-related information, television also came first in the source people turn to. Television was the number one source people relied on when they needed information about diet, exercise, health technology, illness, sexual health, medical or health-care centers and psychological health. Newspaper came in second for every issue except health technology.

5.2.3 Attitudes about receiving Health Information via Mass Media

Men, women, the 40-and-below-year-old group, those with bachelor's-degrees and higher-than-bachelor's-degrees, they agreed about the issues raised. The other two groups, the over-40-year-old and lower-than-bachelor's-degree group strongly agreed.

People viewed television and newspaper as number one and two most efficient mass media, respectively, in reaching and influencing audiences. Magazines came in third in reaching audiences while the internet was most influential.

5.2.4 Suggestions

The respondents suggested that health information reported on these five mass media needed to be clear, accurate and up to date. The presentation should be interesting and creative.

5.3 DISCUSSIONS

This section concerns the analysis of the data from the questionnaires.

5.3.1 People's Behaviors in Receiving Health Information via Mass Media

To gain general and health information, people chose broadcast media, television and radio, as their first choice. This may be because they do not require high literacy; as a result, people with a variety of education levels can rely on them. According to Yubol Benjarongkit (ยुบล เบญจรงค์กิจ, 2534), printed media, on the contrary, requires greater literacy so the amount of people accessing it is lower. In the case of electronic media such as the internet, the number was the smallest since this requires not only high literacy but technological skill also. Thus, the well-educated primarily accessed the internet (ปรมะ สดเวทิน, 2538).

Women watched television for health information less than men did, but of older people (over 40) who did doubled the percentage of younger (40 and below) people which was in contrast with Yubol Benjarongkit's opinion.

Yubol Benjarongkit said people with high reading, translating and analyzing skills prefer printed media to broadcast media while people with low ability in these three skills prefer the opposite. Generally, it is assumed that the older people are better in reading, translating and analyzing so they should depend on television less than younger people do.

Possible reasons for this outcome are 1) older people are more concerned about their health than younger people 2) television is more easily accessed as there is no need to go out; thus saving time and money.

Nonetheless, the percentage of the older people who got health information by reading magazines or newspapers was higher than younger people which support Yubol Benjarongkit results.

The results of this study support Sumalee Limtang's study which found that gender and age are correlated to which media people choose as a source of information, and Kanda Thamsuriya's study that stated that women are more interested in health magazines than men.

5.3.2 Mass Media that People Rely on as a Source of Health-related Issue

Television came in first in the seven health issues while newspapers came second of six. The results mentioned above go along with the advantages and disadvantages of mass media discussed by Rayner, Wall, and Kruger (2001). Television is cheaper to access and does not demand much attention. This is in accordance with multitasking lifestyle of working people who are under time pressure.

Newspapers are popular among working people since, according to Rayner, Wall, and Kruger (2001), they are highly portable; thus, they can be easily carried and read anywhere. Moreover, a lot of choices are available. Although the cost of newspapers is not cheap, it is not so expensive that working people can not afford them.

The internet was ranked third for medical or health-care center, and mental health issues. For the former issue, the internet was chosen in view of the fact that most leading health-care centers have their own websites. For the latter issue, the internet was used as a source because there was little information about this issue available in Thailand in comparison with the other six issues, as a result; people needed to use the internet to search for more data.

5.3.3 People's Attitudes toward Efficiency of Mass Media

According to Rogers (1973), communication has an impact on the receiver's knowledge, attitude and behavior. In the results of this study, men and women have accessed television the most; consequently, they viewed it as the most efficient mass medium in reaching and influencing audiences. In addition, in broadcasting information with sound and video, television has more credibility and makes a better impression than other media. Owing to their high internet exposure, men consider it second in influencing receivers.

Most of the older and the younger people accessed television and newspapers during one week; that is why these two groups ranked them first and second, respectively, as far as reaching and influencing audiences.

Yubol Benjarongkit (2534) stated that low-educated people prefer broadcast media to printed media, which is in accordance with lower-than-bachelor's-degree people's opinion that radio was the second most efficient medium while people with bachelor's degree and higher rated newspapers higher.

5.3.4 People's Suggestion about Publicizing Health Information via Mass Media

Even though people ranked television as the medium they accessed most and the most efficient communication channel, they criticized it the most. Mainly, they complained about advertising, the hidden in particular, which was present during every kind of television program. Thus, television stations should deal with this issue. Many people commented that broadcast times of health program should match their lifestyles.

Because radio can send audio information only, clear and easy-understood messages are required. Some people would like health information on the radio to be brief and frequent. This is possibly because listening, without visuals, to documentary programs is boring.

For printed media, they call for more up to date, varied and directed information in both magazines and newspapers, and people wanted more striking, creative and colorful artwork and layout in magazines. The reason was that people rarely kept newspaper after reading; on the contrary, magazines were bought not only for reading but for collecting as well so the visuals should be as interesting as the content.

Internet, as the latest form of media, had less credibility; therefore, audiences wanted content on the internet to be accompanied by references.

5.4 CONCLUSIONS

From the discussions above, the following conclusions can be drawn:

5.4.1 Gender is not related to behaviors in receiving health news and information via mass media but age is.

5.4.2 Television is the mass medium people accessed most, and was considered the most efficient as well.

5.4.3 The level of education has as an effect on people's attitudes toward the efficiency of mass media.

5.4.4 Overall, people would like information in any kinds of mass media to be more straightforward, frank and up to date, Thai mass media obviously is lacking in this regard.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations are made for future study.

5.5.1 To gain more specific, useful information, future research should focus on people's behaviors and attitudes toward only one or two mass media such as television which is, according to the findings of this study, the most influential mass medium.

5.5.2 Because some kinds of this study's subjects, such as people aged over 40 years old or people with lower-than-bachelor's education, made up a low percentage of the sample, the findings are less reliable. Thus, future studies should include more subjects in these categories.

5.5.3 Future studies should concentrate on the behaviors and attitudes in the insiders in the health-care industry such as medical doctors, pharmacists, scientists, drug agents and officials in the Public Health Ministry. Due to the health-related backgrounds, the research may yield beneficial results.