

**GAY : THE CONSTRUCTION OF
SEXUAL MYTHS IN ADVERTISEMENTS**



Chachaya Sakuna

**A Dissertation Submitted in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy (Communication Arts and Innovation)
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Chachaya Sakuna

**The Graduate School of Communication Arts and Management
Innovation**

..... Major Advisor
(Associate Professor Patchanee Cheyjunya)

The Examining Committee Approved This Dissertation Submitted in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
(Communication Arts and Innovation).

..... Committee Chairperson
(Associate Professor Asawin Nedpogaeo, Ph.D.)

..... Committee
(Assistant Professor Tatri Taiphapoon, Ph.D.)

..... Committee
(Associate Professor Patchanee Cheyjunya)

..... Dean
(Professor Yubol Benjarongkij, Ph.D.)

____/____/____

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation	GAY : THE CONSTRUCTION OF SEXUAL MYTHS IN ADVER TISEMENTS
Author	Chachaya Sakuna
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The objectives of the study, Gay: The Construction of Sexual Myths in Advertisement, are to study the changes of sexual myths in advertisements with gay-related content and to study consumers' decoding of meanings in advertisements with gay-related content. The study is a qualitative research composing of various methodologies: documentary research, textual analysis, interview, in-depth interview and focus-group interview.

The results reveal that signs conveying meanings through codes of advertisement elements are classified into two series of meaning. The first series of meaning is that the products' property reflects a consumer's identity, the meaning in which a sender focuses on the product's property and its utility by encoding both verbal and nonverbal language codes as well as technical-practical codes in the meaning construction, while the second series of meaning is that the product's image reflects a consumer's identity. For the second series of meaning, the meaning conveys the value of a product's image by connecting the relationship between a product's image and a consumer's identity. The significations found are "to accept one's self and change it for the better", and "one's choice reflects one's identity".

Besides, "freedom", and "a person with an identity" are symbolic meanings found in this study, which are encoded by verbal and nonverbal language codes, including technical-practical codes. For new myths found in the study are "gays must have high competence", "gays' right to have a gay family", and "dream consumer". The only old myth that is still often reproduced in the advertisements is "the myth of masculinity."

Regarding consumers' decoding of meanings, it is found that there are

differences in meaning decoding. The consumers decode the dominant meaning of “a product’s property reflects a consumer’s identity” by Preferred Reading and Oppositional Reading in the equal proportion and decode the dominant meaning of “a product’s image reflects a consumer’s identity” by Preferred Reading



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“I do believe that if we are strongly determined and continually strive on something, no goal will be too far for us to reach.”

Chachaya Sakuna

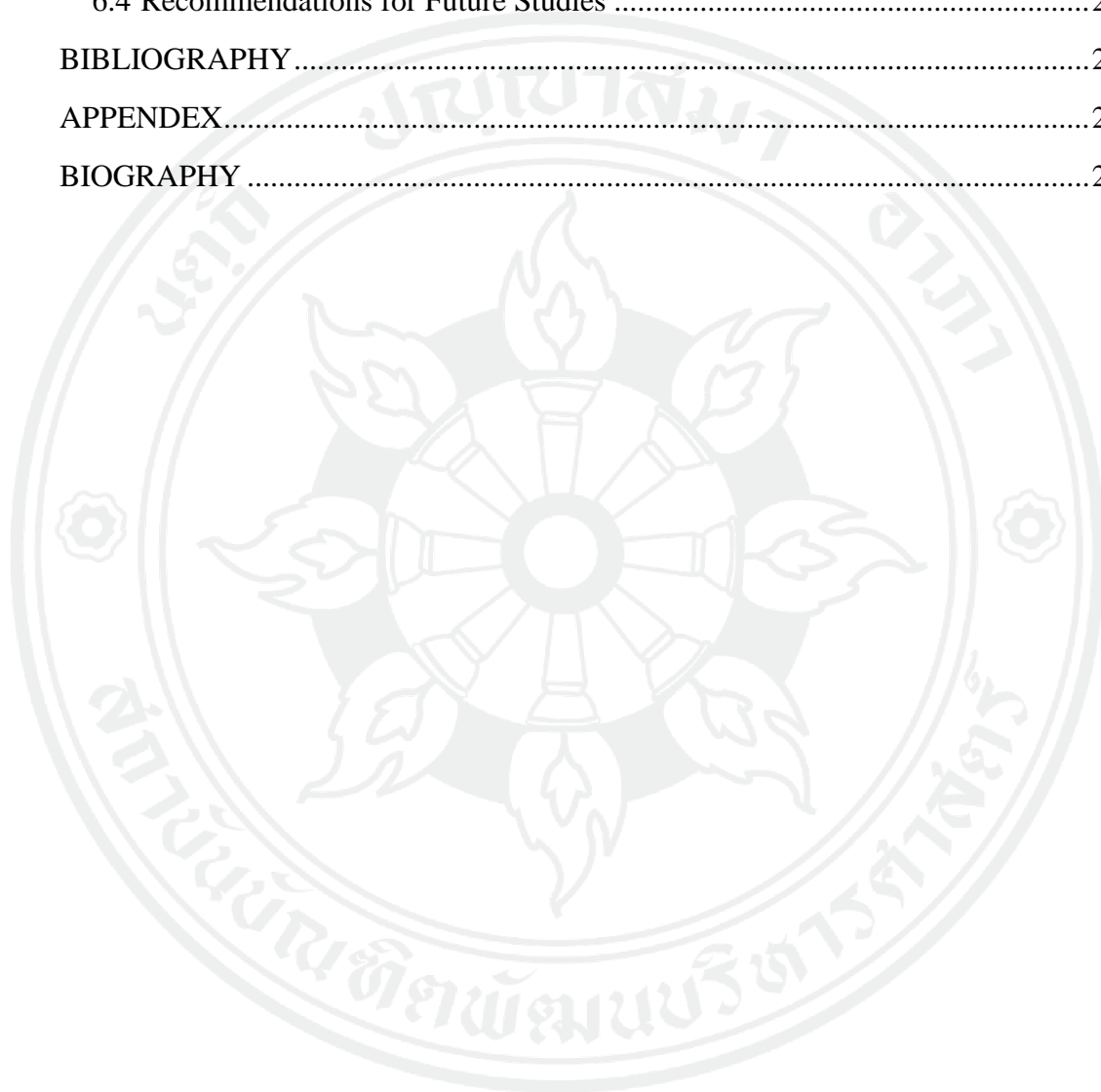
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTUIN

1.1 Rational and State of the Problem

The issue of homosexuality has been witnessed since the Ancient Greek period, especially sexual intercourse or human sexual activity, i.e. sodomy or anal sex, oral sex, etc. In the Dark Age, people were obsessed with the belief of the church that to have a sexual intercourse with people of the same sex was a critical crime that violated laws of heaven and against nature. Accordingly, homosexuals during that period were executed or were burnt to expiate their sin because of their “unnatural” behaviors. Later, in the Enlightenment Age or Intellectual Period, new knowledge of that time changed people’s belief by medical and psychological science, which viewed homosexuality differently. Homosexuality was perceived as a deviating behavior or a psychosis (a mental disorder). Since then, this issue has been interested by a number of Thai and foreign scholars, who have fought for academic ideas and definitions of gays and the third sex or third gender. The first stream in studying such concept was “Social Constructionism” whose conceptual foundation and approach were influenced by Michel Foucault. Foucault explained, “A society constructs a concept of sex. A gay identity is thus constructed from the relationship between man or individual and society, and gays respond to their constructed identity in various ways and symbols”. His concept was further extended by scholars in Queer Studies, who redefined the meaning of “a gay.” They added their notions that the extreme sexuality classification or binary opposition was too rough. In fact, human sexuality was diverse and more complicated. The binary opposition came from a social discourse that admired heterosexuality and looked down upon homosexuality

The second stream of study on gays was Essentialism, which perceived a gay identity as innate or was given by nature. Even among Essentialists who had same basic concepts, there were differences in ideas. Some of them supported

homosexuality and perceived sexuality as universal, continual, consistent, and transferable. Such orientation enhanced a stereotype that all gays would think and behave in the same way and this overlooked the diversity, complexity, and individual differences of gays. On the contrary, some of the Essentialists opposed homosexuality and perceived it as a deviating behavior that violated good morality of a society. Homosexuals thus needed a psychotherapy to change their behaviors back to normal. Apparently, this idea was explained by a deviation theory. Besides, another group of the Essentialism scholars developed the idea from the Evolution Theory of Charles Darwin who explained gays as the stronger creature striving for living in a changing environment while the weaker was eliminated. Therefore, the struggle of gays did not indicate that they were weak. Nevertheless, the Evolution theory with an emphasis on human strength and weakness could not explain all complexities of the human sexual orientation. For the studying on gays in Thai society, Peter Jackson (Duangwises, 2010) found that Thai societal structure gave an importance to the concept of “masculinity” and “femininity”. Thai gays who could successfully express their masculinity could survive in the society without problems. On the contrary, those who were not adept in such expression had to be cautious in living in a society because of the risk of being uncovered from their “unmanly” behaviors and expressions

1.1.1 Gay and Global Society

In a global context, there is a diversity of genders all around. In some countries, real Identities can be revealed and accepted; however, in some countries, they are impeded and hidden. In western societies during the decade of 1960, human right issues started, which occurred at the same time as other social movements, i.e. women liberation, students' demonstration, a demonstration for peace, etc., including a demonstration of homosexuals or groups of people who urged for their sexuality rights. The movement was more severe in the next decade by gays' liberation demonstration in the U.S.A., which was a social movement aimed to liberate homosexuals from the unfair relations, to create a better understanding of their real self and gender, and to alter the general people's perception on them. Homosexuality was asked to be viewed as normal and natural, and as a socially constructed diversity

from a changing environment in time and places. Thus, it should be viewed as “dynamic or variable gender.” (PPTV-HD, 2015) The fight of gays in a global context is thus a fight with unequal power relationship between genders that causes homosexuals to be victims of a structural violence, such as being presented as a clown via media, a contempt, dissociation, physical injury, sex harassment, etc. Therefore, if such unequal power relationships will not be corrected, a clash will never end.

It seems that the social movement of the third sex in the earlier periods is not wasteful. During the past ten years, gays and the third sex have been more accepted. Many countries around the world declared a legitimate acceptance of a marriage between the same sexes as between heterosexuals. Particularly, the law enactment of all states in the U.S.A. in 2015 is widely reputed, especially due to the advanced communication technology in disseminating news. Civic and business sectors around the world harmoniously celebrated for the pride of those gay and the third-sex demonstrators on social media.

1.1.2 Gays and Thai Society

Tracing back to Thai society in the reign of King Rama the sixth, the Siamese at that time gave more importance to an individual's hierarchical position, ranks of nobility, and birth origin than a gender. On the other hand, they gave more importance to one's gender than sexuality or sexual orientation. Men (sex) have a role in governance, culture creation, and in strengthening their masculinity according to the Royal preference. Accordingly, the Royal Court House of Men played a significant role and possessed more power. Especially, at that time masculinity was tied with the nationhood. In the reign of King Rama the sixth, the desirable masculinity needed the following:

- 1) Nation and monarchy loyalty

- 2) Being healthy and able-bodied. To comply with these requirements, men had to keep their body to be strong, clean, and free of sickness, especially venereal disease, which was mentioned in the book, “Kun Puay” (To prevent sickness), that was caused by “immoral women” and was a kind of disease that destroyed men's health. Oppositely, females were associated with physical closeness or proximity. To

have a sexual intercourse with a woman could lead to Syphilis, weakness, and sickness. A marriage and wedlock turned non-warrior men to be civilians.

3) Keeping distant from women. Masculinity was socially constructed through various kinds of activities, including building an awareness that men should be away from women because women were weak and fragile. To get familiar with a woman could dilute the purity of masculinity. The closer a man was to a woman, the more devaluation of masculinity a man would face.

4) Adventure and nature orientation. This qualification of men came from the belief that men should not be stuck at home or be a homebody because any related words to "domestic", i.e. domesticate or domesticated, etc., are not men's characteristics. The concept of avoiding being a homebody, adopted in the reign of King Rama VI, got an influence from Victorian awareness. However, the adventure-oriented personality of Victorian middle-class people contradictorily led to homosexual relations and eroticism. Therefore, all through the twentieth century, "a young man's adventure" did not convey only the meaning of "the relationship between man and man", but also became an inspiration towards erotic art expressing such relationship reflected in pieces of drama and literature.

5) A love between man and man. From the conventional activities showing a masculine-orientation, i.e. sports, exercises, jungle adventures, etc., such activities led men to have intimate relationships towards each other. In the reign of King Rama VI, an all-men association was established as a central place for middle-class men to construct the meaning and characteristics of "being a man". Once these men gathered all together, a sense of collective love, group concern, and self-sacrifice (of their happiness and lives) for the group's well-being occurred. Besides, "an honesty and a sincerity" were important parts of masculinity, which enabled men to reveal their truth without any secrets and to dare to exchange everything: love, emotions, feelings, etc., to one another, until it became a special and profound relationship. Thus, men and women seemed to be apart or parallel. Men had to choose between staying with their group and staying with a weak woman who could defile their masculinity. A close relationship between man and man and their profound relationship were reflected in many pieces of literature during the period, such as "Hua Jai Nuk Rob" (The Heart of a Warrior), "Venice Vanich", Phra Ruang" etc. (Yodhong, 2013)

The overall awareness of masculinity since the old days induced men to get closer to one another naturally. It also terminated females from all concerned activities because of the notion, "Never get close to a woman". This notion pushed them to go outside for an adventure or to enter a jungle. Such notion also inspired the establishment of jungle-love associations up to the love of nature consciousness. Subsequently, a number of novels emphasizing a young man's adventure into a jungle appeared, i.e. Long Phrai (A Jungle Adventure), Phret Phra U-Ma (Phra U-Ma Diamond), etc. Another explicit example of the creation of masculinity that needed no woman involvement was the building of boy scouts of Lord Baden-Powell, "the Father of Boy Scouts" (Wongyannawa, 2013). Powell perceived that a good and majestic man would spend his life by staying with only men because a man is a more noble sex. A man's body is more attractive than that of a woman. Thus, Powell viewed a man's body with muscles or six packs as a man's ideal qualification. This leads to a question if men of that period were homosexual or not. Therefore, due to the awareness of masculinity and a tight relationship between man and man, the portrayal of an "effeminate man" did not show up in the earlier period. Gender diversity was presented on mass media in 1995. It was the news about the love of men who called themselves "gays" for the first time. The word "Gay" was used to distinguish between manly prostitutes and effeminate prostitutes (men with effeminate gestures or Krathei in Thai).(Singhakowin, 2013) Such sexual myth was then reproduced in the period where mass media grew.

Another sexual myth relating to homosexuality is viewed from a Buddhism's belief in the Law of Karma and the belief in death and rebirth. Homosexuals are viewed as people who pay back for their karma or bad deeds in the past. Such deeds are sexual sinful behaviors. Specifically, homosexuality is a natural happening caused by bad deeds in the past life (a previous life before getting born into earth again) However, if viewed from the former social construction from an awareness of masculinity, the notion of masculinity (strong) and of femininity (weak) have been cultivated and learned from a large number of Thai literature. The textbook emphasizes that there are only two sexes in this world: men and women. (Tootsie's a Joker, 2016) Moreover, in the school book of health education of the first-grade student, a sexually-biased definition of gender diversity is found. In the said textbook,

sexual deviation means “An abnormality of a person with inappropriate sexual feeling, attitude, and expressed behaviors that are different from those of the majority in a society”. Sexual deviation is often caused by an abnormal mental state of losing a self-control. However, this abnormality does not mean a psychosis or insanity, but only a psychic irregularity or disordered personality. Besides, even from the advice of a person with sexual deviation, it was written “a person with sexually deviated behaviors should keep this deviation in secret or disclose himself to only a trusted and accountable person. He should try to adapt his expression appropriately in relations to his physical sex and situation, ask for an advice from some reliable persons when facing an adaptation problem, avoid an unsafe intercourse, and keep himself to be well informed.” (Manager Online, 2014). Because of these biased statements, they create a hatred and fear. Additionally, when textbooks provide such sexually biased content, it causes no doubt why the third-sex students in schools, universities, and educational institutes are often bullied and cannot live in such a place. When young people read the biased content from their books, it increases their stress and pressure with the understanding that they are abnormal, and tell themselves, “It’s me, a queer.” This devalues their human dignity from the sexual myths hidden in the textbooks. Consequently, they often face a discrimination and social stigmatization and are afraid to stand up to protect their right. Many people feel that they deserve to be treated that way as they are not normal or they are the second-class citizen.

Another sexual myth, “Gays are loose and promiscuous”, took place because of the borrowed English word, “Gay” in Thai context used by male prostitutes. The first discovery of AIDS was in the U.S.A. in 1981 and most of the patients were homosexuals who were gays. (Wuttirode, 1991). Ten years after that, it was the Dark Age of Thai gays who were blamed for spreading the disease. The statement, “AIDS is a gay, and a gay is AIDS,” thus emerged. Until the medical confirmation that AIDS or HIV can be caused by several ways and can happen to anyone even to an infant if infected either by sexual discourses or by a shared syringe, it helps dilute such claim. Still, the image of gays is critical, especially when there is an epidemic. However, under the epidemic crisis, it encouraged gays to correct their negative image. A group of gays (i.e. bar gays in Bangkok, Pattaya, and Chiangmai) joined a campaign with some private organizations supported financially by W.H.O. (World

Health Organization) to protest AIDS/HIV with other members around the world. The gay members helped to establish an organization to coordinate with those private organizations and disseminate the information about AIDS to general people to let them know and understand the spreading of AIDS correctly. In addition, a gay association entitled, “Fraternity for AIDS Cessation in Thailand (F.A.C.T.)” was established and opened for gay members. The main purpose was to communicate about AIDS to correct Thai gays’ image. Such phenomenon was a turning point that called for a gay gathering to express their standpoint and position. This could be considered as the starting point of a mouthpiece towards the acceptance of gays in Thai society concretely via several activities. At present, the existing gay associations are Bangkok Rainbow Association (BRO), Rainbow Sky Association of Thailand, etc. The communication of these gay organizations helps to promote a positive image for gays in Thai society.

In short, the emergence and existence of gays have been transmitted through the given definitions and sexual myths continually since the first period in which gays were perceived as a psychosis (Singhakowin, 2013), which was defined based on the heterosexuality interpretation so gays were interpreted as a deviation. Later, the meaning of “gay” tied with a sexual promiscuity due to the usage of this word by male prostitutes. Until the arrival of AIDS in Thailand, gays became a hit target of sexual bias and the statement, “A gay is AIDS, and AIDS is a gay,” emerged. Consequently, a gay organization was established to promote a positive image of gays. Nevertheless, there has been another arousal and sexual myth reproducer. That is “mass media”.

1.1.3 Gays and the Construction of Sexual Myths in Mass Media

In the era where communication technologies, both traditional and new media, are advanced, it is inevitable to say that mass media plays a crucial and influential role in creating and diffusing culture, values, ideology, and myths. Among the myths presented by mass media, the sexual myths relating to gays, the third sex, and alternative genders are issues to which mass media has paid attention and tried to construct some attached meanings for a long time until they become myths embedded in Thai society.

In the first period, mass media, namely printed media and magazines, presented stories about Thai gays after the great event on October 14, 1973, in which Thailand stepped into the blooming era of Democracy. All types of mass media had a freedom in presenting any news richly. Hence, the first gay magazine, “Mithuna” (June Magazine) was published. Later, many other gay magazines, i.e. Neon, Mid-Way, Morakot (Emerald), etc., followed. (Wuttirode, 1991). All these magazines contain the similar content or the content about the movement of gays in Thailand and from every corner of the world. Besides, they aimed to improve gays’ personality, to call for a participation towards social responsibility through their articles, and to advise love problems through some columns in the magazines. This helped to reduce the feeling of loneliness for Thai gays and make them feel the existence of a gay society.

Despite some positive portrayals of gays, mainstream mass media still often presents news or stories about gays with a sexual bias. For instance, a joker actor or a clown always performs his exaggerating sexual expression in an effeminate manner. This even emphasizes negative myths about gays. From the study of Singhakowin (2013), since 2007, there has been a decreasing presentation of effeminate homosexuals. However, the gay characters always end up with a love despair and a sad life. Some roles of gays appearing in mass media are repeatedly reproduced to illustrate gays’ obscenity and exaggeration. Mockery, peculiarity, and lust of gays are often presented. However, there has been some positive encouragement for gays occasionally. For instance, during 2004-2009, Manager Weekly published a column called, "Stop Hiding" for gays as its target readers. This column presented a variety of gays' stories, i.e. A call for sexual diversity, a campaign through the column showing a gay who dared to accept his real self to his family and peers. Compared with other printed media, this column is the publicity that presented gays as normal people the most. During that time, though the construction of sexual myths by mass media was both positive and negative, the negative ones were repeatedly presented due to some business factors. (Kaewprasert, 2008) Besides, printed media as the pioneer media in presenting issues on gays in the past, the researcher has found sexual myths of gays in many other mainstream media that have also been studied widely, such as films, television, online, and advertising media, etc.

In films, sexual myths of gays emphasize a mockery, rejection, love despair, rudeness, sad life and misery, and deviation. Such myths have been reproduced to represent the identity of gays for selling their mockery and peculiarity. This reinforces their deviation in the society. For televisions, in the past gays often played the role of a lead actor's friend in Thai dramas or played as a support role. Still, they had to conceal their real selves. The first TV drama that portrayed a man-to-man love and ended with happiness was “Rak Pad Pan Kao”, broadcast during 2004-2006. However, in spite of love fulfillment, the couple had to move to the U.S.A. This reflects that those characters had to move from Thai society as it provides no space for homosexuals to disclose their love in public. However, after 2004, a number of series about gays have been broadcast in Thai society.

Another influential and popular media displaying gays after 1997 is online media. Gay websites originated at that time and started to gain popularity after that. Up to now, it has been a channel through which gays can communicate and express their real identity, including sharing their life experiences. This cyber media helps to release their loneliness from being rejected in the real world very well. The arrival of an internet and websites brings about different consequences from the period where printed media was the gays' mainstream media. In the prior period, people might want to read gay magazines but dared not to buy them from a bookshelf. Some could not bring them back home, as their family did not accept their peculiarity. Their solution was to leave those magazines at their friends' house. Thus, they got difficulties to access information from such media. This differs from websites that gays can access at any time and any place. Popular websites in the earlier period were missladyboy.com, dekchai69.com, thaiboxy.com, gooogay.com, etc. (Some of them still exist nowadays). At present, there are a great number of pages with gay content and provide a space for Thai gays for chatting, expressing their ideas, and calling for major changes, i.e. news about the legal same-sex marriage in the U.S.A. in 2015. This enhanced the presentation of sex diversity by having online media as a mediator in disseminating information. Facebook also shared the joy with other Facebook members around the world by changing its profile to be a rainbow flag. Such movement induced a trend of changing the profiles to be rainbow colors. People then acknowledged what the rainbow flag meant. This can be considered as an event

arousing the understanding of sex diversity in Thai society. Besides, the celebration of equal rights of diverse sexes brought about a more positive meaning and image of gays. Therefore, the presentation of gays through mass media depends on a social context at a certain time, including media producers' perspectives towards gays and marketing mechanisms influencing the production process. Another kind of media that depends on marketing mechanism and needs to draw an attention to the masses is "advertising".

1.1.4 Gays, Advertisement, and Sexual Myths

Sexual myths are often constructed in an advertisement using "stereotyped images". The concept of a stereotyped image comes from an observation of W. Lippmann that mass media production is a kind of work in a limited space that requires an "Economy of Effects" from both producers and the audience. Regarding the producers, the presentation must be the most precise and takes the shortest time. For the audience, they need the least effort and time in their interpretation of any received message. The way causing a time saving induces the use of a "stereotyped image", which is easy for both senders and receivers. Accordingly, to draw an appeal of pity, it must relate to an old person, innocence to a child, weakness of a woman, and mockery to the gays or queers.

In Thai advertisements relating to sex diversity, sexual myths are often found to be reproduced repeatedly. From the researcher's study ten years ago, a plenty of sexual myths present the mockery concept in the advertisements through the act of gays and queers, or through exaggerating sexuality expressions. To illustrate some examples, a number of advertisements, i.e. Penn Choice Oil (Long Life) advertisement in 2006, Tip Vegetable Oil in 2008, Unif Fruit Juice in 2008, etc., used "gays" as a part of their advertisements presenting their ridiculous and exaggerating expressions to add more appeals into their advertisements. Another popular sexual myth found in Thai advertisements is the portrayal of inhibited or unrevealed gays. For example, the advertisement of "I AM" of KTC presented a man's free way of living surrounded by women but at the end of the advertisement, it showed the man glanced at another man with sprinkling eyes while dancing with a woman. This conveys the meaning that gays have to conceal their real identity and make other

people understand that he flirts with a woman. This agrees with the definition of a gay in 1991, “Thai gays need to use their masculinity as a shield, especially those of middle and high classes, including those with governmental ranks or positions. The shield covers a marriage with a woman or any masculine expressions to emphasize their manhood. (Wuttirode, 1991). Such presentation of the third gender does not appear without reasons but is systematically planned to convey the meaning of “hiding”. However, the way of presentation, which looks natural, is constructing some kinds of myths in the same way as a culture constructing some myths in a society naturally. “Absence” is thus important since it enables the existence of “appearance”. That is why Barthes gives high importance to the meaning of “the Empty Signified”. (Roland Barthes, 1967). He perceives that any meaning comes from a “difference” system that helps to fulfill the complete meaning of something. The signified meaning from the point of view of Barthes is thus skeptical and induces the researcher to study it. A Signified can become a Signifier to construct a signified endlessly. This is a conceptualization of using a stereotyped image to yield a sexual myth in an advertisement.

The portrayal of gays in Thai advertisements started to change due to some changes in Thai society in many aspects. For instance, during 2006- 2007 there was an advertising campaign focusing on a masculinity by coining the word, “metrosexual” into a market. “Metrosexual” was defined as “a young single man with high-income living or working in a big city like Bangkok” and metrosexuals were the highest potential consumers of the market. (Wolfman, 2017). However, later there was another research finding that more than 50% of “metrosexuals” in Thailand were gays. (Pensiri, 2007). The study of Duangwises (2012) found that 95% of gays had more social spaces, either in the form of being presented in mass media or in playing more roles and expressing their real identities in various business and industries in Thailand. For an instance, the opening of a full-service entertaining complex for gays to respond to their lifestyles. The significant turning point occurred when the U.S.A. declared the laws of accepting the same-sex marriage all over the country in 2015. This movement constantly affected a change in the perception towards gays as well. Most of all, recently mass media present the success, celebrity, competence, and high potentials of gays continually. These groups of gays represent high-income people in

a society. "Work Hard and Play Hard" is the coined slogan of "Pink Double-Income and No Kids" gays who earn a high income but have no child as a burden; thus they have a high power of buying. Several business and industries in Thailand and in the U.S.A. thus pay attention to these gay groups increasingly, especially when a media analyst in San Francisco declared, "gays and the third-sex people will become the richest in America with huge purchase power". Besides, a number of studies found that most gays live separately from their family. Thus, their family had no influence on their purchasing so advertising had a great influence on gays' consumption. (Gross, 2012) Thai media also perceived gays as another significant target group so the advertisements could not present the same old sexual myths any longer. After 2016, the researcher found the presentation of gays in new dimensions, such as, "Change Destiny" of SK-II advertisement, "5 Brow Pencil for Men" of Mistine, and 28 Chidlom Condominium of SC ASSET. All these three advertisements portrayed gays in a creative look with any repeated reproduction of old sexual myths. Thus, the researcher chose these three advertisements as subjects for this study by using a communication model of Stuart Hall to see how these advertisements with a new-dimension portrayal of gays encode and decode their message to the audience.

1.1.5 The Study of the Meaning of a Gay in Advertisements based on the Communication Model of Stuart Hall.

Sexual myths in an advertisement, from the point of view of Barthes, are constructed from connotative meanings, a meaning which is subjective and requires the interpretation within a socio-cultural context. Therefore, connotative meanings can be different depending on who is an interpreter of such meaning. Stuart Hall developed his concept by modifying the previous concept widely known as S-M-C-R Communication Model, one of the American communication theories, which viewed that in a transmission process a sender has a power in encoding a message while a receiver is powerless in decoding a message or interpreting the meaning of the received message. Therefore, the previous concept viewed receivers as the passive audience. Hall believes that in the decoding process, meanings can be interpreted in many ways depending on an interpreter. Subsequently, he developed a new concept of encoding and decoding, which can be explained in three folds:

1) Meanings are not restricted or monopolized by a sender only. Although a sender is the one who transmits a message, the meaning also depends on a receiver's interpretation.

2) A message is not as clear as a crystal that one can see through but a message is very complex and can be interpreted differently.

3) A receiver is not only a passive audience but can interpret the meaning of the received message from his perception. Thus, the meaning sent by a sender may not be the same as the meaning interpreted by a receiver.

This concept of an encoding and decoding process can be applied in an advertising production. Specifically, an advertising producer encodes a sign related with gays into a message. A gay or heterosexual receiver then decodes or interprets may interpret the same received message differently depending on each individual's frame of reference and experience. In the studying of encoding an advertisement constructing the meaning of a gay, the researcher gives an importance to a sender because he or she is the constructor of the message by using some codes, comprising a dominant, professional, and technical-practical code for his or her construction. At the same time, the study also emphasizes the decoding process by studying the perception and interpretation of a consumer, both gays and heterosexuals, to see how the receiver interprets or understands what the producer transmits to him or her. Does a receiver decode with preferred, negotiated, or oppositional codes according to the concept of Stuart Hall.

The reason why the researcher is interested in studying sexual myths in advertisements is what Lazier & Kendrick stated. They stated that the kind of media that is studied the most in terms of sexual myths is an advertisement. (Keawthep, 2013). In general, a typical advertisement on TV takes about 15-30 seconds and is broadcast by interrupting the programs with a marketing purpose mostly. Thus, it is an advertisement filled with extreme persuasive appeals. Such characteristics cause an advertisement to be an appropriate and perfect sphere for cultivating sexual myths. In addition, advertisements containing gay-content are communication that tries to minimize time and space to respond to the marketing purpose. Accordingly, the concept of using stereotyped images is common in advertisements. The advertisements are served for entertainment and profits, which are not so widely

accepted by gay consumers as other consumer groups. (Doty, 1993). The research thus is interested to know what kinds of codes are communicated to convey the meaning of gays in the advertisements under changing contexts and society, which view gays differently from the past. Besides, the researcher is curious to know how much changes in hidden sexual myths appear in the advertisement under changes in Thai society. Especially, it is the period where there is a turning point of bending gay groups into the marketing orbit. When mass media perceive gays as a consumer group, a subsequent question is how or in which way they should design an advertisement message that can create a good or positive attitude towards product brands. This perspective enhances gays to have a power over the negotiated meaning. As a consumer, they have no need to conceal their real identity. From the research of (Kates, 2000), gay consumers chose to consume a product only when an advertisement of such product portrayed a gay with understanding and a respectful perspective and would not consume a product when its advertisement expressed inappropriate image of gays. Kates further found that the use of signs in an advertisement, which combined consumption patterns and perceived value of gays, could broaden an opportunity to create an acceptance of gays within a society in which some groups of people still oppose the existence of gays.

Furthermore, Tsai (2007) studied the advertisement creation for homosexuals and the strategies for negotiating marketing objectives and the value of gays. The study found that the advertisements related with homosexuals were constructed with both positive and negative image of homosexuals. With a negative image, advertisements often belonged to the products with non-gay as target consumers. Gays were portrayed by a lady-like code or symbol, i.e. effeminate walking, overtone voice, etc. On the contrary, the advertisements with a positive image of homosexuals or gays avoided presenting the stereotyped images but tried to encode with a neutral portrayal of gays. The gay consumers could interpret such adjustment while heterosexuals felt nothing. The nonverbal language, i.e. body movement, gesture, etc. was used in encoding a message of gay. For instance, the portrayal of two men wearing a pajama talking about their breakfast in a kitchen was interpreted by heterosexuals as "a friendship" but was interpreted by homosexuals or gays as "a

romantic relationship". Therefore, advertisements will mostly contain codes with various meanings to construct meanings for the audience.

Accordingly, the researcher aims to study a communication process starting from a producer's encoding of advertisement message to the audience's or the consumers' decoding of the transmitted message in Thai society. This study is expected to help to point out changes in sexual myths in Thai advertisements and to search for some guidelines in creating an advertisement with appropriate gay-related content without devaluing their human dignity.

1.2 Research Questions

1.2.1 How are gay myths constructed and changed in an advertisement message?

1.2.2 How do the consumers decode the meanings of a gay-related advertisement message?

1.3 Research Objective

1.3.1 To study the construction and changes of gay myths in an advertisement message.

1.3.2 To study the consumers' decoding of meanings of a gay-related advertisement message.

1.4 The Scope of the Study

This study is divided into two parts. The first part is the study on the construction and changes of gay myths in an advertisement message and the second part is the study on the consumers' decoding of meanings of a gay-related advertisement message. The concept of encoding and decoding of Stuart Hall, viewing that the meaning encoded by a sender is not necessarily the same as that decoded by a receiver. The scope of the study contains the following:

Part 1: A textual analysis of three pieces of advertisement having a gay as the main actor and containing gay-related content. The advertisements are presented on

television (TVC) and present a new gay myth different from old gay myths, i.e. no gays need to be inhibited, gays can express their love and real identity in public sphere, no portrayal of gays in a ridiculous tone, etc. Besides, it covers the study of the construction of gay myths from the perspectives of five advertisement producers and creatives of an organization and of an advertising agency.

Part 2: A study on the opinions of two groups of consumers: heterosexuals and homosexuals by choosing middle-class consumers with a purchase power.

1.5 Operational Definitions

1.5.1 Myth construction: The conceptualization of the meanings of gays appearing in advertisement interpreted by its connotation in the form of Signifier and Signified analyzed from verbal, nonverbal, and Technical-Practical codes in an advertisement message. After being presented in the advertisement, such gay myth will be a principal set of meanings that can create a common perception among people in a society.

1.5.2 Decoding of meanings: The interpretation and the understanding of homosexual or gay and heterosexual consumers towards the meanings of gays reflected through the following codes:

1.5.2.1 Preferred code or decoding the message with the same meaning that is encoded by a sender, i.e. a producer intends to present a ridiculous portrayal of a gay and the receivers interpret that portrayal as ridiculous too.

1.5.2.2 Negotiated code or decoding the message in a compromising way between preferred code and the new code created by the receivers, i.e. a ridiculous portrayal of a gay encoded by a sender is interpreted as having something ridiculous but also having other meanings.

1.5.2.3 Oppositional code or decoding the message with contradictory meanings from those encoded by a sender. During the decoding process, a receiver knows what a preferred code means but rejects or disagrees with such meanings, i.e. a ridiculous portrayal of a gay encoded by a sender is interpreted as not ridiculous at all. To use the third sex for a mockery is not a funny thing.

1.5.3 Perception on Sexual myth: The influence or effects of sexual myth on the receivers after viewing the advertisement. They can be an obsession or dominance (a consumer agrees with what is presented in an advertisement without realizing that it is a myth), negotiation (a consumer knows what is presented in an advertisement is a myth and agrees partly but also creates own interpretation) and opposition a consumer knows what is presented in an advertisement is a myth but rejects it.

1.5.4 Gays: A man who loves or has a tendency to love the same sex. In this study, it covers a man who is manly dressed a man who is dressed like a lady. The characteristics of gays appearing in an advertisement are gays with a complete masculinity, with some masculinity and some femininity, and with a complete femininity or who is dressed like a woman.

1.5.5 Advertisement: Media with moving picture or motions used to serve a marketing objective and having a gay as the main actor. The content is related to gays and broadcast on TV. The advertisement subjects in this study are "5 Brow Pencil for Men" of Mistine, "Change Destiny" of SK-II, and "28 Chidlom Condominium" of SC ASSET.

1.6 Expected Benefits

1.6.1 Academic Benefits: The study of gays appearing in advertisements is expected to reflect the roles of gays as one of the target consumers the advertising markets should keep an eye on. As a social research, this study can illustrate sex diversity in Thai society and helps people to accept gay and other alternative sexes to be as important as general consumers are. Besides, the findings of this study may lead to the study by a semiology in future studies, including the methodology used to analyze the overall communication process: an analysis of a sender, message, and a receiver by a documentary analysis, a textual analysis, and in-depth interviews.

1.6.2 Application Benefits: The findings of this study can be applied for a professional purpose, especially for advertising creative, marketing communicators, and mass media practitioners and executives. The knowledge gained from this study can be used as guidelines to create and produce gay-related advertisements to

communicate to the gay receivers who are the target consumers effectively and appropriately without any sexual bias



CHAPTER 2

Theoretical Concepts and Literature Review

To reply the research questions of the study, “Gays: Sexual Myths Construction in Advertisements”, aiming to study the construction and changes of gay myths in advertisements and the consumers’ decoding of their meanings, the following concepts, theories, and concerned studies are reviewed:

2.1 Semiology Theory

2.2 The Concept of Encoding and Decoding

2.3 The Concept of Advertising Media

2.4 The Concept about Gays, Gays’ Knowledge Inquiry, Gay Myths, and Advertisements about Gays

2.5 Conceptual Framework for the Study

2.1 Semiology Theory

The cycling of a human society comprises a production, consumption, and an exchange of signs, no matter it is a conversation, writing, reading, TV watching, or Music Listening. Human beings are tied with behaviors equipped with signs and meanings in their daily life. Semiology originated from the study of meanings with a belief that meanings are the outcome of communication. In other words, it reflects that meanings do not occur by themselves but will occur only when communicated through a communication channel Human beings created. However, from considering the elements of a communication process: a sender, message, channel, and receiver, only three elements are central for the study of meanings. (Kaewthep & Hinwiman, 2010) .

1) A meaning is in communicators. For instance, theories from Birmingham School of Thought explains that a meaning construction can occur only when there are a sender and a receiver. Thus, this school focuses on the analysis of encoding and decoding of the meanings.

2) A meaning is in a text. This leads to the study of sign and its relations to illustrate that when the relations within a text change, signs will change as well.

3) A meaning is in a context or communication environment, i.e. time, place, an economic and cultural condition, etc. For instance, in the past, gays were the issue one needed to conceal and cannot disclose. However, when social condition changed and the U.S.A. declared legitimate rights of homosexual marriage in 2015, more positive meanings of gays have been witnessed ever since. It reflects a meaning as the acceptance of sexual diversity, etc.

Therefore, signs are defined with meanings bigger than they are. This illustrates that a sign is anything that stands for something bigger than it is and signs are in every component of a communication process

2.1.1 Definition of Semiology

The term “semiology” derives from the Greek word, “seme” or “semion” that means “sign” or “meaning”. Semiology is a science that tries to explain an endless cycling of a sign: occurrence, development, change, decadence, and dissolution, which appears in a systematic pattern.

Saussure (1916), the pioneer of semiology, stated that semiology is a science that studies the life of signs, how and under which rules signs are constructed, while Harshow and Weiss (1931) other pioneers defined the meaning of sign as something with a bigger meaning than itself.

Roland Barthes (1967) expanded the meaning of a sign to signified, a space with a hidden ideology or myth.

In short, semiology is a science studying how signs are constructed and their meanings are bigger than what they are. For example, the sign of male, female, and semi-male and semi-female with a written statement below, "All Gender Restroom". Therefore, this statement does not mean only male, female, and amid between male and female, but means "all genders", etc.

2.1.2 Unique Features of Semiology

Kaewthep and Hinwiman (2010) identifies 4 unique features of semiology:

1) Sign: Sign is the main component in the study of Semiology that questions how signs are constructed and transmitted. The construction and transmission of a sign involve a sign user. An understanding of the meaning of a sign leads to an understanding of people's being in such society.

2) Code/System: A semiologist searches for a pattern called, “code”, which is a repeated pattern in constructing a sign. Codes can create a common understanding between a sender and a receiver. For instance, in Thai advertisement, a main male actor makes up like a woman and displays a product by talking like a woman. A receiver will interpret constantly that that man is a gay or a queer, etc.

3) Relations: To construct a meaning in a sign system requires a composition of two parts: elements and relations, which is connected to convey some meanings. If any part is missing or if relations change, the meaning will change as well.

4) Culture: The above features all involve a communication context since signs, codes, and relations are constructed and operated under a certain cultural context. Thus, if a context changes, the meaning changes as well.

2.1.3 Composition of Sign

The concept of sign composition was mentioned in the book entitled, “Course in General Linguistics” of Saussure (1916). A sign is composed of two main components: the Signifier and the Signified. The signification can happen only if there is an actual object, which is visible, reference, and sign. In Figure 2.1, a sign composes of the signifier and the signified.

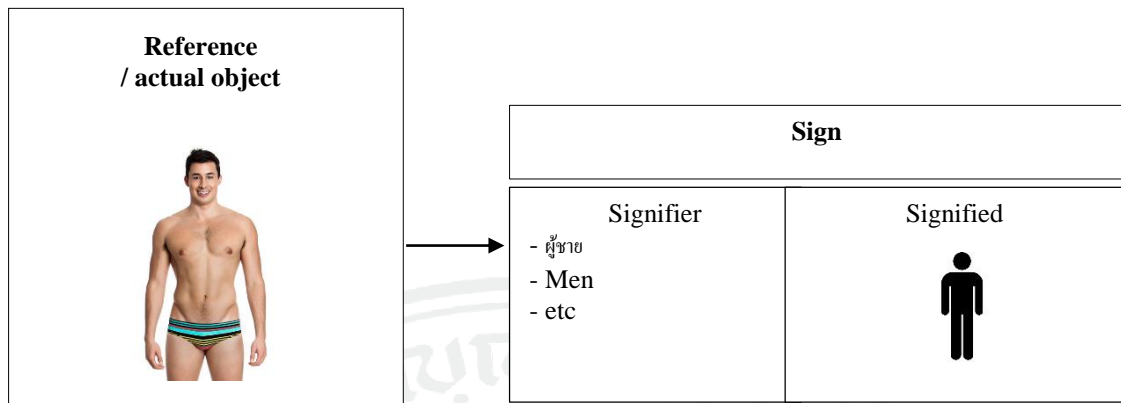


Figure 2.1 The concept of composition of a sign of Saussure

From Figure 2.1, the signification starts with a reference or an actual object (an actual person), and then a sign comprising a signifier (a word "man" in Thai and English) because each society will use different language to describe the object one sees differently. When people in each society or culture learn of this sign (or can read the word), they will have a picture in their mind what that word means by referring to an actual person or man. The complete signification of "man" then occurs.

Later, the next-generation scholar, Roland Barthes (1967) developed his concept from Saussure's concept of signification by dividing the process of signification into two levels: first-order meaning or denotative meaning, an objective meaning that we can perceive visibly, comparable to "sign" of Saussure. The second level of signification is second-order meaning or connotative meaning, a subjective meaning requiring an interpretation from a socio-cultural context. Thus, each interpreter with the different socio-cultural background will interpret a connotative differently. This level of meaning is more thorough than what Saussure explains about the composition of signs

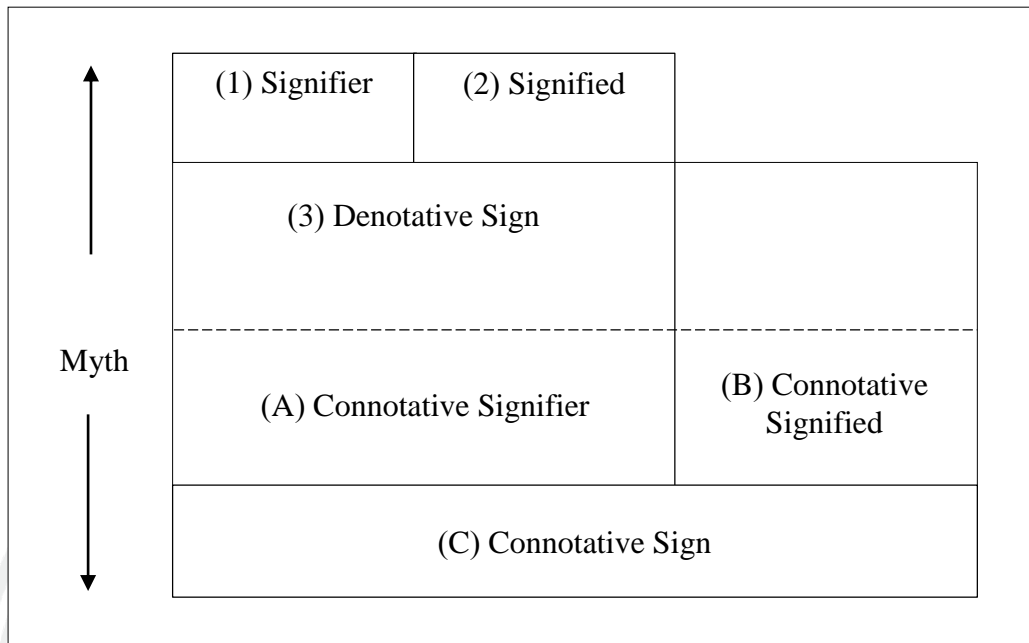


Figure 2.2 Barthes's concept of the signification process

Source: Kaewthep and Hinwiman (2010)

In Figure 2.2, “Tut” (a Thai word for calling a gay or a queer) (3) is a sign that comprises “Signifier” (1) and “Signified” (2) or effeminate or woman-like manner. All of these components are the direct signification with the first-order or denotative meaning. However, Barthes states that a society does not construct only the first-order meaning, but often constructs the second-order or connotative meaning. Namely, it is the transformation of Signified (3) to become Signifier (A) at another level by adding some social meaning to become Sign (C) or the connotative meaning, which is a myth. Therefore, at the second-level meaning, the word, “Tut” or “Gay” does not mean only a man with an effeminate manner or woman-like manner but also is a derision or an insulting word for an unmanly man.

2.1.4 Myths in Advertisement

The study of myths of Barthes pays attention to the meaning of the second-order level or connotative meaning since he believes that myths can be understood only by the connotative meanings. According to Barthes, a myth is not a direct experience but is a sensory experience through codes. Such things are thus comparable to a myth

that a modern capitalism tries to invent a set of truth. Charoensin-o-larn (2012). Seeing no construction means the acceptance and emphasis on such myths. Every text earns various meanings, but unclear. The diversity of meanings is obscured by myths. Thus, the meaning is an interaction between "sign" and "myth", which dominates the first-order meaning of all things.

The first-order level of meaning is touchable and usable, such as wine is for drinking, a detergent is used for getting rid of the dirt, etc. and then it communicates a new meaning at another level, this leads a myth to reflect additional meanings from the first-order or old meaning. Thus, a myth is an expression of the second-order meaning. According to the concept of Barthes, the meaning of all kinds of things will be always reduced by conveying another meaning when such things are dominated by a myth. (Prachakun, 2015)

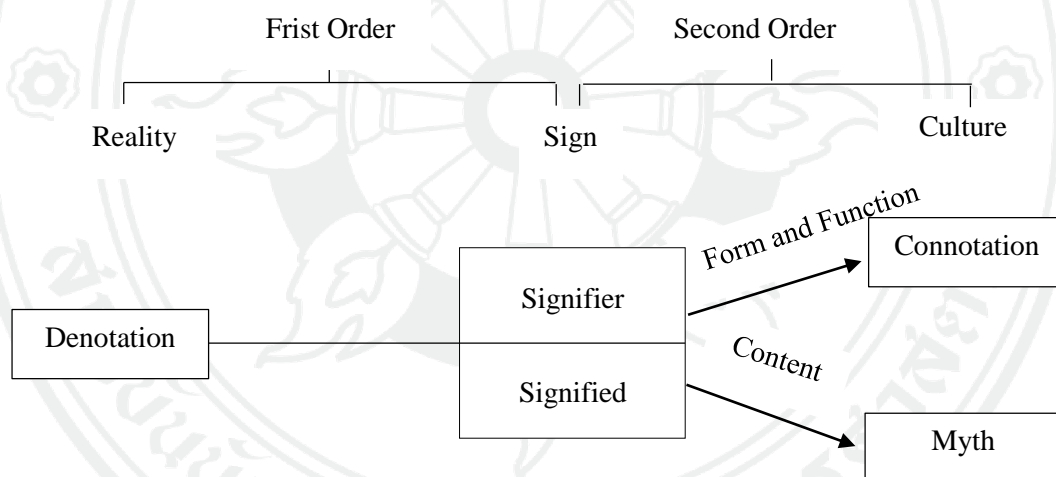


Figure 2.3 The operation of a myth

Source: Adapted from Pilun-Owad (2004)

In summary, a myth is a conceptualization of people in a society towards some issues. However, it does not mean that a myth is a deception or a propaganda that distorts the truth. A myth does not conceal anything. On the contrary, everything is just in front of one's own eyes openly. However, they are human beings who get so familiar with a myth that they ignore that it is constructed from a society and culture. For instance, the advertisement of a skin lotion constructs a myth that a beautiful woman has to be white. This is a myth of beauty. The idea comes from a capitalist

system that needs to make consumers feel dissatisfied with what they are or they have so they will search for a satisfaction from their product consumption. In reality, a society constructs a plenty of what is called, "a beautiful woman". However, in the terms of an advertisement, a myth is a selection of connotative meaning that "a beautiful woman is white", and presents it as the principal and fair meaning. Naïve consumers then will understand that a woman with only white skin is beautiful. Therefore, Barthes's concept of myth changes the perception of viewing consumers relying on a myth as domesticated and naïve to become message readers or those who break apart such social myth and construct their own myth in another way.

Nowadays, most advertisements will present a story with some hidden myths, such as awareness of social classes, ethnicity, sex oppression, etc. All of these often are in a form of a vague statement with a hidden bias. When an advertisement is presented, a producer presents myths for some kinds of purposes. For instance, from an article in the book, "Mythologies", written by Barthes (R. Barthes, 2015), Barthes analyzed an advertisement of between a soap and detergent of two brands. He found that "Persil" advertised with an emphasis on "whiteness" by comparing two pieces of clothes and showing that the one washed by Persil was whiter. Barthes analyzed that such claim comes from a narcissism or self-centered of people who addict to an external image. On the other hand, the advertisement of "Omo" demonstrated a process leading to the whiteness by drawing consumers to have a shared sensory experience with the substance, not to wait for its usefulness. Thus, a substance (detergent) signifies a value. Besides, "Omo" also raises two qualifications of the detergent: depth and bubbles by saying, "Omo can wash more deeply" The issue of "depth" was relatively new in that time. For bubbles, in spite of its excessive usefulness, to splash water to be endlessly multiplied bubbles with ease reminds consumers of some kinds of magic by using only a few drops of detergent. Therefore, "bubbles" might be a sign conveying a meaning of spirituality since people believe that spirits can spell out things from the air. All of these are the arts of coating the usage of detergent to be a delightful portrayal of the substance (detergent) or a created myth that to get a clean piece of cloth, a washing requires a large number of bubbles. Accordingly, consumers will use a great deal of detergent to get a plenty of bubbles so

detergent will be used up more quickly and consumers need to buy a new pack of detergent. This leads to an endless capitalism cycle.

Another myth witnessed in an advertisement was the analysis of Miller Beer Advertisement of Marshall Blonsky (Charoensin-o-larn, 2012). This advertisement emphasizes a myth of racism by showing a black man sitting at the end of a bridge extending to a river with his right hand touching his chin in an upright position so only a side of his face can be seen in the dark. His left hand is placed on his laps while holding a bottle of Miller beer ready to drink. The man casts an aimless look while far away; it shows the sun is falling down behind a building, with a description, "if you have time, we have been for you." Blonsky decoded this advertisement with two codes. The first code is a modeling system. A system of using a model of a black man with a fair figure, not too big or too small, sitting under a shining light to a yellow beer bottle and a falling sun behind a building. According to Barthes, the use of lighting and camera angles does not happen naturally but it is conveying some meanings. Another code is a system of how white people perceive black people's ways of life. It is a system of a meaning signification based on a stereotype of white people towards black people. To illustrate this, in the advertisement, it portrays "after work" time because the sun is falling down behind a building and a worker is sitting and dreaming about his desired life. It is an impossible dream and is expressed through the man's aimless look. Additionally, it portrays the black man's boredom with his work or he dislikes a hard work but prefers an easy one. Furthermore, it even conveys a meaning that black people cannot use their time after work in a useful way, except to drink and dream without any artistic taste. This advertisement thus emphasizes the stereotyped myth about black people based on a narrow-width perception of the white people and advertising media help to hammer into such myth more explicitly.

Advertisements in Thailand relating to sex diversity also contain a number of myths about the third sex, i.e. gays, queers, etc. As an example, the advertisement of Top-Charoen Glasses in 2006 shows a male public toilet as the first scene. Inside the toilet, a queer in a woman-like dress with a heavily made-up face and a gold hairpiece. It is a portrayal of exaggerating dresses with no beauty value. Later, there is a man walking into the toilet and this queer asks him in a seductive manner, "What

time is it?" The young man looks at him and replies as if he wanted to end the conversation, "no watch". Then, the queer gets his watch and asks, "Do you want it?" The man walks towards him as if he wanted to take the watch but on the contrary, he punches on the queer's face so hard that the queer's hairpiece drops out. Suddenly, a narrator's voice raises up, "No, you don't want it because today Top-Charoen will give you a free watch if you buy our glasses.

From the above advertisement, sexual myths are inserted and bring about a sexual bias that gays, Tootsie, or queers are jokers and worth no value. The young man's tone of voice expresses an anger or a discontentment when being asked by a third-sex person. Physical violence against the third gender also indicates his contempt and showing no respect for a sex diversity. Although the strategy of this advertising is for an amusement, the third-gender people do not feel in the same way. Therefore, Bangkok Rainbow Gays came out to protest against this product and claim not to use this product any longer. This unnatural but intended advertisement about the third sex passes through a thinking process and aims to make the concealed message look natural. The culture of creating a myth in a form of natural or normal look highlights the significance of the absence or the hidden meaning and what is absent enables what is present to exist. Therefore, Barthes gives an importance to "the Empty Signified" since the meaning caused by the difference system obstructs us to fulfill its complete meaning. (Roland Barthes, 1967) Accordingly, Barthes's sign system is doubtful because one signified can become a signifier that induces another signified endlessly.

2.1.5 Meaning Construction through Advertising

Wernick (1991) explains the usage of signs in constructing meanings through an advertising channel in his book, "Promotional Culture". He explains that the work of advertising is to provide and disseminate information about a target product and to attract people through the meaning construction. Finally, advertising can change a product to be a cultural symbol. Therefore, advertising is an ideological matter and is a channel that transforms receivers to be consumers by inserting some psychological and cultural appeals into the target products. Besides, advertising uses symbolic

meanings filled with mythological value. Wernick explains the meaning construction of a production in advertising as follow:

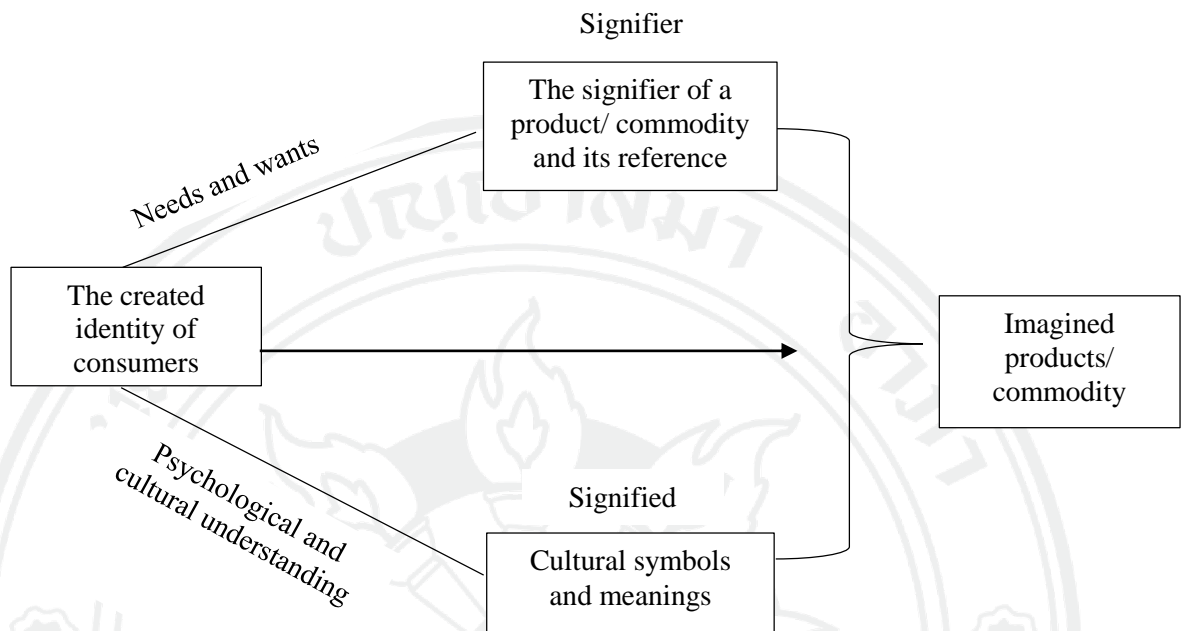


Figure 2.4 The meaning signification of a product or commodity in advertising

Source: Andrew Wernick (1991, cited in Natwipa Sinsuwan, 2010)

From the Figure 2.4, it shows that a symbolized product or commodity is an integration between “a product or a commodity” and “signs”, and “needs” and “wants” of consumers targeted from advertising. Such fundamental relationships between “consumers” and “advertising” are three folds or in three forms: (Sinsuwan, 2010).

- 1) The relationship between “a product or a commodity” and the constructed “signified”.
- 2) The relationship between the identity of consumers and product/ commodity that is presented as something consumers need or want.
- 3) The relationship between the identity of consumers and their frames of reference” to which the products refer.

However, to distinguish between “facts” and “signs” signified by advertising is difficult. This is because each kind of product or commodity is very complex in the

process of signifying any meaning. A product has not been signified to have any property since the starting point from the manufacturing process but is signified through an advertising media to highlight some properties, i.e. the advertisement of Mistine eyebrow pencils expresses some properties through its slogan, "to have thick eyebrows like a man". Therefore, advertising is a part of a signification process. Besides, advertising also draws a consumption product to tie with a specific culture and make the consumers feel that both are the same thing. Consumers will receive advertising messages and take the meaning perceived in a culture into the product, which fuses cultural attribute into the product. Therefore, the process of transmitting cultural meaning into the products becomes successful. Hence, advertising is a communication through mass media that enables the process of creating an imagined product to reach consumers widely. (Wernick, 1991).

Although Wernick will give high importance to the meaning created by a message producer or by advertising, Williamson (1978, as cited in Sinsuwan, 2010) pays more attention to the meaning construction of the receivers or the meanings interpreted by receivers. This concept is in accord with the concept of scholars in the school of cultural studies, i.e. Stuart Hall, who believe that new meanings from receivers' interpretation may not necessarily be the same as those encoded by senders.

As for the products prior to an advertising process, the School of Political Economics classifies the products into two types: 1) Material product, i.e. concrete products in the form of general consumption such as soaps, toothpaste, shampoo, etc., and 2) Mental or Culture Product, i.e. information, thinking pattern, entertainment, ideology, communication, etc. (Kaewthep & Hinwiman, 2010). Both types of products have commonalities and differences. Their commonality is that they are products for a purchase and one cannot possess them without paying. They are produced to serve potential buyers only. Their difference is that a mental or culture product focuses on spiritual or psychological effect, including emotions and feelings but for culture products, they do not emphasize emotional selling but only an effect on consumers' more complex consciousness and ideology. For instance, sports industry does not highlight only an entertainment but also a sphere of cultivating some ideologies towards a competition under a capitalism system simultaneously.

2.1.6 The Usage of Codes in Advertising Media

Advertising messages can be seen in every media: posters, billboards, banners, television, radio, online, etc. Advertising is a design of a meaning construction process that influences consumers' attitude and lifestyle. Thus, strategies of advertising creation play a very important role.

2.1.6.1 Components of advertising codes. In order to persuade consumers most effectively by an advertising message, the message comprises verbal language codes, nonverbal language codes, and technical-practical codes, as follows:

1) Verbal Language Code. It is a symbol or sign used to convey a person's idea, attitude, or feeling or it is a word used in a certain language. Words used to create some meanings can be oral words or utterance of talking voices and written words or characters. In advertising, it contains the following:

(1) Brand Name. In general, brand names often indicates something else besides the nature or property of products. Rather, a brand name is a kind of meaning construction for a product through its connotative meaning. Practically, a name of a product is constructed with a denotative meaning to remind consumers of a product they want to purchase. However, for the hidden or connotative meaning through a brand name conveys further meanings. For instance, the credit card, "KTC I AM" of Krungthai Bank or KTC) has a denotative or direct meaning for consumers to understand that it is a credit card. On the other hand, its connotative meaning is to communicate that this credit card aims to gay consumers. The brand name, "KTC I AM" communicates that when gays perceive the name, they can interpret the meaning of "I AM". It is a proud self-acceptance of being a gay

(2) Slogan. A slogan is a short conceptualized statement of a product. It is a message, about the attributes or properties of a product or service, which is outstanding, persuasive, and memorable. There are a number of slogans, i.e. slogans with a sales purpose, slogans with product property, slogans with an emphasis on target consumers' personality, and slogans for comparing with other products.

(3) Copy. A copy is the content of advertising that can be descriptive, narrative, rational, or informative statements. The advertising content is divided into two parts: positioning and brand image. Positioning indicates who the

target consumers of the products and service while a brand image reflects how the product or service is positioned. As an example, an advertisement, “Change Destiny” of SK II presents a positive story of Khun Sha from a Page of a Queer that promotes the brand image of SK II in accepting sex diversity and equality to be more positive.

(4) Audio Component. Audio components are important parts of an advertisement, such as soundtrack, which is very important in an advertisement. However, there might be no soundtrack for some advertisements depending on nature of products, consumers’ personality and characteristics. A soundtrack helps to add liveliness and stimulate an interest, including arousing an emotion and inducing consumers’ deference very well. In addition, a soundtrack enhances a product’s uniqueness and distinctiveness. It connects songs and a product to make consumers memorize the product brand better. Another audio component is a speech or narration of an actor. A speech or narration relies on the content of the advertisement as mentioned in component C. Danesi (2002) states that the usage of an audio component in an advertisement helps consumers to memorize and recall some corners of the story presented in an advertisement. Besides, the usage of music "genres" emphasizes consumers' lifestyle, i.e. the use of Jazz Music or Classical Music is good at transmitting a sense of superiority or nobility. Audio components can give a feeling of enchantment or any proper feeling. Music may be used in some advertisements as the main component to draw an attention, to make a difference, to communicate main points of sales, to create an image, to determine the positioning of a product, and to add an emotion, including inducing consumers to accept a copy of an advertisement more easily. The other audio component that plays an important role in television advertising is a "jingle". A jingle means a song used to attract consumers towards a product or service. A jingle is easy to memorize while stimulating an effective recall of a product. Therefore, in some advertisements, a jingle is added to communicate about the products and a jingle may appear in the last part of the copy.

2) Nonverbal Language Code. A nonverbal language code is a symbol or a sign used to convey or replace some meanings without words. This essential part makes an advertisement more interesting. Normally, it conveys more profound meanings than using only verbal language codes. Nonverbal language codes

can be visual images or symbols, i.e. movement, illustration, colors, lighting, etc., that represent a meaning of something, as following:

(1) Presenter The selection of a presenter is a vital and punctilious step in advertising. A presenter must possess the characteristics and personality in congruence with the characteristics of a product. Besides, a presenter has to be credible and attractive in the eyes of the consumers. Communication skills are highly needed for a presenter who can convey the property and usefulness of the products credibly. He or she must own a good image. A negative image of a presenter affects an image of a product as well. Accordingly, in many advertisements, the usage of well-known presenters or celebrities, i.e. stars, athletes, the third-sex, etc., are quite common advertising strategies.

(2) Visual/Video. Visual components in an advertisement is a motion picture. In general, this core component can draw an attention and communicate main ideas, messages, and image to the target groups clearly. For a successful advertising, all visual components that can be seen need to work in harmony: a product, a presenter, sequences of actions, a demonstration, etc., including designed characters appearing in an advertisement and concerned factors, i.e. light, color, graphic, symbols, etc. (Belch & Belch, 2004). Pictures or illustrations used in an advertisement are divided into three kinds: Illustration of a story's climate. It is often used as an opening of the advertisement to lead consumers to the main concept or theme of the story or at the end to conclude all messages for consumers' total interpretation. Thus, this kind of illustration is generally broad and presents what is going on in an advertisement. This helps consumers to be relaxed, feel comfortable, and occasionally feel fresh and enchanted. To illustrate this, an advertisement, "A condominium answers all questions of life", presents a climate of surrounding scenery that gives a relaxing and joyful feeling, etc. Illustration of presenters. Mostly, presenters in advertising often represent consumers so that consumers can imagine the usefulness of a product and make such advertisement more credible and closer to consumers. Illustration of a product. It is the visual component presented the most in almost all advertisements. The picture of a product is often displayed at the end as a memory or recent effect on consumers. Sometimes, it may be presented in the mid of an advertisement to describe the type and property of a product or what advertising

producers call, “a pack shot”. From fifteen gay-related advertisements studied in this research, all of them have a pack shot but with different sequences, depending on creative strategies.

(3) Color Colors in an advertisement help to create and stimulate feelings and emotions. The meaning of each color can be interpreted differently; for example, "red" for some people is interpreted as "ardent" or "fierce" while other people as "romantic" or "love", etc. Therefore, it is insufficient to interpret the meaning of a color from only the expressed color but also from other surroundings or other surrounded colors for a more precise analysis. For instance, "white" by itself means "purity". Thus, a bride's dress is white to indicate a purity. However, when analyzing the white color in the Chinese context, it becomes a color of sadness or a dress for mourning. Therefore, if one wants to convey "white" as "purity", one needs to compare with "black". (Chaitip, 2006). Accordingly, the meaning of a color can be interpreted in two sides: one from a life experience and the other from socio-cultural cultivation as follows:

Table 2.1 Examples of the meanings of colors

color	meanings
red	Strength, violence, energy, lust, eroticism, love, desire, romanticism, attraction
yellow	Sun, vigor, energy, joy, optimism, warmth, honor, loyalty, summer, uncertainty, betrayal
blue	Communication, emptiness, mystery, freedom, sadness, coldness, wisdom
pink	Warmth, energy, balance, friendliness, joy, creativity, youth
green	Fertility, growth, relaxation, coolness, peace, nature, hope, no experience.
violet	Charm, influence, luxury, arrogance, self-confidence, third-sex
orange	Brightness, friendship, healing, indifference, caring and cares

Table 2.1 (Continued)

color	meanings
white	Purity, peace, simplicity, innocence, safety, unity, perfectness
grey	Reticence, senility, modesty, boredom, professionalism, sadness
black	Horror, mystery, sadness, misfortune, strength, sexism, seriousness.
brown	Endurance, longevity, draught, strength, firmness
gold	Wealth, victory, men's power, keenness, awe, desire for power

Source: Promsuwan (2005)

Besides, in designing a journal relating to sexual diversity, i.e. More Than Man of M Plus+ in the early age, three main tones of colors were emphasized: **Warm Colors:** red, orange, yellow, violet, magenta, and chartreuse are the warm colors that make readers happy, lively, energetic, and cheerful. They stimulate new learnings. When exposed by warm colors, the presentation of content will become hot issues, controversial issues, or new issues for learning in a society. **Neutral Colors:** Black, white, gray, and brown are a group of colors that convey stability, cleanliness, consistency, simplicity, and powerfulness. The colors are for issues of assurance or of consistent fighting. **Cool Colors:** violet, blue, cerulean or blue-green, and green are cool colors that make readers feel comfortable and relaxed. They are related to relaxing issues, not serious ones. Mostly, they get along with the content for creating an understanding or encouragement.

3) Technical-Practical Code: Besides verbal and nonverbal language codes, another code that gives meanings in an advertisement is a technical-practical code, a code that is indispensable in an advertisement, such as camera angles, zooming, sequences of pictures, etc. (Hinwiman et al., 2014). To avoid redundant words, technical-practical codes are often used by replacing

words in describing things. Such code is thus very essential and the components of technical-practical codes are as follow:

(1) Shot Sizes. The size of a shot relates to an ability to see on a screen in order to convey a meaning to consumers. If an advertisement does not use a proper size of a shot with what it wants to communicate, such communication will fail. Shot sizes can be classified as shown in Table 2.2

Table 2.2 Codes of short sizes

Shot size	Compared with a human body	Abbreviation	meanings	Aspects of usage
Extreme long shot Cover shot Establishing shot	-	ELS	Broad image and climate	Images of an extreme long shot or a very distant or far image emphasize a distance between a viewer and the setting or scene. The audience performs as a distant observant. It is often used to open a story so that viewers can feel a general climate or to illustrate an overview of what happens in the scene without focusing on any specificity especially.

Table 2.2 (Continued)

Shot size	Compared		meanings	Aspects of usage
	with a human body	Abbreviation		
Longshot	Full shot	LS	Distant or full-body image	A long shot or far image illustrates a general climate or illustrate the relationship between individuals and their environment or surrounding people.
Medium-long shot	Knee shot	MLS	A fairly far image or from a head to knees	An image with a medium-long shot is often used to indicate an actor's characteristics.
Medium shot Mid shot	Waist shot	MS	A medium-shot image or from a head to hips	An image with a medium-shot is an appropriate distance between the audience and an actor. It will not be so far that viewers need to stare or get an uncomfortable feeling. This size is often seen in TV programs, especially in the interaction scene.

Table 2.2 (Continued)

Shot size	Compared		meanings	Aspects of usage
	with a human body	Abbreviation		
Medium close up	Bust shot	MCU	A fairly near image or from a head to Xiphoid process	A medium close-up image is a size that viewers can see consumers' facial expression more clearly than a medium shot one. It is often used for the scenes where a presenter converses with another presenter or a presenter is talking before the camera to show his or her facial expression or emotion.
Close-up	Face shot	CU	A near image or from a head to shoulders	A close-up image is the size of an image that one can see an organ or object to be presented, i.e. to see clearly a person's facial expression or a clear image of an object.

Table 2.2 (Continued)

Shot size	Compared		meanings	Aspects of usage
	with a human body	Abbreviation		
Extreme	-	ECU	A very near	An extreme close-up
Close-up		BCU	image or an	image shows only a
Big	Close		image	part of an organ or
up			showing only	body or an object that
			a face or a	focuses on some
			particular	particular points.
			organ or part	When this size of shot
			of the body	is overused, it will
				make viewers feel
				uncomfortable.

Source: Hinwiman et al. (2014)

The shot size that is mostly used in TV advertising is a medium shot (MS) and close-up shot (CU), the size that viewers can see things clearly and can be more attracted. Advertising media producers thus should select an appropriate size with the timing of a presentation in order to convey the desired meaning perfectly and in accordance with an advertising objective.

- Camera Movements is another technique used to communicate some meanings in an advertisement and to call an attention, including to create a special impression on what is being presented. Techniques of camera movements are as follow:

Table 2.3 Codes of camera movements

Camera movement	Meaning	Aspects of usage
Pan	to photograph or televise while rotating or closing a camera on its axis from left to right or right to left	It is used in order to see a surrounding atmosphere from one side to the other side, i.e. to see the surrounding scenery of a public park. In case of a slow pan, it gives a feeling of relaxation and slow motion while a quick pan.
Tilt	To move a camera lens into a sloping position or to press it down in a vertical position without moving the entire camera	It is used to describe the height, depth, or slope, or to see things like eyes in a sloping or sliding down position, i.e. tilt up is for seeing the height of a condominium. A tilt down on gays represents a contempt look.
Pedestal	To raise up or move down the entire camera vertically. However, the distance for moving up or down is not so far or not so many feet since it is a movement along the height of Pedestal stand.	It is used to adjust a viewing position of viewers to be at the same level as a presenter or actor, i.e. when a presenter changes his position from standing to sitting, a camera will tilt down or adjust the eye level to a sitting position too.
Crane/Boom	To move an entire camera up and down vertically but with a longer distance than Pedestal.	It is used for opening or closing the story in combination with a long shot from a high angle, i.e. used in a concert to illustrate a beautiful, fascinating, or gigantic image with a deep dimension. This kind of movement is not boring since shot size is changing all the time so it can hold viewers' attention well.

Table 2.3 (Continued)

Camera movement	Meaning	Aspects of usage
Dolly	To move a camera back and forth from an object horizontally	Dolly in is used for creating excitement or for increasing the degree of an attraction, a confrontation, and a follow. Dolly out is used for a feeling of relief, devaluation, departure, etc.
Track/Truck	To move an entire camera to left or right horizontally by keeping the shot object at a parallel line with equal, slower, or faster speed. This kind of movement requires a wheeled-equipment assistance.	It is used to follow something in a continual moving with the speed in which the distance of a camera and shot object is equal, i.e. in the scene where a police officer is chasing a robber at another side of the road so the camera will track in parallel to the speed of the robber's running.
Arc	To move a camera around a shot object.	It is used to describe a surrounding atmosphere around a certain place continually or in the scene, which reveals an actor's personality and expression clearly and for a more rounded view.
Cant	To turn a camera to sideways, which causes an inclined image and draws more power and excitement.	It is used to arouse an emotional or to portray an irregularity, i.e. in the scene of an absurd person, a teen's curious view, or a music video shooting, etc.

Source: Hinwiman et al. (2014)

- Camera Angles. This technique helps to create a feeling of reception, i.e. viewing at an eye-level towards sensing an equality, viewing from a higher level towards sensing an inferiority, or from a lower level towards sensing a superiority, etc. Camera angles are classified according to the eye level as follow:

Table 2.4 Codes of Camera Angles

Camera angles	Meanings	Aspects of usage
Normal-angle shot or eye-level shot	It is a normal eye-level view. The position of a camera is at the same level as the eye level.	It is used to portray a normal feeling, an equality, and friendliness.
High-angle shot	It is a top-down viewing. The position of a camera is higher than the shot object.	It is used to convey a feeling of weakness, vulnerability, sadness, despair, disappointment, worthlessness, loss, and inferiority. However, in some cases, it also can convey that landscape is huge as well.
Low-angle shot	It is a bottom-up view. The position of a camera is lower than the shot object.	It portrays a feeling of strength, mighty, luxury, wealth, power, victory, and superiority or nobility.
Bird's-eye view	It is similar to a downward view of a bird at 90 or almost 90 degrees. The position of a camera is vertical at 90 degrees or almost 90 degrees with the shot object, which enables to see the surface of such object. .	It is used for shooting from a high building to a lower position to see a line or some geometrical shapes so as to highlight a different or novel perspective. Besides, it is for watching some behaviors or body movements from above. It can also illustrate a presenter's facial expression, emotion, and thought clearly. Mostly, it is used in the scenes that express an oppressive feeling.

Table 2.4 (Continued)

Camera angles	Meanings	Aspects of usage
Aerial viewpoint	It is a downward view by installing a camera on a plan or any flying equipment. This provides a high-angle broad image for showing a scenery from a plane.	It portrays a meaning of freedom and an open worldview.
Worm's-eye view	It is opposite to a bird's eye view. The position of a camera is on the floor for an upward view.	If used to represent an animal's eyes, it conveys a meaning that this world is so gigantic and terrifying. If used to represent a lying man's eye level with an aside view, it portrays a feeling of higher intimacy with the world and animals. However, if viewing upward, it gives a feeling that a human being is just a small creature like other kinds of animals in this vast universe.

Source: Hinwiman et al. (2014)

As mentioned in the Theory of Semiology that there can be more than one meaning in one same sign or a sign can be interpreted diversely. Therefore, in advertising, an integration of technical-practical codes to construct a meaning is used. Components need to be connected properly and in a way that can create an attraction to an advertisement. Besides, what is important in a component arrangement for creating some meanings is that the sequences of what is needed to be conveyed must be arranged properly by highlighting the principal or main meaning. On the other hand, a subordinate or supplementary meaning should be in a peripheral position or in the background of a scene to avoid overlapping meanings or contradictory meaning. Moreover, technical-practical codes can be used with the

television language to convey meanings. The following are additional codes from the aforementioned technical-practical codes:

Table 2.5 Meanings of the additional codes of camera angles

TV language	Meanings commonly used
Aerial view	An opening of a story, an introduction of a place, a gigantic size
Close up	Feeling-oriented
High-angle view	Loneliness, inferiority, devaluation, dead end
Low-angle view	Mighty, power
Track	Chase, follow
Pan	An around glance, a connection between things
Zoom-in	Looking into
Zoom-out	Relaxation, departure, revealing towards a fascination
An eye view	Be a part of what is happening, glance around
Soft light	Warmth, tenderness, comfort, disclosure
Hard light	Mystery, non-refinement
Dim-blue tone light	Mystery, night, instability, threat
Sweet melody	Impressive love
Sound distant	distance
Low-bass voice	Firmness or fortitude, masculinity, terror
Chicken-coo sound	Morning, rural or upcountry area
Traffic sound effect	City life, chaos, traffic jam
Silence	Peace, harming condition
Silk	Nobility, wealth, madam, Thai
Heavy make-up and a seductive dress	Jealous character, sexy character
Black	Immortality, sadness, bad luck or misfortune
White	Purity, religious
Crystal lamp	Wealth, new millionaire, old noble

Source: Hinwiman et al. (2014)

Besides, technical-practical codes are also used in combination with the concept of Signifier and Signified to create different meanings as follow:

Table 2.6 The application of the concept of Signifier and Signified with technical-practical codes

Signifier	Definition	Signified
Close-up	A shot of only a face	intimacy
Medium shot	A shot of almost all the body	Interpersonal relations
Longshot	A shot of a scene with several characters	Context, the area where an event takes place
Full shot	A shot of a full body	Social relations
Pan down	A pressing- down scanning shot	Power, higher status
Pan up	A sloping-up scanning shot	Inferiority, less powerful
Zoom in	An approaching shot	Distinctiveness, attention
Fade in	A gradual lighting up the image	The beginning
Fade out	A gradual fading image	The end
Cut	A move from one image to another image	Two events happen simultaneously, excitement
Wipe	A gradual wiping out from the screen	The end

Source: Keawthep (2013)

2.1.7 Symbolic Consumption

The study of signs in the advertisements leads the researcher to further studying on the symbolic consumption approach since advertisement is a tool that stimulates an endless consumption. On the other hand, a consumption is a meaning construction through products. Scholars of social consumption criticism, such as Jean Baudrillard, (Keawthep & Hinwiman, 2010) perceive that capitalism creates some signs in order to reorganize the relationship between human beings by using some mechanism of capitalism. Besides, they explain a change in the definition of "a consumption" from

using moral to symbolic criteria. Earlier, the analysis of social consumption of Marxism used a moral rationale to explain the causes of consumption, i.e. Lust led people to consume or to accumulate excessive value. However, for Baudrillard, moral criteria or assumptions do not help to understand a consumption culture genuinely. Instead, symbolic criteria can better explain why human needs are created. The answer of Baudrillard is that the consumption of people in this era is not only a usage or a consumption of concrete materials, but they also use and consume the signs or symbols embedded in those materials or objects. Since signs or symbols are abstract, when we consume signs, we can consume products endlessly. Therefore, the dimension of a consumption is an important principle. Baudrillard classifies types of products into two main types: general products and cultural products. While general products are consumed because of the utility goal, cultural products are products yielding spiritual impact. Consequently, selling strategies focus on a feeling arousal while an advertisement also creates and emphasizes this appeal. Moreover, Baudrillard emphasizes that cultural products are the products that sell a sign or a symbol mainly. Namely, it is a product that aims to sell values, meanings, tastes, lifestyles, etc.

Nevertheless, a symbolic consumption by the explanation of Baudrillard starts from the process of encoding a message with a variety of signs/symbols, i.e. the creation of packaging, pricing, advertising, etc., and transmitting the consequences of symbolic creation to the products (i.e. status or prestige) to the product consumers as following: (Kaewthep & Hinwiman, 2010)

2.1.7.1 Due to the logic of symbolic value, people will not consume only concrete objects, but they also consume attached symbols to indicate their taste and socio-economic status.

2.1.7.2 The consumption of symbolic values leads to an endless consumption. This is because such consumption is not aroused by the consumers' actual needs, but is aroused by the attached values to make them different from others.

2.1.7.3 Symbols determine patterns of human consumption, i.e. old clothes, despite its usability, are not needed because they are out of fashion. Another example is an emerging culture of using a credit card instead of cash to make a

cardholder look more prestige. The power of such symbols in this sense enables capitalism to solve an oversupply problem.

2.1.7.4 Symbols are a mechanism used by capitalism of the new era for adding values of their products. Actual objects or products (or a referent as a semiology term) may not have their own values, but the values come from created symbols.

The concept of symbolic consumption of Jean Baudrillard accords with the concept of Henri Lefebvre (Saiyod, 2005), a French sociologist, who says that a capital society during the twentieth century occurred because of a consumption ideology. Specifically, human beings have a satisfaction needs from their consumption. This definition leads to an assumption that human happiness does not end with the satisfaction of the product consumption and the media used to disseminate this consumption ideology are mass media and advertising. Lefebvre uses the concept of semiology to explain the operation of capitalism in the new era and raises up the issues of "a smile" in an advertisement. He explains that "a smile" symbol in an advertisement means a happiness of the possession or consumption of the products of a said company. Therefore, symbols play a role in regulating a human life: they need a car, newly branded clothes, so and so endlessly. In addition, from a study of Duangwises (2010), it is found that the growth of a consumption culture gives a social space for Thai gays. For instance, an establishment of pubs, saunas, or gay bars, responds to a consumption culture of the gays, especially middle-class working gays with a fair income.

The subjects of this study are middle-class consumers. Barthes believes that myths are often hidden in the myths of the middle-class. Especially, the reason Barthes believes so is that the time of Barthes's conducting his research was the period in which France was obsessed by middle-class capitalists. However, they created a myth to distort the fact so that people would not witness such obsession. Saiyod (2005) studied, "Symbolic Analysis of Alcoholic Beverage Advertisement" and found the operation of middle-class myths as well. She found that middle-class myths were presented through sub-components of Beer Advertisements, i.e. the characters' apparel, personality, taste, manner, or activities. All of these components belonged to middle-class people living in a city and capitalism enhanced the rapid

growth of this class of people until they dominate the mainstream culture through advertising. The finding of Saiyod on the predominance of the middle-class people living in a city accords with the concept of a scholar named Simmel (Kaewthep & Hinwiman, 2010). Simmel studied the space, especially social space in a capital or big cities, which are newly established area. Thus, the patterns of social activities and interactions are novel and unfamiliar. For instance, big cities are full of strangers or incidents that change so rapidly that people are confused. Likewise, the patterns of consumption of the cosmopolitans are also new. From a semiology approach, Simmel perceives that a city is an area full of symbols and new codes of communication happen all the time. To illustrate this, all department stores need to renovate their windows regularly, or people follow and wear clothes according to a coming fashion. A large number of advertising billboards and printed advertisements along a pavement or an expressway need to be distinctive and outstanding while lifestyles of urban people are dynamic and change all the time so new symbols and codes are created every day, etc. Amidst such novelty of symbols, one thing that urban people have in common is their individuality. Accordingly, individuals try to construct a meaning of self-identity to reply to the question of who they are and how they are alike or different from other people. The issue of the meaning of self-identity is harmonious with the explanation of Giddens (1992) on the genders in a modern society. Giddens explains that "gender" is a matter of an identity that responds to a modern social consumption and sexual products respond to lifestyles of individuals. Individuals use such sexual products to define their sexual identity. Giddens believes that products in a consumption culture replace natural sexual identity (a biological sex or innate sex). Products come to change individuals' sex and sexual desire. This change leads to sexual freedom and equality of males and females.

Besides sexual freedom, sexual inequality in a symbolic consumption in capitalism is also found. Fraser (1997) (Duangwises, 2017) explains that inequality found in the capitalism consumption culture is divided into two dimensions: economic inequality (or capital) and cultural inequality (or classes).

Economic inequality is a consequence of unfair resources distribution and arrangement. Specifically, resources are bunched together in the hand of capitalists and high-class people whereas cultural inequality is caused by a political separation

and blockage, which causes some groups of people (such as gays, lesbians, or minority/ ethnic groups) to be overlooked, to be blocked, and to become marginal in a society. Fraser views that gays are not disadvantageous in terms of economic inequality but in cultural inequality.

Veblen (1899) (Duangwiset, 2017) explained the differences between classes according to consumption culture. The capitalist class earns high income so they can consume expensive products. The middle and lower classes are labor force in a production system with lower income so they consume relatively cheap products. However, in an industrial society, knowledgeable workers, i.e. engineers, doctors, scientists, etc. play a significant role; thus, they are powerful and earn a high income. What supports these groups to have higher status is their consumption patterns, i.e. consuming costly products to create an image of the rich, etc. Therefore, products that can affect an image are an important thing for a consumerism. Knowledgeable workers will consume products because of their image, not of their necessities. Regarding this, an understanding of a consumerism means a study of the relationship between classes and patterns of their consumption products equipped with brands. A process in turning products to be valuable since they enhance a better image is thus a big puzzle to study in the field of consumption culture. Veblen calls a kind of consumption that gives high value to an image of the products as, "an eye-catching" or "striking" consumption. In other words, knowledgeable workers with high income and free time want other people to see that they have a socio-cultural and economic power. Such costly-products consumption is like a public announcement that they are honorable, have a good taste, and high-class consumption. This makes others who want to consume expensive products but cannot do so feel jealous because they do not have enough money. An envy then becomes a social emotion caused by class differences in a society.

Although Barthes believes that created signs or symbols are the space filled with middle-class myths (or so-called, "Bourgeois Myth"), Baudrillard perceives differently. He explains that capitalism creates all those signs and symbols in order to re-organize relationships among individuals in a society by using a capitalism mechanism, i.e. advertising, etc. Such mechanism stimulates human needs through

the world of signs and meanings. For instance, an advertisement portrays an image of happiness by living in a luxurious condominium in the center of the city, etc.

Another factor that enables “middle-class” to be distinguished from other classes is “their consumption taste”. A modern society is a society of consumption. Taste is thus often defined as, “an approach of choosing to use products or objects for a consumption” according to the concept of Jean Baudrillard (Kaewthep & Hinwiman, 2010). Therefore, each class will have a different consumption taste. Still, every group of people, of every class and in every era, is under the structure of a taste control or Habitus that causes different tastes among various classes. Baudrillard also specifies that a social institution is a major mechanism that cultivates a belief that “A taste of the rich is superior to that of the poor”. Mass media institutions are also the next important mechanism in reinforcing such belief.

Due to this, the issue of sexual equality and economic equality relating to a consumption is complex. Some economic inequality can increase a sexual inequality, such as middle-class gays with high income may have higher economic power than low-class gays with low income. Regarding the relationship between a consumption culture and the sexuality of gays, Binnie (2004) views that a consumption culture is based on a discourse that emphasizes an opposition against homosexuals. This causes a contradiction between gays as potential consumers of a market and gays as a deviated group from heterosexual standards. Consequently, myths for explaining such contradiction occurs. For instance, myths in consumption culture, gays are potential consumers. Pink Economy Theory explains that this group is a gay who earns a high income, has high purchase power, and prefers consumerism. Because of this assumption, the concerned business tries to create marketing strategies to draw these gays to consume their products. Thus, the target group marketing people need are middle-class gays with good income only. Accordingly, the class difference between gays is overlooked.

The issues of middle-class and consumption taste, together with the study of sexual myths through advertising media, help the researcher to understand the phenomena of the meaning construction and signs appearing in advertising much better. Especially, a large number of advertisements now display an image of

luxurious taste through lifestyles of gays as advertising presenters to draw gay consumers' desire and needs towards the advertised products.

2.2 The Concept of a Sender's Encoding and a Receiver Decoding

The concept of a sender's encoding and a receiver's decoding was proposed by Stuart Hall (Procter, 2004), one of the founders of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies or CCCS of Birmingham University. Hall developed a number of academic work and concepts, i.e. the Concept of Representation, Signification, Identity, and Cultural Differences, including the Concept of Encoding and Decoding, which gives an importance to a communication process by answering the questions raised in the analysis of Saussure. Namely, the early semiologists questioned how a meaning was constructed, diffused, and consumed.

Hall rejected the Transmission Model of an American communication theory or the theory known as S-M-C-R Model (Figure 2.5) that defines a communication is a process in which a sender constructs a meaning into a message and sends that meaning via a channel to a receiver who interprets the transmitted meaning. Accordingly, the model seems to imply that a sender will transmit a set of fixed meanings to a receiver and the receiver will interpret with the same meaning that the sender transmits. In another word, it means that a sender has a full power in sending a message with the intended meaning and a receiver is just a passive receiver and has no power in interpreting it with other meanings. The S-M-C-R model is thus a linear model in which a sender has a power over a receiver.



Figure 2.5 Transmission Model of an American Communication Theory

Hall has a different view. Most of the studies of Hall and CCCS perceive a society is pluralistic (Procter, 2004). In each society, there are people with different language, race, religion, sex, and skin color, etc. Therefore, a message delivered to a receiver contains diverse meanings since receivers have a different background.

Accordingly, Hall's interest goes beyond the question of how a receiver discovers a meaning. Instead, the communication model of Hall tries to explain the following:

- 1) Meanings are not restricted or monopolized by a sender only.
- 2) The content of a message is not as transparent as a glass through which one can see, but it is complex and can be interpreted differently.
- 3) Receivers are not passive audience towards the meanings transmitted by a sender. On the contrary, they have a right to interpret the meaning from their own understanding. Therefore, the meaning sent by a sender may be different from that received by a receiver.

However, in order to clarify the above statements, Hall defines the meaning of a communication based on Marxism theories that “Communication means the process of producing, circulating, consuming, and reproducing of culture and meanings” Thus, the step of a production is the step of encoding. Consumption is the step of decoding. Besides, a sender in the transmission model is transformed to be “a producer” and a receiver “a consumer” (Figure 2.6). In addition, consumers are not always passive audience but can be the ones who induce the process of reproduction as well, as Hall said, “ Consumption determines production just as production determines consumption” (Procter, 2004)

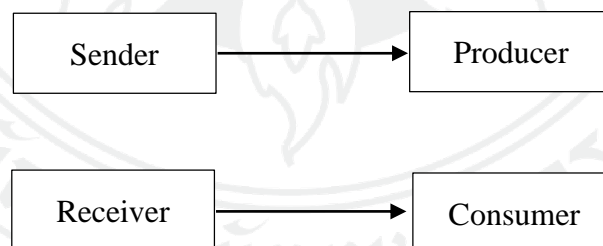


Figure 2.6 The transformation of names by Hall

Consequently, Hall proposes a communication model containing three steps of meaning distribution, and each phase has its own characteristics as follows: (Keawthep, 2013)

- 1) Media-Production Preparation Step: A media producer selects some raw materials used to produce a medium for a presentation. Not all raw materials will be presented. The selection is determined by a producer's ideology, i.e. the production of

an advertisement for mocking gays, queers, or the third sex in Thailand about sexuality can make the advertisement funny. Therefore, the advertising producer will select the mockery and sexuality as the main theme without presenting other dimensions of gays, etc. The selection process of raw materials has several factors involved, such as understanding of producers' world, knowledge in production, production techniques, and embedded professional ideology, etc. For advertising, it is also essential to concern about the turnover and business profits gained from product sales. All these factors operate under the concept of "Definition of a Situation" of phenomenology, a guideline for a producer in considering how he or she should encode such raw materials". Thus, this phase is the step of encoding according to Hall's theory.

2) Production Step: This step is to use selected raw materials with various meanings or polysemy to be transformed into various media, i.e. TV, radio, advertising, print, etc. However, not all needed meanings can be contained in this step. Therefore, a meaning must be produced in one form, such as for an advertising production, it is necessary to produce a message with maximal ability in persuasion, i.e. by presenting a product's property, drawing an attention, using an attraction appeal, etc.

3) Decoding Step: After the first two steps, the produced and presented raw materials are no longer actual or natural raw materials anymore. Therefore, decoding step, according to Hall, is free from the first two steps completely since the content and its meaning has not yet been transmitted while in fact its meaning has been produced all the time. In this step, receivers can react to the received message in two ways. (1) A receiver can decode the message so the receiver can consume and interpret the meaning of such message. However, if the interpreted meaning is not workable or produces no desired effect, the meaning received is then meaningless for a receiver, i.e. an over exaggerating advertisements, etc. (2) A receiver cannot decode the meaning because the message contains no created meanings. The receiver thus may expose to such message but no consumption occurs.

From the aforementioned steps, it illustrates Hall's standpoint that meanings are constructed twice: the first time by a producer and the second time by a receiver. Thus, by this sense, a communication process gives equal importance to both senders

and receivers as “meaning generators”, and consequently transforms the transmission model to be the model of encoding and decoding. (Figure 2.7)

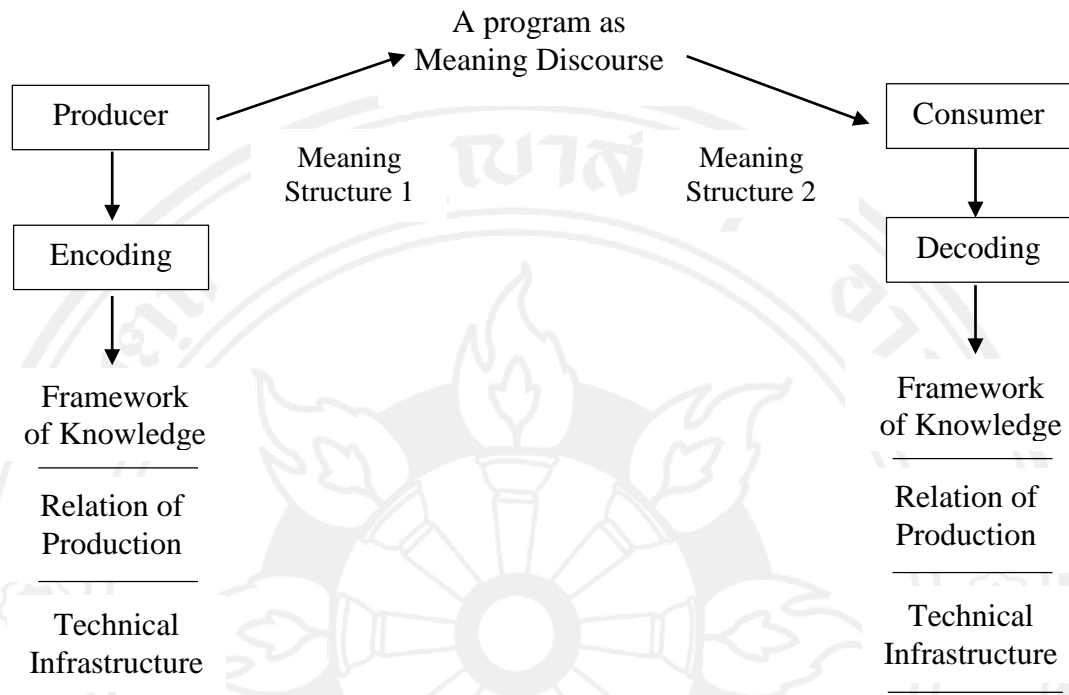


Figure 2.7 The Model of Encoding and Decoding of Hall

Source: Adapted from Keawthep (2013)

Besides, an equal status of senders and receivers in each step of a meaning construction process, in each step there are also different codes used in communication as follow: (Procter, 2004; Kaewthep, 2013)

2.2.1 Codes in Production or Encoding Step

It is a cooperation among several codes: dominant codes, professional codes, and technical-practical codes. An example of dominant codes and professional codes is that an advertising must focus on selling products or can make profits from the advertising, etc. An example of technical-practical code is camera angles, different distance, or shot sizes, etc. However, no matter how many types of codes a message contains, all sub-codes must be under a dominant code. In other words, the message cannot violate or deviate from dominant code or dominant culture. As an example,

almost every advertisement of AEX, a deodorant spray, conveys a meaning of an adultery, sexy girls, or almost naked women, which violates Thai dominant value. Subsequently, such advertisement was banned, etc.

2.2.2 Codes in Decoding Step

Since the content of a message is polysemy, it enables diverse interpretation. Especially, as a receiver is free in interpreting a received message, coding of the received message can be in three kinds:

2.2.2.1 Preferred Code: Decoding with the same meaning as being encoded by a sender, i.e. a producer wants to present a mockery of gays via advertising media and consumers perceive the exposed message as funny.

2.2.2.2 Negotiated Code: Decoding with a combination between Preferred Code and newly created code of a consumer, i.e. the portrayal of a mockery of gays via advertising media may be perceived as somewhat funny but a receiver also perceives other dimensions of gays from the media as well.

2.2.2.3 Oppositional Code: Decoding with an opposing or contradictory standpoint from a sender's encoded meaning. In this kind of decoding, a consumer knows what the Preferred Code is, but it is rejected or disagreed, i.e., a receiver does not perceive a received message showing a mockery of gays as funny.

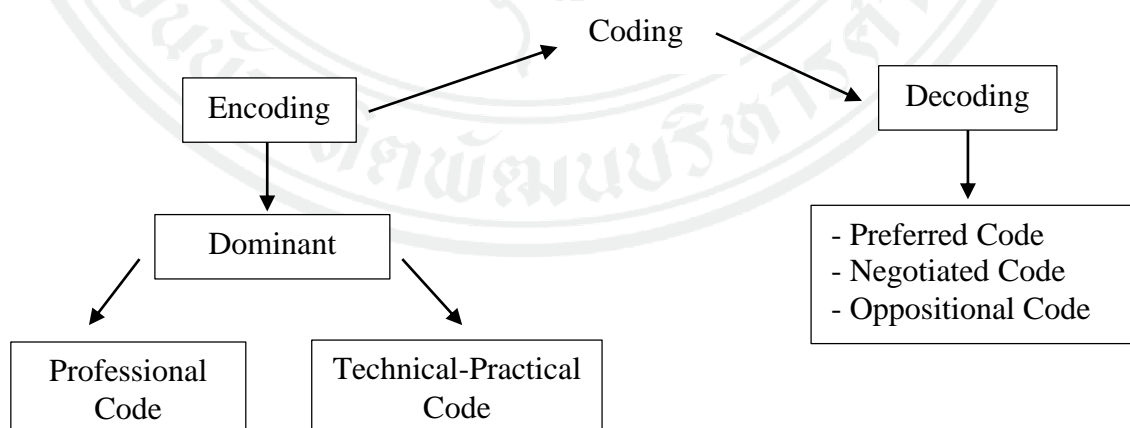


Figure 2.8 Communication Codes in the Concept of Encoding and Decoding of Hall

The researcher modifies the concept of encoding and decoding of Hall for this study because in an advertising production process, many codes are put into an advertisement to draw an attention. On the other hand, consumers are independent in decoding such codes, which may be interpreted or decoded with different codes from a sender's codes. Thus, the model of encoding and decoding is applied to study an advertisement whose content relates with gays, including studying diverse interpretations of heterosexual and gay consumers.

2.3 Concepts on Advertising Media.

“Advertising” is defined by a number of scholars. Shimp (2000) defines “advertising” as a form of mass communication or a direct communication to the consumers without personal media paid by those who want to transmit their message, either informative or persuasive, to their target consumers. Fill (1999) defines it as “a form of impersonal mass communication to persuade target consumers to have opinions or behaviors as planned.” Besides, Belch and Belch (2004) define it as “a form of structured communication without personal media to sell products, mostly being paid so as to provide information about products or service via diverse media to persuade consumers.”

In short, advertising means a form of persuasive communication for persuading consumers to pay attention to a product or service by paying for sending an information about products and service without using personal media in selling products.”

However, advertising is a part of capitalism used to stimulate product sales in an industrial era in which emphasizes selling products rather than producing products like a prior period before the industrial era. Scholars from political economics explain that in capitalism era, receivers or media audience are transformed to be product consumers. In the early period of capitalism, the quantity of products in the market is not sufficient so consumption process or the product selection must start with consumers’ needs or demand towards a product. Later, the quantity of products in the market is huge and there is a variety of product brands. Therefore, it is necessary to create the consumers’ needs first. In other words, products are produced first. Then, it

is followed by the creation of needs for the products. An important communication tool for creating such needs is advertising. The assumption of advertising is that products cannot sell themselves or when people do not have real needs towards a product, advertising strategies thus are for creating “pseudo-needs”. The illustration receivers perceive from advertising media is just a pseudo image or phenomena. (Boorstin, 1962,) (Kaewthep & Hinwiman, 2010), which is not a reality in a real life. It is just a pseudo imagination that is dramatized by an advertisement agent so much that it becomes too surreal, only for stimulating consumers’ needs towards a product. Message created by mass media is transformed to become a kind of product for sales in a mass market aimed mainly for gaining profits.

To help clarify how advertising supports a marketing system and capitalism, (Kaewthep & Hinwiman, 2010) summarized iron laws of capitalism as follow:

1) Maximal Profits This means that in an economic process of capitalism, every investment must look forward to gaining profits and the profits must always be the maximum. Therefore, once the process of media production steps into a capitalism, it means that the ultimate goal of the media is only profit-oriented. Although the concept of maximal profits is very obvious in capitalism during the nineteenth century or during the period in which Marx questioned about economic production process under capitalism, in the twentieth century, even capitalists themselves start to believe that the maximum-profit goal may not always be their ultimate goal. Many kinds of media business aim to increase their funds towards maximum profits in a short time but cannot continue their business because of an inability to circulate money timely with new investments. Accordingly, a great deal of media business nowadays starts to aim for proper profits but sustainable rather than maximal profits without sustainability.

2) Biggest Market Shares Possession. Based on the logic of capitalism that the last horse must be cut out of a race, product producers and service providers need to avoid being cut out of a market by expanding or competing for the biggest share in a market. Communication is thus used as a part of a marketing mechanism of capitalism. For example, if any product or brand is produced and faces many competitors in a market, advertising strategies will be used to attract consumers and create their loyalty for such products or brands.

3) Consistent Market Expansion. Since a market of products and service can reach a saturation point, capitalists need to expand their market consistently for their survival. For instance, a condominium business aims for heterosexual consumers but due to high competition in a market, it changes its target buyers to gay or MLM consumers, etc.

4) Continual Capital Increase. "Capital" differs from "wealth" in the way that wealth is a collection of accumulated monetary resources for keeping without moving. On the contrary, the goal of capital is an expansion in order to gain increased profits. This kind of capital increase covers media business as well. As an example, Dentsu, an advertising agency of Japan, merged with Young & Rubicam, an advertising agency of the U.S.A. to be a new company called, "DYR Co., Ltd.", etc. for a capital increase and subsequently increased profits.

From the aforementioned basic assumptions of capitalism, it illustrates that advertising helps to sell products and service consistently. Besides, it is a tool in creating consumers' needs. Capitalism thus changes human relations to involve with money and objects (products) by promoting human values through their product consumption. Advertising helps to create such desirable image and hence it needs to design effective strategies in attracting and persuading consumers.

2.3.1 Advertising Purpose in Drawing an Attention

Besides the construction of meanings by advertising components, advertising also has one main purpose of drawing an attention or a motivation of consumers. Belch and Belch (2004). The motivation appeals used in an advertisement comprises three parts as follow:

2.3.1.1 Rational Appeals. Rational appeals emphasize the use of facts, utility, or necessity of products or service. They can be products' property, the usefulness of products, or the necessity of using products. Advertising content thus emphasizes facts, learning, and logical appeals in persuasion. Advertising producers use rational appeal to persuade consumers that their product or service has distinguished property or some usefulness that responds to consumers' needs. Rational appeals used as a basic content in an advertisement are "comfort, easy to use, worthiness for an investment, etc.

2.3.1.2 Emotional Appeals. Emotional appeals involve consumers' needs, emotion, psychological aspects, etc. For some groups of consumers, emotional appeals are more effective than rational appeals or property of products. Advertising producers can use this kind of appeal in many ways, such as using humor, sex, etc., to arouse consumers' emotion and feeling and enhance their recall of advertisement.

Britt (1978) (Saiyod, 2005) classified emotional appeals into seven types:

- 1) Pride and Prestige Appeal: Emphasizing a pride in using a product or an acceptance or admire of others
- 2) Emulation Appeal: Emphasizing an imitation of a referred person, i.e., after use, the face will look younger like a presenter in the advertisement, etc.
- 3) Individuality Appeal: Emphasizing the uniqueness of an individual that can interest other people.
- 4) Conformity Appeal: Emphasizing to be a part of a society or a part of the same group of the product used.
- 5) Comfort Appeal: Stimulating consumers towards a comfort and relaxation after a use of a product
- 6) Pleasure Appeal: Stimulating consumers to feel happy when using a product, i.e. a slogan, "where is happiness?" of MK Suki reflects a happiness and good health from having good food.
- 7) Creativeness Appeal: Expressing an independence, artistic ability, a new invention, self-monitoring, etc.

2.3.1.3 The combination of rational and emotional appeals. Most buying decisions are based on rational and emotional appeals; therefore, both appeals are needed to ensure an effective advertisement. The study of McCann (Belch & Belch, 2004) found that consumers would develop their relations with product brands through three level of variables. First, it is the usefulness of the products, which is a basic appeal. Mostly, a learning process uses rational appeals, which can measure their ability in persuading consumers through the provided information. The next level, consumers will determine product brands' personality, i.e. helping to increase a confidence, focusing on adventures, improving individuals' personality, etc.

Normally, consumers will judge products' personality from eminent features highlighted in an advertisement. The last level is feeling or emotion-related to a product. Consumers will have an emotional engagement with product brands of each kind, which enhances a positive psychological effect. McCann believes that a combined-appeals advertisement can create consumers' engagement towards a product brand.

The researcher uses the concept of advertising as guidelines for analyzing signs appearing in advertisements with gay-related content by using components of advertising message: verbal language codes, nonverbal language codes, and technical-practical codes. The analysis will illustrate codes used in an advertisement and their functions in reflecting the meanings of gays in Thai society.

2.4 Gays: Knowledge Inquiry, Sexual Myths, and Advertising Media

For this topic, the researcher reviews previous studies, both Thai and foreign, and major concepts and issues related to gays and sex diversity, including sexual myths related to gays and those embedded in Thai society for a long time to understand the context in which sexual myths and advertising media are studied. Especially, it is very vital to study and understand what and by which approach scholars study about "who gays are" and sexuality.

2.4.1 Review of Knowledge Inquiry about Gays of Two Streams

Western academic world during the first era (nineteenth century), paying attention to the study of gays and homosexuals, is divided into two streams of studying. The first stream was scholars in "Social Constructionism" whose concepts and studying approaches are influenced by Michel Foucault. Foucault explains that a society creates a concept of sex. Thus, a gay identity is created on the relationship between individuals and a society, so gays react such created identity by different methods and symbols. Later, this concept was paid high attention by scholars in "Queer Studies". These scholars explain the redefined "gays" as a sex division from a binary opposition. A discourse like, "males and females are not equal to gays," is a too rough division. (Duangwises, 2010). In reality, human sexuality is more complex

than that. The binary opposition is a division of sex that originates from a social discourse that accepts heterosexual love and looks down upon homosexual one.

Scholars of the second stream are those in "Essentialism." These scholars have an assumption that a gay identity is natural or innate. However, scholars in this stream are divided into two groups. Scholars in one group support homosexuals, as they perceive that sexuality is universal, continuum, consistent and equipped with inherited behaviors. This kind of perception induces an occurrence of stereotypes that all gays will think and behave in the same ways. This overlooks a diversity and individual differences among gays. On the other hand, Essentialists, who do not support homosexuals, perceive that homosexuals are people with deviating behaviors and violating morality of a society. These people need a psychic therapy in order to change their behaviors back to normal. This explanation is based on a theory of deviation. Besides, there are some groups of scholars, under this view, using Evolution Theory of Charles Darwin to explain about gays. They explain that a stronger creature can survive in a changing environment. On the contrary, a weaker creature will be eliminated. However, the struggle of gays is not necessarily an indicator that gays are weak. To use the Evolution Theory to explain about gays obstructs a possibility to view human complexity beyond judging from the strength and weakness variables.

As for the study of gays in Thai society, Peter Jackson (Duangwises, 2010) found that the behaviors of homosexuals were widely mentioned during the 1980 decade, in which two directions of perception appeared. Some Thai scholars were worried that Thai youth would have homosexual behaviors so they expressed their opposition against television programs and any medium that presented gays' or queers' behaviors. They were afraid that what was presented in mass media would lead to an imitation among the youth so they wanted to protect the youth from such homosexual behaviors. At the same time, another group of scholars tried to point out that gays did not have deviated behaviors nor cause any social burden. After 1995, the study of gays in a negative way has been decreased due to the emergence of several approaches, i.e. Postmodern, Cultural Studies, etc. Especially, Feminism began well known and hence this movement motivated the study of gays to focus more on gays' life experience and their individuality.

Therefore, it can be seen that the definition of gays in Thai society and in western society is both positive and negative depending on each approach or perspective. The standpoint of the researcher is to view that a society is diverse and no matter what kind of sex or gender people belong to, they deserve an equal treatment and social acceptance. All human beings of all sexes and genders should have a space for their cultural expression, especially a space to define who they are. Mass media play a great role in helping to create sexual equality. However, on the contrary, the researcher found a number of sexual myths and ideology in the presentation of several mass media, including some mechanism and ways of creating myths relating to gays. The invention of texts in mass media is for a majority people of a society: heterosexual, white, middle-class, etc. (Doty, 1993). Thus, occasionally mass media ignore some sub-social groups in a society. Nevertheless, these subgroups are also a part of a mechanism that helps a society to move forward no less than other groups in a society.

2.4.2 Gay-Related Sexual Myths in Thai Society

A myth is a socio-cultural construction. A myth does not hide the fact; on the contrary, it reveals everything. However, people get accustomed to it so they do not notice that it is constructed, not always true. For instance, we get used to seeing queers and gays as funny characters in TV programs or in advertisements. Therefore, we get accustomed to this image and understand that all gays are jokers. This means a myth has occurred. Myths do not occur in a few days but for a long time until people get used to them and understand that they are true or correct. That is why the researcher is interested to find out how sexual myths in the past occurred in Thai society.

Starting with the word, "sex", sex contains at least three kinds of meanings: 1) sex or biological sex or original sex since birth, 2) gender or sex that is socially constructed or socialized to be femininity or masculinity. Thus, gender is a matter of roles assigned by a society based on biological sex. When a society changes sex conditions from other factors besides biological sex, there will be more kinds of genders, i.e. gays, queers, Tom, Dee, etc. and 3) sexuality or lifestyle of certain sex or gender that is cultivated by social values, norms, or thinking patterns. It is a practice

about how to handle and express a person's sexual desire. Besides, it covers a thought about lovers, ideal soul mates, and sexual activities. It is the thinking pattern and culture with some social meanings relating to political, economic, social, and cultural dimensions that determines and constructs a meaning of sex in various perspectives. (Archavanitkul, 2011). From the aforementioned typology, sexuality is thus dynamic and changing all the time. At an individual level, sexuality is a long life process of a person with growth and changes. At a societal level, sexuality stands on the criteria of politics and morality, including sexual regulations or culture in each society, which changes all the time as well. To define sex by this approach is similar to the concept of Giddens (1992) who explains that in a modern society, sexual emotion turns out to be power in itself. This differs from the past where sexual emotion is a matter of fertility (or biological sex). Callings for woman rights, rights of gays and lesbians are examples that demonstrate sex to be a matter of self. Giddens calls such sexual emotion as "plastic sexuality". This kind of sexuality opposes sexuality in the sense of natural sexuality that is a sexual reproduction between male and female.

Tracing back to Thai society in the reign of King Rama the sixth, the Siamese at that time gave more importance to an individual's hierarchical position, a rank of nobility, and birth origin than a gender. On the other hand, they gave more importance to one's gender than sexuality or sexual orientation. Males (sex) had a role in governance, culture creation, and strengthening their masculinity according to the Royal preference. Accordingly, the Royal Court House of Men played a significant role and possessed more power. Especially, at that time masculinity was tied with the nationhood. In the reign of King Rama the sixth, the desirable masculinity needed the following characteristics: (Yodhong, 2013)

- 1) Nation and monarchy loyalty. Nationhood consciousness was invented because Siam transformed from a traditional state to be a modern state and this strengthened the importance of soldier profession. Due to numerous events in the past, i.e. Crisis 112 (in 1893), Rebellion of Turtles 2445 (Tortuous /Chans/ Shans) (in 1902), Rebels of the Northeast 1901-45 or Holy Man's Rebellion, etc., soldiers became important shields of the nation and a shelter of people. They were admired as "nation's fences and mighty of the state". Accordingly, the meaning of "the soldiers of King Rama VI" did not mean only an occupation, but it must be male by birth, and

soldiers meant "a young man or man of military age". To go to a war was what Thai people who called themselves, "a man," should do. To be a soldier or warrior was not tied with a modern state only, but also tied with a monarchy. Since King Rama V, soldiers needed to come from laborers of the king, not general bosses like the old days. Besides, King Rama VI got an influence of a nationalism from British culture that emphasized, "God, King, and Country." The King applied such ideology in Thailand and translated into Thai. This even made the concept of masculinity tightly tied to being a soldier. When masculinity in the sense of biological sex and of innate sex was leveled up until reaching a complete manhood, males had to be bold, strong, adventurous, and most of all spoke no lies. That was why all scouts in the reign of King Rama VI had to take an oath, which led to a vow, "To die but not to lie".

2) Being healthy and able-bodied. To comply with these requirements, men had to keep their body to be strong, clean, and free of sickness. As aforementioned, soldiers had to be strong without any disease because unhealthy or weak men were useless in the war. King Rama VI wrote a book, "Kun Puay" (To prevent sickness) as a self-help guidebook for young men. Therefore, men had to keep themselves out of any disease, especially Venereal Disease that was caused by "immoral women" and was a kind of disease that destroyed men's health. Oppositely, females were associated with physical syphilis, weakness, and sickness. A marriage and wedlock turned non-warrior men to be civilians. Accordingly, sports was a solution because sports could help to promote a good health, strength, able-body, and good disciplines. Especially, that sport was "football" playing in a team. It was a kind of activity played by all men at that time. Thus, young men could get together to play a football to promote their manhood and this would also prevent them from wasting their time with "bad women".

3) Keeping distant from women. Masculinity was socially constructed through various kinds of activities, including building awareness that men should be away from women because women are weak and fragile. To get familiar with a woman could dilute the purity of masculinity. The closer a man was to a woman, the more devaluation and loss of masculinity a man would face.

4) Adventure and nature orientation. This qualification of men came from the belief that men should not be stuck at home or be a homebody because any related

words to "domestic", i.e. domesticate or domesticated, etc., are not men's characteristics. To leave home to upcountry and a forest, a man did not only cut himself from his world and women but it was a challenging activity that proved his manhood also. This was because an adventure required a competence, boldness, hardship bearing, and confrontation with the cruel environment like the mad sea, tropical forest, and wild animals. Besides, a distant journey into woods helped men to learn how to do household works, to cook food, to sew their own clothes, etc., which helped them to depend less on women. Women then would play fewer roles. Furthermore, a wandering into a wide forest and a fighting with big wild animals did not only lead men to declare their manhood, but also declare their class and economic status also. The concept of declaring one's manhood, adopted in the reign of King Rama VI, got an influence from Victorian awareness. However, the adventure-oriented personality of Victorian middle-class people contradictorily led to homosexual relations and eroticism. Therefore, all through the twentieth century, "a young man's adventure" did not convey only the meaning of "the relationship between man and man", but also became an inspiration towards erotic art expressing such relationship reflected in pieces of drama and literature.

5) A love between man and man. From the conventional activities showing a masculine-orientation, i.e. sports, exercises, jungle adventures, etc., such activities led men to have intimate relationships towards each other. In the reign of King Rama VI, an all-men association was established as a central place for middle-class men to construct the meaning and characteristics of "being a man". Once these men gathered, a sense of collective love, group concern, and self-sacrifice (of their happiness and lives) for the group's well-being occurred. Besides, "an honesty and a sincerity" are an important part of masculinity, which enabled men to reveal their truth without any secrets and to dare to exchange everything: love, emotions, feelings, etc., to one another, until it became a special and profound relationship. Thus, men and women seemed to be apart or parallel. Men had to choose between staying with their group and staying with a weak woman who could defile their masculinity. A close relationship between man and man and their profound relationship were reflected in many pieces of literature during the period, such as "Hua Jai Nuk Rob" (The Heart of a Warrior)", "Venice Vanich", Phra Ruang" etc.

For the study of masculinity, western scholars, i.e. R.W. Connell (1990) (Phanprasit, 2016), propose some guidelines by considering diverse masculinity. The word "diversity" covers social class, race, skin color, etc., while understanding the levels of masculinity is needed. Besides, it is important to understand that the relationship between man and man does not focus only on sex, but on how they interact with each other also. Each group of men will create its own masculine identity leading to a competitive power over other groups. Therefore, in this sense, the definition of a masculinity focuses on "gender," or what a person has since he is born. This induces an expectation towards what a man has to do or perform. For example, a man has to be a husband, leader, father, strong, brave, and not weak. He must not act like a woman and a man must be a couple only with a woman. These are the sex roles. Thus, this brings about a sexual myth that a man must be strong and has a power over a woman. (Kimmel, 1987; Connell, 2005) (Duangwiset, 2017). Nardi (2000) further states that gays have several ways of expressing their manhood and this can be understood by considering the diversity of masculinity. Some men express their manhood with some obvious masculine representation, such as showing their bodybuilding or their bravery, etc. Some men express themselves by imitating to be a woman. Several types of masculinity call for a combination of traditional manhood and sensational manhood in the daily life of gays, i.e. when they are with friends and lovers when they confront a class oppression or ethnic identity crisis, etc. Therefore, when mentioning about a masculinity, it should be aware that there are several types and patterns of masculinities and one should not focus only on one monopolized type of a masculinity of any particular group in a society. This kind of definition will thus be different from that defined in the reign of King Rama VI in which the image of manhood in Thai society relates tightly to soldiers, wars, and power. This image can be witnessed in the heroes in Thai literature up to a modern period in which manhood is tied with soldiers in a monopolistic way. However, since all men cannot be soldiers or cannot use their power to express their superiority to other men or other sexes, this monopolized meaning causes a stress and makes it difficult to access a genuine meaning of masculinity or manhood. This proves that a masculinity in Thai society is not adapted to social changes towards a modern society. In other words, Thai men start to be confused about what they should have or do to be called, "a man" in

accordance with Thai values. A type of masculinity that ties with strength and power seems not to give an opportunity for Thai men to express their manhood in different ways like in western society in which warriors, intellectuals, and men under the religion's shade have unique or different identities.

The overall awareness of masculinity since the earlier period induced men to get closer to one another naturally. It also terminated females from all concerned activities because of the notion, "Never get close to a woman". This notion pushed them to go outside for an adventure or to enter a jungle. Such notion also inspired the establishment of jungle-love associations up to the love of nature consciousness. Subsequently, a number of novels emphasizing a young man's adventure into a jungle appeared, i.e. Long Phrai (A Jungle Adventure), Phret Phra U-Ma (Phra U-Ma Diamond), etc. Another explicit example of the creation of masculinity that needed no woman involvement was the building of boy scouts of Lord Baden-Powell, "the Father of Boy Scouts" (Wongyannawa, 2013). Powell perceived that a good and majestic man would spend his life by staying with only men because a man is a more noble gender. A man's body is more attractive than that of a woman. Thus, Powell viewed a man's body with muscles or six packs as a man's ideal qualification. This leads to a question if men of that period were homosexual or not. Therefore, due to the awareness of masculinity and a tight relationship between man and man, the portrayal of an "effeminate man" did not show up in the earlier period. Gender diversity was presented on mass media in 1995. It was the news about the love of men who called themselves "gays" for the first time. The word "Gay" was used to distinguish between manly prostitutes and effeminate prostitutes (men with effeminate gestures or *Krathei* in Thai) (Singhakowin, 2013). Such sexual myth was then reproduced in the period where mass media grew.

Another sexual myth relating to homosexuality is viewed from a Buddhism belief on the Law of Karma and the belief in death and rebirth. Homosexuals are viewed as people who pay back for their karma or bad deeds in the past. Such deeds are sexual sinful behaviors. Specifically, homosexuality is a natural happening caused by bad deeds in the past life (a previous life before being born into the earth again).

From the frame of education, it is found that a teaching in class often gives an importance to the act of accepting one's guilt, which is taught to be a good

qualification of a student. This includes an acceptance of "an unmanly act" (A man accepts that he does not perform or behave like a man or he lacks a required qualification of being a man). To illustrate this, one of the scenes in a Thai literature, Lilit Talengpai, Nantabureng (Nanti Burong or Nanda Bayin), where the King of Burma talked to his viceroy about his son's cowardice, prove this statement. Earlier, the son of Nantabureng expressed his fear for going to fight with King Naresuan the Great of Siam (Thailand) after knowing the astrologer's prophecy or prediction that he would die in the war. Knowing that King Nantabureng said to his viceroy, *"Don't let him go out to fight if he's so afraid, but he should cover himself with a women's dress to pray for himself"* This illustrates the importance of admitting that men have to be strong and women have to be weak. However, if viewed from the former social construction from an awareness of masculinity, the notion of masculinity (strong) and of femininity (weak) have been cultivated and learned from a large number of Thai literature. The textbook emphasizes that there are only two sexes in this world: men and women. (Tootsie's a Joker, 2016). Moreover, in the book of health education of the first-grade student, a sexually-biased definition of gender diversity is found. In the said textbook, sexual deviation means *"An abnormality of a person with inappropriate sexual feeling, attitude, and expressed behaviors that are different from those of the majority in a society. Sexual deviation is often caused by an abnormal mental state of losing a self-control. However, this abnormality does not mean a psychosis or insanity, but only a psychic irregularity or disordered personality"*. Besides, even from the advice of a person with sexual deviation, it was written, *"a person with sexually deviated behaviors should keep this deviation in secret or disclose himself to only a trusted and accountable person. He should try to adapt his expression appropriately in relations to his physical sex and situation, ask for an advice from some reliable persons when facing an adaptation problem, avoid an unsafe intercourse, and keep himself to be well informed."* (Manager Online, 2014). Because of these biased statements, they create a hatred and fear. Additionally, when textbooks provide such sexually biased content, it causes no doubt, why the third-sex students in schools, universities, and educational institutes are often bullied and cannot live in such a place. When young people read the biased content from their books, it increases their stress and pressure with the understanding that they are

abnormal, and tell themselves, "It's me, a queer." This devalues their human dignity from the sexual myths hidden in the textbooks. Consequently, they often face a discrimination and social stigmatization and are afraid to stand up to protect their right. Many people feel that they deserve to be treated that way as they are not normal or they are the second-class citizen.

In 1991, it was the period where a society started to get used to the word, "gay" more than before. It appeared some books providing knowledge about gays and lifestyles of gays to reflect where gays could stand. In there, Thai definitions of gays were as followed: (Wuttirode, 1991)

1) No unity among gays. Although gays dared to disclose themselves more than in the early period and there were gays in every circle, they did not gather in a group nor was there any gay organization (Later, it emerged groups of gays and gay organizations) helping to coordinate all gay groups towards collective and useful public activities. This was because at that time Thai gays were not protested so much by a society. Besides, their rights were not violated as in many foreign countries. Therefore, Thai gays could have rather freeways of life and hence they did not see why they had to gather in groups.

2) Views about a gay's love. There was a saying that gays would never find a true love and they will face only pain and despair in love. There was no sincerity among gays. Accordingly, gays' genuine love never existed. This myth has been reproduced repeatedly up to present.

3) Usage of masculinity as a shield. At that time, a number of Thai gays, especially those of middle-class up to high-class and those with governmental positions, often concealed their gay-being and used a masculinity to shield it, i.e. by marrying a woman, expressing themselves in a manly way, etc., to avoid being blamed from a society.

4) Views about gays' changing sexual partners. The view about love of gays mentioned above led the society to perceive that gays were loose and promiscuous and were the cause and carrier of AIDS/HIV.

Another sexual myth, "Gays are loose and promiscuous", takes place because of the borrowed English word, "Gay" in Thai context used by male prostitutes. The first discovery of AIDS was in the U.S.A. in 1981 and most of the patients were

homosexuals who are gays. (Wuttirode, 1991). Ten years after that, it was the Dark Age of Thai gays who were blamed for spreading the disease. The statement, "AIDS is a gay, and a gay is AIDS," thus emerged. Until the medical confirmation that AIDS can be caused by several ways and can happen to anyone even to an infant if infected either by sexual discourses or by a shared syringe, it helps dilute such claim. Still, the image of gays is critical, especially when there is an epidemic. However, under the epidemic crisis, sometimes it can turn to correct the negative image of gays. Once a group of gays (i.e. bar gays in Bangkok, Pattaya, and Chiangmai) joined a campaign with some private organizations supported financially by W.H.O. (World Health Organization) to protest AIDS/HIV with other members around the world. The gay members helped to establish an organization to coordinate with those private organizations and disseminate the information about AIDS/HIV to general people to let them know and understand the spreading of AIDS/HIV correctly. In addition, a gay association entitled, "Fraternity for AIDS Cessation in Thailand (F.A.C.T.)" was established and opened for gay members. The main purpose was to communicate about AIDS to correct Thai gays' image. Such phenomenon was a turning point that called for a gay gathering to express their standpoint and position. This could be considered as the starting point of a mouthpiece towards the acceptance of gays in Thai society concretely via several activities.

The establishment of gay organizations at that time still was not so clearly structured. To answer the question of when it appeared a well-structured gay organization, it might say that it happened in 1999 with reference to the concept of Kamolset Kengkanruea, a counselor of an anonymous clinic of The Thai Red-Cross Society. Kengkanruea organized a panel discussion on gays' problems because of the increasing numbers of people infected with HIV. On the other hand, a problem caused by the increasing presence of mass media about gays in a negative way also increased. As Kengkanruea represented Thailand to participate in a workshop about AIDS and genders in Bangladesh, he met several homosexual groups and organizations of foreign countries and this inspired him to establish a gay organization called, "Fah See Roong" (Rainbow Sky). The purpose of the organization is to improve a quality of life of homosexuals, to make a society accept gays, and to create a campaign to provide knowledge about AIDS, by the support of Doctors Without

Borders Organization (or Medecins Sans Frontieres, MSF) and Raks Thai Foundation. Later, Rainbow Sky Organization registered as “Rainbow Sky Association of Thailand” in 2003, with the main organizational philosophy of “love, understanding, honor, and equality”. At present, the association is growing in all dimensions: personnel, missions, and collaborative networks from various organizations. Besides, there is another gay association called, “Bangkok Rainbow Association” (BRO), established in 2002 by Nikorn Arthit and a group of people working in AIDS and sex education who used to work with Rainbow Sky Organization. The purpose of this organization is to give basic advice about AIDS infection, sexual problems of male youths, and male youths with a homosexual-behavior tendency, including organizing academic activities, i.e. gay problems, media for gays, films for gays, etc. Moreover, M-Plus in Chiangmai is another organization established in 2003 with same purposes as Rainbow Sky Association of Thailand and Bangkok Rainbow Association. All these gay organizations work collaboratively since they are supported by the same source of funds. Rainbow Sky Association of Thailand becomes a center of funds distributed to all concerned organizations. These collaborative networks also connect to the networks of sex diversity in Thailand to mobilize the rights and freedom of gays, lesbians, queers, and other transgender. (Duangwises, 2010)

The communication of these gay organizations helping to promote a positive image for gays in Thai society is an AIDS campaign to eradicate the myth that "gays are AIDS, and AIDS are gays", a training workshop to provide knowledge about sex education and AIDS, etc. Besides, there are other activities whose content focuses on transmitting knowledge, information, movements, and idea exchanges, which cause the emergence of many small group communications and communication with a homosexual society continually. Despite the fact that the major purposes of all these activities are to provide knowledge, understanding, and to gather gays into a firm group, the minor purpose aims to help the general public to see other beneficial sides of gays to alter gays' image to be more positive.

From the study of (Duangwises, 2010), it is found that the working on good health and knowledge about AIDS of gay organizations illustrates the gays' intention to perform good deeds to prove that gays are abnormal. Thai gays' parade is another paradigm showing gays' normality. In a parade, gays worn Thai dresses on Songkran's

Day or Loy Krathong Festival with a slogan, "a unity among a variety." However, gays' parade did not involve with politics like in western countries. Instead, their parade reflects their negotiation towards a self-presentation in public sphere to make a society accept them and perceive that gays can do good things for a society as well. It accords with the concept of Ungphakorn (2006) who believes that a social movement of gays and lesbians in Thailand was a result of AIDS crisis during the 1980 decade and of a consumption trend of a new generation during 1990-2000. However, such movement involves no political consciousness like in the western world. Thai gay organizations do not fight for changing a society, but for calling for their identity-expression and for creating understanding for a society so that the society will accept them. Ungphakorn proposes that gay organizations should have more consciousness in politics and try to participate more in a civil society to fight for other unfairness in the society as well.

At present, campaigns still go on but the content changes according to a social context. Gay organizations, i.e. Rainbow Sky Association of Thailand, try to urge for an enactment of a legitimate and certified marriage registration of homosexuals through a panel discussion or a forum with stakeholders of many parts to issue such laws. (Rainbow Sky Association of Thailand, 2018). While in a global context, 22 countries issued legitimate marriage of homosexuals by having Germany and Taiwan as the latest countries. If sexual myths about gays are still repeatedly reproduced, this might enable gays to overlook the rights they deserve to have. Homosexuals, both male and female, will not pay attention to such rights as they still lack a knowledge and understanding of sexual diversity and their equality rights. Theraphacharaporn (2017) stated that Thai society still provides little knowledge about rights and sexual diversity. On the other hand, the lawmakers also lack knowledge while homosexuals do not participate in a law making. Most of all, homosexuals themselves do not pay attention to their own rights and just think that if they can get it, it is good. If not, it is ok. Therefore, it is very important to provide knowledge and understanding about human rights and human dignity. For instance, Taiwan established an organization called, "Taiwan Tongzhi Hotline Association" for more than ten years. This organization is a hotline center for the youth to consult about sex or LGBT problems. Besides, Taiwan also contains "Gender Studies" into their educational curriculum.

Therefore, this organization plays a great role in educating about homosexual issues. Once their people have a knowledge and understand about these issues, it is easy for them to issue laws of accepting the homosexual marriage. Therefore, if the mainstream media, as a vital factor and mechanism, in Thailand have not mobilized about this issue, the lawmaking and the certified marriage registration of homosexuals will surely be delayed.

Despite the roles of gay organizations trying to create a more positive image of gays, at the individual level gays are still facing a structural inequality and need to prove themselves against a variety of claims. In an article on new myths and new stereotypes of gays of Yodhong (2016), it is found that gays need to struggle to get free of the negative stereotype towards them by studying harder, devoting themselves to their work and education so that they can climb up to a status or position accepted by a society. This will also create a new sexual myth of gays to have unique qualifications, be talented, and possess distinguished competence, different from males and females. Besides, the study of Nusomton (2003) finds that gays need to work twice harder to prove their effort, diligence, and eminent capability to get an acceptance from their workplace, which is the acceptance of their ability rather than of their sex or real selves.

In short, the emergence and existence of gays have been transmitted through the given definitions and sexual myths continually since the first period in which gays were perceived as a psychosis (Singhakowin, 2013), which was defined based on the heterosexuality interpretation so gays were interpreted as a deviation. Later, the meaning of "gay" tied with a sexual promiscuity due to the usage of this word by male prostitutes. Until the arrival of AIDS in Thailand, gays became a hit target of sexual bias and the statement, "gays are AIDS, and AIDS are gays," emerged. Consequently, a gay organization was established to promote a positive image of gays. Nevertheless, there has been another arousal and sexual myth reproducer. That is "mass media"

2.4.3 Gays and Sexual Myths Construction through Mass Media

Mass media involves a touch-up. Behind a media production, it is a process of schematic thought being plot and framed through a complex encoding to transmit

some messages to the audience. Likewise, homosexuals are portrayed colorfully by mass media. The study of Phanutaecha (2008) found that during 1997-2007, it appeared more than 1,345 pieces of news about alternative sex or genders, both on personal issues and social movements. Most of them are the presentation of their social movements, i.e. a protest against governmental policies in barring or violating the rights of alternative sexes, calls for several changes through a collaborative networking, seminars or meetings to provide knowledge about sex diversity, an identity-disclosure of homosexual communities, etc. The first negative portrayal of gays appeared in a column called, "Pra Sa Suk Lek" of Thairath newspaper in 1982 and a QA column called, "Ko Paknam" in Prak (Strange) Magazine in 1985. Such columns reported that some men did not define themselves as "queers" in Thai society while they believed that those people were well educated and exposed to the western gay news. However, it was also reported that the tone of voice of those people indicated their loneliness and self-perception as a psychosis. Thus, printed media, both newspaper and magazines, were the pioneers in presenting news of Thai gays.

After the great event on October 14, 1973, in which Thailand stepped into the blooming era of Democracy. All types of mass media had a freedom in presenting any news richly. Hence, the first gay magazine, "Mithuna" (June Magazine) was published. Later, many other gay magazines, i.e. Neon, Mid-Way, Morakot (Emerald), etc., followed. (Wuttirode, 1991). All these magazines contain the similar content or the content about the movement of gays in Thailand and abroad from every corner of the world. Besides, they aimed to improve gays' personality, to call for a participation towards social responsibility through their articles, and to advise love problems through some columns in the magazines. This helped to reduce the feeling of loneliness for Thai gays and make them feel the existence of gays. Besides, a magazine also published a long and firm love story of homosexuals, i.e. a love story of Ann Taveesakchananont, etc. This helps to reconstruct the previous definition that gays were loose and had no true love.

Despite some positive portrayals of gays, mainstream mass media still often presents news or stories about gays with a sexual bias. For instance, a joker actor always performs his exaggerating sexual expression in an effeminate manner. This even emphasizes negatively negative myths about gays. From the study of

Singhakowin (2013), since 2007, there has been a decreasing presentation of effeminate homosexuals. However, the gay characters always end up with a love despair and a sad life. Some roles of gays appearing in mass media are repeatedly reproduced to illustrate gays' obscenity and exaggeration. Mockery, peculiarity, and lust of gays are often presented. However, there has been some positive encouragement for gays occasionally. For instance, during 2004-2009, Manager Weekly published a column called, "Stop Hiding" for gays as its target readers. This column presented a variety of gays' stories, i.e. A call for sex diversity, a campaign through the column showing a gay who dared to accept his real self to his family and peers. Compared with other printed media, this column is the publicity that presented gays as normal people the most.

During that time, though the construction of sexual myths by mass media was both positive and negative, the negative ones were repeatedly presented due to some business factors. (Kaewprasert, 2008). For instance, a mockery of gays can be sold since the audience like it. Besides, printed media as the pioneer media in presenting issues on gays in the past, the researcher has found sexual myths of gays in three mainstream media: films, televisions, and advertising, which have been studied widely and interests the researcher in this study.

Films: Films are one of the media that play a great role in constructing the meaning of gays. The roles of gays shown in American films all through the past decades have been constructed with the past pessimistic perspective of viewing gays as pathetic and tolerant against all surrounding pressures before being accepted. (Harris, 2016) Owing to some marketing mechanism, films need to target their audience as mass. Accordingly, so many unknown corners of gays are not yet all presented. Gays and films have gained a popularity in the field of academic research during these twenty years. The core interest is the portrayal and the creation of a gay and the third-sex identity through characters appearing in films. For instance, the study of Samitinantana (2010), which aimed to study the creation of the third-sex characters in Thai films during 1997-2009, found that personality and characteristics of the third-sex characters were presented in a little exaggerating way, i.e. Queers have effeminate manners, etc. Besides, the characters were presented as being confused and searching for their real selves. However, the successful discovery of

their real selves needed to be exchanged with their despair in love. Feel lonely and abandoned, including a desire to be accepted by their family rather than by a society are reflected as problems gays needed to face. The reflection of social-structure oppression on the characters of the third sex also was witnessed in films, i.e. the perception of viewing the third sex as peculiar and different from others. Such perception affected them to express a violence towards themselves and others. The finding accords with that of Chuenkar (2012) studying on gay identities in Thai films. Chuenkar compared a gay identity presented in the studied films with that in a real world in Thai society and found that gays presented in the films often were jokers or bad characters who liked to talk loudly, used rude words. The content displayed gays' mockery and sadness. The producers expressed their ideas that the reason they needed to have gays in their movies because gays could make their movies more colorful. On the other hand, gays in a real society disclosed themselves more. The language used in the movies and in their real life was similar but that shown in the movies was more violent and rude. From 30 movies with gay-related content produced after 2000, more than half of them were a comedy. Even the main character also expressed like other gays or expressed with an exaggeration. This was why a society perceived gays to have deviant behaviors. (Singhakowin, 2013) Therefore, from the studies of gays, sexual myths of gays emphasizes a mockery, rejection, love despair, rudeness, sad life and misery, and deviation. Such myths have been reproduced to represent the identity of gays for selling their mockery and peculiarity. This reinforces their deviation in the society in spite of more acceptance of sexual diversity nowadays. The question is why those portrayals of gays have still been reproduced in films without ceasing. Is it possible that gays have more meanings than being clowns or have more significant roles than only adding more colors in the scenes?

Television: For televisions, in the past gays often played the role of a leading actor's friend in Thai dramas or played as a support role. Still, they had to conceal their real selves. However, since 2014, a number of TV series have presented more gay stories in Thai society, i.e. Room Alone, Club Friday Series 5: secrets of Mint and Mew, Love Sick the Series, Tutsi Diary, etc. From a supporting role in the past, gays and the third sex play as the main roles. The themes of the story focus on gays' life: family, lifestyle, work, and love, which convey more varied perspectives and

dimensions of gays. While there have been some changes in TV presentation of gays, the number of studies on gays found in Thai TV media are relatively very small.

The study of Wongmuang (2016) studied gay characters in TV drama in a new era, which tried to explore the development of TV characters in three periods. The study found that Thai TV dramas tried to present gay identities to comply with a social reality. In the first period, gays were not widely portrayed because the Ministry of Culture issued a laws and a social organization that prohibited actors, organizers, and moderators with sexually deviated behaviors to appear on television because of several reasons: psychological and behavioral imitation. However, the attitude towards homosexuals was found to be more positive. From the finding of this study, it shows that deeply by the nature of Thai people, they can accept all kinds of differences in a society, but with some restriction. Thus, they can accept gays or the third gender in some ways but if it is too much, then it will be something unbearable. In other words, gays are placed in some certain positions, if they are in different from those positions, they will not be accepted. To illustrate this, a TV drama named, "8009 love" broadcast during 2004-2006, was the first drama presenting a male and male (MM) love. Gay characters named John and Tee live in an apartment named, "8009". For John, his peers and family accept their love relationship. However, for Tee, owing to his profession as an actor, he cannot reveal his gay identity since it will affect his career. Nevertheless, finally, both can step over the obstacles and prolong their relationship. Both of them move to live in the U.S.A. A happy love of John and Tee at the end of the story illustrates that Thai society accepts the love between homosexuals under the condition that it should not be too open or publicly revealed. Thus, the relationship between John and Tee in "8009 love" may be greatly affected if they revealed their relationship too openly in public. Their love fulfillment cannot indicate fully that Thai society accepts a male-and-male relationship since John and Tee decides to move to the U.S.A. to get away from Thai society. This is because Thai society is not completely ready to open a sphere for homosexuals to express their love and relationships, which are different from a heterosexual relationship. (Singhakowin, 2013).

Regarding foreign studies, there are fairly more pieces of research and studies of gays on television. In foreign countries, the studies emphasize the presentation of

gays and the third gender in TV series as well. An article by Berridge (2012) reflects that in many American TV series, the presented image of gays is both positive and negative. In general, the storyline of TV series for teenagers involves sex, drugs, and alcohols. The TV series producers try to present some lessons learned from those main storylines for their teen audience, including teaching them about sex bullying, homophobic abuses, and self-disclosure. From the studies of self-disclosure of gay characters in TV series, characters often face a contempt, dislike, and objection, including homophobic abuses from surrounding people, i.e. their desks being painted into pink color by their classmates, a gay poster being stuck on their lockers, etc. After such abuses, an unveiling of their gender occurs. The common portrayal of TV series at the stage of gays' revealing their identity is the occurrence of negative impacts: loneliness, despair, unhappiness, and difficulties in revealing ones' self. Some TV series presents an extremely loaded scene (the outburst crying of a gay) while revealing one's gay identity. Eventually, after much difficulty, their family and friends understand and accept their being- gays. This kind of plots enables gays to live happily in a society. Another study in Australia by McKee (2000) examines the image of gays in TV and the development of self-esteem of gay viewers. The results show that TV is an important source of information for a self-development, especially during the juvenile period. TV dramas are found as the media exerting the most positive impact on the gay audience, especially on their satisfaction with being what they are. Besides, it is found to present a beneficial identity of gays and to inspire gays for their normal life in a society. Furthermore, Alan McKee summarizes that the core message of a gay presentation, as normal people and as a call for an acceptance of gays' disclosure, can increase gays' self-pride and decrease the rate of suicides among gay teenagers in Australia.

From the above studies, television is an influential media for gay receivers in a positive way. However, despite the fact that most TV dramas try to portray gays sincerely, they still stick to the stereotype images of gays like films, i.e. loneliness, abandonment, sadness, confusion, etc. Consequently, gays confront a psychological pressure due to a too restricted space provided for them to stand happily in a society.

Especially when TV still emphasizes the stereotyped images of gays and influences receivers' attitude and behaviors. Accordingly, a TV producer should present a diverse image of gays to avoid such stereotypes images. (Berridge, 2012)

Online: Since 1997, online media has become a channel used by gay groups to communicate and express their real identity, including sharing their life experiences. This cyber media helps to release their loneliness from being rejected in the real world very well. The arrival of an internet and websites brings about different consequences from the period where printed media was the gays' mainstream media. In the prior period, people might want to read gay magazines but dared not to buy them from a bookshelf. Some could not bring them back home, as their family did not accept their peculiarity. Their solution was to leave those magazines at their friends' house. Thus, they got difficulties to access information from such media. This differs from websites that gays can access at any time and any place. Popular websites in the earlier period were missladyboy.com, dekchai69.com, thaiboxy.com, gooogay.com, etc. The growth of online media enhances to absorb the image of western gays. Therefore, since 2007 a number of websites have become a sphere for gays to create their own blogs or personal websites. For instance, a website, thaigmc.com, represents gays of a new generation who are grown up amidst pop culture. These gays expose themselves greatly to gay news and stories from movies, TV dramas, magazines, novels, cartoons, and internet. Such information reflects lifestyles of urban gays with a good economic background, high education, and with a good looking. Teenager gays become target audience in business sectors. When internets give a space for gays to create their own information, they prefer creating their own space in Cyberspace for posting their photos accordingly. They always choose the best photos to raise up their votes because the popular votes lead them to become famous in a cyberspace. This makes gays proud of themselves even in a virtual world. (Duangwises, 2010). Besides, it enhances a more creation of gay-identity in the internet world and broadens the diverse perspectives to see gays and their ways of living. Until a social networking is formed, websites and weblogs play less significant roles. At present, there are a great number of pages with gay content and provide a space for Thai gays for chatting, expressing their ideas, and calling for major changes, i.e. news about the legal same-sex marriage in the U.S.A. in 2015, This enhanced the presentation of

sexual diversity by having online media as a mediator in disseminating information. Facebook also shared the joy with other Facebook members around the world by changing its profile to be a rainbow flag. Such movement induced a trend of changing the profiles to be rainbow colors. People then acknowledged what the rainbow flag meant. This can be considered as an event arousing the understanding of sexual diversity in Thai society. Besides, the celebration of equal rights of diverse genders brought about a more positive meaning and image of gays.



Figure 2.9 The transformation of Facebook's profile to rainbow color

Source: Sanook news (2014)



Figure 2.10 The addition of "Pride" icon on Facebook

Source: www.facebook.com

In June 2017, Facebook took a new move by adding an icon for pressing "Pride" button to celebrate a month of the pride of diverse-gender groups. Once again, Thai society raised a question of what the "rainbow flag" icon means. Did it mean that anyone who presses this button was a person of an alternative gender? Later, there was an explanation that a heterosexual person could also press this icon to support sexual diversity in Thai society. Therefore, this was another knowledge creation about the diversity of genders for Thai people.

The role of online media in mobilizing the image of gays enables gays to have an identity and space in a society. This movement accords with an article of Archavanitkul (2011), which says that the growth of information and communication technologies is a significant factor towards an opening of a new space for learning about changes in a sexuality based on the diversity of genders. At the same time, a consciousness of sexual diversity becomes a symbol of a freedom in a society that reminds people of this new movement. Besides, it encourages the acknowledgment and understanding of heterosexuals to support homosexuals. This promotes more acceptance of gays in Thai society as witnessed by an organization of a fair called, "Bangkok Pride" at the end of 2017. In the fair, there was workshops, film festivals, and parties around the city. The highlight was a parade, firstly organized in the past eleven years by Out BKK, Rainbow Sky Association of Thailand, Queer Mango, Bangkok Rainbow and Asian HIV organizations. All these movements are big drives for creating an equality of sexual diversity towards a positive direction in Thai society and they might be a starting point of a construction of positive sexual myths to promote and empower gays increasingly.

2.4.4 Gays in Marketing and Advertising

Lazier & Kendrick stated that the type of media studied on sexual myths the most was advertising (Keawthep, 2013). By the nature of advertising on television, it takes about 15-30 seconds and is inserted in the programs with a marketing purpose mainly. This makes an advertising to be an extremely persuasive communication. Because of these attributes, an advertising is a proper and fertile space for cultivating sexual myths.

Sexual myths are often constructed in an advertisement by using "Stereotyped images". The concept of a stereotyped image comes from an observation of W. Lippmann that mass media production is a kind of work in a limited space that requires an "Economy of Effects" from both producers and the audience. Regarding the producers, the presentation must be the most precise and takes the shortest time. For the audience, they need the least effort and time in their interpretation of any received message. The way causing a time saving induces the use of a "stereotyped image", which is easy for both senders and receivers. Accordingly, to draw an appeal

of pity, it must relate to an old person, innocence to a child, weakness to a woman, and mockery to the gays or queers.

Gross (2012) illustrates the entrance of advertising media with gays and the third gender as a target group. Starting from a question raised in a magazine titled, "Advertising Age" in 1978, "where is an image of gays and the third gender from a marketing and advertising perspective?" In 1980, Advertising Age Magazine started to point out that some companies dared not to talk about homosexuality in their advertisings due to some embarrassments to use it as their selling point. On the other hand, the gay magazine also claimed that their groups were overlooked and not paid attention by marketing people. After that, the stories of gays and the third gender were more mentioned in mass media. In 1981, Kenneth Maley, a media consultant in San Francisco declared that gays and the third gender would be the richest buyers in American. Since such statement of Maley, gays and the third gender have been targeted as major consumers for a marketing. Most of all, Charley McBreaty, an advertising producer who was a gay gave a promise that he would produce an advertising that is able to access gay culture and he will communicate to gays with a gay language. From there, it has been a turning point that marketing includes gay groups in their target completely

Later, in 1982, gays in advertising got an obstruction that slowed down the growth because some marketing people worried that to portray gays in their advertising media might offend some other consumer groups. "Hip Drink" was one example. At first, Hip Drink needed a gay presenter but it was held back due to the fear of its effect on the principal consumers. After a while, Gap started their advertising campaigns by presenting celebrities from various fields of occupations with their products and among those celebrities, it included gays. However, the result turned out to be very successful and hence gays were paid high attention from marketing men. More varying presentation of gays and the third gender has appeared in advertising since then. Gays are perceived as consumers with high purchase power so they are needed highly in terms of business. An example of the presentation of gays in advertising is Toyota's advertisement in Australia. In the advertisement, it shows two men having a picnic basket behind their backs. Aside is a Toyota car with an advertising copy saying, "Family Car", etc. This illustrates that mass media

perceive gays as one main important consumer group. A question following is what kind of advertising message will create their good attitude towards a product brand. This perspective provides a negotiating power for gays as another consumer group. Such movement accords with the study of Kates (2000), which found that gay consumers would choose to consume a general mass product only when the product presented gays' image with a respect and understanding. On the contrary, they would ban any product that presented gays inappropriately in an advertisement. Kate also found that the use of signs in an advertisement that displayed gays' value would be a good opportunity to create an acceptance of gays in the context where some groups of people in a society still opposed the existence of gays.

From a literature review of the studies on the representation of gays and alternative sex in advertising, one of the studies by Tsai (2007) was found. Tsai studied a creative strategy in advertisements for homosexuals (Homosexual), including searching for a production mechanism of advertising producers in negotiating between marketing purposes and value of gays. The study also found that the advertisements related with homosexuals were constructed with both positive and negative image of homosexuals. With a negative image, advertisements often belonged to the products with non-gay as target consumers. Gays were portrayed by a lady-like code or symbol, i.e. effeminate walking manner, overtone voice, etc. On the contrary, the advertisements with a positive image of homosexuals or gays avoided presenting the stereotyped images but tried to encode with a neutral portrayal of gays. The gay consumers could interpret such adjustment while heterosexuals felt nothing. The nonverbal language, i.e. body movement, gesture, etc. was used in encoding a message of gay. For instance, the portrayal of two men wearing a pajama talking about their breakfast in a kitchen was interpreted by heterosexuals as "a friendship" but was interpreted by homosexuals or gays as "a romantic relationship". Therefore, advertisements will mostly contain codes with various meanings to construct meanings for the audience.

Advertisements focusing on gays as their principal targets will often display gays as normal. For instance, an advertisement of IKEA portrays a speech of a cute fair-skin woman to her parents, *"Dad, mom, if you are watching me now, I would like to tell you that finally, I found a person who I want to end up my life with. She's*

Jane." The advertisement showed another woman smiling to the camera and an advertising copy showed, "Show your colors." The advertisement just ended like that. Therefore, in advertisements whose target audience are gays, no stereotyped images of gays, i.e. squeezing voice, an effeminate manner, etc., will appear in the advertisements. Contradictorily, Tsai found a new stereotyped image of a "white" man who is a middle-class consumer by trying to display him as a "Dream Consumer" to respond to marketing objectives.

In Thai society, sexual issues are still unspoken or a secret that a society tries to overlook since they are not good issues to talk in public. Therefore, product brands and business dare not to declare clearly that their target consumers are gays. On the other hand, they choose to indicate that their consumers are "Metrosexual" and define "Metrosexual" as "a group of men who take very good care of themselves. This group emphasizes their physical appearance. They earn a high income and have high purchase power." In the study of Pensiri (2007), she found that more than half of metrosexuals were gays and were perceived as "New Comer and New Revenue" with high buying power. They like to use branded products but have no kids or a family to take care. Therefore, they can spend their money on buying things fully. From his study at that time, the population of Bangkok was 5 million. Among this figure, more than 10% were gays with 50,000-100,000 baht monthly income or they can be called, "A Class Consumer." (Arthit, 2009). This group like to buy the products that promote a good image for them, i.e. apparels, salons, etc.

Tracing back to the advertisement media production responding to gay markets, it was found that there were not so many. In the past, a number of myths of gays focused on the mockery and their effeminate or exaggerating manner were found in advertisements, i.e. Penn Choice Long Life, 2006; Tip Vegetable Oil, 2008, etc. Even an advertisement focused directly on gay consumers like "KTC I AM" of KTC credit card also encoded their message that men had to hide or conceal themselves or have a girlfriend as their shield. Thai advertising thus tried to communicate with gays indirectly while also concerning about heterosexuals. They also were afraid that sexual bias might affect their brand image. Accordingly, an advertisement has to be profound, thorough, and refined, including communicating directly to the gay groups. On the other hand, heterosexuals can accept it as well. (Wattanapanit, 2007). The

reason why a marketing circle wants to grasp gay consumers, partly because of gays' adaptability. In other words, gays started to disclose or reveal themselves more from the presentation of various media as aforementioned. Lately, media presented gays who are celebs, capable or have high potential in a society. Therefore, this group represents a high-income group or the group of "Work Hard – Play Hard." Some call this group, "Pink Double Income – No Kids" or consumers with high income and without kids to be a burden. Therefore, they become the more interesting group for a market.

The study, "Perception and Attitude of Heterosexual and Homosexual Consumers towards Advertisements for Homosexuals in Print Media and Homosexuals in Thai society," found that homosexual consumers could perceive and understand advertisements for homosexuals better than heterosexual consumers. However, both suggested that an advertisement on homosexuality could be conducted in a normal way, not so exaggerating or openly. It should communicate neutrally or without emotionally loaded language and use advertising components or symbols to communicate indirectly and they had better let the consumers interpret the meanings themselves. On the contrary, subjects who disagreed or had negative attitudes toward homosexual advertisements perceived that such advertisements could lead the youth to imitate. It should be noted that all studied advertisements were all foreign advertisements.

From the review of previous literature and studies relating to gays and advertising in Thailand and foreign countries, the researcher found that both negative and positive sexual myths are still constructed in advertisements. Thai society seems to choose to communicate in a neutral way due to the fear of a negative feedback from other groups of consumers. It will be like a communication of "Honey Maid" in a foreign country. Honey Maid used an advertisement for gays as their target particularly. However, it was strongly rejected by other groups of consumers. Honey Maid reacted to this rejection by putting all negative feedbacks received in Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, in order or in line to convey one same meaning, "Love" to emphasize "an equality" and "sexual diversity." (Snyder, 2015) This reaction pleased the third gender, which was the group Honey Maid wanted to communicate since the beginning. The important factors that brought about the pleasure of homosexual

consumers were a sincere communication and a respect for the right of sex equality. It may be difficult to eradicate or reconstruct the myths of gays and the third gender in Thai society. However, the positioning of gays and the third gender as consumers being equal to other consumer groups interests the researcher to study myths in advertisements and to study the creation of an advertisement that can erase or dilute old myths of gays so that sex equality through advertisements can be promoted.

From sexual myths related with gays and reproduced in Thai society for a long time, the researcher found that the presentation of gays via various media is still a mixture of both good and bad images, depending on the objectives of a message producer. Sometimes, marketing and business benefits affect the presentation of a message and its direction. For instance, gays have to express their exaggerating manner, their effeminate manner, and their joking. These expressions are sellable and are what the mainstream audience wants to see. They can call for the audience's laughs. On the other way, in terms of marketing, gays are chosen to be presented as main consumers with high income and purchase power. To create them as funny may not yield beneficial outcomes. An advertisement thus needs to reduce all those stereotyped images and sexual bias by creating a communication code or sign for communicating a respect of sexual diversity. From the previous review of literature and studies relating to sexual myths, it can be summarized as shown in figure 2.11. It can be seen that sexual myths occur in various contexts, i.e. religion, education, healthcare (AIDS), social (a demonstration of sex equality rights), etc., including economic. Those contextual variables and factors mobilize and cause a change of portrayal of gays in media

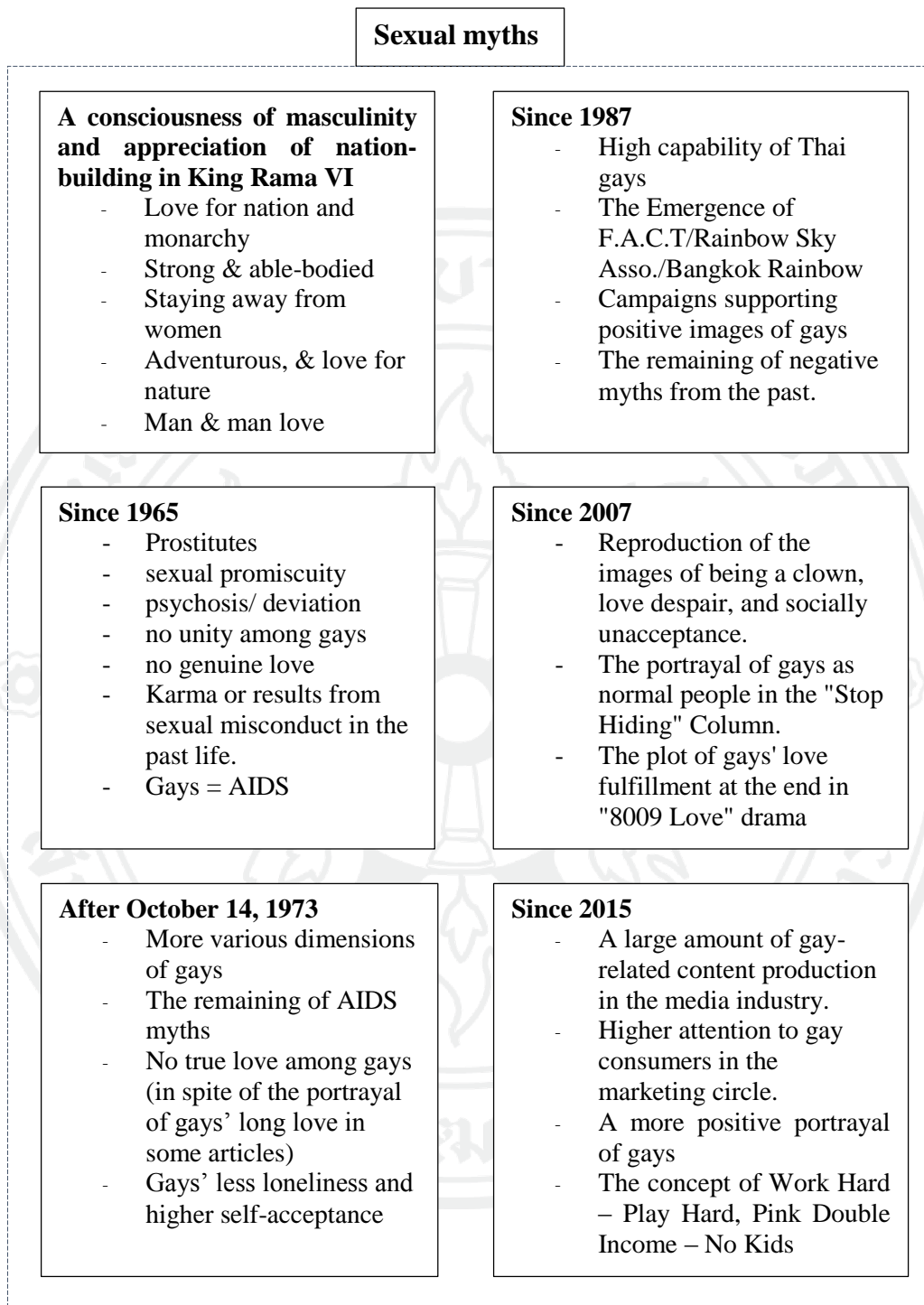
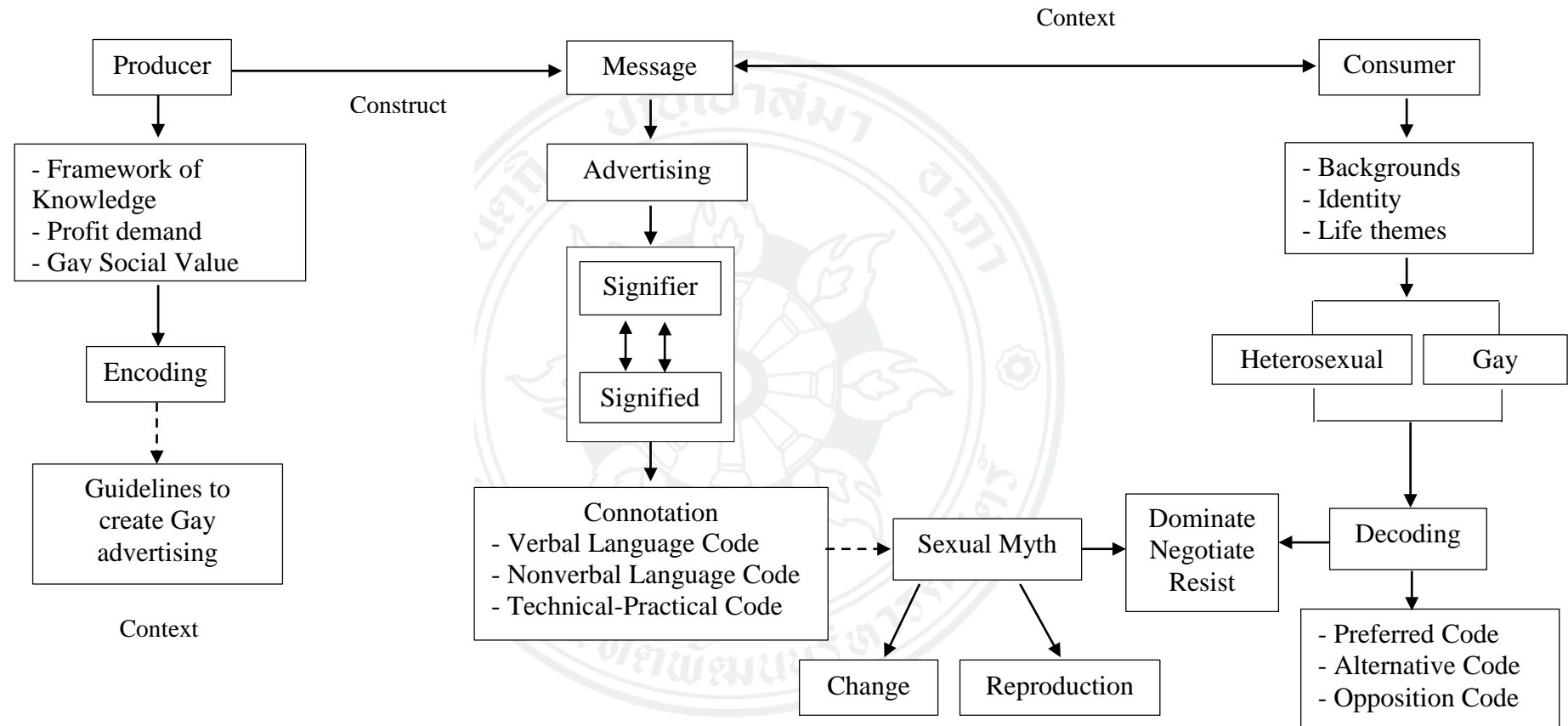


Figure 2.11 A summary of sexual myths related with Thai gays.

2.5 Conceptual Framework of the Study



CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research entitled, "Gay: The Construct of Sexual Mythology in Advertising," aims to explore the meaning construction and changes of sexual myths in advertising media and to study the consumers' decoding of a gay-related advertising message. This study is a qualitative research as it can acquire a factual truth from a specific case for a particular purpose. Besides, it enables a better understanding and provides concerned meanings of human behaviors in a certain context more profoundly. (Babbie, 2015). The researcher is interested to study the construction of sexual myths from the old days up to present to see their evolutionary and transitional meanings in different contexts. Furthermore, the findings of the study can reflect what truly happens from the perception and accumulated experiences of both message producers and consumers. The main research methods are 1) Textual analysis, 2) Documentary research, 3) In-depth interview, and 4) Focus group interview, to answer all research questions.

3.1 Information Sources for the Research

There are three kinds of sources: documentary, advertising media content, and personal sources

3.1.1 Documentary sources are Thai and English books, research articles, academic reports on advertising media with gays as their target, including previous studies on gays, advertising media, and analysis of semiology. Additionally, articles and columns in magazines, journals, newspapers, and online media on an advertising creation for gay targets are also studied and analyzed in this study.

3.1.2 Textual Analysis for studying a gay mythology in Thai advertising media. Ten pieces of TV advertisements during 2006-2016 were chosen, as, during these past ten years, there were changes in several dimensions in Thai society.

For instance, between 2006-2007, the marketing strategy emphasized the concept of "metrosexual", being defined as a young single man with a high income, living or working in a big city like Bangkok, and is the highest potential consumer in the market. (Wolfman, 2017). However, in a later research, it found that more than 50% of "metrosexual" consumers in Thailand were gays. (Pensiri, 2007) In 2009, the study of Duangwises (2012) found that gays gained 95% increase in a social space: being mentioned in mass media, expressing their identity in various business industries, especially a complete gay entertainment complex to respond to lifestyles gays. Another significant transitional point in the world context was the legalization of a gay couple's marriage in the U.S.A. in 2015, effective in all states of the country. All of these changes affect the gays' image in Thai society as well.

All these ten advertisements were selected by a purposive sampling based on the content of the advertisements that were related with gays, had a gay as the main character, or made the audience understand that the characters were gays. It was also found that all through the past ten years, there were gay-related sexual myths of both old and new perspectives. The old perspective presented gays as clowns and as someone who needed to hide or conceal themselves. On the contrary, the new perspective presented a man-to-man love openly or revealed the real identity of gays to the public. The classification of these two perspectives is shown in Table 3.1

Table 3.1 Advertisements with gay-related content during 2006-2016.

TVC	Broadcasting year	length	Target consumers	Perspectives shown in the presentation of sexual myths	
				Old	New
1. “Swensen”: Let’s love each other (Ice cream)	2006	16 seconds	general	√	
2. Penn Choice: Long Life (Oil)	2006	31 seconds	general	√	
3. KTC I AM (Krung Thai Bank)	2007	1 minute	gays	√	
4. Tip (Vegetable Oil)	2008	31 seconds	general	√	
5. Unif Daily C (Fruit Juice)	2013	31 seconds	general	√	
6. Hiruscar (Skin- care cream)	2015	31 seconds	general	√	
7. Change Destiny (SK II cosmetics)	2015	3 minutes	General		√
8. Calbee (Snack)	2016	2 minutes	General	√	
9. 5 Brow Pencil for men (Mistine)	2016	31 seconds	Gays		√
10. 28 CHIDLOM condominium (SC ASSET)	2016	1 minute	General & gays		√

From Table 3.1, there are only three advertisements that presented sexual myths related to gays with a new perspective. Therefore, the researcher chose these three advertisements as subjects for this study: "Change Destiny" of SK-II, "5 Brow Pencil for Men" of Mistine, and "28 Chidlom Condominium" of SC Asset. Besides, gays presented in the advertisements can be divided into 3 characteristics: gays with masculine characteristics, gays with masculine characteristics but also with some effeminacy, and gays dressed as females.

Table 3.2 illustrates the list of advertisements used in the study

TVC	Broadcasting year	length	Gays' characteristics	Presentation of sexual myths	
				old	new
1. SK-II: Change Destiny	2015	3 minutes	Gays dressed as females		√
2. Mistine: 5 Brow Pencil for Men	2016	31 seconds	Gays with some masculinity and femininity		√
3. SC Asset: 28 CHIDLOM Condominium	2016	1 minute	Gays with masculinity		√

3.1.3 Personal Sources. There were three groups of personal sources as follow:

3.1.3.1 Message producers: Five subjects who worked in the area of advertising media, marketing communication, and other related business, i.e. advertising creatives, marketing personnel, etc.

1) Warinthornthip Sirichatchanokkul, PR Account Director of Leo Burnett Agency, the producer of SK-II advertisement.

2) Sirin Wanwalee, Executive Creative Director of Leo Burnett Agency, the producer of SK-II advertisement

3) Wanlaya Angsirikulchoti, PR Group Account Director Leo Burnett Agency, the producer of SK-II advertisement

4) Chomchada Kuldilok, Head of Corporate Communication of SC Asset, the producer of SC Asset advertisement

5) Arisa Sorananuphap, Mistine Marketing Manager of Better Way (Thailand).co, Ltd. the producer of Mistine advertisement.

3.1.3.2 Consumers The personal sources in terms of consumers are heterosexual and homosexual consumers because the selected advertisements are TVC commercial advertisements aimed to both heterosexual and homosexual consumers and this research aims to study the decoding of advertisement message so both groups should be studied. (Tsai, 2007). The details of the subjects are:

1) Homosexual consumers. The researcher collected information from this group through an in-depth interview because it is inconvenient for some gay consumers to reveal their identity in a group due to their occupation and social status. The criteria used for selecting the subjects are middle-class gays aged over 25 with any kind of occupation, but earning higher than 25,000 baht monthly, and living in Bangkok or neighboring cities. The reason why the researcher chose middle-class subjects is according to the concept of Barthes (Kaewthep & Hinwiman, 2010), Signs are the production and reproduction space of middle-class myths. Relatively, the middle class has a power in regulating economic and cultural mechanism of a society and this enhances the spreading of their values and norms through all communication channels. A natural construction of a myth, according to Barthes, is also regulated by the power of the middle class. Moreover, gay consumers are one of the high potential consumers in the market among the middle class. Accordingly, a business marketing needs to produce products to respond to the needs of gay consumers with a purchase power. Therefore, 20 middle-class gay consumers, with the same types and personality of gays specified as criteria in choosing selected advertisements (gays with masculine characteristics, gays with both masculine and feminine characteristics, and gays dressed as females occasionally) were the subjects for this study.

2) Heterosexual consumers. The subjects of this group are 18 consumers aged over 25 with a variety of occupation with an income higher than 25,000 baht monthly and living in Bangkok and neighboring cities. The subjects are divided into three gender groups. The first group comprises 6 females, the second group 6 males, and the third group 6 of both males and females. In each group,

subjects are mixed of high, moderate, and low involvement with gays, i.e. having some gay relatives, family members, friends, or connecting with gays in some ways, to gain different perspectives towards gays. The data collection of this group was conducted by a focus group interview.

3.2 Data Collection

3.2.1 Advertisements with gay-related content were collected by internet and YouTube website.

3.2.2 Personal information.

3.2.2.1 Message producers: The data was collected from subjects who worked in the area of advertising media, marketing communication, and other related business, i.e. advertising creatives, marketing personnel, etc., by an in-depth interview with the following primary questions:

- 1) How is a gay-related advertisement constructed?
- 2) What are verbal language, nonverbal language, and technical-practical codes used to convey the meanings of advertising message on general products, gay products, and campaign? And why?
- 3) How do marketing objectives (i.e. profits, benefits, etc.), the value of gays, and a sex diversity in a society affect a creation process of advertising media?
- 4) What are the strategies used in creating gay-related content of an advertisement?
- 5) What are the differences in constructing some signs or symbols in advertisements towards heterosexual and homosexual target groups?

3.2.2.2 Consumers. The data was collected from homosexual consumers by an in-depth interview, and from heterosexual consumers by a focus group interview. The samples were purposively selected and questioned by the following:

- 1) How do you understand (decode or interpret) the portrayal of gays in advertisements? And why do you interpret so?

2) How do you feel about a communication of gays in advertisements? (This question aims to find out what kind of code a consumer decodes an advertisement message: Preferred Reading, Negotiated Reading or Oppositional Reading)

3) Is the advertisement content related with or connected to some of your background, identity or life themes?

4) (For gay consumers) Can you connect your real life to what is communicated in an advertisement? And how?

5) What are your recommendations on the creation of an advertisement with gay-related content or message?

After the questions preparation, the researcher collected the data from the aforementioned samples by a focus group interview and an in-depth interview through the following steps:

Step 1: The researcher conducted a focus group and in-depth interview by having a research assistant to record tapes, shoot photos, and supervise all concerned equipment used in showing advertisements.

Step 2: During the interview, the researcher introduced herself and informed the subjects about the research objectives, including giving time for subjects to know one another and ask questions under a supportive and comfortable, not stressful, climate.

Step 3: After idea exchanges and questions, the subjects were asked to view three selected advertisements. They viewed all three consecutively in the first round and were explained about the overall information the researcher would like to gain from them.

Step 4: The subjects were asked to view each of the advertisements again one by one with questions after each advertisement. It took about 10 minutes for them to express their ideas in each advertisement. The total time used was 30-45 minutes.

3.3 Research Ethics

As this study involves a sensational issue of human beings, the researcher paid high attention to the ethics of the research by complying strictly with research ethics.

First of all, the researcher proposed the first draft of the study to the research committee of the Faculty of Communication Arts and Management Innovation, National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA) to follow the research procedure and to be approved by the Ethics Committee. This study was approved on January 16, 2018. After the approval, the researcher started to conduct the study and collect data. During the data collection, the researcher informed the subjects about the research objectives, steps of collecting data, and rights of the subjects, i.e. no revealing of names, keeping their responses as secret, etc.

3.4 Validation of Research Instrument

3.4.1 In-depth Interview

3.4.1.1 Validity: The subjects of this study are all key informants, i.e. advertisers, creatives, marketers, etc. Besides, the researcher conducted the study by herself (face validity) in a real context (contextual validity), i.e. interviewing at the workplace of the advertisers, or interviewing gay consumers at their own sphere, etc.

3.4.1.2 Reliability: The findings or the responses obtained from the interview were compared with the actual observation to test their congruence. In case of a contradiction, new questions were raised.

3.4.2 Focus Group Interview

3.4.2.1 Validity: The questions were structured based on a clear interview guide. Besides, the interview was conducted in a relaxing place with a supportive climate to assure the subjects to freely express their opinions and to ask and reply to the questions fully.

3.4.2.2 Reliability: The focus group interview was conducted with various groups of both heterosexual and homosexual consumers. In each group, the interview was conducted separately based on gender characteristics: masculinity, masculinity and femininity, and femininity. The results were compared and analyzed with an observation. In case of any contradiction, new questions were raised.

3.5 Data Analysis

3.5.1 Textual analysis: Three advertisements with gay-related content were analyzed with a documentary analysis, which studied the background from the past, to see changes of gay myths in Thai society from the past to present time. The theories used in an analysis are Semiology theory, especially on transmitted myths and the construction of connotative meanings of gays appearing in advertisements, including the kinds of codes used in decoding an advertising message. The analysis framework is as follows:

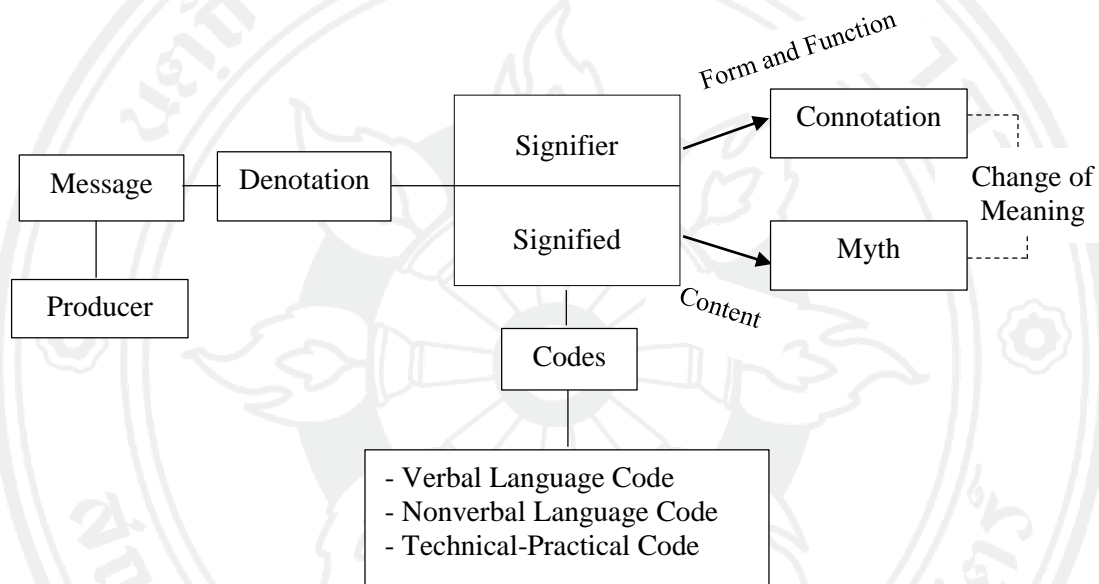


Figure 3.1 Textual analysis frame

From Figure 3.1 the researcher used the theory of Semiology to analyze the change of a myth construction as appearing in advertisement messages, together with additional information obtained from a documentary analysis. Besides, the concept of Advertising creation components or codes was also used in the analysis. The codes being analyzed are 1) verbal language codes comprise slogans and advertising copies, 2) nonverbal language codes comprise a presenter's personality, image/shot, color usage in advertisements, audio components, etc., and 3) technical-practical codes comprise shot size, camera movements, and camera angles.

3.5.2 Consumer Analysis: In-depth interviews and a focus group interview were used to study the decoding of the, based on Semiology Theory, towards advertising messages about gays. Besides, the concept of a sender's encoding and a

receiver's decoding was used to analyze kinds of the codes used in interpreting the message:

3.5.2.1 Preferred reading or a receiver's decoding in the same way as a sender's encoding,

3.5.2.2 Negotiated reading or a receiver's different decoding from a sender's encoding, but it can be negotiated, and

3.5.2.3 Oppositional reading or a receiver's decoding is in contrast with a sender's encoding.

The researcher collected the data on the subjects' exposure to the selected advertisement. After that, the researcher conducted a data reduction by taking the irrelevant information out of the findings. Collected data were interpreted, categorized, and presented in the form of descriptive analysis with tables and diagrams for an easier understanding.

CHAPTER 4

Gay: The Construction of Sexual Myths in Advertisement

In this chapter, the researcher presents the findings on the construction of sexual myths related with gays appearing in advertisements with gay-related content, including the advertising producers' strategies of encoding an advertising message to their consumers. From collecting data of TV advertisements with gay-related content, ten advertisements were found with the presentation of gays in the image of a mockery, an exaggerating sexual expression, an ambiguity, a flirting with a woman as a shield, and a self-concealing. Only three advertisements were found with new positive meanings as shown in Figure 4.1, which is what the researcher tries to search from the Textual Analysis. The question this study aims to answer is how such new meanings are constructed and how they change from the old meanings in the past.

In chapter 4, the findings of sexual myths construction through advertising message or content are presented into three parts:

- 4.1: Meanings and appearing sexual myths encoded by advertising components
- 4.2: Creative strategies on advertisements with gay-related content.
- 4.3: Changes in sexual myths in advertising.

4.1 Meaning and appearing sexual myths encoded by advertising components

In this part, three advertising copies are analyzed in order to see communication codes and their symbolic meanings appearing in each advertisement. Such meanings are intended message the advertising producers want the audience to perceive and interpret by disposing signs and organizing advertising components purposively. Nevertheless, the encoding process is more complicating than a daily communication due to nature and characteristics of TVC. Besides, advertisements use a lot of

stereotyped images. Besides, advertisements have to run within a limited space and time so they have to communicate their message as precisely and shortly as they can. Stereotyped images thus can provide them "an economy of effect" for both producers and receivers. Therefore, producers can present their points most briefly and quickly while the receivers can use the least effort and time in interpreting the message. The overall outline of a textual analysis for this study is illustrated in Table 4.1

Table 4.1 illustrates the overall outline of a textual analysis for this study

Sign components used in constructing meanings and myths.	Study approach
1. codes of advertising components	1.1 Verbal Language Code <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - name of the product - slogans - copy 2.2 Nonverbal Language Code <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - presenter - image/shot - usage of colors and light - audio 2.3 Technical-Practical Code <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - shot size - camera movement - camera angles
2. Denotation (Reality)	An analysis of direct meanings or the meanings that we can perceive. It is concrete and is the "First Order" meaning, according to Barthes, i.e. to present straightly what kind of product it wants, what the purpose of the advertising is, etc.

Table 4.1 (Continued)

Sign components used in constructing meanings and myths.	Study approach
3. Connotative Signifier	An analysis of indirect meaning through the interpretation of signs with socially and culturally additional meanings. It is the “Second Order” meaning, according to Barthes. The interpretation requires the consideration of forms and functions of an advertisement.
4. Connotative Signified (Myth)	It is similar to Connotative Signifier. The difference is that the meaning can be analyzed from the presented content of an advertisement and the sequences of myths occurrence.

From Table 4.1, it can be summarized that the researcher studied the meanings and sexual myths appearing in three advertisements (SK-II: Change Destiny, Mistine: Eyebrow pencil, and SC ASSET: 28 Chidlom Condominium) by analyzing four components:

- 1) Codes of advertising components: verbal language, nonverbal language, and technical-practical codes
- 2) Denotative meanings or the first-order meaning of an advertisement
- 3) Connotative meanings via signifiers or the second-order meaning of an advertisement.
- 4) Connotative meanings via signified.

To help explain the construction of the meanings process more clearly, each advertisement is analyzed in details by a textual analysis as follows:

4.1.1 SK-II: Change Destiny broadcast on television in 2015 with three-minute length. The purpose of this advertisement is to present a diversity of sex in a society and to promote a good image of SK-II. The main concept of the advertisement is to present a story of Khun Sha, a writer of a book called, “Diary of a Tootsie” or “The Record of a Homosexual”, which is very well known in social media. His story is about the transcendence over a fear of revealing a gay identity to the family and surrounding people.

Story

Khun Sha, a writer of “Diary of a Tootsie (The Record of a Homosexual)”, narrates about his experience in revealing himself as a gay to his family, especially to his father. Accidentally, his father saw him have female cosmetics with him so Khun Sha decided to tell the truth to his family that he was a gay. In doing so, he was so afraid and anxious. Certainly, his family was very upset with this acknowledgment, but Khun Sha chose to prove himself by apprenticing his writing seriously until he got a huge number of followers. Nevertheless, finally, this helped his family understand what he was. While narrating Khun Sha’s story, the advertisement showed the backstage where Khun Sha was dressed and made up as a woman before going up to the stage for an interview. At the end of the advertisement, the MC announced the name of Khun Sha on the stage with a big applause from the audience.

Voice Over

Khun Sha: As far as I can remember who I am, not even once I feel confused to know that I am not a real man. However, the worst thing was when my parents knew what I was since I always kept it a secret. One day, my father left a car key with me but before he walked further, he asked me to give him his key. I grasped it from my handbag and sent to him but it was not a key but was a powder case. Of course, at that moment, I was so frightened and scared. I felt that from that day my life would never be the same. However, after pondering for a while, I felt that this was the right time I should tell him the truth. Therefore, I told him I had something to tell him. I said I was not like other men. I liked men and I had some effeminacy. Upon hearing so, he was very angry and deep down inside he was extremely disappointed.

He was absolutely surprised since he never imagined that I would be so. During that time, my life was so tough but the show must go on so I had to prove myself to let him see that I could be good at studying, be a good kid, and be the chief of the family. Since childhood, I love writing. Earlier, I thought that there should not be any occupation or space for my writing. I have started to write since the big floods in 2011. I wrote this story in the social media. It turned out readers liked my language. They thought that it was amusing. After that, I got so many followers that media paid attention to my written diary, i.e. TV, radio, etc., and contacted me. I think the real turning point in my life was when my dad said he understood and accepted what I am. That day, we had dinner together and suddenly he asked, *“Which program have you been to today? Your hair is gold! Now many people know you and follow you. You have to behave well and be a good model for others. Now I understand you.”* Since that moment, I could feel that everything in my life has been unlocked. I chose to be honest with myself and be myself. Sha is Sha and I believe that you can do it as well. Change Destiny.”

MC: Please give a big applause for our guest today, Khun Sha, the writer of the Diary of a Tootsie (The Record of a Homosexual)

Super

- 0:04 SK-II proudly present a story of “change destiny”
- 1:37 The owner of the page Toodsdiary with 566,000 followers in social media in two years and the writer of “Diary of a Tootsie” (Toods Diary) or the Record of a Homosexual” with the total sales of 45,000 books in only 11 months.
- 2:48 Theetawit Setthachai, the author
- 3:00 Watch more # changedestiny Stories from SK-II

4.1.1.1 Denotation. According to Barthes, a denotation or direct meaning means an actual object or a thing that really happens. It is a meaning what is perceivable and objective. It is the first-order meaning. The purpose of "Change Destiny" of SK-II advertisement is to create a good image for the product brand through a variety of perspectives and narrations of the presenter. "Change Destiny" presents a story of a gay who dares to reveal his real self to his family and surrounding people and proves himself until his family accepts his being. The true story of the presenter is in congruence with the slogan of the product, "Change Destiny." Besides, the advertisement tries to convey a message that we can choose to change our own lives and determine our own destiny

4.1.1.2 Connotation or an indirect meaning via the interpretation of advertising component codes. According to the concept of mythology, it is the Second-Order meaning. It is in a form of a sign or is called as "signifier" that requires an interpretation from a cultural dimension. The analysis of advertising component codes is as follows:

1) Verbal Language Code

(1) Slogan. This advertisement uses a slogan, "Change Destiny," to persuade the audience to view that they can change their destiny by themselves. They are the ones who can determine their own destiny. Thus, this message is in accordance with the plot and theme of the transmitted advertisement. There had been an ancient motto, saying "Blue lies our life." In other words, our life depends on the blue or stars in the sky. Human beings have no right to choose their destiny but only let it go. From the Buddhism perspective, whether a man will go to heaven or to a hell, it is all destined before birth. Similarly, a belief that being a gay is destined because of his sexual sin in the past life. Therefore, the slogan of the advertisement, "Change Destiny," tries to reconstruct a new meaning of gays. However, the reconstruction of meaning will still base on the old belief. In other words, it insists that our life is destined but we choose to change our destiny through an action. In this advertisement, such action is "to accept one's own self."

"This advertisement can convey two meanings. The first meaning is a direct point we want to present. Namely, the skin condition is our own

skin that can be changed, and so is the future of it. Besides, fair complexion can enhance a woman's bravery and self-confidence. The second or indirect point is SK-II tries to be another motive that mobilizes Thai women and other sexes to be more confident and to independent from a social confinement, i.e. an idealistic beauty, social commitment, and bias, etc., and can destine their own future."

(Warinthornthip Sirichatchanokkul, interview, September 8, 2017)

(2) Copy. The SK-II advertisement uses a narrative copy to interest the audience to follow the story of the presenter. The narration of the gay's own story or from his perspective can promote a positive image for the product brand. Besides, the copy also indicates the positioning of the product that tries to reach the gay target. In addition, the copy presents a major persuasive message of "a transcendence over the fear of being rejected by the family." The presenter said,

"During that time, my life was so tough but the show must go on so I had to prove myself to let him see that I could be good at studying, be a good kid, and be the chief of the family".

This indicates the uncertainty of life he faced, especially the fear of not being accepted by his family. Finally, he said,

"After that, I got so many followers that media paid attention to my written diary, i.e. TV, radio, etc., and contacted me. I think the real turning point in my life was when my dad said he understood and accepted what I am. That day, we had dinner together and suddenly he asked which program I had been to that day. He also said my hair was gold. He warned me that now many people know me and follow me. I have to behave well and be a good model for others. Now he understands me."

From the above copy, it illustrates that his family accepts his gay-being but the presenter needs to prove to himself that he can be successful with his writing competence. This emphasizes the myth that one can be a gay but he

must be successful in something in order to be accepted by his family and surrounding people. The copy of this advertisement is special because it bases on a true story of the presenter himself. For this kind of fact, the advertising producer cannot distort it but he has to select which part of the presenter's story should be narrated in the advertisement. The part of revealing himself a gay is the best part ever and can reflect the concept of "Change Destiny" the best.

“We had to talk and interview him to select the part of his story that can call the audience’s attention and curiosity. The audience liked to know how he told his parents. I believe that for this kind of issue, once one has it in his mind, it is very hard to tell the parents. Personally, I believe that the society can accept what Khun Sha is but it is hard to talk to his family, especially his father. This is Khun Sha’s sensational point, and we raised up that point to emphasize to add deeper insight into the story.”

(Wanlaya Angsirikulchoti, interview, September 15, 2017)

“A story is the most significant starting point. Our concept is to mix the concept of SK-II with a true story of people. For the copy, the global level had their storyline but at the local level, we had to develop and adapt it to suit for our context. For instance, the story of Khun Sha focuses on his success as a writer but we needed more story about his previous life. Thus, we raised up his third sex to be presented to match with the concept of change destiny. Most of all, we had to mix SK-II into the story too. Therefore, in the scene where Khun Sha picked up his powder case instead of a car key to his father. The powder case must be SK-II, which is our product. All of these had to be communicated to Khun Sha and get his approval. It is a kind of a collaboration since Khun Sha had to narrate his own story.”

(Warinthornthip Sirichatchanokkul, ibid)

2) Nonverbal Language Code

(1) Presenter. The selection of a presenter is a thorough and important stage. The "Change Destiny" advertisements selected presenters from

several countries in Asia, i.e. Japan, Hong Kong, China, and South Korea. In other countries, the presenters of the advertisement are all female. Thus, the decision of choosing a gay presenter in Thailand is very stunning. SK-II in Thailand chose to present Khun Sha, a gay who wrote his story in "Diary of a Tootsie" or "The Record of a Homosexual" to inspire people to stand up to do their dreams to become true. Definitely, the image of the presenter must go in line with and support the positive image of the product brand as well. The selection of a gay as a presenter in this advertisement illustrates the respect of sexual diversity. This also influences female consumers who are also the main target of SK-II to perceive SK-II with a more positive image as well. This opens a social space for gays in a society. Moreover, the celebrity of a successful writer like Khun Sha is also advantageous for creating a good image of the product. More than that, in Thai society lately there has been plenty of changes in various dimensions, especially the trend of "metrosexual" marketing. From the research of Pensiri (2007), she found that more than 50% of metrosexuals in Thailand were gays. Congruently, the study of Duangwises (2012) found that gays had 95% more increased social space, i.e. being presented in mass media, expressing their identity in various kinds of business industry, and a wider opening for gay and the third-sex issues. All of these are the reasons why SK-II selected a successful gay as their presenter to share the story of his "Change Destiny".

“ Khun Sha had an interesting story in the trend at that time. His book also was launched at the same time and everything seemed to suit for him. Especially, his story coincided with the theme of Change Destiny concept. Besides, Thai people can accept the third sex more than the past. Therefore, before choosing a gay as our presenter, we have to understand this point first. Previously, we proposed many choices, both women and gays, for our Brand Communication manager who is a Thai, but Khun Sha was our most recommended one because he had an interesting story and matched with the advertising concept of SK-II. Then, he understood why we chose Khun Sha. In addition, SK-II was going online. Most of the internet users are teenagers and young generation so they can accept this kind of issue. At present, our brand communication manager is a westerner. If you ask me if

we still want to choose Khun Sha, we can tell you right away that we will because of his identity and his story also truly matches with our concept."

(Warinthornthip Sirichatchanokkul, *ibid*)

"We chose a gay like Khun Sha to be our main character while SK-II is a product that has accompanied female consumers for a long time. Therefore, SK-II was very defiant in choosing and taking a risk in doing so. We have gays use our products but most of them are ordinary people without high positions. Thus, when this campaign was launched, they felt that we gave them a respect or we saw their existence. This campaign helped increase our sales accordingly. On the other hand, another positive outcome was women also accepted this advertisement. Normally, women are very susceptible to this kind of issue. Likewise, fan clubs of the movie, "Diary of a Tootsie" are also females. Therefore, we got no problem at all. On the contrary, it is only positive and positive. Our target audience also felt that we presented the truth and we were very brave to present this."

(Sirin Wanwalee, interview, September 15, 2017)

(2) Visual/Video. One of the main elements of advertising images is a movement, which can draw attention and communicate the main concept of the advertising well. The examples of the images or illustration in advertising are a supporting image illustrating the desirable climate of the story that the presenter is narrating. The image of the family shown in the storytelling of Khun Sha illustrates the use of a "social code" to indicate an interpersonal relationship. A display switch between the picture of Khun Sha in the past on the mirror of a dressing table and Khun Sha on the stage narrating his story demonstrates a change of Khun Sha. In the scene where Khun Sha talked about his writing success, the illustration of plenty letters and stories Khun Sha wrote on his popular page, Toodsiary, was displayed, etc. All of these illustrations reflect the producer's effort in creating the audience's common imagination with the story being told. Another illustration used in this advertisement is the image of the presenter or actor. It is the image of his movement and his story-telling manner. All through the story, it demonstrates the transformed gender of the presenter from being dressed and made-up like a man to that like a

woman before going up to the stage to be interviewed about the book he wrote. A gradual movement or transformation from a male to a female helps to enhance the image that the presenter chooses to be himself confidently without any fear in revealing himself. Cosmetics and golden wigs increase his confidence on stage and this ensures the audience that his masculinity is not of which he feels confident but his femininity is. Today, he is no longer afraid of choosing to present himself as what he wants. Furthermore, from a marketing perspective, his make-up is another stage of presenting the target product or it can be inserted into the story to connect with the product perfectly.

“The reason why we narrated the story through the picture against the mirror of the dressing table was that first of all, not everyone knows Khun Sha. Therefore, the audience who do not know him can understand and follow our story. Secondly, Khun Sha has not been like this since he was born. This is then a change of his destiny and it is the key concept of this advertisement. The story is like before and after but it is a before and after with a new perspective to see a good development of life. Our story thus is intended to be bigger than the skincare issue. The illustration of the dressing room reflects a personal space. It is the place where an interview took place and space where he revealed and told us his story. Backstage or the dressing room is space or we can call "before" and "behind" the curtain. Before the curtain means a performance on stage and behind the curtain means his place for dressing himself. Symbolically, it is the space of revealing the truth or concealed issues.”

(Sirin Wanwalee, *ibid.*)

“Backstage or the dressing room is for the preparation of skin before going up to the stage. It is a gradual portrayal of skin preparation and skin beauty. After a make-up, it looks beautiful and moisturized. All products of SK-II emphasize skin moisture.”

(Warinthornthip Sirichatchanokkul, *ibid.*)

(3) Usage of Colors and Light. This advertisement uses a dark tone, especially black. The usage of colors and light to convey meanings is an important element of an advertisement. For Thai people, "black" is a horror and mystery. Black can also relate to a sexual meaning. The producer uses the code of color that accords with the presented story. He uses low-key light to signify the choice of accepting his deviated sex. This kind of low-key light will darken the area around the presenter and can call a high attention from the audience.

“This tone of color is not used only in this campaign but also in the campaigns of other subsidiaries in Asia. Each country can choose their own actors and story independently, but we must hold our mood and tone of the product in common. For dark-tone colors, we do not want to make it stressful but we want to add a feeling of seriousness and earnestness. We want to give a feeling that we are very enthusiastic to tell the audience this story. On the other hand, black is the principal color of this advertisement that conveys a feeling of elegance and a classic, which is the positioning of SK-II.”

(Sirin Wanwalee, ibid)

(4) Audio. Songs and music can make an advertisement more interesting and arouse a common emotion, including an enchantment. The advertisement of Change Destiny of SK-II uses Post Rock with low rhythm to make the audience think and follow the presented story. The ascending rhythm, from slow to quick rhythm, matches with the presenter's storytelling rhythm. By a comparison, it is like curling oneself up amidst the darkness because of a fear at first when the presenter narrated that he was so afraid to tell his family that he was a gay. After that, the light is suddenly bright up when he narrated that his family could accept him. The brightness of color thus means a relief and happiness of being oneself and being accepted. Similarly, Post-Rock music is appropriate and accords with the content of the advertisement.

“Music is harmonious with the story the scenes, such as the supporting music in the dressing room scene where the presenter was transforming

himself from being a male to be a female. Then, the climax is when he opened the curtain. I think all are fitted and can build the audience's emotion to go along with the story. In spite of no image, the audience can still feel from Khun Sha's voice and the music."

(Wanlaya Angsirikulchoti, *ibid.*)

3) Technical-Practical Code

(1) Shot Size. In SK-II advertisement, four sizes of shots are used: 1) Medium long shot (MLS) or a shot from a head to knees to illustrate the presenter's personality and manner 2) Medium shot (MS) or a fair distance between the audience and the presenter. In other words, it is not too far to stare and not too near to feel uncomfortable 3) Close-up (CU) or the shot from a head to shoulders to see the presenter's face clearly or to indicate the intimacy 4) Extreme Close-up (ECU) or the shot of only a face or some particular part of the body to highlight some certain spots sharply so that the audience can view it closely.

From the study, this advertisement mostly uses ECU and CU shot sizes to let the audience see details in the dressing room and table during the transformation of the presenter from a male to a female. While CU is used to arouse the audience's common feeling and imagination towards the story being presented.

" These are basically advertising techniques. When the parts of the story do not call for any emotion, we will use a long shot to see the overall atmosphere. However, if we need to touch the audience's feeling or need the audience to listen to our message, we will use a close-up or extreme close-up because we want them to get close to see and hear what we want to convey. On the other hand, our hidden message is we sell skin-care products so we want them to see fair complexion of the presenter too. Therefore, a shot size is a focal element. If the shot of Khun Sha is too long and the audience can see people running up and down on the stage or backstage, their concentration and listening will be greatly affected."

(Sirin Wanwalee, *ibid.*)

“Mostly, CU and ECU shots are used to highlight the skin to indicate connotatively that Khun Sha uses the product of SK-II. Therefore, it is important to portray a face with perfect or balanced moisture. The skin needs to be clear and bright. For a CU shot, we want them to see our product brand. Besides, it can be used to focus on Khun Sha's eyes to illustrate his emotion, and his real identity while narrating. The third- sex people are sentimental about this issue. Still, this shot size is common in advertising.”

(Warinthornthip Sirichatchanokkul, *ibid.*)

(2) Camera Movement. It is another technique in conveying intended meanings in advertisements. From the analysis of SK-II advertisement, the producer used two techniques of the camera movement: Tilt and Pan. Tilt is to move a camera lens into a sloping position or to press it down in a vertical position without moving the entire camera. It is used to represent the eyes of looking at a gay identity of the presenter.

Pan is to rotate or close a camera on its axis from left to right or right to left without moving the entire camera. A slow pan gives a feeling of relaxation. The producer uses a pan to show the picture of Khun Sha's family being stick on the mirror in the dressing room, which is like viewing his past from the picture. Besides a pan from one image to another image helps to connect the relations between the parts of the story presented by the presenter. This can increase the audience's common feeling.

“ Tilt and Pan are common camera movements used in advertising to draw more feelings from the audience.”

(Sirin Wanwalee, *ibid.*)

(3) Camera Angles. Same as camera movements, camera angles help to build the audience's emotion. The SK-II advertisement uses a normal-angle shot or eye-level shot to convey regular feelings.

“ A camera angle like a Normal-angle shot is used generally in advertising to present a story in a normal way, not with a particular or different perspective. Therefore, a normal-angle shot is used all through this advertisement.”

(Sirin Wanwalee, *ibid.*)

4.1.1.3 Connotative Signified (Sexual Myth) It is a sexual gay-related myth in the advertisement. Change Destiny of SK-II advertisement presents a story of Khun Sha, a famous internet influencer who wrote a book called, "Diary of a Tootsie" or "the Record of a Homosexual". His story is found amusing and is followed by a large number of the fan page. The advertising thus picks up the issue of his success in combination with his self-disclosure to his family that he is a gay. From the story narrated by the presenter, the focal point is when he decides to tell his family that he is a gay. The presenter narrated,

“During that time, my life was so tough but the show must go on so I had to prove myself to let him see that I could be good at studying, be a good kid, and be the chief of the family”.

From the above content, it illustrates that his family did not accept for the first time when he confessed that he was a gay. Thus, this leads to prove himself or to do something to make his family accept him. Consequently, the acceptance does not come from the acceptance of his being a gay but from the success the gay accomplishes. Furthermore, it points out that sometimes gays need to exert more effort than others do by using their competence to achieve their goals. This can enable surrounding people to accept him and not to label him as an abnormal or sexually deviated man. In this case, an acceptance is an important message. Therefore, the advertisement tries to portray a transcendence over the fear of revealing his gay identity to his family as what he wants is an "acceptance."

Although the story presented in this advertisement seems to be individualistic since it is a narration of only one gay. However, the story is narrated through an advertisement in the form of an extreme persuasion. Therefore, an

advertisement is a space or sphere of constructing a sexual myth no matter if the producer intends to do so or not. The myth constructed from this advertisement is "gays must have high competence or capability." Consequently, it is an acceptance of individual gays under some conditions, which is still alike the acceptance of gays in the past. Namely, gays with high competence are often more accepted and have a more positive image than general gays. The stereotype that gays have to earn some abilities in order to be accepted in a society is still reproduced. Such stereotype still emphasizes the judgment of gays on their sex rather than on their genuine individuality.

4.1.2 Mistine 5 Brow Pencil for Men. The advertisement was broadcast in 2016 with 31 seconds long with a purpose of introducing a new product, a brow pencil for men by having Pongsak (Aof) as the presenter. The main concept is a trial to communicate that the product (brow pencil) is good for both men and gays. Guidelines for using the product are also presented by the presenter.

Story

A question is raised, "where is the manliness? How can we tell? Physical appearance, dressing, or bold eyebrows? After that, it is the presenter's demonstration of how to use an eyebrow pencil. At the end, there is a woman trying to approach the presenter but he pulls in another man instead.

Voice Over

What makes a man a real man? His muscular body, cool dresses, or just simply bold brows? Mistine 5 Brow Pencil for Men for drawing bold brows for men. Draw it thick and spread out smoothly. Presenter: Pongsak (Aof) with bold brows and a manly look.

Super

Mistine 5 Brow Pencil for Men and Mistine Brand

4.1.2.1 Denotation The first-order meaning of Mistine 5 Brow Pencil for Men is to introduce a new product or a brow pencil for men with a convenient and easy instruction to ensure a perfect manliness of having thick, sharp, and dark brows. The main concept is for male consumers. Especially, at present people take care of themselves much more than in the past. Besides, the concept of a "Metrosexual" Marketing that highlights a manliness emerged. Specifically, the consumers are males who give special care to their physical appearances. Therefore, Mistine produces this product to respond to the needs of this target group.

4.1.2.2 Connotation. The connotative meanings through the codes of advertising components are the Second-Order meanings. They are signifiers that require an interpretation in analyzing their meanings. From analyzing the codes shown in advertising components, the findings are the following:

1) Verbal Language Code

(1) Slogan. The advertisement uses the slogan, "Bold Brows, A Real Man" (With bold brows, you can be a real man.) The producer wants to present the manliness or masculinity through the slogan, which accords with the product or brow pencils for men. The main targets are gay and male consumers. The emphasis on "Manliness" is for creating a stereotyped image that whether men or gays must possess a manliness as their core attribute. This concept is transmitted through the presenter, Aof or Pongsak, who is widely known as a gay.

"Although the product itself says that it is a male product, especially our slogan, "Bold Brows, A True Man" (with thick brows, you can be a real man)," the advertisement ends interestingly with a scene of the presenter's pulling a handsome man towards him before raising his brows with a hidden meaning. Because of this, it shows that the product is not only for men but also for a man with incomplete manliness."

(Derojanawong, 2016, May 15-18th)

"From the slogan, we try to convey the message that this product is for men. We emphasize that our product is for men through the presentation of 1-2 keywords. Therefore, we just say with thick brows, you can be a

true man. We want to focus that if a man wants to look good or cool, to have thick brows can achieve that needs.”

(Arisa Sorananuphap, interview, October 20, 2017)

(2) Copy. The copy of this advertisement is “what can make you a real man, a muscular body, cool dresses, or just bold brows?” New Mistine 5 Brow Pencil for Men. “Draw dark, and smoothly spread-out.” The copy indicates the producer’s objective of reflecting the attributes of a manly man, i.e. muscles, apparels, etc. by adding the new meaning of having dark brows as another manly attribute for men. At the end of the advertisement, a woman comes to kiss the presenter but the presenter pulls another handsome man towards him instead and says, “With bold brows, you can be a real man.” This even reflects an effort in approaching gay targets who are “New Comer and New Revenue”. (Wattanapanit, 2007) Besides, two fundamental appeals are used to stimulate men’s purchase of this product: fundamental needs of that particular product and the personality derived from the product utility. Therefore, this advertisement uses a copy emphasizing various purposes for men.

“Male-consumer markets have a high potential and continual growth, especially for metrosexuals who tend to use cosmetics for their make-up increasingly. An influence from Korea draws Thai men to make-up, especially by eyebrow pencils. From a survey, 90% of male subjects reply that the first piece of cosmetics they buy is a brow pencil. Consequently, the company paid a huge amount of 55 million baht to launch brow pencils for men and have Aof (Pongsak) as a presenter. At the end of this year, there will be a launch of another two items of male products. Nowadays, the company earns 300 million baht sales volume of male products. After launching more products by the end of this year, the sales volume is expected to go up to 900 million baht.”

(Derojanawong, 2016, May 15-18th)

“The image of males and females we present in our products will absolutely different. For females, they are concerned more about the

value function of the product while for males; they are just concerned that such product is for them. Therefore, the copy focuses on a few concepts, i.e. muscular body, good-looking dresses, and dark brows. Of course, we aim for both real men and gays. Therefore, it is very important to communicate our concept in the most compromising way. For instance, normally Mistine advertisement will focus on rationality to see the function of the product. However, for this advertisement, we give emotional dimension as a priority. The consumers must be surprised to see that Mistine also produces products for men and this message is transmitted more widely. We use an emotional cue. Our mood and tone are to let Khun Pongsak present his elegance. When Khun Pongsak is with Mistine, consumers can recall and want to follow because the story is different. Anyway, eventually, we need to add rational of how to use the product. Compared with other advertisements, this advertisement performs the functional part the least."

(Arisa Sorananuphap, *ibid.*)

2) Nonverbal Language Code

(1) Presenter. The important component of this advertisement is the presenter. The presenter is like the consumers' representative. The advertisement reflects who the consumers of this product are. Mistine always gives a high importance to a presenter. The consumers' perception of our brands comes from our products' presenters. It is the producer's intention in selecting Khun Pongsak as a presenter to reflect that our needed target consumers are gays. Khun Pongsak as a well-known gay can make this advertisement interesting. In this advertisement, the producer uses product codes through the presenter's dress in a suit with a tie to portray an elegance and great style. This code is for constructing a meaning for middle-class real men and gays who take special care of their body. At the end, a social code is used by having a woman kiss a presenter before a presenter pulls in a man. The transmitted social code of a kissing is western culture and a position of a kiss can convey different meanings. In the advertisement, the position of the kiss is the presenter's cheek. It can convey the meaning of a friendship as well. Therefore, what the producer tries to signal to the audience is that the presenter needs a love relationship with a man, not a woman. Another social code

used is the presenter's gaze into a camera. This gaze is for consumers or the audience whom this advertisement wants to target.

“The selection of Aof Pongsak as a presenter is to respond to the marketing needs to find a male singer, star, or actor to create a perception and to impress female consumers. From the survey, 90% of them favor Aof Pongsak. Besides, he owns a personality that matches with the metrosexual concept. Most of all, he has never presented in any product advertisement before. This can make a much easier recall of the product so it is different from some artists who present for many brands or products and this can confuse the consumers’ memory of the product. Mistine is the product brand that uses a presenter to create our brand and we can increase our sales volume continually all through these 20 years. We use each presenter for a different purpose depending on the products and marketing requirement. From the perception of over 50% of the consumers, they recall Mistine brand as a product with a presenter.

(Derojanawong, 2016, May 15-18th)

“ We did not choose a man with crab craws because we need a certain point to communicate with our clients. If the presenter is a real man, it is unrealistic. For example, if we chose Nadech, he did not use this kind of product. Therefore, we had to choose someone in between, and Aof Pongsak is one of them. We decided to choose Khun Pongsak because of his good-looking, both womanly and manly. He is cute but also elegant. All images of Khun Pongsak can present Mistine brand the best. Especially, our executive focuses on the selection of a presenter very much. In the past, sometimes we used some famous stars but we could not reach the intended target so much. When we chose Khun Pongsak, we are quite happy because our brand has never been unconventional before. In the past, we used Khun Tik, Jesdaporn. At that time, although the presenter is male, we can female products. Now, we look for target consumers alike Khun Aof more clearly so the Mistine brand is presented through his amusing but elegant personality. He hits the center of the target exactly. He has some distinctiveness.”

(Arisa Sorananuphap, *ibid.*)

(2) Visual/Video There are three images used in the advertisement of Mistine 5 Brow Pencil for Men: 1) the portrayal of an overall atmosphere for opening the advertisement before introducing the product. 2) The presentation of an actor or the presenter as consumer representatives, namely Khun Aof Pongsak, has bold brows suitable for the product, which helps to create consumers' imagination towards the outcome of the product usage. This increases the credibility of the product and accesses the consumers more closely. 3) The portrayal of the product. The producer presents the product in the middle of the advertisement to describe the product with a graphic presentation of having the product flying in the air to make the product eminent. After that, it is the demonstration of how to use the product by the presenter.

“ We designed the image how a man should act or if he should wear a suit all the time or he should carry it in his arms. However, normally men do not often do. They prefer wearing it to emphasize their look as a man, especially an urban man. Normally, advertisements will show this function. However, for this advertisement, we have Khun Pongsak wear a suit to look handsome. We intended to communicate the end of the advertisement to gays as a surprise. When we run an advertisement, we surely want our audience to view it up to the end. We thus leave this gimmick at the end”

(Arisa Sorananuphap, ibid.)

(3) Usage of Colors. The producer uses gray, black, and white for the scenes and for the presenter's dress. It is the selection of colors of the same line. In other words, it is all colors in the similar tone, not a contrasting or different tone. White, gray, and black used in this advertisement give the feeling of an elegance, distinctiveness, and interestingness. On the other hand, it conveys the meaning of modernity and newness because brow pencils for men are counted as an initiative business in producing brow pencils for men and gays.

“ The colors of blackish tone look elegant. Among all images, Khun Aof must be the most distinctive with the utmost look of a man.

However, the advertisement ends with the image of not a real man. We thus used gray tone to convey such meaning. If we use a too colorful image, it will focus on the presenter's playful characteristics too much. Instead, we want to communicate his elegance. The advertisement focuses mainly on the elegant look to connect with the concept that an elegant man also uses this kind of product."

(Arisa Sorananuphap, *ibid.*)

(4) Audio. Audio components used in this advertisement are the sound of a drum and harr-beat rhythm to give a sense of firmness and stability in congruence with the concept of a masculinity, which the producer tries to encode. At the end of the advertisement in which the presenter pulls in a man to approach him, a light jingle is used. This kind of jingle is often used in a sitcom or in a comedy to give a sense of amusement in the scene where a real man at the opening turns to choose a man instead. This kind of rhythm can draw good attention and can present the property of the product well.

"We used the rhythm to emphasize coolness and firmness. Normally, the audience will smoothly listen to the music but upon hearing the rhythm, the audience who do not keep their eyes on the screen will take a glance to see what it is. Therefore, we can draw them to pay attention."

(Arisa Sorananuphap, *ibid.*)

3) Technical-Practical Code

(1) Shot Sizes. Four sizes of shots are used in this advertisement: 1) Long Shot (LS) or a full-body shot to display the costume of the presenter. 2) Medium shot (MS) The producer wants to illustrate the presenter's muscles, his six packs and the relationship between the presenter and the other two actors. 3) Close-up (CU) to portray the feeling of the presenter and to present the manliness of the presenter, especially the heart of this advertisement is the presenter. 4) Extreme Close-up (ECU) to emphasize the details of parts of the presenter's face, especially his bold brows, which the product can respond to the consumers' needs.

“A long shot is for displaying an overall elegant look of Aof, our presenter. Of course, we mostly use close-up shots to present the distinguished point of our product, i.e. to see Aof’s bold brows and to see how to use the product.”

(Arisa Sorananuphap, ibid.)

(2) Camera Movement. The producer uses “Pan” or to move or close the camera horizontally from left to right or right to left without moving the camera to explore the masculine characteristics and to connect the relations between the presenter and the other two actors in the advertisement.

“We use a normal camera movement and try not to use too complicating techniques in this advertisement because we want to pan to see Khun Aof’s elegance and to assure the audience that our product can improve their elegance and create their manliness”

(Arisa Sorananuphap, ibid.)

(3) Camera Angles. The producer uses a normal-angle shot or an eye-level shot that is suitable for presenting the new product because the camera is *at* the same level with normal sight level of the audience. This makes the audience feel comfortable in viewing the product. Besides, it creates a sense of informality and stimulates the audience towards a trial of this new product.

“Normal-angle shot is selected because we do not want to make the presentation look too complicating. This kind of angle makes the audience access to the product easily. We want to make the product look interesting in a simple way without any complication. The audience can view the product clearly.”

(Arisa Sorananuphap, ibid.)

4.1.2.3 Connotative Signified (Sexual Myth). The presenter of Mistine 5 Brow Pencil for Men is Khun Aof Pongsak who reveals himself publicly that he is a gay. He is the first gay presenter of Mistine. The advertising components at the opening of the advertisement display characteristics of a man so it is the construction of signs to convey the meaning that a muscular body, good-looking dress, and bold brows, are men's attributes that lead to their sales of the product. Such concept complies with men's value of sex and their sex roles in a society. A man must be strong, defiant, and indifferent or shows no emotion while a woman must be tender, sensitive, and dependent on men. To use a gay as a presenter of the product and to present his manliness ties with a myth through the message of the advertisement. This can enable the consumers to be obsessed by such myth, which is a step toward stimulating a consumption. When consumers absorb this myth of masculinity, a decision-making process occurs because brow pencils can strengthen their masculinity, especially because of the slogan, "Bold Brows, Be a Real Man." (With bold brow, you can be a real man.) Mistine wants to produce the product to respond to men's needs; therefore, the selection of a gay presenter causes an ambiguity in their marketing target. Although, Mistine wants to include gays into their target consumers; however, gays are very diverse and complex. Some groups of gays want to look like a real man but love a man while some groups want to display their femininity rather than masculinity. Therefore, to create a stereotype that "gays must have a perfect manliness" might be another sexual myth constructed by advertisements but it may have a negative effect on gays who are not so confident if they are gays or not. They might try to create their masculinity from a sexual myth of the advertisements. Therefore, the advertising sphere has a power in constructing a new image of a beauty-oriented masculinity without casting aside an ideal masculinity of the society. This blurs the bipolar opposition between a man and woman in the past. Accordingly, the sexual myth focusing on masculinity reflects the intent of the advertisement to create a kind of masculinity that is different from gays-being and femininity to stimulate a consumption.

4.1.3 28 CHIDLOM Condominium of SC ASSET. The advertisement was broadcast in 2016 with one-minute length. The purpose of the advertisement is to present a new style of a condominium, by focusing on consumers who want to have a new style of living and to be themselves freely. The value of advertisement is created in the copy of the advertisement with the main concept of presenting a variety of people living in Thai society with their own choices. These people, living in a big city like Bangkok, have a high degree of being themselves with their personal dreams and passions. The advertisement tries to display its target groups and indicates that the CHIDLOM Condominium is suitable for all of them.

Story

The advertisement presents the action of three persons: an elderly woman who wants to run, a young man who wants to marry another man, and a ballet dancer who wants to follow her dream. Therefore, the advertisement focuses on a person's choice to reflect his or her desire of being himself or herself.

Voice over

I will choose to run every day.

I will choose to follow my heart.

I will choose to follow my dream.

There is no word like "it is the only choice in one's life." Choose to have a life as you are. Your choice reflects your identity. 28 CHIDLOM available for a reservation on February 25 – 26 at Sale Galley by SC ASSET.

Super

#CHOOSECHIDLOM 28 CHIDLOM

4.1.3.1 Denotation. The first-order meaning of the advertisement of 28 CHIDLOM Condominium of SC ASSET is a trial to positioning their new product, including determining clearly their target groups by using the advertisement as a tool to present the images expected by the consumers. That is the consumers choose to be

themselves in an unconventional way, including making their dreams and passion to be true, and 28 Chidlom Condominium responds to the needs of these consumers.

4.1.3.2 Connotation. According to the concept of mythology, connotative meanings are the second-order meanings in the form of a signifier that requires a cultural interpretation for analyzing the meanings. The advertising components are analyzed as follows:

1) Verbal Language Code

(1) Slogan. The slogan of this advertisement is “Choose yours”, which emphasizes choosing one's own life. It means that each choice and decision determines one's life. Some people choose the least risks. Some choose the ways others tell them that it is the best for them and some choose a socially appropriate way. Sometimes, they forget about their own selves and dreams, including the passion of what they want to be. The producer conveys the meaning that one's choice reflects one's own identity and personality. The consumers who want to buy 28 CHIDLUM Condominium must be clear of their own needs. They must have strong passion and self-confidence. Therefore, the choice of where to live also reflects one's personality and being oneself.

“Advertisements contain the notions of a passion, love, and health and these are what consumers can choose. For example, when I wake up, I must be healthy no matter how old I am. After waking up, I have to practice what I love. That is my passion. Another example, when I wake up, I must stay with this man because he is the one I love. It is what my heart tells me to do. Therefore, this advertisement does not say that you must choose Chidlom Condominium but you will buy because your heart tells you to buy. Your heart will beat when you choose Chidlom. When you wake up, you will hear a whisper. It is the same thing that tells you to stay here and to buy it. We will tell him or her to make his or her own choice. This is to stimulate the consumers' desire and to remind them to look back at themselves. What will they choose? We have Chidlom Condominium. You will or will not buy, it does not matter but we just want to tell you that when you wake up, you should do what your heart orders you to do.”

Chomchada Kuldilok, Interview, September 18, 2017)

(2) Copy. The main concept of this advertisement is reflected through three presenters. The first one, an elderly woman, says, "I choose to run every day". The second one, a young man having a faith in love says, "I choose to follow my heart," and the last one, a young woman full of dreams says, "I choose to follow my dreams. Then, a voiceover says, "There is no such a word that this is the only alternative in one's life. Choose to have a life that you want. Your choice reflects your identity. The producer constructs the meaning of this advertisement by using emotional appeals that are in accordance with the consumers' social and psychological needs. The emotional appeals that the producer uses are a feeling of individuality, a distinctiveness, and a uniqueness through the consumers' choices of their lifestyle and accommodation. On the other hand, the psychological appeal the producer uses to arouse the consumers' sub-consciousness or intuition is "everything in life can be chosen to reflect one's being of oneself or one's identity. Every person has only one life so he or she should choose the best thing for himself or herself."

"The advertisement presents three people's life. All of them do what their heart tells them to do. The copy is from the designed concept. It gained from an insight of the consumers. This copy is emotional-oriented, especially to draw their intuition or sub-consciousness. If you ever experience this kind of feeling, you will understand that when you grow up, you will gain increased life experience. Hence, there is something in your mind, a kind of intuition, which will tell you that this is what you want. Therefore, the function of an emotional advertisement is to draw consumers' intuition and sub-consciousness. Have you ever experienced something your heart told you to do so without requiring any logic or an explanation? It is truly an inner feeling. That is why in advertising, we have to use all arousing mechanisms, songs, photos, etc. We have to make consumers feel deep down into their intuition. Besides using emotional appeals to strengthen a sense of being oneself, consumers need the drive to be themselves. For example, we will stop talking about the prices. Just ignore them. We can leave prices behind but our heart says this is it. Go and buy it because you cannot find it anywhere else. Likewise, all three presenters in this advertisement feel the same way. Why run? Because I want to run. Why dance?

Will it not hurt your legs? I want to dance. You cannot marry. Why not? Anyway, I want to marry. All of these are insights we put in our advertisement."

(Chomchada Kuldilok, *ibid.*)

2) Nonverbal Language Code

(1) Presenter. The producer uses three presenters with three characteristics: an elderly woman, a young man having a faith in love, and a young woman full of dreams. To interpret the producer's encoded message or his encoding through an advertisement text requires an interpretation of surrounding contexts to understand who the presenters are and what kind of passions they want to do. These contexts are all scenes appearing in the advertisement, i.e. a crowded city, a wedding ceremony, a ballet practice room.

" The main concept of this advertisement is narrated through three main presenters. The first one is an elderly woman. She chooses to have a good health so she chooses to run every day. She is a character who signifies that an old woman like this should not run to make themselves tired. However, this is her choice. A young girl who wants to play ballet. Actually, she has danced until her legs get hurt and she feels exhausted but she chooses to dance because it is her passion. A voiceover says, "I choose passion", and the elderly woman says, "I choose health". For the last presenters, we call them lovers; we will not call them gay couples because we view them as normal men. This is another segment. We did not put any make-up on them. For an MLM relationship, the couple can be like this or can look like normal men without a make-up. We cannot deny that in Thai society we have many gays in a masculine look. Especially, our product is a premium product. Therefore, we made it real and believable. Especially, our product is a premium product. Actually, earlier we had a variety of characters for this advertisement but we ended up with this third character that is real in a society. He is normal like us and he chooses a love. Therefore, a society might say that a man cannot marry a man. However, our advertisement talks about a diversity in our society. Human beings are diverse. This advertisement is powerful because of this diversity. It is true that if we use a universal design, we can use it for everybody. However, our concept is a

diversity. We focus that 28 Chidlom Condominium is not only for one kind of people or for just one person. We did not do it for only investors or for rich people. We did this for those who want this product. Thus, you can be anybody. That is why we did not narrate our concept through only one character."

(Chomchada Kuldilok, *ibid.*)

Furthermore, in interpreting the meaning of the producer's encoded message, it needs to understand the relations between "text" and "context" to be able to interpret it means to make a choice of your life by yourself. Besides, the producer uses some social codes in the encoded message, i.e. a gaze at the end of the advertisement, etc. All presenters gaze at the camera with a strong determination without being afraid of what they choose to do. Thus, it conveys the strong passion of each character in each style of life. A gaze at the camera also conveys their no-surrender against any social rules or frames. For instance, it reflects through the story of the young man who has a strong faith in his love for another man. The faces of both men are full of happiness for living together. This is the meaning construction of gays' love. It is also remarkable that the characters' gaze or stare at the audience at the end of the advertisement is to inspire the audience to choose what they need for their life.

" The advertisement is ending with the slogan, "choose yours." Therefore, the advertisement throws a question to the audience through the gazes of all three characters to the camera that now it is your turn to decide what you want to choose."

(Chomchada Kuldilok, *ibid.*)

(2) Visual/Video. The producer encodes visual codes in the presenters of three personalities and uses the product image at the end of the advertisement by editing and switching the presentation of each personality back and forth. However, the common concept or message is "a choice" of people, as following:

- The elderly woman who chooses to run every day. The advertisement uses a long shot to portray an overall atmosphere of the story at the beginning to lead the audience to the theme of the story. Besides, a long shot is used to display a surrounding climate: places in big cities, morning sunlight shining on the roads, and people rushing to work on time. From this point, the advertisement tries to connect with the product, 28 Chidlom Condominium, which is located in the center of the city. Later, a woman in a sports suit runs against rushing people on the road. This kind of atmosphere display can call the audience's attention and create a sense of consent. To open with an image of the overall atmosphere conveys the meaning of "to choose to walk out of the restricted frame" or "to do differently from social norms" This meaning is illustrated by the woman's running against rushing people on the road.

The next presentation is the illustration of the actors or presenters. The producer uses emotional appeals to surprise the audience. Because of the introductory presentation, the audience thinks that the woman who is running is a young worker because she looks to be strong considering from her muscular legs. However, the audience is surprised when the actor opens her cap and find out that the woman is an elderly, who chooses to run every day.

“This scene tries to present in two perspectives. The first perspective is 28 Chidlom is a condominium project in a city. It is a city life. I intended to keep the concept not too far from our product. If she runs in a garden, that is too far from our product. Therefore, for this, we want to represent the image of an urban area. The second perspective is to tell the audience that the woman has a passion and her heart tells her to run. Therefore, she runs without paying attention to where she is running. She can run everywhere.”

(Chomchada Kuldilok, ibid.)

- A young man with a faith in love. The producer uses an image of an overall climate of the story and an image of the actors simultaneously. The portrayal of the climate at the beginning focuses on a young man dressing in a formal suit in front of a mirror. Later, the producer reveals that the man is waiting for

his lover in a wedding party among a number of people who come to congratulate both of them. Once again, the producer uses emotional appeals to surprise the audience because the man who has a faith in love chooses to love and marry another man. Besides, cultural codes are used, i.e. a wedding and engagement ceremony, which is a traditional ceremony since the old days in almost every country and every language, but between heterosexuals. It is normal to see a man and a woman fall in love with each other and learn to understand each other until their love is ripe and both are ready to spend their lives together as a husband and wife. A marriage then is required. Some say that a marriage is human beings' way of relieving their sexual desire. Nevertheless, it must comply with social customs and traditions. From this definition, a marriage is between a man and a woman only. However, this advertisement encoded the message with an image of MLM marriage. From a cultural perspective, a ripe love means to choose to spend the rest of one's life with the one he or she loves.

A wedding, on the other hand, is a transitional ritual from a love for an individual to for a family. The producer's encoding of MTM love thus is alike WLM love. This is a construction of a beautiful dream for the gay couple or the advertisement is creating dream consumers. This concept has never occurred in Thai advertising. Besides, the encoding of a wedding scene also implies that both gays must love each other so much that they choose to spend their life together. However, due to advertising restriction in terms of the time limit, the economy of effort is applied. Therefore, the producer cannot narrate or put too many details about their prior relationship. Therefore, only the wedding scene is selected to convey the intended meaning.

“ The final destination of love in the social context is to share lives. Therefore, it goes beyond just a love between two men but it means two people decide to spend their life together. If viewing from a traditional approach, a man and woman will marry because they reach the destination of love. Since the advertisement takes only 30 seconds, so it cannot trace back to their prior relationship. On the other hand, to portray an image of a man holding another man's hand or of two men hugging each other is not enough to lead to their destination of

love or to decide to spend their life together. I think this is a surprise. Actually, when we see a groom wearing a wedding suit and looking at his bride, we expect a bride in a wedding dress but his bride is wearing a suit too. This is a surprise and also an arousal of emotion. Anyway, we produced this advertisement without feeling that it violates any values or norms, it is like a marriage between a man and a woman.”

(Chomchada Kuldilok, *ibid.*)

- The young woman full of dreams. The producer uses an image of an overall climate of the story and an image of the actors simultaneously to convey the passion of following the dream without ceasing and the heavy practice of the presenter. Furthermore, a symbol in the form of a fox sculpture in the ballet room is used. A fox in western culture has negative connotative meaning. It means tricky, cunning, scheming, etc. However, for eastern culture, it has a different meaning. In a Japanese legend, a fox is compared to a god connector while in many countries, it means a versatility, adaptability, beautiful figure, and agility. Such eastern meaning accords with the meaning encoded by the producer.

“ In the practice room, it shows an orange fox sculpture. We try to communicate its meaning to go along with the presenter because a fox has a beautiful body like a ballet dancing with beautiful gestures. In this scene, we also try to convey the presenter’s choice to follow her passion. It also gives a feeling of never-ending or something to do devotedly and continually through the scene showing the presenter’s effort to carry on her dance in spite of a plaster- on her hurt leg.”

(Chomchada Kuldilok, *ibid.*)

(3) Usage of colors. The usage of colors is another form of a clear presentation of products and brands. In this advertisement, the producer encodes the meaning of shining and brightness by using greyish and orange color in harmony with the philosophy of SC ASSET, “Good Morning.”

“ Our brand is the brand meaning for Good Morning. It is the organizational philosophy. Therefore, it is remarkable that in every previous

communication messages of SC ASSET, we talked about mornings. It is our symbol and recalling image to make consumers remember that our brand believes in good things of the mornings. Therefore, because of such philosophy, what are our purposes to build the houses or condominiums? To let consumers have beautiful mornings. We believe that a morning is a time for starting something new. Every time when we are tired, we come back home and restart ourselves. After the night, a new morning comes to start again. Besides, our brand believes in Live Life forward so we move forward and create everything for future. For a house building, we will always spare one room in case we can expand it. Therefore, our communication is always endorsed with the seal of a morning. If we can make our consumers relate SC ASSET brand with the morning feeling, we consider this as a success. Especially, we believe that most people can relate well to the morning time that after waking up in the morning, everything starts. That is why our Thai slogan says a good life comes from a good start. Therefore, almost every scene in this advertisement is morning time

(Chomchada Kuldilok, ibid.)

(4) Audio. This advertisement uses Alternative Rock as a supplementary component to make it more dramatic and arousing, including stimulating more interest from the audience. Alternative Rock is an alternative style of music, out of the mainstream music, to deviate from the old traditions. It reflects a differentiation and new alternatives, which accords with the main concept of this advertisement that emphasizes “Choose yours” or “choose what you want to be.”

“When we listen to this style of music to play with the song of the advertisement, it sounds very good. It can draw our emotion the most while also giving a different feeling. It matches with the determined selection of the actors we present.”

(Chomchada Kuldilok, ibid.)

3) Technical-Practical Code

(1) Shot Sizes. The producer encodes the meaning of the message through four sizes of shots. 1) Long Shot to display an overall atmosphere of

the story and to create the consumers' feeling towards the presented atmosphere

- 2) Medium Long Shot to illustrate three different kinds of the presenters' personality
- 3) Medium Shot to portray other details more clearly to induce the consumers' susceptibility and
- 4) Close-up to focus on a facial and eye expression of the presenters showing their determination of what they choose.

“In this advertisement, a close-up is very significant and is our intended shot size. At the beginning, we will see a shot of an elderly woman warming up her body before running. From a close-up, we can see her muscular thighs indicating the strength. This is what we want to focus to show that it is the result of her endeavor and of her heart. I want to highlight her flexing muscles, her hand placing a plaster on the hurt foot, and I want the audience to question how such an old woman can get so strong muscles. They then can imply that she must have gone through a very heavy run and have practiced so much that her foot is injured. For the gay couple, I do not want them to look at each other in a feminine way or as gays. These two people are not gays but in their real life, they are men. I want them to look at each other like a man looking at a woman he loves. That is why a close-up is very important. Therefore, a long shot is for opening the story but a close up is necessarily used to convince the audience.”

(Chomchada Kuldilok, *ibid.*)

(2) Camera Movement. Most of the camera movement used in this advertisement is “Pan”, or to rotate or close the camera horizontally from left to right and right to left without moving the camera to connect the relations between the presenter and surrounding scenes. Besides, “Tilt” is used in the scene where a man is being dressed in front of a mirror to represent the eyes or the gazing around to pull the audience to participate in exploring the presenters and to persuade them to follow what will happen further. “Arc” is also used in the scene of revealing the face of the elderly runner. This kind of camera movement helps the audience to see the presenter's personality and movement in a more well-rounded way. Finally, the producer uses “Dolly in” or a movement of the camera towards the presenters in the wedding scene. It can increase more attraction and a confrontation that accords with

the man's facial expression and movement while waiting for his lover intensely. This can also create a happy feeling for the audience.

“ We tried to use diverse camera movements because we presented three perspectives. Besides, this can avoid a redundancy. For instance, Arc was used to focus on the running woman and emphasize that she is old. This is for surprising the audience by using a camera movement as an answer. The rest are general camera movements used in advertising.”

(Chomchada Kuldilok, ibid.)

(3) Camera Angles. The producer uses a normal-angle shot to represent people's normal eye level. This angle is used the most generally because it can convey the meanings easily and clearly. Besides, a low-angle shot is also used to move the camera upward like a look-up. The position of the camera is lower than the object being shot. In the running scene, the camera is moved up from the woman's shoes to the overall running in a distance. This helps to communicate the strength and its value filled up with a victory.

“ Mostly, we use a normal-angle shot because it is comparable to the audience's eyes. It is easy to communicate without much complexity. On the other hand, a low-angle shot is used in the scene of the elderly woman's running to focus on her determination and strength.”

(Chomchada Kuldilok, ibid.)

4.1.3.3 Connotative Signified (Sexual Myth). In general, the advertisement of 28 Chidlom Condominium of SC ASSET uses beautiful and normal shots and presentation through the action of three presenters to illustrate the diversity of marketing target groups. In analyzing sexual myths appearing in this advertisement, the research analyzes only the role of the gay couple to answer the research objective. The meaning conveyance of this advertisement tries to focus on the concept of "dream consumer" or the concept of selling dreams to the consumers to fulfill. It is a dream destination of the gay couple, a dream of an MLM marriage that

could not be revealed five or ten years ago. However, when the social context changes, including in the global context, some countries legalize a marriage of the same sex. Even in Thailand, the portrayal of gays in mass media has been increasing and subsequently more advertisements dare to present gay issues in mass media and define this as the destination of gays' love. Several codes are used, i.e. tender and warm shots, colors, and light, to fulfill their perfect dream of love. On the other hand, a broad view of the atmosphere full of people coming to express their congratulations for the gay couple is presented with a normal feeling like a general wedding between heterosexuals. Besides, because of the limited time of presentation, a stereotyped image takes place without sequences of the story or detailed explanations about the actors. Therefore, the consumers can understand signs and signifiers presented in the advertisement without difficulty. This differs from a TV series in which the audience needs to connect the meanings all through the story to reach the climax or anti-climax. Accordingly, for advertising, a form, like a front curtain, is more important than the content, which is like a back curtain. Consumers can understand clearly in a second about any single expression of the actors or presenters (form) and this form can absorb its content. Consequently, the consumers will not ask where the end of their love is or if their destination is ended with just their marriage. However, when analyzing deeply into the advertisement, we may find that a right to have a family for gay couples is something for which the gay couple should not dream. This obstructs an advertisement to present further about inequality and rights like heterosexual couples. Therefore, the myth appearing in this advertisement is that the love of this gay couple cannot be guaranteed towards a firm and happy family, which differs from a heterosexual marriage. Accordingly, it cannot present a happy home with kids and parents playing in a house in the same way as the other real estate advertisements. Instead, the stereotyped image in this advertisement just constructs a dream for gay couples that they can marry and that is all their destination of love, no further than that. From another perspective, it might be that the advertisement itself can present only up to this point, because it seems that Thai society can accept the diversity of sex within this limit, to avoid causing any effect on the predominant structure of Thai society.

4.1.4 The Summary of Meanings and Appearing Sexual Myths through the Encoding of Advertisement Components

From the textual analysis of three advertisements, some commonalities and differences in the producers' encoding of advertisement codes are found. After data organization from the main conveyance or transmission of the meanings, the findings are 1) The communication of products' property reflects a consumer's identity and 2) The communication of the image of the products reflects the identity of a consumer. Each meaning is encoded through advertisement components and sexual myths as illustrated in Table 4.2

Table 4.2 A summary of meanings and appearing sexual myths through the encoding of advertisement components.

Main conveyed meanings	Encoding		
	Signifier		Signified
	Connotative Meaning (Form and Function)	Signifying	Sexual Myth
	Codes of advertisement components	Code	(Content)
1. Products' property reflects a consumer's identity - Bold brows are one of the masculinity property	1) Verbal Language Code <u>Slogan</u> : Concrete (Mistine)	- Product Code (Mistine)	- Masculinity or Manliness
	<u>Copy</u> - Emotional+ Rational Appeal (Mistine)	- Social Code (Mistine)	
	2) Nonverbal Language Code <u>Presenter</u> Star/ actor (Mistine)		

Table 4.2 (Continued)

Main conveyed meanings	Encoding	
	Signifier	Signified
	Connotative Meaning (Form and Function)	Sexual Myth
	Codes of advertisement components	(Content)
	<u>Image/ shot</u> - Atmosphere of the story (Mistine) - presenter (Mistine) - product (Mistine) <u>Usage of colors</u> dark tone (gray/black) (Mistine) <u>Audio</u> - Jingle/Rhythm (Mistine)	
	3) Technical-Practical Code <u>Shot Sizes</u> - mostly CU and ECU (Mistine) <u>Camera movement</u> - Pan (Mistine) <u>Camera Angle</u> - Normal-angle Shot (Mistine)	

Table 4.1 (Continued)

Main conveyed meanings	Encoding	
	Signifier	Signified
	Connotative Meaning (Form and Function)	Sexual Myth
	Codes of advertisement components	(Content)
	<u>Usage of colors</u> - Dark tone (grey/black) (SK-II) - Bright orange tone (SC Asset)	
	<u>Audio</u> - Music (SC Asset, SK-II)	
	3) Technical-Practical Code	
	<u>Shot Sizes</u> - Focus on CU and ECU (SK-II, SC Asset)	
	<u>Camera movement</u> - Tilt (SK-II, SC Asset) - Pan (SK-II, SC Asset) - Dolly (SC Asset) - Arc (SC Asset)	
	<u>Camera angle</u> - Normal-angle Shot (SK-II, SC Asset) - Low-angle Shot (SC Asset)	

From Table 4.2, the main meanings conveyed by three advertisements with gay-related content, 1) Change Destiny of SK-II, 2) 5 Brow Pencil for Men of Mistine, and 3) 28 Chidlom Condominium of SC ASSET, can be divided into two groups of meanings:

4.1.4.1 A group of the advertisement that reflects “the products’ property reflects consumers’ identity” meaning. The encoded meaning of the producer focuses on the products' property or focuses on the empirical meaning of the products' utility. The advertisement in this group of meanings is "5 Brow Pencil for Men of Mistine" through its communication that "bold brows are one of the properties of the masculinity." This group of meanings is encoded through the following advertisement components:

1) Verbal Language Code. From the analysis, the slogan used in this advertisement is concrete by conveying, "with bold brows, one can be a real man," to connect its meaning to the product. The copy uses a combination between an emotional and a logical appeal to increase the advertising effectiveness. The logical or rational appeal is used to present the property of the product i.e. it is easy to draw and to spread it out smoothly, etc. The emotional appeal is used to emotionally gratify the needs of the consumers.

2) Nonverbal Language Code. From the analysis, the presenter of this group is an artist or an actor because the advertisement mentions about advantages and properties of the product so it needs to use a famous actor or artist to present such message to gain more credibility and acceptance from the consumers. Besides, it can enhance the consumers' perception and recalls of the brand more easily from the connection between the presenter and the product. For images or illustration, this group of advertisement uses three kinds of images to convey its message and meaning: general atmosphere of the story, the presenter, and the product. It is the switching presentation between the product and the presenter to increase more attraction to the advertisement and its persuadability. Dark tone color, namely gray and black, is used to convey its focused meaning of elegance, distinctiveness, newness, and modernity. For audio components, this group of the advertisement does not use any specific music or song but uses a jingle and rhythm to support the

presentation of the product's property more heavily. Besides, it is the presenter's role to describe the property of the product in this kind of advertisement so the inappropriate use of music can cause a disturbance in the encoded copy of this advertisement.

3) Technical-Practical Code. For advertisements focusing on conveying the meaning of a product's property, the technical-practical codes are not complicating because they need the simplest and easiest interpretation in a short time. Therefore, this kind of advertisement emphasizes the use of a close-up and extreme close-up shot size to present details and physical appearance of the product clearly. For camera movement, it mostly uses "Pan" or the rotation and closing of the camera from left to right and right to left to connect all three images: general atmosphere of the story, the presenter, and the product. Likewise, a normal-angle shot or eye-level shot is used to represent a normal sight.

Regarding "Signifying Code", this kind of advertisement uses a product code via a presenter to convey the meaning of elegance and refinement. In other words, it means a male consumer who takes a very good care of himself. A social code is also used to display the interpersonal relations through the presenters' kiss and gazes at the camera to draw more attraction to the advertisement.

4.1.4.2 A group of advertisements that reflects "the products' image reflects consumers' identity" meaning. This group of advertisements highlights the value of the product's image by creating the relations between the image of the product and the identity of the consumers. The meanings found are "a self-acceptance brings about a better change" and "one's choice reflects one's identity." Both of them reflect a symbolic meaning that "to have freedom and to have one's own identity means the person with a strong determination and life goal." The meanings of this group of the advertisement are encoded through the following advertisement components:

1) Verbal Language Code. From the analysis, the slogans of advertisements in this group are relatively more abstract, i.e. "Choose yours", "Change Destiny", which requires an interpretation by considering other components because the message can be interpreted differently depending on cultural contexts and consumers' experiences. For the copy, these advertisements use emotional appeal in

designing the copy. This is because to create a product's image and a consumer's identity, it needs to focus on an emotional appeal to inspire the consumers for their consumption of the product. Besides, it is a connector to communicate its conveyed meaning through a storytelling. These advertisements do not mention the usefulness of the products but encode their symbolic meanings to reflect some meanings about the identity of the consumers.

2) Nonverbal Language Code. This group of advertisements does not use a famous actor or artist but choose to use no-name actors and an internet influencer instead. The focused meanings are conveyed through the story. Due to the focus on products' image, two kinds of images or illustrations are focused: general atmosphere of the story and the actors, while the image of the product is displayed only at the end of the advertisement. For example, the advertisement of 28 Chidlom Condominium narrates about a consumer's choice and illustrates the image of the product only in the last five seconds of the advertisement. Two tones of colors used in the 28 Chidlom advertisement are dark tone or gray and black to display the consumers' identity: elegance and distinctiveness, and bright orange tone to accord with the organization's philosophy. For audio parts, the music is used for supporting an emotional arousal and for presenting the story of the advertisements. From the analysis, Post Rock and Alternative Rock are used in the advertisements

3) Technical-Practical Code. From the analysis, this group of advertisements also focuses on Close-up and Extreme Close-up shot sizes as the first group. The difference is that the shot sizes are not encoded through the image of the product but through the presenters to illustrate their emotion and to get along with the storytelling. Besides, various kinds of camera movement are found: Tilt, Pan, Dolly and Arc to draw more attraction and interest of the audience to the narrated story in combination with camera angles that help the consumers to interpret more easily from the abstract meaning of the advertisement to be more concrete via various signs.

For the encoding of "Signifying Code", it is found that some social codes are used to display the interpersonal relations in the narration, i.e. the relationship between the presenter and his family, or his stare to the camera to raise up some questions to the consumers. Besides, cultural codes, i.e. marriage, help to make the storytelling be more interesting.

In addition, some sexual myths are found through the encoded content of all three advertisements: a myth of masculinity, the requirement of successful gays to have high capabilities gays' right of having a family, dream consumer, and social classes. These myths reflect a change from gay-related advertisements in the past. The researcher will organize and specify all changes in these myths in the gay-related advertisements in the topic 4.3

4.2 Strategies in Creating Advertisements with Gay-Related Content

From an interview with marketers and advertisers including those involved in an advertising creation of all three selected advertisements, first of all, the producers must analyze their target audience and search for marketing information before encoding their messages in the advertisements. Then, it will be a step in the planning of how to create the best advertisement to reach their target consumers. The findings show their strategies in creating advertisements with gay-related content as summarized in Figure 4.1

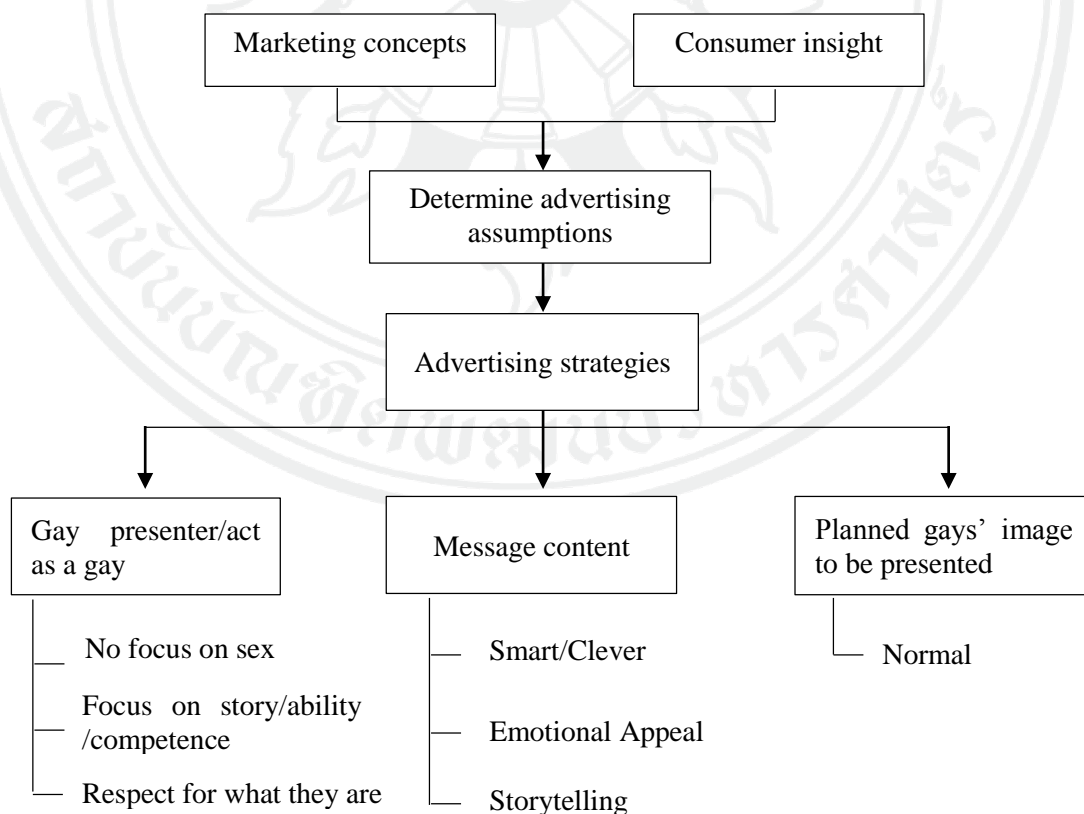


Figure 4.1 illustrates an overall plan of strategies in creating advertisements with gay-related content.

From the figure 4.1, the creation of an advertisement with gay-related content starts with marketing concepts of certain product to find out what should be presented in a market, what kind of content needs to be recalled by the target consumers, what are the distinguished aspects of the product that needs to be emphasized and communicated strongly. Consumer insight analysis is also conducted to find a precise communication focus for the consumers. Then, communicative signs are designed for communication towards maximal effectiveness.

“Every time when we do an advertisement, no matter if it is gay-related or not, we have to go back to our question what kind of message you want our target consumers to take out and what its insight is. For instance, 28 Chidlom is the location that is very hard to find because it is located in the center of Chidlom or we can call it the last real estate in that area. Therefore, we have to find out what attribute we should focus on or what kind of perspective we should present. Finally, we came up with the word "Chidlom" without any explanation. Is it expensive? Surely, it is very expensive. It is so high that we can say that our real estate has gone very far. Anyway, it is Chidlom. There is nothing to be thought of, it is Chidlom. It needs no reasons. What is "Choose Chidlom Insight"? Its insight is an intuition (something we can perceive by ourselves without any teaching.)”

(Chomchada Kuldilok, *ibid.*)

Therefore, the main concept since the starting is very important because the main concept determines the rest of the advertising production. Especially, if the product brand is not for sales in only one country, more importance has to be given to marketing concepts to communicate in the same direction.

“SK-II is a Global Brand. Therefore, for a communication or a campaign, it must be communicated in the same direction. The main marketing concept of SK-II is to let an individual be his own spokesperson to narrate his true story from his heart. It must be an interesting story that all sexes and all ages can access. Accordingly, the main concept focuses on a true story. When we received this proposition a global

concept, each country will find their own presenter based on a true story that truly emphasizes the concept of Change Destiny.”

(Warinthornthip Sirichatchanokkul, *ibid.*)

After the step of analyzing marketing concepts and consumer insight, the next step is to determine the advertising assumptions or propositions and the strategies. Mostly, the advertisements with gay-related content often use a gay presenter or use an actor to play as a gay. From the interviews with the producers about principles of using a presenter for a gay advertisement, the main principles are “no focus on sex but on the story or on the gays’ ability that accords with the advertising propositions. For communication, a respect for what he is should be emphasized without too exaggerating content in the transmitted message.”

“ To select a gay presenter, we should select him as the way he is, not by making him look funny, sexy, or devalue himself. SK-II is a good example. We respect what he is.”

(Wanlaya Angsirikulchoti, *ibid.*)

“ No sex-concern but use it properly. It is wrong to use the third sex in a mocking or funny way and gains nothing from it. We have to use it properly. For instance, the advertisement of SK-II is proper. We did not choose him because he is a gay but it suits his story and his life. We did not choose because he is funny but we chose because of his ability or potential. If it is what we need, then it is ok. Our advertisement that chose the third sex as the main actor got very positive responses. Normally, SK-II has been the product for women for a long time. It is very brave that SK-II chose this campaign and very brave to deviate from the conventional image. It is the third sex who use our product, the third sex without any fame or a high position. However, when this campaign was launched, they feel that we respect them. You see us. This helps increase our sales from this campaign. On the other hand, female consumers also accepted this advertisement. Women are sensitive for this kind of issue, such as fan clubs of Diary of a Tootsie are also females. Therefore, we got no problem when we chose the third sex. Besides, what we got further from that was that

they felt that we gave a true story and we are very brave to present the story about them. This is the consequence of our proper presentation.”

(Sirin Wanwalee, *ibid.*)

“For the strategy of using a gay presenter or acting as a gay, what should be avoided mainly is if there is no such a thing, then there should not be. For instance, when we do an advertisement, we will always start with our target first. Then, we will move it with data of what the target audience wants to hear. Who are our customers? What are their drives? If we know that these things are not related to what we will present, then we should not present it. As an example, 28 Chidlom talks about the variety of people who have some drives in their mind. Some customers are gays or MTM groups. However, they are capable of doing business and of earning a high income. Therefore, we have to think from the real people. With no real people, we have to create them to draw attention but we do not agree with this concept because it is not creative. By chance, Chidlom is a high-end condominium of urban people and many of urban people are gays. That is why our brand must mention about them. Especially, lately, they become a big target group or are called as Double-Income and No Kids. In other words, they are rich but have no children. Therefore, what they want to buy is what we are selling. Therefore, it all concerns with our target. If we use the presenter to make him ridiculous, it is irrelevant here, nor should we use an overacting to draw consumers' attention to our brand.

(Chomchada Kuldilok, *Ibid.*)

Besides, the strategy of selecting a proper presenter for a gay advertisement, the strategy of creating content is also important, especially for the gay-related content. From the studies, it is found that the presentation of gay advertisements should emphasize good-looking and smart gays without focusing too much on sexuality and sexual appeals because sexuality is a fluid, dynamic, and diverse identity. Due to the nature of advertising that requires limited time for a presentation, an economy of effect from both producer and receivers occurs. For the producers, it must be presented precisely within the shortest time while for the receivers, they must use the least effort and time in interpreting the message. Therefore, the producer must

be careful about causing a stereotyped image as a result of the improper-content presentation.

“The gay-related content creation should emphasize the image of their smart or clever attribute. It should not contain filthy nor too sex-oriented content. On the contrary, it should upgrade the advertisement to look expensive and good. The copy must not be too seductive but focus on the important issue we really want to convey to the audience. The issue of sex diversity should not be raised up in a humiliating or contempt way as it will affect directly to the product brands

(Warinthornthip Sirichatchanokkul, *ibid.*)

The study further finds that in advertisements with gay-related content, a narrative style, and the emotional appeal should be used to connect the conveyed meanings because the audience of all sexes can access to the emotional appeal the producer tries to convey to them through the use of signs. Therefore, the usage of emotional appeal in advertisements can help consumers to interpret the conveyed meanings through the same sign with common feelings with the encoded message by the producer

“28 Chidlom advertisement emphasizes an emotional appeal as an intuition. We believe that since birth, human beings have experienced some kinds of intuition, at least twice in one life. The first intuition is milk breast. When a baby sees his or her mother, he or she wants to have milk from her breast or to hug her. Babies learn no language yet but they just know that they will hug her when they see her. Therefore, we need to have an intuition as a connector in our message. Our product has an intuition to support for those who need it. Even though the audience might not be our consumers but at least when they expose to our advertisement, they will have a kind of emotion that makes them want to do something.”

(Chomchada Kuldilok, *ibid.*)

“When we focus on our sales, we have to classify clearly who we want to sell and communicate directly to that group. However, for emotional appeal, it has some

concurrent point for all sexes. No matter they are females, males, gays, or any sexes; they all can touch or feel this point. Therefore, any brand must look for this kind of touch point. For example, the word, "Change Destiny", means that all sexes can change themselves. We present this point through a storytelling. Thus, the challenge of the advertising is a good balance of communication, which is difficult to achieve."

(Warinthornthip Sirichatchanokkul, *ibid.*)

The last advertising strategy found in this study is the image of gays presented in an advertisement, which is also a very important part. This is because if an improper image is presented, it can cause a stereotyped image or even a wrong one. Advertisements in the past portrayed the images of gays as a clown or a weird creature, which is not a proper perception of gays. However, from this study, the new image of gays is found. That is the image of gays as normal or ordinary people without trying to communicate that they are the third sex but they are normal people like all of us.

"The third gender can be presented in an advertisement as normal people or as the third sex. Personally, I am not sure if our country is keen on this issue. In many other countries, they will present them as normal but in our country, we mostly present them in an exaggerating way or too much to be true. I am not quite sure if this is good. Therefore, we try to communicate by raising their personhood or as they are normal human beings. In future, we expect to see the third gender as a new normal people. Our brand just wants to tell that they are normal human beings and there is not any complication."

(Chomchada Kuldilok, *ibid.*)

In summary, the strategies of creating an advertisement with gay-related content start like general advertisement production, i.e. marketing concepts, analysis of consumer insight, etc. The next steps are to determine advertising proposition and strategies. Advertising strategies must be able to respond to the advertising questions via the construction of various signs to convey "the core or main meaning." From the study, it is found that it is not necessary to have gay presenters for the advertisements

with gay-related content. Besides, the presentation of gays' story should be proper and accords with the product and their target consumers. To use an actor to play in the role of gays or gay presenters, it should not focus on sexuality but should focus on their story and their competence that is harmonious with the advertising propositions. A communication should show a respect for what they are and the content should be communicated properly by emphasizing good images of the gays, i.e. smart, etc. Besides, an emotional appeal should be used as touch point or a connector between presented content so that the audience of all groups can access those stories. Regarding the image of gays to be presented in an advertisement, an image of gays as normal people should be presented because gays are just normal people in a society who is not different or special from others. Therefore, advertisements should present them as normal people like all of us.

4.3 Analysis of the Changes in Sexual Myths in the Advertisement

In analyzing the changes of sexual myths in the advertisements, it is inevitable that the researcher needs to analyze social contexts in parallel because social contexts and media have a connecting interaction. Besides, a myth often occurs under a social discourse with dynamic complexity. Therefore, the researcher summarizes an overall portrayal of social contexts, media, and sexual myths that appear in each period. The first period starts in the era of King Rama VI – 1964, the period of appearing the word, "gay" in Thai mass media from 1965-1972, the period in which democracy was booming 1973- 1986, the period of the spread of AIDS 1987-1997, and the period of the growth of capitalism and information processing 1998-2016, as shown in Table 4.6. Then, the researcher will elaborate on the emergence of sexual myths in an advertisement which was found during the period of the growth of capitalism, information processing and the diversity of sex.

Table 4.3 Summarizes an overall portrayal of social contexts, media, and sexual myths relating to gays of each period

	The first period : King Rama VI - 1964	The second period : The appearance of the word "gay" in Thai mass media 1965-1972	The third period: Booming democracy 1973-1986	The fourth period : The spread of AIDS 1987-1997	The fifth period: The growth of capitalism, information processing, and sexual diversity 1998-2016
Social Context	The phase of Nation building by trying to create the consciousness of masculinity through a political system	The first time that the word "gay" appeared in Thai mass media. Gays are perceived as male prostitutes or men who were hired to sleep with a western people.	Political freedom affected freedom in communication. Mass media of all types have rights and freedom in presenting news of various issues, including the issue of sex diversity, more heavily	The widespread of AIDS in Thailand. In the U.S.A., most sick people were homosexuals. At the same time, a civic society emerged, i.e. the merger of gays organizations and gay-related business, i.e. gay pubs, complete gay bars.	The growth of internet and gays had more social space. In 2007, metrosexual marketing was introduced into a market. Media industry talked more on gay issues. In 2015, U.S.A. announced a legal marriage of homosexuals.

Table 4.3 (Continued)

	The first period : King Rama VI - 1964	The second period : The appearance of the word "gay" in Thai mass media 1965-1972	The third period: Booming democracy 1973-1986	The fourth period : The spread of AIDS 1987-1997	The fifth period: The growth of capitalism, information processing, and sexual diversity 1998-2016
Media	Printed media, i.e. books, literature etc.	Newspapers	Newspapers contained special column about gays. The emergence of magazines, literature, films in the mid of the period and TV dramas at the end of the period.	Films and TV dramas were very popular but the government issued some laws prohibiting the presentation of homosexuals' love to avoid the imitation of Thai youth. The emergence of movements for presenting positive images of gays in the magazines and activities of gay organizations.	An increasing TV drama about gays. In the internet and advertisement, it appeared the use of gays as the presenter of the products.

Table 4.3 (Continued)

	The first period : King Rama VI - 1964	The second period : The appearance of the word "gay" in Thai mass media 1965-1972	The third period: Booming democracy 1973-1986	The fourth period : The spread of AIDS 1987-1997	The fifth period: The growth of capitalism, information processing, and sexual diversity 1998-2016
Sexual myths	Masculinity, i.e. strong, able-bodied, love of nation and monarchy, adventurous, keeping distant from women, and MTM love was allowed.	Promiscuity of gays	Stereotyped image from the increased presentation of gays in the media. Gays needed to hide, had a love despair, and had deviating behaviors and abnormality.	AIDS were gays and gays were AIDS. Gays were AIDS, promiscuity, no true love among gays and deviated behaviors. Gays were clowns.	- Gays were clowns and despair. - Masculinity - Gays needed to have the high competence to achieve a success in life. - Gays' right to have a family - Dream Consumer

From Table 4.3, it illustrates that the passing social contexts in each period are like discourses that affect the changes in gays' image. Media play very great roles in reflecting gays' image, both positive and negative, and causing the occurrence of sexual myths in each period. Each period will be described as following:

The First Period: King Rama VI – 1964. In this period, Thai culture during the reign of King Rama VI gave higher importance to classes, ranks of nobility, birth or family background than to sexuality. Men had roles in governance, culture creation, and stimulating the sense or consciousness of masculinity complying with His Royal Preference. Thus, a number of myths on masculinity occurred, such as men

had to be strong, able-bodied, and adventurous. They also had to love their nation and monarchy and loved nature. MLM love was allowed but men had to keep distant from women. (Yodhong, 2013) The consciousness of masculinity in the past enabled men to get close to one another by nature and by the eradication of women from all kinds of men's activities. Women were perceived as someone men should not be near. At the end of the nineteenth century, women themselves had more social spaces, i.e. in the house where they needed no men to get involved so men had to go out for outside adventures or to a forest. This kind of consciousness led to the establishment of many forest-love associations and a love for nature. Accordingly, a large number of novels emphasized an adventure in the forest of a young man, i.e. Long Prai, Pet Pra-Uma, etc. Another obvious example of the creation of masculinity consciousness without interfering with women was the Foundation of Boy Scouts by Lord Baden- Powell or the Father of the Boy Scouts. Powell viewed that the good and noble life of men needed to come from the relations between man and man because a man was a more noble sex than a woman. The body of men was more charming than that of women. That was why a glance at men with a muscular body, which indicated their strength as the major characteristics of men, was common in this period. (Wongyannawa, 2013). However, the word, "gay" was not found in this period. By the end of the period, it appeared the word "Kratei" (or queer) to describe a man with effeminate manners like women. The media that reproduced such sexual myth was printed media, such as books and literature.

The Second Period: the Appearance of the Word, “Gay” in Thai Mass Media (1965-1972). In this period, the word, "gay", was firstly mentioned in Thairath Newspaper in 1965. This word was borrowed from an English word used in western countries for defining men who had a sexual taste of an MLM love but had no effeminate manners like women. However, in Thailand context, the word, "gay" was used to represent male prostitutes. It was the presentation of news about MLM love, who called themselves, "gays". Therefore, gays in this sense were the word used by male prostitutes who had different sexual expressions from "Katei" (or queer) prostitutes. (Singhakowin, 2013). Therefore, the word, "gay" in this period did not mean only sexuality or the expression of sexuality but also meant a kind of

occupation, namely hired sexual partners. (Romjumpa, 2002) This led to the sexual myth of gays through social contexts that gays were promiscuous and often changed their sexual partners. Thus, when the word, "gay" was mentioned, a stereotype of perceiving gays as male prostitutes occurred.

The Third Period: the Booming Democracy (1973-1986). Political freedom brought about freedom in communication. Mass media of all types had rights and freedom in presenting their news on various issues, including the issues about the diversity of sex, heavily. Consequently, a number of magazines with gay-related content emerged, such as Mithuna (June) Magazine, Neon Magazine, Mid-Way Magazine, Morakot (emerald) Magazine, etc. All of these magazines contained similar content or transmitted about gays' movements around the world, both domestic and abroad. Besides, the content of these magazines promoted gays to develop their personality and to jointly create a good society through their articles and their QA of love problems column in the magazines. This helped to decrease the feeling of loneliness of gays in Thai society. Furthermore, it created a good perception for gays to feel that they had space in the society and people realized their existence in the society. (Wuttirode, 1991). Nevertheless, some media still presented a negative image of gays. For instance, in 1975 Plak (Weird or Strange) Magazine of Jinda Sarn, written by Ko Parknam, had a column, "Sad life of Gays", which presented a sad love story of gays. This column created a stereotype and sexual myth that homosexual love was exaggerating, weird, and also ended with sadness. This column collected the presented content into a book called, "Sad stories of Gays" in 1978.

The Fifth Period: The Growth of Capitalism, Information Processing, and the Diversity of Sex. (1998-2016). The main issues for this study appeared in this period. It was the period of a big growth in capitalism (i.e. media industry, various business sectors, etc.) During the early time of this period, the construction of sexual myths by mass media was both positive and negative but the negative myths were reproduced more than the positive ones owing to some business factors. (Kaewprasert, 2008). For instance, the mockery of gays favored by the audience and gays' despair in love were the myths often presented and reproduced by mass media,

especially TV dramas and films. Advertising was another tool towards the growth of capitalism. An exaggerating ridiculousness, strangeness, and sexual expression were often presented in the advertisements for selling products. Later, in 2007, a new trend of masculinity concept in “Metrosexual” marketing took place. This new target group was perceived as “New Comer, New Revenue” who had high purchase power, preferred branded products, and had no children or family to take care of so they could spend their money fully. From 5 million populations in Bangkok, there were more than 10% who were gays with an income of 50,000 -100,000 baht monthly, which was called as “A- Class Consumer.” (Arthit, 2009). The products or services that this group liked to buy were products that helped to promote their images, i.e. clothes, beauty salons, etc. In 2009, from the study of Duangwises (2012) gays gained 95% increased social space, such as being the topics in the media, having some roles or displaying their identity in various kinds of industry in Thailand, i.e. a complete gay entertainment complex, etc., to respond to their lifestyles. Furthermore, the big turning point in the world was the announcement of a legal marriage of homosexuals in the U.S.A. in 2015, which were valid all through the country. This big phenomenon also affected the image of Thai gays. At the end of this period, media presented gays who were famous, capable, and had high potentials in the society. Due to their high income, they were called the group of “Work Hard – Play Hard” or “Pink Double Income – No Kids”. In short, they were gays with high income but without kids as burdens and had high purchase power. Therefore, a number of business and industries paid more attention to gays so it appeared the changes of gay myths through advertisements in this period. In summary, gays’ images occurred under certain social contexts in each period and were presented in advertisement until they became stereotyped images and sexual myths, as illustrated in Figure 4.2

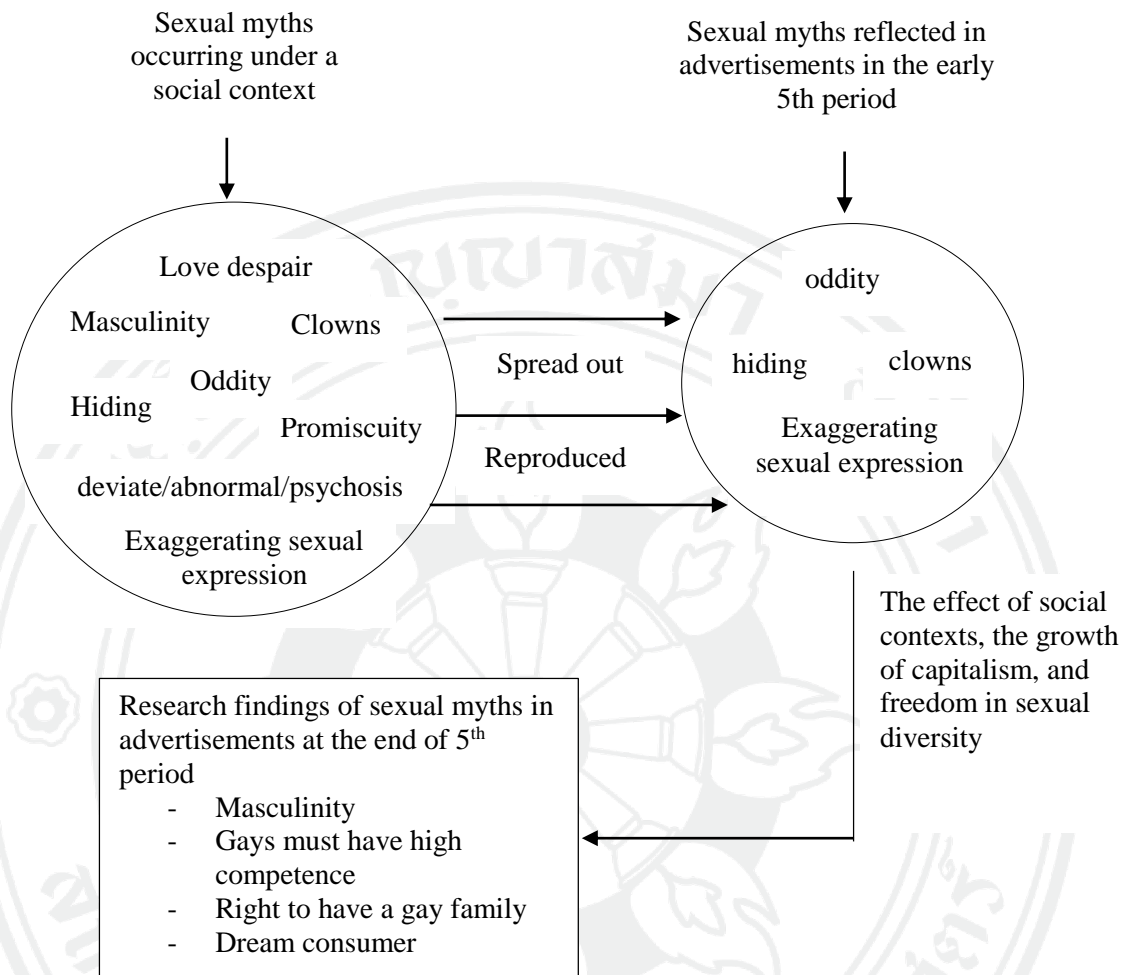


Figure 4.2 illustrates an overall view of changes in sexual myths in advertisements

From Figure 4.2, the study found the reproduction and the changes of sexual myths in advertisements. In other words, social contexts in the fifth period affected the increased production of advertisements with gay-related content. From the textual analysis, the traditional or old myths under the social contexts in the earlier periods were reproduced through advertisements. Such traditional myths were an oddity, clowns, concealing themselves, and exaggerating sexual expression, i.e. over make-up, exaggerating effeminacy, etc., and these myths affected gays' images to be stereotyped as presented in the advertisements. Furthermore, during the early and middle time of this period, marketing targets were divided into males and females distinctively. At the end of the period, several factors caused changes, i.e. capitalism and the focus on gays as new marketing targets, including the global trends of the

respect for equality among diverse sexes, which affected the definition of gays in this period. Especially, the changes were due to the change of sexual myths in advertisement after 2015 in which the U.S.A. declared a legal marriage of homosexuals and due to the nature of online media in rapidly disseminating information all through the world. The changes in sexual myths found in this study are as follow:

4.3.1 Gays must have high capabilities in order to gain an acceptance and to succeed in life. The perception that gays are odd, weird, or have to hide, is changed. However, the acceptance of gays is conditional. Namely, gays must prove themselves to be good men, to have an ability to lead their life towards a success, they have to be smart with high potentials, in order to be accepted and not to be perceived with the old myths.

4.3.2 Gays can have a family. In the past, there had been no presentation of gay couples living together happily without a despair in the advertisements. After the change, such presentation is witnessed in the advertisements. A gay couple can marry like heterosexuals. However, from the study, it also finds that the marriage is portrayed as the final destination of love for gays in the advertisement. It cannot go further to cover their right to have a family or to live like a family in the same way as heterosexual families. For instance, a number of real-estate advertisements illustrate a warm and happy family of a mother, father, and children. Therefore, the destination of gay presentation needs to end with the creation of the acceptance of gays. Therefore, it means that the presentation of gays' image has a ceiling and an advertisement should not go beyond or breakthrough such ceiling because it can affect a social structure or mainstream discourses of the society that still admire heterosexual love or relationships.

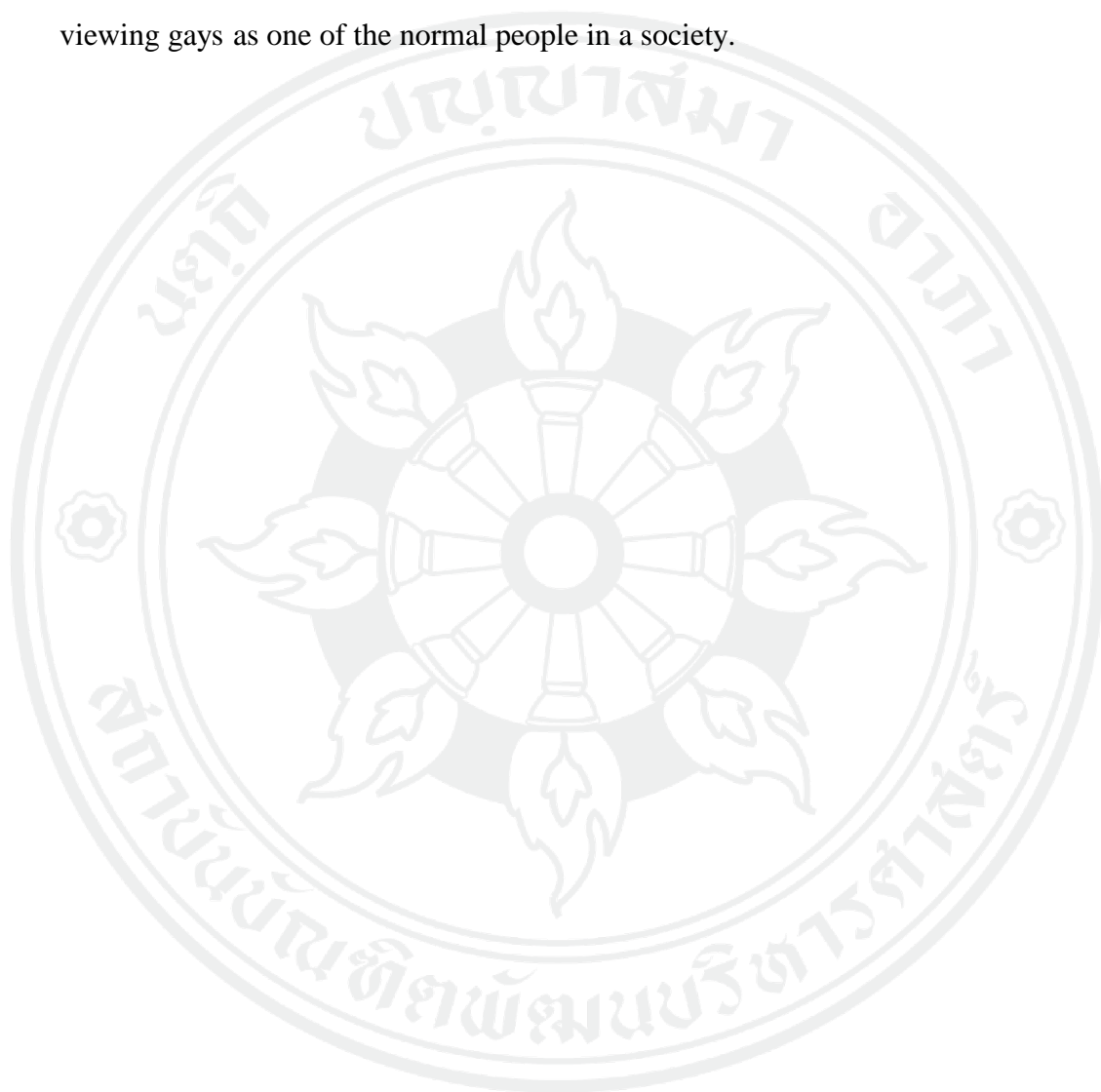
4.3.3 Dream Consumer. The change happening in this myth is that gays are perceived as one of the main marketing targets, which never occurred in the past. This myth tries to put some dreams of the consumers into their advertisements and make them perceive that their dreams can be fulfilled if they make a choice of buying what they want. By using or consuming such product or service, it will help to create more acceptance or to create a better life. Therefore, the representation of gays in the advertisements are mostly middle-class gays with a buying power and accepted by

surrounding people. Such representation may cause other groups of gays who are not chosen to be presented in the advertisements, i.e. low-class, labor-class, etc., are still not accepted in the society from the stereotyped created by the dream consumer myth. Therefore, only gays with high income or “Work Hard-Play Hard” or “Pink Double Income” groups are accepted in Thai society.

Nevertheless, the sexual myth that has still been reproduced in the advertisements is a myth of masculinity because Thai society focuses on the important roles of men and this major social structure is hard to be reconstructed. Therefore, this influence affects the present advertisements in the way that gays must possess real men’s property without expressing an effeminacy like women and must express their sexuality in accordance with their innate sex in order to be accepted in a society.

In summary, from the study of sexual myths in advertisements with gay-related content, it shows that Thai society accepts gays increasingly but the acceptance is conditional. Although gays can free themselves from some traditional social structures, they cannot get themselves away from the core or mainstream social structure and discourse in terms of advertisements. It is comparable to two ceilings covering the gay being. Advertisements can help them release from the first ceiling but they cannot do for the second ceiling. The second ceiling is Thai social structure that perceives heterosexual love as correct, proper, and “deserving to be.” Accordingly, advertisements must follow these mainstream discourses or what Hall called, “Dominant Codes.” Such codes will determine the production of an advertisement all through the process. Advertising is one kind of mass media that is transmitted to the public or mass or the mass will support the markets. Therefore, the dominant code is the second ceiling of the advertisement that limits the presentation of gays. Especially, as Thai people still perceive that heterosexual love is a dominant code, the production of an advertisement must concern about the image of the product supported by the mass. Therefore, advertisements use other signs or codes to convey their hidden meanings or to hide their myths under such meanings instead. All types of advertising thus involve with an ideology. Although, in general, advertising might be a channel to turn the audience to be the consumers, some advertisements are also spaces filled with cultural and psychological appeals to go with the products and enable the above myths to operate with maximal effectiveness. Therefore, the

increased presentation of gays might be interpreted as more acceptance of gays; still, it is the acceptance of conditions, and thus are still stereotyped images in the advertisements. This can be compared with the creation of a box in which the society tries to put gays so that they can have spaces and positions within the box. However, this does not indicate that Thai society truly accepts "the diversity of genders" by viewing gays as one of the normal people in a society.



CHAPTER 5

The Consumers' Decoding of Meanings Related Gay Advertisements

This chapter presents the findings for responding to the second research objective, which is to study the consumers' decoding of meanings in advertisements with gay-related content. The data collection for this objective is conducted by in-depth interviews with 20 gay consumers aged over 25 with an income of over 25,000 baht monthly and living in Bangkok and neighboring cities. Besides, it is conducted by a focus group interview with 18 heterosexual consumers with similar personal and demographic variables to the gay consumers, by dividing these heterosexuals into 3 groups: 6 men, 6 women, and 6 of mixed men and women.

Table 5.1 illustrates an overview of a framework for analyzing the consumers' decoding of meanings in advertisements with gay-related content

Codes of advertisement components	Type of decoding	consumers
1. dominant codes	1. Preferred Reading	Sex Variables
2. Verbal Language Code - slogan - copy	2. Negotiated Reading 3. Oppositional Reading	1. Gay Consumers
3. Nonverbal Language Code - presenter - image/ illustration - usage of colors - audio		2. Heterosexual Consumers
4. Technical-Practical Code - shot sizes - camera movement - camera angles		
5. Sexual Myth	Dominate/negotiate/oppose	

From Table 5.1, the analysis of consumers' decoding of meanings in advertisements with gay-related content is conducted through the following advertisement components: 1. dominant code 2. verbal language code (i.e. slogans, and copies) 3. nonverbal language code (i.e. presenters, images or illustrations, usage of colors, and audio components) 4. technical-practical code (i.e. shot sizes, camera movement, and camera angles) and 5. sexual myths appearing in advertisements. Three types of decoding are used: 1). Preferring reading (consumers decode the same meaning as the producer encodes) 2). Negotiated reading (consumers decode the meaning by negotiating with some new meanings and 3). Oppositional reading (consumers decode the different meaning from what the producer encodes). The researcher divides the sex of the subjects to be homosexual and heterosexual because sex differences can interpret the meanings differently and with more polysemy. The findings of this part will indicate what kind of reading or decoding is for the dominant meaning from the perception of the consumers. Besides, it is interesting to know whether preferred reading is the kind of reading found the most since it means that the consumers interpret the meanings in the same way as being transmitted or encoded by the producers. Furthermore, the study tries to find out if the sexual myths, encoded in the message of advertisements, can be observed by the consumers or not. If so, by which reading their decoding is.

General Information of the Heterosexual Subjects

For the heterosexual subjects of this study, they know gays and have a different level or degree of relationships with gays so such differences affect their decoding. Accordingly, the researcher intends to select the heterosexual subjects with a different degree of relationships with gays to gain more well-rounded findings.

Female consumers group. In general, most of them or 66.57% of them know gays as close friends, 50% know gay senior or junior classmates/ schoolmates and their relationship is high, 33.33 % know gay colleagues and their relationship is high and moderate equally.

Male Consumers group. In general, most of them know gays as friends and colleagues the most. Their relationship with gay friends is moderate (50.00%), and their relationship with colleagues is moderate and low equally (33.33%).

Mixed group of male and female consumers In general, most of them know gays as friends the most and their relationship with gay friends is moderate (50.00%), Next, they know gays as their teachers, classmate/schoolmates, and colleagues and their relationship with them is moderate and low equally (33.33%).

In chapter 5, the researcher presents the findings of the study in four parts:

- 5.1 The findings on the consumers' decoding of dominant codes
- 5.2 The findings on the consumers' decoding of advertisement components
- 5.3 The findings of the consumers' perception of the myths.
- 5.4 Consumers' recommendations for the creation of advertisements with gay-related content

Table 5.2 illustrates the decoding of dominant codes in three advertisements of gay and heterosexual consumers.

Communication of dominant codes	Advertisement	Decoding	Consumer				Total group(s)
			gay	female	male	mixed	
1. The product's property reflects a consumer's identity	Mistine	Bold brows are one of the property of masculinity	✓ (1)				1
		Bold brows can help a gay look like a real man and attract the opposite sex.	● (2)	●			2
		Men have to take good care of themselves by keeping their good- looking, cool, and manly physical appearance	✓ (10)	✓	✓		3
		To use a pencil draw dark brows does not help to make one look like a man.	✗ (6)		✗	✗	3
		Manliness does not depend on his brows.					

Table 5.2 (Continued)

Communication of dominant codes	Advertisement	Decoding	Consumer				Total group(s)
			gay	female	male	mixed	
		No understanding of the meaning of the dominant code	-				1
2. The image of the product reflects a consumer's identity	SK-II	To accept one's self and change it to be better.	✓ (6)	✓	✓	✓	4
		Be yourself. Proud of what you are.	✓ (10)			✓	2
		Beauty is inside oneself	● (1)				1
		No understanding of the meaning of the dominant code	- (3)				1
		One's choice reflects one's identity	✓ (14)	✓	✓	✓	4
	SC ASSET	The illustration of consumers' lifestyle that can respond to their needs in each range of age.	● (6)				1

- ✓ means “Preferred Reading” decoding
- means “Negotiated Reading” decoding
- ✕ means “Oppositional Reading” decoding
- means no understanding of the meaning of the dominant code

5.1 The Finding on the Consumers’ Decoding of Dominant Codes

From Table 5.2, most of gay and heterosexual consumers decode the dominant code by “preferred reading”. This indicates that they can decode the dominant meaning encoded by the producer. However, the sex variable has no effect on the decoding. This might be because gays, males, and females, have the similar type of decoding. The “negotiated reading” decoding is found in three advertisements as well but with the less proportion than “preferred reading” decoding. “Oppositional reading” decoding is found only in the advertisement of Mistine. This type of decoding is found in all sex of subjects: gays, males, females, and mixed males and females so this indicates that Mistine advertisement is decoded by polysemic meanings or the consumers cannot decode its meaning in the same direction. Besides, there are some advertisements whose dominant meaning is not understood by any gay consumers. These advertisements are Mistine and SK-II. The researcher will present these findings in more details as following:

5.1.1 The Finding of Decoding of the Dominant Code: The product’s property reflects a consumer’s identity.

For the dominant code, from the study it is found that both gay and heterosexual consumers decode Mistine advertisement with various meanings (polysemy). The proportion of the decoding by “Preferred Reading” and by “Oppositional Reading” is equal, or three groups each. Three groups of consumers that decode the dominant code with “Preferred Reading” are gays, females, and males, while three groups of consumers that decode the dominant code with “Oppositional Reading” are gays, males, and mixed group.

5.1.1.1 The consumers' decoding of dominant code of Mistine advertisement

From the aforementioned finding, the proportion of the decoding by Preferred Reading and by Oppositional Reading is equal. Likewise, the decoding of the dominant code can be by both readings. Besides, one gay consumer does not understand the dominant meaning of this advertisement at all.

For the decoding of dominant meaning by Preferred Reading, which is the decoding of the same meanings as encoded by the producer, it is found that the meaning that the consumers can decode or interpret as encoded intentionally by the producer is *“men have to take good care of their physical appearance to keep it look good, elegant, and manly.”* It is remarkable that more than half of gay subjects interpret such meaning, same as some in male and female groups.

“ No matter women or men, we all need to take care of ourselves. Many people said eyebrows are like a crown of the face. If someone has them, it should make him or her look good”.

(Gay consumer No 2)

“ Our physical appearance must look good. If we look good, people will like us. To be a man or not is judged by our physical appearance, and that physical appearance are eyebrows.”

(Gay consumer no. 7)

“ The advertisement might want to tell men to take care more of themselves to create their good image and their elegant look, as if they looked more real men. It tries to present the product after communicating about good image.”

(Gay consumer No. 13)

“I think the product is trying to break down people's thought that men cannot make up. If they do so, they will look like a queer or a tootsie. However, now the world changes, there are so many metropolitan men who take care of themselves

or they are called as Metrosexual. For a man drawing his brows, it is not a strange thing anymore. Mistine thus tries to create a product to access this target.”

(Gay consumer No. 15)

“ Men can use cosmetics or men might get a problem of thin eyebrows.”

(Interviewee in the female group)

“The advertisement seems to invite men to take good care of themselves because now it is not strange for men to use cosmetics”.

(Interviewee in the mixed group)

For the decoding of dominant meaning by Oppositional Reading, which is the receiver's decoding of the opposite or contradictory meanings as encoded by the producer, it is found that the meaning that the consumers decode or interpret is *“To use a pencil to draw dark brows does not help him to look manlier. Manliness is not judged from his brows.”* It is remarkable that over six gay subjects interpret such meaning, same as some in male and the mixed groups.

“In the advertisement, nothing is compatible. Drawing eyebrows and manliness are contradictory. Sometimes, to draw too bold brows is not manly. Now, it is true that some men draw their brows but to say that to draw eyebrows reflects their manhood, I don't think so. Manliness and elegance is their personality and gesture, not the use of cosmetics.”

(Gay consumer No. 3)

“ I think the advertisement wants to convey that for a manly man, he must draw his brows but I disagree. It is like the brand misunderstood that a real man have to draw his brows to make them bold but actually will not do so. In short, it tries to say that men can draw brows. However, it is not O.K. to specify that only

handsome and elegant men will draw brows because for even some gays, they will not draw their brows.”

(Gay consumer No. 11)

“Men with bold brows are real men? It is not true”

(Interviewee in the male group)

“The advertisement seems to focus on the sales of the product without considering its connectivity. It sounds irrelevant. It tries to say that men with bold brows are cool to sell its product but it is not. To draw bold brows should not be what real men will do.”

(Interviewee in the mixed group)

Besides, the consumers’ decoding by Negotiated Reading is also found in the study in the gay and female groups. The meaning found is that to have bold brows, one can act or perform as a man to attract men or women. This kind of decoding negotiates for a new meaning. Thus, it is the type of decoding between Preferred Reading and a new meaning constructed by a consumer.

“It should just say that this brow pencil is for men. After use, he can act like a real man and can be attracted by a man too.”

(Gay Consumer No. 1)

“It must be so good that Aof Pongsak accepted to be a presenter who can attract a woman”

(Interviewee in the female group)

Nevertheless, some gay consumers do not understand the dominant meaning encoded by the producer at all. They are confused between the name of the product, “for men” and the selection of Aof Pongsak as a presenter who is widely known as a gay. This confusion can be an obstacle in decoding the dominant meaning of the advertisement.

“I am confused. What do they like to sell? I do not understand at all what it tries to convey. Is this a product for men? If so, why is Aof a presenter? Will it be clearer to choose a real man as a presenter? It is all confusing.”

(Gay consumer No. 16)

5.1.2 The Findings on the Decoding of Dominant Code: The Image of the Product Reflects a Consumer's Identity.

There are two advertisements are found to have the decoding of dominant code: the image of the product reflects a consumer's identity, SK-II and SC Asset. From the study, it is found that most consumers decode the dominant code of the advertisements by “Preferred Reading” or they can interpret the dominant meaning encoded by the producer. The sex variable does not affect the consumers' decoding. Besides, the study also finds some of the consumers' decoding by Negotiated Reading but finds no decoding by “Oppositional Reading”. The details of the findings are as following:

5.1.2.1 The consumers' decoding of dominant code of SK-II advertisement

From the aforementioned finding, the proportion of the decoding by Preferred Reading is higher than Negotiated Reading but no Oppositional Reading is found. For the decoding of dominant meaning by Preferred Reading, which is the decoding of the same meanings as encoded by the producer, it is found that the meaning that the consumers can decode or interpret as encoded intentionally by the producer is *“to accept one's self and change it to be better,”* and *“to be yourself. Proud of what you are.”* It illustrates that consumers can decode the dominant meaning in the same direction as the producer encoded.

“It should convey the meaning of an acceptance, a self-disclosure, and no fear of accepting oneself.”

(Gay consumer No. 5)

“It tries to stimulate or drive us to be brave to change our destiny and to change everything that is our obstacle. However, we have to hold strongly of what we are but change a mean destiny that will obstruct us or whatever.”

(Gay consumer No. 11)

“ I understand that this brand wants use to respect of what we are. From the story, Khun Sha must conceal herself of what he is but there is a turning point until his family accepts him. Everything can go to a good direction if you hold firmly of what you are”

(Gay consumer No. 17)

“I see the social acceptance. Thai society cannot accept the diversity of sex so long. This advertisement tries to point out that Thai society opens more for this issue. However, a person has to accept himself first before the society will accept him. In general, it tries to stimulate us to accept ourselves and be confident of ourselves.”

(Interviewee in the female group)

“I feel that no matter sex you are, you have to take care of yourself and express what you are. Whatever you are, you must accept it. This advertisement is clever in narrating a story as a motivation to persuade alternative sexes to accept themselves and to change themselves for a better.”

(Interviewee in the male group)

“Everyone can change himself for his own sake towards a better way. We have to dare to accept what we are and reveal it without hiding. This can enhance our confidence and expression.

(Interviewee in the mixed group)

Besides, the study finds the decoding by Negotiated Reading of one gay consumer, which is the consumer's decoding between Preferred Reading and the new meaning created by the consumer. This consumer decodes the dominant meaning

of SK-II advertisement that “beauty is inside oneself.” This interpreted meaning is similar to a self-acceptance, which is the dominant meaning of this advertisement. However, he also adds some new meaning of his own. Such newly created meaning may reflect via the product brand of SK-II, which is a beauty product. Therefore, it affects the decoding process to have a common meaning between the meaning encoded by the producer and created meaning of the consumer from his experiences.

“It is the beauty inside. The beauty of each person is not the same. In case of Khun Sha, it is his concealed beauty since his childhood because gays in the old days were not accepted. Therefore, if he wants this beauty to shine, he must be brave to change.”

(Gay consumer No. 9)

However, some gay consumers do not understand the dominant meaning of this advertisement. They feel that it does not connect to the SK-II brand so the encoded message from the producer cannot be understood.

“I don’t know what it wants to convey. I don’t get it. They are selling a beauty product but present a story like this so I don’t understand.”

(Gay consumer No.10)

“I feel confused what it wants to communicate. Whom do they want to sell, women or men? Does it communicate that it is our own life so we have to choose by ourselves? In short, I don’t clearly understand it.

(Gay consumer No. 8)

5.1.2.2 The consumers’ decoding of dominant code of SC ASSET advertisement

For SC ASSET advertisement, the consumers’ decoding by Preferred Reading is found the most and no difference affected by the sex variable is found. Only some gay consumers decode by Negotiated Reading but no decoding by Oppositional Reading is found. For Preferred Reading, the meaning that both gay and

heterosexual consumers decode in the same way is *“One choice reflects one’s identity.”*

“It communicates that everybody chooses to do what he or she wants or chooses to do what he or she dreams for or what her or his heart calls. To choose to do what we need and what we are.”

(Gay consumer No. 15)

“I choose the best thing for me. It reflects who you are from what you choose. Sometimes, it is an ambition or aspiration. Choose to do what your heart asks you to do.”

(Gay consumer No. 19)

“Choose what you want to be and want to get. That choice will tell what kind of person you are.”

(Interviewee in the female group)

“Choose what is the best for yourself. Choose what you like, what you want to get or what you want to be.”

(Interviewee in the male group)

“To let us be brave to choose what we want. To choose to reflect your identity. Therefore, people have a right to choose to do from their own heart”

(Interviewee in the mixed group)

For the decoding by Negotiated Reading, it is found in the gay group but is not found in the heterosexual group. The meaning that the consumers decode by this reading is *“to illustrate consumers’ lifestyle that can respond to each consumer’s needs at each range of age.”* In the advertisement, three presenters represent consumers with different lifestyles and with different ages. Therefore, in each range of age, it shows a choice that consumers of that age need in the advertisement. That is why a part of consumers of that range of age decodes by

Preferred Reading in combination with the decoding with their new created meanings to connect with the product or the condominium in the center of Chidlom, which is an expensive product of SC ASSET.

“It communicates in the sense that Chidlom Condominium can respond to your special needs, no matter you are a lady with a dream to play ballet, an elderly people who want to exercise, or gay lovers. All these people have special lifestyles and have a purchase power. Therefore, these people have a passive income so they can have time to do other activities, the activities which fulfil their happiness or their dreams.”

(Gay consumer No. 17)

“ I feel that they want to communicate about spending our life or choosing what it should be. For the girl who plays ballet, she is in the trial phase of chasing her dream. For the married gays, it is the phase of beginning a family and for the elderly woman; it is the phase of taking care of herself by an exercise. It is what a human life should be but the activities are only for a lifestyle of those who have a buying power.”

(Gay consumer No.13)

Table 5.3 illustrates the decoding of advertisement components by gay and heterosexual consumers

Dominant meaning	AD.	Codes of AD. components	Decoding Signifier	Consumer				Total group(s)
			Connotative Meaning (Form and Function)	gay	female	male	mixed	
The presenter looks so cool and manly that a woman misinterprets him as a real man.	Mistine	1) Verbal Language Code - Slogan (With bold brows, one can be a real man)	Men look handsome, cool, and elegant with bold brows.	✓ (5)				1
			The advertisement does not talk about real men in its copy.	✗ (2)			✗	2
			Manliness does not depend on bold brows	✗ (13)	✗	✗	✗	4
			- Copy Muscles, dresses, and eyebrows reflect the property of a man and increase his coolness.	✓ (6)	✓			2
			The Product is not for men but for gays.	✗ (12)		✗	✗	3

Table 5.3 (Continued)

Dominant meaning	AD.	Codes of AD. components	Decoding Signifier	Consumer				Total group(s)
			Connotative Meaning (Form and Function)	gay	female	male	mixed	
			No agreement with the meaning conveyed by the advertisement that bold brows represent a manliness.	✗ (2)				1
		2) Nonverbal Language Code - presenter	The presenter has bold brows that suits to present the product.	✓ (2)				1
			It emphasizes that the marketing targets of Mistine are gays like the presenter.	✓ (11)		✓	✓	3
			The presenter has a metrosexual look	✓ (3)		✓		2

Table 5.3 (Continued)

Dominant meaning	AD.	Codes of AD. components	Decoding Signifier	Consumer				Total group(s)
			Connotative Meaning (Form and Function)	gay	female	male	mixed	
			I feel a contrast between the copy talking about manliness and coolness and the presenter who is a gay.	x (4)	x			2
		- Image/ illustration	It communicates that gays are the marketing target of Mistine	✓ (8)		✓	✓	3
			Both men and gays can use the product.	✓ (3)	✓	✓		3
			The product helps the presenter to look charming for a man and woman	● (5)	●			2

Table 5.3 (Continued)

Dominant meaning	AD.	Codes of AD. components	Decoding Signifier	Consumer				Total group(s)
			Connotative Meaning (Form and Function)	gay	female	male	mixed	
			The presenter looks so cool and manly that the woman misunderstands that he is a real man	● (2)				1
			Image in the advertisement contradicts with the presentation of “for men” product.	✕ (2)				1
		- Usage of colors	Colors give a feeling of coolness, distinctiveness, and strength, which is accordant with the product.	✓ (20)	✓	✓	✓	4
		- Audio	Steady voice gives a meaning of coolness.	✓ (11)	✓	✓	✓	4

Table 5.3 (Continued)

Dominant meaning	AD.	Codes of AD. components	Decoding Signifier	Consumer				Total group(s)
			Connotative Meaning (Form and Function)	gay	female	male	mixed	
			Voices used in advertising can draw goos attention.	✓ (1)				1
			No feeling with the voice used in the advertisement. It does not call attention or attract the viewers.	✗ (8)				1
		3) Technical – Practical Code	CU for presenting details of the presenter and the product.	✓ (20)	✓	✓	✓	4
		- Shot size						
		- camera movement	To display the presenter's coolness and gestures.	✓ (20)	✓	✓	✓	4

Table 5.3 (Continued)

Dominant meaning	AD.	Codes of AD. components	Decoding	Consumer				Total group(s)	
			Signifier Connotative Meaning (Form and Function)	gay	female	male	mixed		
The image of the product reflects a consumer's identity	SK-II	1) Verbal Language Code - Slogan (Change Destiny)	- Camera angle	To present clearly the product and images for an easy understanding.	✓ (16)	✓	✓	✓	4
			A normal angle used in advertisements	✓ (4)					1
			To accept oneself	✓ (4)					1
			We can determine and change our own destiny.	✓ (13)	✓	✓	✓	✓	4
			The slogan is not connected with the brand.	✗ (2)					1
			To be oneself is not a change of destiny	✗ (1)					1

Table 5.3 (Continued)

Dominant meaning	AD.	Codes of AD. components	Decoding Signifier	Consumer				Total group(s)
			Connotative Meaning (Form and Function)	gay	female	male	mixed	
		- Copy	To stimulate the audience to change their own destiny	✓ (10)		✓		2
			A good focal point to access the story since it is the story gays often experience.	✓ (6)	✓		✓	3
			Gays do not necessarily prove themselves all the time.	✗ (4)				1
		2) Nonverbal language Code - presenter	The presenter is well known and a trend of that time	✓ (9)	✓	✓	✓	4
			The story of the presenter is interesting.	✓ (7)			✓	2

Table 5.3 (Continued)

Dominant meaning	AD.	Codes of AD. components	Decoding Signifier	Consumer				Total group(s)
			Connotative Meaning (Form and Function)	gay	female	male	mixed	
			The brand tries to communicate that they understand every group of people and tries to focus on alternative sex as the target.	✓ (4)	✓			2
		-image/ illustration	It is the preparation for the skin and beauty.	✓ (3)				1
			To portray the background of the presenter before his success.	✓ (13)	✓	✓	✓	4
			To display a transition of the presenter that goes along with the slogan, “Change destiny”.	✓ (4)				1

Table 5.3 (Continued)

Dominant meaning	AD.	Codes of AD. components	Decoding Signifier	Consumer				Total group(s)
			Connotative Meaning (Form and Function)	gay	female	male	mixed	
		-usage of colors	To display a seriousness of the narration	✓ (12)				1
			To give a feeling of a mystery while narrating a hidden story. The use of bright color at the end conveys the meaning of a success.	✓ (5)	✓	✓	✓	4
			To give a feeling of grandness	✓ (3)				1
		- Audio	A slow rhythm at the beginning gives a feeling of sadness and discomfort at the end stimulates a feeling of success.	✓ (14)	✓	✓	✓	4

Table 5.3 (Continued)

Dominant meaning	AD.	Codes of AD. components	Decoding Signifier	Consumer				Total group(s)
			Connotative Meaning (Form and Function)	gay	female	male	mixed	
			The sound is so harmonious with the story that it is not noticed.	✗ (6)				1
		3)Technical -Practical Code - Shot size	CU can create a common feeling very well.	✓ (11)	✓	✓		3
			To use CU for focusing on the fair complexion of the presenter using SK-II product.	✓ (6)			✓	2
			It gives a feeling of unease, which is not suitable for the product.	✗ (3)				1
		- camera movement	Attention is used.	✓ (5)				1
			It can draw a good attention	✓ (15)	✓	✓	✓	4

Table 5.3 (Continued)

Dominant meaning	AD.	Codes of AD. components	Decoding Signifier	Consumer				Total group(s)
			Connotative Meaning (Form and Function)	gay	female	male	mixed	
	SC ASSET	1) Verbal Language Code	Choose what you are	✓ (18)	✓	✓	✓	4
		- Slogan (Choose yours)	Choose to follow your heart	✓ (2)				1
		- Copy	To choose what your heart calls for without reasons	✓ (11)		✓	✓	3
			No matter who can make a choice.	✓ (3)				1
			Be oneself / to have different lifestyles	✓ (6)	✓			2
		2) Nonverbal Language Code	To display a number of marketing segments of SC ASSET	✓ (14)	✓	✓	✓	4
		- presenter	To portray different tastes and lifestyles	✓ (6)	✓		✓	3

Table 5.3 (Continued)

Dominant meaning	AD.	Codes of AD. components	Decoding Signifier	Consumer				Total group(s)
			Connotative Meaning (Form and Function)	gay	female	male	mixed	
		- image/ illustration	An image of the wedding to display a love of two men	✓ (7)				1
			A wedding image is a desirable imagination.	✓ (3)	✓			2
			To display the targets with a purchase power	✓ (4)	✓	✓		3
			A focus on making a choice from one's heart.	✓ (5)				1
			A surprise				✓	1
		- usage of colors	Same as SC	●				1
			ASSET	(4)				
			Cheerful and natural	✓ (14)	✓	✓	✓	4
			The usage of this advertisement conveys no meaning	- (2)				1
		- Audio	Determined, exciting, enthusiastic	✓ (15)	✓	✓	✓	4

Table 5.3 (Continued)

Dominant meaning	AD.	Codes of AD. components	Decoding Signifier Connotative Meaning (Form and Function)	Consumer				Total group(s)
				gay	female	male	mixed	
			interesting	✓ (5)				1
		3) Technical-Practical Code	CU helps to see the presenter's feeling and action well.	✓ (20)	✓	✓	✓	4
		- shot size	To give a feeling of a surprise	✓ (20)	✓	✓	✓	4
		- camera movement	No complication and easy to understand	✓ (20)	✓	✓	✓	4

- ✓ means decoding by Preferred Reading
 ● means decoding by Negotiated Reading
 ✕ means decoding by Oppositional Reading
 - means “no understanding of the meaning”

5.2 The Finding on the Consumers' Decoding of Advertisement Components.

The Dominant Meaning: The product's property reflects a consumer's identity.

From Table 5.3, it is found that the advertisement containing the dominant meaning, "the product's property reflects a consumer's identity," is Mistine. Besides, the consumers are found to decode its meaning from the advertisement components as follows:

1) Verbal Language Codes. The consumers decode the "slogan" of this advertisement by Oppositional Reading the most with the interpretation that "Being manly does not depend on the bold brows." The sex variable does not affect the differences in their decoding. Similarly, the consumers also decode "the copy" by Oppositional Reading the most and three of the four groups of the consumers decode that "The product is not for men but for gays." The next decoding found the most is the decoding by Preferred Reading with the interpretation that "muscles, dresses, and brows are men's property that can increase their coolness. However, the sex variable is not found to affect the differences in consumers' decoding.

2) Nonverbal Language Codes. The consumers decode "the presenter component by Preferred Reading the most from three out of four groups with the meaning that, "the marketing targets of Mistine are gays like the presenter." Next is the decoding by Preferred Reading as well but with the interpretation of two out of four groups that, "a presenter has a metrosexual personality." In addition, two out of the four groups also decode the presenter component by Oppositional Reading with the interpretation that, "It is contradictory to present the coolness and manliness by a gay presenter." The consumers decode "the image or illustration" component in two meanings by Preferred Reading the most from three out of the four groups. Their interpretation of the image is "gays are marketing targets of Mistine" and "both real men and gays can use the product." The next decoding is the decoding by Negotiated Reading (2 from 4 groups) with the interpretation that, "the product helps the presenter to look charming in the eyes of both men and women." Besides, the decoding by Oppositional Reading is found in the gay group who interpret that the

image of the advertisement contrasts with the product "for men." For the color component, all four groups of the consumers decode the usage of colors in the same direction by Preferred Reading with the interpretation that, "the color gives a feeling of coolness, distinctiveness, and strength in accordance with the product." Another advertisement component that is found the most is "audio component" and the consumers decode it by Preferred Reading the most. The interpretation of the audio component used in this advertisement is "the steady voice gives a feeling of coolness and manliness."

3) Technical-Practical Codes. All four groups of the consumers decode "the shot size" component in the same direction by Preferred Reading with the interpretation that, "close-up shots helps to see details of the presenter and product." Similarly, all four groups decode "the camera movement" component by Preferred Reading with the interpretation that, "it helps to see the presenter's coolness and gestures well." All four groups also decode "the camera angle" component by Preferred Reading the most and interpret that "it helps to see the product and image clearly and make it easy to understand."

The Dominant Meaning: The product's image reflects a consumer's identity.

The advertisements that contain the dominant meaning, "the product's image reflects a consumer's identity." Are SK-II and SC ASSET

SK-II Advertisement

1) Verbal Language Code. The consumers decode "the slogan" component by Preferred Reading the most from all four groups. Their interpretation of the slogan is that "we can choose to determine or change our own destiny." Only gay group decode it by Oppositional Reading with the interpretation that, "the slogan does not connect with the brand and being oneself is not a change of destiny." For "the copy" component, three of the four groups decode by Preferred Reading with the interpretation that, "it is a good focal point to access the story because it is the story gays often experience." Another two groups also decode by Preferred Reading with a different interpretation, "it stimulates a change of our own destiny." The decoding by

Oppositional Reading is found only in the gay group with the interpretation that “gays do not always need to prove themselves.”

2) Nonverbal Language Code. All four groups decode "the presenter" in the same direction by Preferred Reading with the interpretation that "the presenter is well known and a trend of that time." Likewise, "the image" component is decoded by all four groups in the same direction by Preferred Reading with the interpretation that "it is the background of the presenter before his success." All four groups also decode "color" component with Preferred Reading and they interpret it as "the colors that give a feeling of mystery while narrating a hidden story, and the shining white color at the end reflects a success." Similarly, all four groups encode "the audio" component in the same direction by Preferred Reading with the interpretation that "a slow rhythm at the beginning gives a feeling of sadness and uneasiness from concealing one's self and the accelerating rhythm at the end stimulates a feeling of brightness and success."

3) Technical-Practical Code. Three of the four groups of consumers encode "the shot size" component by Preferred Reading with the interpretation that "A close-up shot enhances a common feeling with the story well". Next is also the decoding by Preferred Reading (2 of 4 groups) with the interpretation that "To use a close-up shot helps to see fair complexion of the presenter from the use of SK-II product." The decoding by Oppositional Reading is found only in the gay group who interpret that "the shot gives an uncomfortable feeling and it is not suitable for the product." For the "camera movement" component, all four groups decode it by Preferred Reading in the same direction with the interpretation that "it can draw an attention and makes the story interesting to follow." In the same direction, all four groups decode the "camera angle" component by Preferred Reading with the interpretation that "a normal angle gives a feeling of being normal."

SC ASSET Advertisement

1) Verbal Language Code. All four groups of the consumers decode the "slogan" component in the same direction by Preferred Reading with the interpretation that "to choose what you are." For the "copy" component, three of four groups decode it with Preferred Reading and interpret it as "to choose what your heart

calls without reasons.” The decoding by Preferred Reading is found with another interpretation, “to be oneself and to have a different lifestyle.” (2 of 4 groups).

2) Nonverbal Language Code. For the decoding of the “presenter” component, all four groups interpret by Preferred Reading in the same direction that “SC ASSET has many segments of marketing targets”. The next interpretation of the presenter component decoded by two of four groups by Preferred Reading is “it illustrates different tastes and lifestyles.” Three of four groups decode the “image/illustration” component by Preferred Reading with the interpretation that “the advertisement display its target group with a purchase power.” The next decoding of the image by Preferred Reading by two of four groups with the interpretation that “the image of a wedding is a desirable imagination,” and by only the mixed group with the interpretation that “it gives a feeling of a surprise.” All four groups decode the “color” component in the same direction by Preferred Reading with the interpretation that “it means cheerfulness and naturalness.” Besides, the decoding by Negotiated Reading is found only in the gay group who perceive that “colors in the advertisement are similar to the colors of the brand but they convey no meaning.” For the “audio” component, all four groups decode it by Preferred Reading with the interpretation that “it shows a determination, excitement, arousal, and enthusiasm”.

3) Technical-Practical Code. All four groups decode the “shot size” in the same direction by Preferred Reading with the interpretation that, “it gives a feeling of a surprise.” Similarly, all four groups decode the “camera angle” component in the same direction by Preferred Reading with the interpretation that “it shows no complication and makes it easy to understand.”

From the above analysis of the consumers' decoding of the advertisement components, the details of the findings are presented as follows:

5.2.1 The Findings on the Consumers' Decoding of Advertisement Components with the Dominant Meaning: The product's property reflects a consumer's identity.

MISTINE ADVERTISEMENT

5.2.1.1 Verbal Language Code

From the study, the proportion of decoding by Oppositional Reading is higher than the decoding by the other two readings, especially the decoding of the slogan and the copy of this advertisement.

1) Slogan: "With bold brows, one can be a real man.

After viewing the slogan of Mistine advertisement, it is found that all four groups of consumers decode this slogan with Oppositional Reading or they disagree with the meaning encoded by the producer. Their opposite interpretation is "Manliness does not depend on the bold brows."

"I think that bold brows do not make one look manlier. I saw many tootsies (or queers) with bold brows. It is just a creation of a myth that to have bold brows make one a man. I understand that an advertising must find a slogan to attract their customers but for the slogan of this advertisement, I disagree."

(Gay consumer No. 12)

"I don't believe with this slogan. To be a man needs bold brows? I don't think so."

(Interviewee in the female group)

"I don't like this slogan at all. Normal men will not waste their time on this make-up. I think it will not make you look like a man if you draw your brows too dark."

(Interviewee in the male group)

*“It looks very funny. A male with bold brows is a man, isn’t he?
I think the advertisement tried to force to emphasize that the brows must be bold.”*

(Interviewee in the mixed group)

For the rest of consumers, only five from twenty gays in the gay group decode this slogan by Preferred Reading while it is not found in any heterosexual groups. The interpretation of the gays by Preferred Reading is “it reflects a sharp and cool look of a man through his bold brows.”

“I see that this advertisement tries to use the manliness to play with the brows as brows are one property of a man. As some people said that brows are like a crown of the face, the product can make an unreal man look like a man.”

(Gay consumer No. 18)

2) Copy. From the study, three of four group, namely gays, males, and mixed, decode the copy of this advertisement by Oppositional Reading with an interpretation that “the product is not for men but for gays.” This meaning opposes the meaning encoded by the producer because the producer encodes that this product is for men mainly because male markets have high potential and grow very rapidly

“I think its hidden meaning is that gays are not real men so big muscles cannot be better than bold brows. They do not mean to sell this product for men actually but it is like inviting gays who want to look like real men to try their product. However, from the point of view of gays, to draw eyebrows will not increase your manliness. It depends on how he looks like.”

(Gay consumer No. 7)

“ Its message is for selling for gays but they do not say it directly.”

(Interviewee in the male group)

“The advertisement tries to communicate to men but men will not dare to use it certainly because it will make them look like gays very much.”

(Interviewee in the mixed group)

Nevertheless, the decoding by Preferred Reading is found partly in the female and gay groups and their interpretation is that “the copy of the advertisement reflects some property of being a man, i.e. muscles, dresses, and brows, to enhance their coolness,” which is the meaning encoded by the producer

“The advertisement tries to tell us what the property of men are and tries to persuade that men in this modern era can use this product.”

(Interviewee in the female group)

5.2.1.2 Nonverbal Language Code

From the study, the consumers decode nonverbal language codes of Mistine Advertisement by Preferred Reading more than the other two readings. The details are as following:

1) Presenter

From the study, it is found that three of four groups: gays, males and mixed, decode the presenter component by Preferred Reading with the interpretation that the marketing targets of Mistine are gays, which is the same meaning as encoded by the producer via the presenter to see their hidden target group

“ At last, the hidden target group that Mistine wants to communicate with is the gay group. That is why they chose Aof as a presenter and he is an idol of gay with still having a look of a man.”

(Gay consumer No. 19)

“ The advertisement tries to reveal their target group of the product. Aof also is famous and it is obvious that he is a gay.”

(Interviewee in the male group)

“ I think they want to sell the product for gays. If they want to sell men, they should have chosen Nadej as a presenter, which will be another mood.”

(Interviewee in the female group)

Besides, it is found that some in the gay group also decode the presenter component by Preferred Reading but with another interpretation that "the presenter has bold brows that suit for the product," and some in the gay group and in the male group interpret that "the presenter has a Metrosexual personality."

“ Aof has bold brows, which match with the product, so when viewing the advertisement, I believe that he truly uses the product.”

(Gay consumer No. 7)

“ Aof gives an image of a man who pays much attention to his appearance and Metrosexual man. Therefore, I am not surprised if this group of men will use cosmetics.”

(Gay consumer No. 3)

Nevertheless, some gays and some females decode by Oppositional Reading against the meaning encoded by the producer. Their interpretation is “it is contradictory to present the manliness and coolness through other codes but choose the presenter who is a gay.”

“ It is strange why they chose Aof. The advertisement is communicating what are the indicators of being a man so in our imagination we will think about something manly. However, when it turns out to be Aof, it does not respond to the assumption. It erases all the images the advertisement tries to convey at the beginning.”

(Gay consumer No. 16)

“ When it becomes Aof Pongsak, it is contradictory with the message narrated in the advertisement. This makes the audience not believe in the product.”

(Interviewee in the female group)

2) Image/ Illustration

From the study, it is found that the consumers decode the image component by Preferred Reading more than the other two readings. The sex variable does not affect the differences in the consumers' decoding. Besides, it is found that the gay group interprets the image component more diversely than other groups. However, the interpretation from the Preferred Reading is divided into two groups. Three of four groups (gays, males, and mixed) interpret with the meaning that "gays are marketing targets of Mistine," while other parts of three out of four groups (gays, females, and males) interpret that "both men and gays can use the product."

“ I think they try to make the image interesting by having a woman involved to create a contradiction first because anyway at last Aof must choose a man. Especially in the scene where a man takes off his shirt showing a muscular body to attract gays so it is obvious who they want to sell to.”

(Gay consumer No. 18)

“ It communicates clearly their target consumers or who they want to sell to, especially in the scene in which the presenter pulls another man towards him. It is very obvious.”

(Interviewee in the mixed group)

"The product can be used by real and unreal men. Today, some men also make up. I think it communicates with both sexes."

(Gay consumer No. 4)

"It should try to present for both markets: men and gays."

(Interviewee in the male group)

Besides, some subjects in the gay and female group decode the presenter component by Negotiated Reading. They interpret with the meaning that "the product helps the presenter to look charming in the eyes of both women and men." This is the kind of decoding with a combination between the encoded meaning of the producer (to help the presenter look charming, manly, and sharp) and the meaning created by the consumers.

"I think it can draw attention from both women and men. It is like from drawing the brows, one can look so sharp and manly that a woman and a man like him."

(Gay consumer No. 20)

"From the shot, it looks like, after the use of the product, a woman likes because he looks charming so a woman comes towards him and so does a man."

(Interviewee in the female group)

Another meaning from the only some gays' decoding by Negotiated Reading is "the presenter looks so cool and manly that a woman misunderstands that he is a real man." This meaning is not found in other groups.

"I think the bold brows are so beautifully drawn that he can disguise himself to make even a woman believe that she truly chooses a real man."

(Gay consumer No. 14)

Besides, the aforementioned subjects, the rest of the gay group also decode the presenter component by Oppositional Reading with the interpretation that “the image shown in the advertisement contradicts with the presentation of the product for men.”

From the above findings, it illustrates that the consumers decode the image component with a polysemy or diverse meanings.

“It is very contrasting especially at the last scene in which the presenter blinks. Why does he act like a woman since this is a product for men? Moreover, the slogan is with bold brows, you can be a real man. All through the story, it tries to communicate with this sense but the images are contradictory.”

(Gay consumer No. 12)

3) Usage of colors

From the study, all four groups of the consumers decode the color component in the same direction by Preferred Reading with the interpretation that “the colors used in the advertisement give a feeling of coolness and strength that accords with the product.”

“Boldness and Manliness for an attraction and a charm uses the basic tone of men.”

(Gay consumer No. 2)

“The colors help to look dark, manly, and cool.”

(Interviewee in the female group)

“It helps to see the manliness. It is the color of men”

(Interviewee in the male group)

“It is the classic color of men that helps to increase a cool and manly look.”

(Interviewee in the mixed group)

4) Audio

From the study, the consumers of both gays and heterosexuals decode the audio component by Preferred Reading the most with the interpretation that “the audio part of the advertisement gives a feeling of firmness and a feeling of coolness and manliness, which is the same meaning encoded by the producer.

“It sounds firm, strong, and very manly.”

(Gay consumer No. 6)

“ The audio component used gives a feeling of being a man. When you hear it, it will remind you of men’s cologne.”

(Interviewee in the female group)

“A manly advertisement must use this kind of music. It can get along very well.”

(Interviewee in the male group)

“ It sounds manly and cool and makes me think of Handsome advertisement.”

(Interviewee in the mixed group)

On the other hand, the decoding of Oppositional Reading is also found in some parts of the gay group but with smaller proportion than Preferred Reading. Some gays are neutral and “feel that the audio component does not give any specific attraction or interest,” which opposes to the meaning encoded by the producer. However, no Oppositional Reading is found in the heterosexual groups.

“I feel nothing with the music. It does not interest me or help to recall the content of the communication.”

(Gay consumer No. 14)

5.2.1.3 Technical-Practical Code.

From the study, only the decoding by Preferred Reading is found in all components and in our groups. This illustrates that the consumers decode the same meaning as the producer encodes. Besides, the sex variable does not cause any decoding differences.

1) Shot size

Both gays and heterosexuals decode the shot size component by Preferred Reading with the interpretation that “the use of a close-up shot helps to see details of the presenter and the product,” which is the intended meaning encoded by the producer.

“Of course, a close-up shot helps to see the manly look of the presenter and the details of the product, including how to use the product clearly.”

(Gay consumer No. 2)

“It helps to see the physical appearance of Aof. In other words, we can see what it wants to sell sharply.”

(Interviewee in the female group)

“They focus on selling their product by this shot size to see its details.”

(Interviewee in the male group)

“It must show the product and its instruction so the used shot is proper.”

(Interviewee in the mixed group)

2) Camera movement

From the study, both gays and heterosexuals decode the camera movement component by Preferred Reading with the interpretation that “this kind of camera movement makes us see the presenter’s cool look and gestures very well” which is the intended meaning encoded by the producer.

“This movement helps to make it look cool and modern It also enhances the presenter’s personality.”

(Gay consumer No.18)

“It seems that they use Pan camera movement, which is common in the advertisements. This advertisement pans to get Aof. It looks good and interesting.”

(Interviewee in the female group)

“It can make me consented. It is not complicating but easy to understand that they want us to see the presenter’s manliness.”

(Interviewee in the male group)

“It looks comfortable. It looks like a man”

(Interviewee in the mixed group)

3) Camera angle

From the study, both gays and heterosexuals decode the camera angle component by Preferred Reading with two interpretations. The first interpretation is “From this angle, we can see the product and images clearly and it is easy to understand.” The second one, perceived by some gays, is “it is a normal angle used in the advertisement,” which is the intended meaning encoded by the producer.

“This angle is a normal angle, isn’t it? I think it can help to understand it easily and clearly, not too much.”

(Gay consumer No. 1)

“It is correct to use this angle for this kind of product presentation”

(Gay consumer No. 7)

“This angle helps to see the product and Aof clearly”

(Interviewee in the female group)

“You cannot use too complicating angles to sell a product. It is correct to use this angle because it is easy to understand.”

(Interviewee in the male group)

“It is clear what it wants to convey. It helps to see the product and the presenter. This kind of angle is O.K.”

(Interviewee in the mixed group)

5.2.2 The Findings on the Consumers’ Decoding of Advertisement Components on the Dominant Meaning: The Product’s Image Reflects a Consumer’s Identity.

SK-II ADVERTISEMENT

5.2.2.1 Verbal Language Code

From the study, the consumers’ decoding by Preferring Reading is found with a higher proportion than the decoding by Oppositional Reading but no Negotiated Reading is found.

1) Slogan: Change Destiny

After viewing SK-II advertisement, the consumers, both gays and heterosexuals, decode the slogan component by Preferred Reading with the interpretation that "we can choose to determine and change our own destiny." However, the sex variable is found to have no effect on the differences in decoding.

“We have a power in changing our own destiny. I think that the advertisement tries to tell that it is ourselves who can determine what kind of life we want it to be.”

(Gay consumer No. 18)

"I feel that this brand tries to create a character to tell us that we can be an active chooser without letting others choose for us or tell us what we are. The brand tries to give this character for those who use the product like it gives some kind of the power to them."

(Interviewee in the female group)

"It is we who determine our own life. Whatever we want to change, change it and dare to change a society's perspective on us."

(Interviewee in the male group)

"It might match with the saying that human beings cannot choose how we are born but we can choose what we want to be. For example, Khun Sha is born as a man but he changes himself not to be a man."

(Interviewee in the mixed group)

Another meaning decoded by Preferring Reading of some gays is "to accept oneself."

"From interpreting this advertisement, formerly our destiny is determined by what others expect us to be but we must be honest to our own feeling. We must accept ourselves first and make things to go to a better way."

(Gay consumer No. 7)

Besides, some gays decode the slogan "Change Destiny" by Oppositional Reading, which is opposed to the meaning encoded by the producer. They interpret this slogan by Oppositional Reading in two meanings: "no connection between the slogan and the product," and "to be oneself is not a change of destiny."

"I think it has no connection with this brand at all. I think this slogan cannot connect to the brand of the product."

(Gay consumer No. 11)

"I think the narrated story does not change a destiny at all. He is the one who draws his own life, and it is not a destiny. It does not mean that destiny exists somewhere and he goes to change it. Without this slogan, I will not ever know that the key message wants to communicate this. The fact is to reveal yourself, as the way you are is beautiful in the type that you are. Therefore, it is a matter of yourself, not a destiny."

(Gay consumer No. 19)

2) Copy

From the study, both gays and heterosexuals (three of four groups: gays, females, and mixed) decode the copy component by Preferred Reading with the interpretation, "the copy shows a good focal point that is reachable because it is the story gays often experience."

"I believe that this is what many gays used to experience. Like my family, do my parents know that I am a gay? I guess that they can observe it but they will not say it directly because they are not sure if they can bear it. For Khun Sha, he is lucky. His life seems to go gradually smooth and this family can accept it so his life was unlocked as he said."

(Gay consumer No. 2)

"It is an insight of the alternative sex in our country that many gays experience. They must conceal themselves and get pressure from the society. Only the details of each person's story may be different. Therefore, for this message, they can feel attached to it."

(Interviewee in the female group)

"It seems to be a story many gays get familiar with. This kind of life is a classic life of former people but at present, I think, people can somewhat accept it."

(Interviewee in the mixed group)

Another interpretation from the decoding by Preferred Reading is that “the copy stimulates a change of one’s own destiny.” This interpretation is decoded by the half of gay consumers and by some male consumers.

“ It encourages the alternative sex or gays not to surrender to what the society judges them. In every story about gays, it is conveyed with the portrayal of disappointment always. Since we are different from others, we must put more efforts to get an acceptance.”

(Gay consumer No.5)

“A number of gays try to present a story that we should not focus on sexes, which is good, so now gays can be an idol. People follow their stories rather than pinpointing their gay identity. This is like an encouragement for gays to change their lives”

(Interviewee in the male group)

Moreover, the rest of the gays decode the copy of SK-II advertisement by Oppositional Reading by viewing that “Gays do not necessarily prove themselves like Khun Sha.” Therefore, such interpretation of the meaning opposes to the producer’s encoded meaning.

“It is often heard that when the third gender is not accepted, they need to prove themselves. I am not sure if we need to do it because we hear someone saying so. Since childhood, I heard that gays had to study hard. At that time, I was a kid so I listened to them but when I grow up, I realize that it is not necessary to do so. We don’t need to be successful in order to let others accept us.”

(Gay consumer No. 12)

5.2.2.2 Nonverbal Language Code.

From the study, only the decoding of the nonverbal language codes by Preferring Reading is found but with some different interpretations. The details of the findings are as following:

1) Presenter

From the study, only the decoding of the presenter component of this advertisement by Preferred Reading is found and the sex variable does not affect the differences in the consumers' decoding. The interpretation of the consumers is that "the presenter is well known and is in the current trend so he is selected to present the campaign of Change Destiny," which accords with the producer's encoded message that Khun Sha is well-known because of his "Diary of a Tootsie" and the book is going to be launched at that time. Besides, he is also an internet influencer with a huge number of followers at that time."

"Maybe because Khun Sha at that time is in the trend with many followers. He also wrote a book. He is one of the alternative gender who is accepted in the society"

(Gay consumer No. 4)

"He is very trendy and his Diary of a Tootsie is very popular. Lots of people know him."

(Interviewee in the female group)

"He is famous in social media and many people follow him. His book is also very well known. The trend of the alternative gender is coming too. I think the brand chose him because of this."

(Interviewee in the male group)

"He is hot and this is his peak time since his book up to the series of Diary of a Tootsie. Thai society also is more open about this."

(Interviewee in the mixed group)

Besides, another decoding by Preferred Reading is found in the gay and mix groups with the interpretation that "the story of the presenter is interesting."

“ His story fits into the concept of Change Destiny because he told about his background or what he had passed before becoming like this now.”

(Gay consumer No. 3)

“I think the reason they chose Khun Sha because of her story not because of her identity and it matches with the slogan of Change Destiny.”

(Interviewee in the mixed group)

The last meaning from the decoding by Preferred Reading is found in two groups: gays and females, with the interpretation that "the product brand tries to communicate that it understands every group of its consumers and now it tries to focus on the alternative gender as its target group." This shows that the message encoded by the producer is decoded with various meanings by different groups of consumers.

“ The society seems to be open but it does not. They might say that they can accept gays but in reality, it seems that they oppose gays everywhere. Therefore, this advertisement chooses the alternative sex to show that it understands people of every group so this is a kind of encouragement. After viewing this advertisement, gays might be motivated to cross over their obstacles. Both women and men may feel how hard they have to fight in order to be accepted while gays may feel that this advertisement is designed for them

(Gay consumer No. 7)

“This brand might want to sell for the alternative gender as well.”

(Interviewee in the female group)

2) Image/ illustration

From the study, only the decoding of the image component by Preferred Reading is found and the sex variable is not found to affect any differences in the consumers' decoding. The consumers' interpretation is “the image of the

advertisement portrays the presenter's background before his success," which accords with the encoded meaning of the producer that tries to portray what kind of changes the presenter must face before he is successful.

"The context is Khun Sha is on air. The TV program is to give the social status to someone. In Thailand, anyone who can be on air will surely be famous, be accepted, and be successful. To tell the story of Khun Sha behind the stage is to display his change before his success

(Gay consumer No. 14)

"It tries to compare behind the stage as his previous life or what he has gone through. It is a symbolic comparison. Before the curtain is his fame and success."

(Interviewee in the female group)

"At first, behind the stage is like an unacceptance and before the stage is his success."

(Interviewee in the male group)

"It is his life background, or the backstage before he is successful."

(Interviewee in the mixed group)

Moreover, there are two more meanings found in the decoding of the image component by Preferred Reading of some gays. The interpretations are "the preparation for skin and beauty," and "the illustration of the presenter's transition that accords with the slogan of Change Destiny."

"I think it wants us to see that Khun Sha is preparing his skin and beauty, especially in the scene in which he gradually changes himself."

(Gay consumer No. 15)

“It matches with the slogan of Change Destiny, especially in the dressing-room scene. The presenter gradually puts his make-up on as if he is changing himself. It is a real change when he is on the stage and becomes someone accepted by everybody. In other words, at the end, he can finally change himself.”

(Gay consumer No. 11)

3) Usage of Colors

From the study, only the decoding of the color component by Preferred Reading is found with the meaning that “the colors give a feeling of a mystery like some concealed secret. The bright color at the end illustrates a success,” which accords with the encoded meaning of the producer who tries to present the story in a serious tone.

“At the end, the light is gradually brighter. It is similar to his life that gradually climbs up to a success. It uses the shining light from a dim light to communicate a success.”

(Gay consumer No. 12)

“The concealment is darkness and the opening of the curtain is the light of success.”

(Interviewee in the female group)

“The color used at the beginning looks mysterious but later it is the color showing a success.”

(Interviewee in the male group)

“ Dim colors at the beginning looking mysterious mean a concealment. The opening of the curtain means a revealing or disclosure. The brighter color means people accept him.”

(Interviewee in the mixed group)

Besides, more than half of gays also decode the color component by Preferred Reading but with a different meaning, that is, "the usage of color reflects a seriousness in narrating the story."

"It seems to indicate that the third gender is not treated in a mocking way like before but it is the story of a life. It is serious; therefore, the color used gives a feeling of being more dramatic."

(Gay consumer No. 18)

The rest of gays also decode the color component by Preferred Reading with the interpretation that "the color used in the advertisement illustrates a grandness."

"Black represents a grandness"

(Gay consumer No. 17)

4) Audio

Both gay and heterosexual consumers decode the audio component in the same direction by Preferred Reading. However, the sex variable does not affect any differences in the consumers' decoding. The shared interpretation is "the slow rhythm at the beginning gives a feeling of sadness and discomfort from hiding oneself and the rapid rhythm at the end conveys the meaning of a success."

"I feel that the music is played in the same direction as the story being narrated. The beginning starts a dim feeling until it starts to be quicker at the end. It is like he is winning his father's heart. It sounds powerful."

(Gay consumer No. 16)

"A slow rhythm is like telling a story of the past. Until it comes to the turning point, then the rhythm gets faster to indicate a change very clearly."

(Interviewee in the female group)

“It can help to build the feeling well. You can feel the peak of the change from the accelerated tempo.”

(Interviewee in the male group)

“It is more positive and gives more hope from the beginning. It turns no success to a success.”

(Interviewee in the mixed group)

Besides, some gays decode the audio component by Oppositional Reading with an interpretation that “the sound of the advertisement is too harmonious with the narrated story that the audio component is not observed or paid attention.” This can be interpreted that the copy attracts these gays so much that they shut down the audio component from their perception.

“Actually, I did not hear it. The presenter’s story made me focus on it so I did not listen to the music but only listened to what he said.”

(Gay consumer No. 14)

5.2.2.3 Technical-Practical Code

From the study, it is found that the consumers decode the shot size component by Preferred Reading the most and partly by Oppositional Reading but none by Negotiated Reading as shown in the following details:

1) Shot size

Three of four groups: gays, females, and males, decode the shot size component by Preferred Reading but the sex variable does not affect any differences in the consumers’ decoding. The found interpretation is “a close up helps to build a common feeling with the narrated story well.”

“I feel very attached to what he tells. A zoom-in helps to see the eye expression of Khun Sha when he narrates his story.”

(Gay consumer No. 6)

"I help to touch the actor's feeling very well. It seems like we are talking with a close friend and listening to her story."

(Interviewee in the female group)

"After viewing, I can feel how he feels. I feel much attached to his story."

(Interviewee in the male group)

Another connotative meaning from the decoding of the shot size component by Preferred Reading of some in the gay group and in the mixed group is "a close-up helps to see fair complexion of the presenter as a result of his use of SK-II products.

"As the product is skin care, it must emphasize the skin of Khun Sha and use a zoom-in to focus on his fair complexion."

(Gay consumer No. 9)

"After tie-in the product, it needs a zoom-in to show how fair and beautiful his skin is."

(Interviewee in the male group)

Nevertheless, this study also finds the decoding of the shot size component by Oppositional Reading as well by the rest of gay consumers who interpret the use of shot size that "it gives an uncomfortable feeling, which is not suitable for the product."

" A close-up can create too tensed feeling while it does not communicate much about the facial skin or about the product."

(Gay consumer No. 13)

2) Camera Movement

From the study, it is found that the consumers' decode the camera movement component by Preferred Reading with two meanings. The first meaning is "the camera movement of this advertisement can call a good attention and make the story interesting." The sex variable is not found to affect the differences in decoding.

"The camera movement helps us to follow the story and makes us pay attention to what is in front of us."

(Gay consumer No. 1)

"It makes me want to follow the story. I am interested to know what he will tell next."

(Interviewee in the female group)

"Good move. It looks interesting."

(Interviewee in the male group)

"It arouses me to know what will happen next. Will his father accept him? What will he look like after finishing his make-up? It is interesting."

(Interviewee in the mixed group)

Another meaning from the decoding by Preferred Reading of the rest of the gays is, "As the presenter is the only actor, a camera movement is to focus on him."

"He is the only actor in the story so it needs to move the camera this way to keep the audience not being distracted to other things."

(Gay consumer No. 17)

3) Camera Angle

All four groups of consumers decode the camera angle component by Preferred Reading only and the sex variable is found to have no effect on the decoding differences. Their interpretation is “it is the normal angle used in advertisements to give a feeling of being normal,” which is the same meaning as encoded by the producer.

“This kind of angle is often used in the advertisements. It is not complicating but looks normal and is easy to understand.

(Gay consumer No.10)

“As he is telling his story, the camera must focus on the narrator and use a normal angle to enhance a better focus

(Interviewee in the female group)

“The camera angle is normal to match with the advertisement content. It looks proper.”

(Interviewee with the male group)

“It is easy to understand and is not complicating. Mostly, the advertising in this style often uses a normal angle.”

(Interviewee in the mixed group)

SC ASSET ADVERTISEMENT

5.2.2.4 Verbal Language Code

From the study, it is found that all groups of consumers decode the verbal language code by Preferred Reading only and no other readings are found.

1) Slogan: Choose yours

After viewing the advertisement of SC Asset, both gay and heterosexual consumers decode the slogan component in the same direction by

Preferred Reading as encoded by the producer. No sex differences are found. The interpretation found is “to choose what you are.”

“It is to choose what we are. I am like this. I am satisfied and ready to live like this. I will not violate my own feeling. I feel that this advertisement conveys the meaning that to spend your life and enjoy your feeling as you wish.”

(Gay consumer No. 2)

“It conveys its main concept directly to let us choose a life that we want to be. Don’t do as general people need to do.”

(Interviewee in the female group)

“It is a choice, the choice of what we want.”

(Interviewee in the male group)

“It is to choose what we are.”

(Interviewee in the mixed group)

Another meaning decoded by Preferred Reading of the rest of the gays is “to choose to do for what your heart calls.”

“This is the era that we can do what our heart wants us to do. Choose the best thing. This is clearly about our dreams.”

(Gay consumer No. 19)

2) Copy

For the copy component of the advertisement, both gays and heterosexuals from three of the four groups: gays, males, and mixed, decode it in the same direction by Preferred Reading, which is the same as encoded by the producer. The meaning found is “to choose what your heart orders without reasons.”

“It is the symptom of people who want to choose what they want to be. This advertisement is interesting in the way that it cuts out other distracting cues and focuses only on the word “choose” without connecting to any other circumstances. Especially, because of time restriction of an advertisement, this focus enables us to believe that we can truly choose. It cuts out other variables completely and keeps the feeling that we can choose what we are.”

(Gay consumer No. 14)

“It is to use your heart and nothing else.”

(Interviewee in the male group)

“It demonstrates that we can truly choose what we want.”

(Interviewees in the mixed group)

In addition, two of four groups: some part of gays and females decode the copy component by Preferred Reading with another meaning or interpretation “the copy reflects being oneself and having different own lifestyles.”

“ The activities in the advertisement are rather different from those of general people. This might try to say that despite your differences from others, we can still respond to those things for you.”

(Gay consumer No. 17)

“The advertisement has introduced what this person chooses and leads to see its value of choosing what he wants.”

(Interviewee in the female group)

The rest of the gays also decode the copy by Preferred Reading with another meaning, “Whoever you are, you still can choose.”

“Although the advertisement may illustrate several perspectives back and forth, the main point is to indicate that whoever you are, you can still make a choice.”

(Gay consumer No. 7)

5.2.2.5 Nonverbal Language Code

From the study, only the decoding of nonverbal language codes by Preferred Reading is found but with slightly different meanings as shown in the following:

1) Presenter

Only the decoding of the presenter component by Preferred Reading is found and no differences in the sex variable are found. The first meaning found is “the presenter component illustrates several segments of marketing targets of SC ASSET,” which accords with the meaning encoded by the producer that before choosing the presenters, it must start with analyzing who are the target consumers of 28 Chidlom Condominium and communicate to respond to those segments.”

“It seems they trying to sell their condominium to those with a purchase power. Thus, they choose quite a wide range of age. For instance, a young woman who plays ballet can ask her parents to buy the condominium for her if she likes. MLM (a man loves a man) also has a high buying power.”

(Gay consumer No. 7)

“The character of MLM is universal. They look good with good wealth but do not care about the society so much. They choose to do what this style of people call for or people who want to live at Chidlom where they can find everything.”

(Interviewee in the female group)

“The advertisement reflects its target and urban lifestyles.”

(Interviewee in the male group)

“It shows its target. He can choose what he likes without caring about the society.”

(Interviewee in the mixed group)

Three of the four groups (gay, female, and mixed group) decode the presenter component by Preferred Reading with another meaning that “the presenters represent different tastes and lifestyles.”

“ It seems that every character chooses his or her lifestyle differently from general people. It is unique and is a city lifestyle.”

(Gay consumer No. 12)

“ Every character has a modern and distinctive taste. All three characters are different. This helps to see choices in different types.”

(Interviewee in the female group)

“ They are activities of those with high income and are alternative activities that are different from mainstreams. It goes against a normal trend.”

(Interviewee in the mixed group)

2) Image/ shot

From the study, the decoding of the image or shot component by Preferred Reading is found with a polysemy interpretation or with various meanings. The first meaning, decoded by three of four groups: gay, female, and male, is “the image illustrates the target consumers with a purchase power.”

“The advertisement reflects the target groups of the brand. It is obvious that its target is a high-end group because the condominium is very expensive.”

(Gay consumer No. 8)

“ Every shot and every scene looks expensive. It might be the insight consumers of SC Asset. In the middle-class consumers with a purchase power, there might be a huge number of MLMs. Therefore, when the product dares to present this group, it satisfies these people.”

(Interviewee in the female group)

“ In the scene, they are all wealthy people, who might be its target group. MLM in the advertisement also look rich and are ready to reveal themselves to the society.”

(Interviewee in the male group)

Two of four groups: gay and female decode the image component by Preferred Reading with another meaning, “the shot of MLM marriage is an imaginative dream.” From this decoding, the consumers focus specifically on MLM couple.

“As a gay, when I see this shot of marriage, it is like a mindset shift. I feel that in future I might do like this so such image leads to another step of an imagination.”

(Gay consumer No. 5)

“This is a dream or fancy scene, the wedding near the sea with the one we love without caring about his sex. I am a woman but I can feel good too. If gays view this shot, they should be happy.”

(Interviewee in the female group)

On the other hand, the mixed group of men and women decode the advertisement shot component by Preferred Reading with the meaning that “the shot gives a surprise.”

“I am surprised. The shots are switched back and forth but all are revealed at the end. It comes out oppositely from what I think.”

(Interviewee in the mixed group)

Besides, the rest in the gay group decode the shots by Preferred Reading with a different interpretation that “the image of the wedding reflects a love of two men and emphasizes the concept of choosing to do things from one’s heart.”

“I feel very good. It helps to see that both men truly love each other and people surrounding them are happy with their love.”

(Gay consumer No. 6)

“In every scene, it emphasizes the choice that is made by following one’s heart, i.e. The shots of MLM, the wedding, and a ring are symbols of the concept, to choose from your heart,”

(Gay consumer No. 7)

Nevertheless, one gay decodes the shot component by Oppositional Reading or the meaning that opposes to that encoded by the producer. His interpretation is “the shot of the MLM wedding is impossible in Thai society so it causes a feeling of being unrealistic.”

“I feel it might be impossible in Thailand. However, the product is in Thailand so I feel it is not truly true because in fact Thailand has not been opened for such thing that much and no laws support it.”

(Gay consumer No. 13)

3) The Usage of Colors

From the study, the consumers of both gays and heterosexuals decode the color component by Preferred Reading the most but the sex variable causes no differences in consumers’ decoding. The decoding is the same meaning

encoded by the producer that “colors in advertisements give brightness and a natural look.”

“It looks amusing, bright, and realistic.”

(Gay consumer No. 6)

“Vivant. It looks like a real life and very natural with an orange tone of color.”

(Interviewee in the female group)

“Relaxing and bright.”

(Interviewee in the male group)

“ It looks bright and lively, which matches with the accommodation product.”

(Interviewee in the mixed group)

The decoding by Negotiated Reading is found from some gays with an interpretation that the usage of orange tone in the advertisement is similar to the color of the product brand of SC Asset. This is the decoding from consumers' experience by connecting with their recall of the product brand. However, the actual meaning the producer wants to convey with orange-tone color is to respond to the organizational philosophy, "For a good morning." Therefore, the intended meaning contains deeper meaning, not only the color of the organization.

“The logo of SC ASSET is orange so it should try to reflect the identity of the organization. All their advertisements will have this tone of color.”

(Gay consumer No. 2)

Besides, the rest of the gays cannot get meaning from the color of the advertisement because they pay more attention to other components of the advertisement.

“What does it mean? I don’t know either. I feel nothing. I just feel that the main thing in conveying a meaning would rather be the copy and shots”

(Gay consumer No. 1)

4) Audio Component

Both gay and heterosexual consumers decode the audio component by Preferred Reading only and no other Readings are found. The meaning that accords with the meaning encoded by the producer are "audio components in the advertisement. It indicates determination, excitement, provocativeness, and enthusiasm."

“It arouses the emotion and stimulates the consumers to believe that we are free to choose what we are.”

(Gay consumer No. 6)

“It gives a feeling of arrogance and enthusiasm.”

(Interviewee in the female group)

“It helps us to view it until the end. It sounds active and goes along with the story.”

(Interviewee in the male group)

“An exciting and arousing sound”

(Interviewee in the mixed group)

Another decoding of an audio component by Preferred Reading from the rest of gays is an interpretation that "audio components used in the advertisement make the story more interesting."

“The use of a song sounds interesting and appealing. It fits the rhythm of each shot.”

(Gay consumer No. 11)

5.2.2.6 Technical-Practical Code

From the study, only the decoding of the technical practical codes by Preferring Reading is found without the other two Readings. The consumers decode with the same meaning encoded by the producer as follows:

1) Shot Size

The study finds only the decoding of the shot size component by Preferred Reading and no difference affected by the sex variable is found. The meaning found is “a close-up helps to see the presenters’ emotion and action clearly”.

“From a zoom-in of the old woman, we can see her wrinkles and can tell that she is very old but she still likes to exercise and to run. This helps to see more details and helps us to perceive what the producer wants to convey better.”

(Gay consumer No. 12)

“It makes us feel like we are in that scene, get close to people in the scene, and see his feeling.”

(Interviewee in the female group)

“It is the answer of each phase of life. It uses CU to show a wedding ring, wrinkles, and heavy ballet practice. From these details, we can feel with them.”

(Interviewee in the male group)

“For beautiful shots, when it uses a CU, it can narrate the story very well because an advertisement will not talk too much but use images for communicating the meanings.”

(Interviewee in the mixed group)

2) Camera Movement

The study finds only the decoding of the camera movement component by Preferred Reading and no difference affected by the sex variable is found. The meaning found is "it gives a surprise."

“ I guess it must have a surprise surely. From the camera movement, it yields a surprise; either a surprise of revealing that it is an old woman and a man marries a man.”

(Gay consumer No. 11)

“ It surprises us by gradually leading our eyes to the intended message without giving any hints.”

(Interviewee in the female group)

“ It is a real surprise, especially when it moves the camera to reveal the face of the old woman who likes to run.”

(Interviewee in the mixed group)

“It is like we think it this way but it turns out to be the other way so I feel surprised.”

(Interviewee in the male group)

3) Camera Angle

The study finds only the decoding of the camera angle component by Preferred Reading and no difference affected by the sex variable is found. The meaning found is “it is not complicating and easy to understand.”

“ It is easy to understand because finally it will be answered at the end.”

(Interviewee in the female group)

“ It is clear and distinct causing no headache. Some advertisements use weird angles and make me have a headache.”

(Interviewee in the male group)

“The camera angles are not complicating with quick editing but it is understandable.”

(Interviewee in the mixed group)

5.3 The Findings on the Perception of Gay and Heterosexual Consumers on Sexual Myths

According to Barthes, a myth is a social and cultural product of a group of people or a class of people in the society. From the textual analysis of sexual myths appearing in three advertisements, the researcher finds four main sexual myths: 1) masculinity 2) Gays need to have high competence 3) gays’ right to have a family and 4) dream consumer. All these four myths are cultivated in the advertisements with gay-related content by diminishing the dominant meaning of the advertisement to be perceived as natural. In this chapter, the researcher intends to study if the operation of these four myths is successful by analyzing by which way the consumers perceive and decode each myth: Preferred, Negotiated, or Oppositional Reading. Finally, the study aims to point out that the literacy of myths presented in the advertisements can help consumers to scrutinize and evaluate the second- order meanings of the transmitted message based on the Barthes’s concept

Table 5.4 An overview of the findings on the consumers' perception of sexual myths

Sexual Myths	masculinity			Gays need to have high competence			Gays’ right to have a family			Dream Consumer		
	Preferred	Negotiated	Oppositional	Preferred	Negotiated	Oppositional	Preferred	Negotiated	Oppositional	Preferred	Negotiated	Oppositional
Gay	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓
Female	✓				✓					✓		
Male			✓	✓								
Male/Female			✓	✓							✓	
Total group(s)	2	-	3	3	2	1	1	-	1	2	1	1

Note: Preferred Reading means the consumers perceive the meaning in the same direction as a myth operates.

Negotiated Reading means the consumers perceive the meaning as operated by a myth but reject some parts of it or in some cases, a new meaning might be created.

Oppositional Reading means the consumers perceive the meaning as operated by a myth but oppose it.

From Table 5.4, it is found that in general, gay and heterosexual consumers perceive each sexual myth appearing in the advertisements differently.

1) The myth of masculinity: three of four groups: gay, male and mixed, decode this myth by Oppositional Reading and two groups: the rest of gays and females, decode the myth by Preferred Reading. However, no Negotiated Reading is found.

2) The myth that “gays need to have high competence”: three of four groups: gay, male, and mixed, decode this myth by Preferred Reading and two groups (some gays and females) decode it by Negotiated Reading. Only the rest of gays decode it by Oppositional Reading.

3) The myth of gays’ right to have a family: Preferred and Oppositional Reading are found in the gay group only and this myth is not perceived by any heterosexual groups.

4) The myth of dream consumers: two of four groups: gay and female, decode this myth by Preferred Reading while Negotiated Reading is found only in the mixed group of men and women. The rest of gays decode it by Oppositional Reading. The detailed findings are presented as follow:

5.3.1 The Myth of Masculinity

Thai society is a male-dominated society. Masculinity in Thai society thus becomes an instant formula appearing in various representations. The concept of masculinity is tied with a physical advantage of men and is based on the norms of heterosexual relationships so it oppresses other sexes in the society. Such norms are that all Thai men need to be strong, patient, brave, and be a leader of a family to perform his role as a father and a husband as expected by the society. Therefore, in

order to be accepted by the society, men need to comply with the role expectation of the society. Accordingly, men who have deviated sexual taste and behaviors from those expected by the society need to conceal their real self or try to create an acceptable masculinity. Otherwise, they will become distinct from other men. Therefore, the myth of masculinity is the only myth that has still been reproduced repeatedly. It is the myth whose content has never been changed in Thai history but the only change is the form, which has been changed since Rattanakosin Era. Likewise, the myth of masculinity remains appearing in advertising media. From the study, it is found that three of four groups of consumer subjects: gay, male, and mixed, decode this myth by Oppositional Reading.

“ The advertisement tries to present all of the men's property, i.e., Physical appearance, a muscular body, dresses, etc., but this advertisement is communicating with gay and trying to convince gays to act like a real man. I think that is too restricted. There are different types and styles of gays that are accepted, not only a gay with a real man look.”

(Gay consumer No. 14)

“ It seems to persuade gays to act like a real man but from my experience of having gay friends, not all of them want to express themselves as a real man. Some of them are very feminine. It is their personality and they choose to be like that. When the advertisement emphasizes the concept of being a real man, general people including gays may feel that they look so feminine, is it necessary for them to change to look like a real man in order to be attractive like Khun Aof? This is not true at all.”

(Interviewee in the mixed group)

“It is wrong starting from the slogan, with bold brows, you can be a real man. However, the speaker is a gay. It tries to communicate to persuade gays to look like a real man or only gays with such look will look good, which I disagree.”

(Interviewee in the male group)

Besides, two of four groups: the rest of gays and females, decode this myth by Preferred Reading or they interpret the same meaning as encoded by the producer.

“If gays want to look good, sometimes they should not have too effeminate manners or feminine look because it is not attractive. The advertisement suggests what they can do to make them have a manly look. Of course, it wants to sell the product but it is also the trends now. The too feminine look is difficult to find a boyfriend because when they walk together in a department store or elsewhere, it looks peculiar. Therefore, every gay wants to have a good look, i.e., they go for a fitness if they want a good figure. Now a man with six-pack can convey a positive image. Therefore, most people will think this way.”

(Gay consumer No. 17)

“The advertisement tries to illustrate how to look like a man. To look good, gays must look cool and handsome. At least in the eyes of outsiders, they should not express too much feminine manners.”

(Interviewee in the female group)

5.3.2 The Myth that “Gays Must Have High Competence.”

Nowadays, Thai society accepts gays more widely; however, such acceptance is still conditional. Namely, gays must prove themselves that they are decent people and have an ability to make their life successful. Their competence and potentials will lead to the acceptance. Therefore, gays have to prove themselves all the time in order to live happily without being perceived as a strange creature. From the study, three of four groups: gay, male, and mixed, decode this myth by Preferred Reading.

“It is common that everybody has to prove himself or herself. However, for gays, we have to prove ourselves more than other people do. The perception of general people forces us to do so while the environment forces us to be like this. Whatever one says, we have to accomplish something so that people will overlook our gender.”

(Gay consumer No. 3)

“We all have to prove ourselves but gays are always expected with one higher level so we have to prove ourselves more than others.”

(Interviewee in the male group)

“Our society seems to accept gays but in fact, it does not like a proverb. It says the hand holds a pestle but the mouth utters Buddhist precepts. The reason we accept gays because of their competence, such as Pom Pam, Woody, etc. Before being successful, these gays have to trade with their competence. Therefore, all gays might have to do the same.”

(Interviewee in the mixed group)

The next reading found is Negotiated Reading of two of four groups: some gays and females. The Negotiated Reading of these groups is that “it is true that gays need to be successful but not because of being accepted by the society. Instead, they want their family to accept them and see that they can earn their living”

“I believe that since our parents bring us up, they should know and can accept us. What worries them is how we live and whether people will accept us. Therefore, we have to prove to them that we have a potential to take care of ourselves.”

(Gay consumer No.2)

“For Thai people, a family is the most important thing. Gays need not get a great success but they must be able to take care of themselves so that their parents will be worried. A gay can be a good man like others without being so eminent but they can take care of themselves.”

(Interviewee in the female group)

In addition, the Oppositional Reading is found only in the gay group (the rest of gays).

“ This advertisement uses gays’ success by raising a question whether gays’ family will accept them if they cannot get an accomplishment. In short, gays must be capable and must succeed to get others’ acceptance. I disagree with this notion. I think it is not correct. No matter which sex one is born with, he or she can have an opportunity to be successful or unsuccessful. Therefore, it becomes that gays must work hard. It is good that the society accepts gays more but it still requires some conditions. It will be the best if we can accept gays no matter who they are, not what kind of competence they have.”

(Gay consumer No. 18)

5.3.3 The Myth of the Gays’ Right to Have a Family

In the past, no portrayal of gay lovers or couples living together happily appeared in advertising media. After some changes, such portrayal has been presented in advertisements increasingly. The happy love of gay lovers shown in the advertisements is treated the same as heterosexual lovers. However, from this study, it is found that the presentation of their love is limited and cannot go further towards the ultimate destination like heterosexual lovers. Therefore, the issues, such as their right to have a family or living together as a gay family, are not presented in the advertisements. Apparently, a marriage of homosexuals has not been legalized in Thai society. The presentation of a gay’s family cannot be presented further than that in advertising media accordingly. From the study, it is found that the myth of gays’ right to have their family is perceived only by the gay group and is decoded by both Preferred and Oppositional Reading. This issue is not perceived by heterosexual groups.

“ To marry or to have a family with the man we love in Thai society is hard because it will not be accepted 100% surely. What we can do is just to love each other and hang around. Our marriage can be done in the form of an informal exchange of our rings and a celebration dinner. It cannot go further than that. When gays marry, it will be a big news and we don’t want to be that way.”

(Gay consumer No. 20)

“Actually, if the advertisement has a marriage-registration scene, that will be very nice. To have a legitimate family is beneficial. For example, for a heterosexual marriage, they can see their agreement or the agreed property such as a marriage property, legacy, and a legitimate child. However, for homosexuals, we cannot do that. In case, a gay couple invests in some business together and later they marry but with no laws supporting. When something happens to one of them, the other one should deserve to get the business legacy and other rights but he cannot get those. This is not a genuine equality. However, media cannot present such points so far.”

(Gay consumer No. 18)

5.3.4 The Myth of Dream Consumer

Gays are one of the marketing targets that never occurred in the past. Consequently, the myth of Dream Consumer has been constructed to add a gay's dream and imagination into advertising media to make him feel that to use or consume a certain product, his dream will be accomplished and he will be accepted with a better life. The representation of gays in the advertising is mostly a middle-class gay with a buying power and accepted by surrounding people. From the study, it is found that two of four groups: gays and females perceive this myth and decode it by Preferred Reading.

“Our dream from this advertisement is to able to marry a man we love and to have someone congratulate us. This is not the level of work or money needs but it is a level of our personal needs that homosexuals can marry.”

(Gay Consumer No. 17)

“I think this should be the dream of gays. A rich man who can buy such an expensive condominium should not care for anyone else. He can marry a man without a social concern or without a fear to be perceived negatively by others. He just does not care.”

(Interviewee in the female group)

Besides, the decoding of this myth by Negotiated Reading is also found only in the mixed group of men and women. Their interpretation is “to give an importance to gays by presenting all beautiful images in a positive way. This is because the brand wants to create a perception that it accepts the sex diversity in the society.”

“The advertisement does not want to only present a dream of gays. Of course, gays should feel attached to it and want to do the same as the presenter. However, I perceive that the brand would rather try to stand out to say that it accepts and supports the sex diversity.”

(Interviewee in the mixed group)

However, the rest of gays perceive the myth and decode it by Oppositional Reading. They perceive that “the myth of Dream Consumer is constructed to portray gays with a buying power and with a good lifestyle. Therefore, this myth will arouse ordinary gays who have no buying power to struggle more to accomplish this dream.”

“Of course, the advertisement will not present bad things to the audience. What it will present must be beautiful like a beautiful dream. However, it will be only a dream because we cannot afford to create everything as displayed in the advertisement. For gays with no lifestyle as shown in the advertisement, they may feel that one day I must be like him. However, it focuses on only rich gays and does not cover other classes of poor gays who are not its marketing targets.”

(Gay consumer No. 11)

From the aforementioned findings, both gay and heterosexual consumers decode the advertisements with gay-related content by Preferred Reading more or less. This illustrates that an advertisement with high ability to persuade in a restricted time can incur a stereotype and enhance the operation of myths, especially the myth that “gays must have high competence,” which is decoded by Preferred Reading in three of four groups. However, on the other hand, the myth of masculinity is decoded by Oppositional Reading in three of four groups as well. Such findings indicate that consumers have a media literacy and are not dominated by sexual myths totally.

Therefore, advertising producers should be aware that consumers can perceive their intentional or unintentional encoded sexual myths. If an advertisement encounters consumers' decoding by Oppositional Reading or the disagreement of the encoded message, it can produce a negative effect towards the image of the product brand eventually.

5.4 Consumers' Recommendations for the Creation of Advertisements with Gay-Related Content

In chapter 4, the researcher mentioned the strategies in creating gay-related content in advertisements. For this part, the researcher will present the consumers' perspectives and recommendations towards the direction gay advertisements in Thailand should go. In-depth Interviews with gay consumers and focus group interviews with heterosexual consumers are conducted. The results are as follow.

Table 5.5 illustrates consumers' recommendations for creating advertisements with gay-related content

Consumers' recommendations for creating advertisements with gay-related content	Gay Consumer (persons)	Heterosexual Consumer			Total group (s)
		Female	Male	Female /Male	
1. a normal presentation	✓ (10)	✓	✓	✓	4
2. no mockery	✓ (3)	✓		✓	3
3. no exaggerating image	✓ (2)		✓		2
4. no violation of Thai morality		✓			1
5. a good image of gays	✓ (3)				1
6. Thorough presentation	✓ (1)				1
7. a presentation of equality and reflection of genuine sex diversity	✓ (1)				1

From the findings, more than half of gay and heterosexual consumers suggest harmoniously that the advertisement should present gays as normal and ordinary people to emphasize that to be gays or gayness is not an abnormality nor specialty but gays are normal like other sexes in the society.

“I want the society to perceive that to be a gay is like having a meal. Some people like to eat the vegetable, some pork, and some fish. It is just a sexual taste. Gays are like normal men and women without any differences. Therefore, advertisements should make people see that it is only a taste. He is not necessarily smarter than any one. He can make mistakes. Sometimes, people say that gays are more capable than normal men or women so everybody focuses on their capability. In other words, people look for other things but not their real identity. Therefore, advertisements must present that gays do not want to be perceived as abnormal or peculiar but as normal and ordinary people. If they want to sell products, just display their normal lifestyle, not exaggerating one because we are ordinary and normal people without any specialty.”

(Gay consumer No.18)

“I suggest that don’t try to focus on this issue too much. If they want to call for an equality, do not make it as a special issue but do it in a natural way. If the presentation is too exaggerating, it becomes something needed to be fixed. Therefore, it should be presented in a narrative form like something that can happen to general people.”

(Interviewee in the female group)

“Gays are just a normal man or a marketing target in terms of advertising. Therefore, advertisements should not present anything that looks too much or to focus specifically on sex. This can make it become a stereotype and make people recall of this image. I think gays are like us. Males also have different types. Therefore, it should not present or emphasize this point too much.”

(Interviewee in the male group)

“It should be presented in the most natural way. Don't present it as something weird or ridiculous but as normal because gays are normal people. Don't present it in too exaggerating ways because the alternative gender also wants to spend his life in a normal way.”

(Interviewee in the mixed group)

The next recommendation comes from three of four groups: some gays, females, and the mixed group of men and women. They suggest avoiding to present gays as a clown. Normally, advertisements often use the mocking characters of gays to make their presentation more colorful. Therefore, it becomes a stereotype often found in various kinds of media, i.e. films, TV, including advertising media.

“I don't want gays to be presented as a clown. It creates a stereotype. When other people see us, they might not understand that gays also have different characters. Don't perceive them as clowns only; otherwise, such image will be embedded in their memory.”

(Gay consumer No. 5)

“Mockery of gays is the first thing to be corrected because it means an insult. I do not want to see that presentation. Media is another cause that creates such image. The advertisements repeat the same thing without further development.”

(Interviewee in the female group)

“ I don't want them to present gays for laughing because it is not funny. Although we are not gays, we can feel it. The more gays are presented as clowns, the more it reflects that they are not accepted as they should be.”

(Interviewee in the mixed group)

Furthermore, two of four groups: gays and males offer another suggestion of not creating too exaggerating images of gays. Very often, the advertisements present too exaggerating sexual expression, i.e. obscene or sexy dresses, heavy make-ups,

over-effeminate manners, etc. These repeated presentations cause a stereotype of gays in spite the fact that in reality gays are diverse like men and women.

“Advertisements should not create too exaggerating images of gays, i.e. Very feminine or too successful, etc. They should present what we find in the reality. Some gays look like a real man, some like a female. We are diverse so don’t present these exaggerating image too much in advertisements.”

(Gay consumer No.2)

“Just present it in a proper way. Thai media like to create a wow to call for total likes and shares or to create the perception towards their products. However, they should not present gays in too exaggerating images, i.e. an over make-up, etc., but to present them in the most natural way.”

(Interviewee in the male group)

Another suggestion given by only the female group is no violation of Thai morality.

“ In our country, we have not accepted the alternative sex totally or all through the country. Therefore, advertisements should not present any images or content that violate Thai morality, such as excessive sex content, etc., because although Thailand is quite an open country, we still have different cultural roots from the western.”

(Interviewee in the female group)

Besides, from the rest of gays, many other recommendations are offered: Thai advertisements should present good images of gays, concern about a thorough presentation, present sexual equality and reflect a genuine diversity of sexes.

“Advertisements should present positive images of gays. Gays are presented in the news in a very violent image. When a gay killed his adversary, news headlines used highly loaded language, such as a cruel jealous gay, etc. I do not want

advertisements to do like that. Don't emphasize too many negative images of gays and try to present more creative and positive images."

(Gay consumer No. 6)

"I don't worry much about advertisements. Mostly, they select quite positive images to present because it is related to the image of their brands as well. What I want to suggest is to be more thorough in their presentation. They must cover all groups not only a particular group. Therefore, the issues to be presented should be thorough and circumspect. They have to be careful and cautious to choose a topic or issue to be portrayed. They might do a research with several groups to make sure that it covers the feeling of the people in general."

(Gay consumer No. 7)

"They should present gays' struggle to get equal rights. For instance, why in the wedding scene, it is not a marriage registration scene. It is because Thailand has not issue laws to support this right. What advertisement should do now is to display their position in the society. It is not an equal position like others. TVC has not gone that far. Gays are consumers like others but they are not treated as people like others. I want advertisements to call for this equality and to reflect a genuine diversity of sex in the society."

(Gay consumer No. 14)

All findings in Chapter 5 summarize that consumers perceive and decode the encoded advertising messages and myths with polysemy or various meanings. However, no encoding differences are found to be affected by the sex variable. Two dominant meanings or interpretations were found: The products' property reflects a consumer's identity and the products' brand reflects a consumer's identity. For the dominant meaning: the products' property reflects a consumer's identity, it is found that consumers decode it by Preferred Reading and Oppositional Reading with an equal proportion. This illustrates that gay and heterosexual consumers decode this dominant meaning in different directions: one agrees with the encoded meaning by the producer while the other disagrees. On the contrary, for the dominant meaning:

the products' image reflects a consumer's identity; both gay and heterosexual consumers decode it by Preferred Reading in the same direction.

For the consumers' perception of sexual myths, it is found that the myth of gays' right to have a family is decoded by Preferred Reading while the myth of masculinity is decoded by Oppositional Reading in the higher proportion than by Preferred Reading. For the myth of Dream Consumer and the myth that gays must have high competence, the consumers decode these two myths by all three readings but they are decoded by Preferred Reading the most, which is an interesting issue and will be discussed further in Chapter 6.

The last part of this study is to propose guidelines for the creation of advertisements with gay-related content. The results show that the consumers suggest producing an advertisement without making gays as clowns but as normal people, without too exaggerating sexual expression and images, i.e. over or heavy make-up, too effeminate manner and dressing, but with a proper presentation.

CHAPTER 6

Summary, Discussion and Recommendation

The research, “Gay: The Construction of Sexual Myths in Advertisements,” aims to study the construction of meaning and changes of sexual myths appearing in advertisements and to study the consumers’ decoding of meanings in advertisements with gay-related content. The study uses Semiology Theory, the Concept of Encoding and Decoding, and Advertisement Components as a framework in a textual analysis. The findings, discussions, and recommendations are presented as follow.

6.1 Research Summary

6.1.1 Meanings and Sexual Myths Encoded by the Producer through the Codes of Advertisement Elements.

From the study, two main dominant meanings from the uses of signs to convey the intended meaning through the codes of advertisement elements or components are found: the products' property reflects a consumer's identity and the products' image reflects a consumer's identity. For the first dominant meaning, the producers emphasize mainly the products' property or their utility meaning, such as bold brows from a brow pencil for men of Mistine. Different signs or codes are used. For verbal language codes, the slogan and copy focus on the property of the product by an integrative use of rational and emotional appeal to increase the effectiveness of the advertisement. For nonverbal language codes, the presenter is an actor and artist for more credibility. This advertisement uses all three types of visual components to convey its meaning: images of an overall atmosphere, the presenter, and the product, by switching their presentation to draw for more attraction. Dark-tone color, i.e. gray and black, is used to give a feeling of grandness, distinctiveness, including newness and modernity. A rhythm of the music is played without disturbing the narration of

the presenter about the property of the product. Technical-Practical codes are also used to support the congruent meaning.

For the dominant meaning that the products' image reflects a consumer's identity, it focuses on the value of the product brand in order to connect the brand image with consumers' identity. The meanings found are "to accept oneself and change it for the better", and "one's choice reflects one's identity." Besides, it reflects symbolic meanings of freedom and the concept that a person with identity is determined and has a life goal. Verbal language codes are mostly abstract and require consumers' interpretation from their experiences. Emotional appeal is enormously used in the advertisements to inspire consumers to consume their products and to connect the meaning conveyed through a storytelling without mentioning the property of the products. Instead, a number of symbolic meanings are conveyed to reflect the consumers' identity. Thus, the audio component as one of the nonverbal language codes uses music to create an emotion and to present a story together with images or shots of the presenters and the general climate of the story. Dark-tone color, i.e. gray and black, is used to convey the grandness and distinctiveness. The bright orange color also represents a new beginning while technical-practical codes are used to support all the encoded meanings.

From the textual analysis of three advertisements, various myths as outcomes of the advertisements are found, i.e. masculinity, gays must have high competence, gays' right to have a family, and Dream Consumer.

6.1.2 Guidelines for Creating an Advertisement with Gay-Related Content from the Producer's Perspective.

From the study, the producers reveal that firstly, they start from the marketing concept and analysis of consumer insight of the product that will be launched on the market. The next step is to raise up an advertising question or assumption and strategies to respond to such question or assumption through the construction of various signs to convey "a dominant meaning." In gay-related advertisements, the selection of a presenter and a gay story has to be in harmony with the products or brands and the target consumers. With a gay presenter or an actor performing as a gay, the advertisement should not focus on sexuality but on the story and his

competence that accords with the advertising assumption. For communication, in an advertisement, it should pay a respect to what a gay is while the content should focus on positive aspects of gays, i.e. good, smart, et., and use an emotional appeal as a touch point or as a connector of content to reach every group of consumers. Besides, the image of gays should be presented as normal people.

6.1.3 Changes of Sexual Myths in Advertisements

From the study, both reproduction and changes of sexual myths are found in advertisements depending on the changes in social contexts in each period. The former sexual myths in Thai society contained the content and images of gays as abnormal. Sexual deviation, love disappointment, promiscuity, psychosis, unmanliness, exaggerating sexual expression, and being a clown, were also myths appearing in the former period. Until the early fifth period in which economics is prosperous, gays started to appear in advertisements with the old same interpretations: abnormality, hiding, exaggerating sexual expression, and being a clown. Nevertheless, at the end of the fifth period, sex diversity became a topic mentioned widely around the world. Since then, gays have been perceived as new marketing targets with high buying power and high potentials in the market. Consequently, the creation of advertisements turns out to be more positive. Besides, some new myths appear, such as gays must have high competence, gays' right to have a family, and dream consumer, etc. However, from the study, it is found that the myth of masculinity has not been changed and has still been reproduced up to present.

6.1.4 The Consumers' Decoding of the Advertisements' Dominant Meaning.

For the finding on the decoding of the dominant meaning of "the products' property reflects a consumer's identity, it shows that both gay and heterosexual consumers decode this dominant meaning with a polysemy interpretation or with various meanings and the proportion of the decoding by Preferred Reading and by Oppositional Reading is equal, or three of four groups. Three groups who decode it by Preferred Reading are gays, females, and males while three groups who decode it by Oppositional Reading are gays, male, and the mixed group of males and females.

The decoding of the dominant meaning, “the products’ image reflects a consumer’s identity”, is found in two advertisements: SK-II and SC ASSET. Most consumers of both groups decode the dominant meaning of the advertisements by Preferred Reading. The sex variable is found to have no effect on their decoding differences. Besides, Negotiated Reading is also found in the rest of the groups but Oppositional Reading is not found. This indicates that consumers tend to interpret the dominant meaning in the same direction as the meaning encoded by the producers.

6.1.5 The Consumers’ Decoding of Sub-Meanings through the Codes of Advertisement Elements

For the consumers’ decoding of the dominant meaning, “the products’ property reflects a consumer’s identity”, it is found that both gay and heterosexual consumers decode this dominant meaning by Preferred Reading the most. Next is the decoding by Oppositional Reading, especially their decoding on the slogan and copy of the advertisement. Besides, gay and female consumers decode the images or shots of the advertisement by Negotiated Reading. The sex variable is not found to affect any decoding differences. In addition, it is remarkable that gay consumers decode with more various meanings than heterosexual consumers.

The decoding of the dominant meaning, “the products’ image reflects a consumer’s identity,” is found in SK-II advertisement. Both gay and heterosexual consumers decode the dominant meaning by Preferred Reading the most and no Negotiated Reading is found. Oppositional Reading is found in small proportion in the gay group. Similarly, gay consumers decode this dominant meaning with more various meanings than heterosexual consumers. For SC ASSET advertisement, the decoding by Preferred Reading is found the most in the gay and heterosexual groups. However, other readings are not found in heterosexual groups, except a few gay consumers decode this dominant meaning, especially through nonverbal language codes, by Negotiated and Oppositional Reading.

6.1.6 The Consumers’ Perception of Sexual Myths

From the study, it is found that four sexual myths are perceived by the consumers but gay and heterosexual consumers perceive and interpret each sexual

myth differently. 1) The myth of masculinity. Gay, male, and mixed groups decode this myth by Oppositional Reading and only the rest of gay and female group decode by Preferred Reading. Negotiated Reading is not found. 2) The myth that gays must have high competence. Gay, male, and mixed group of males and females decode this myth by Preferred Reading. The next decoding is the decoding by Negotiated Reading of some parts of gays and female group and the decoding by Oppositional Reading is found only in the rest of gay group. 3) The myth of gays' right to have a family. Only the gay group is found to decode this myth by both Preferred and Oppositional Reading. 4) The myth of Dream Consumer. The decoding of this myth by Preferred Reading is found in the gay and female group while the mixed group of males and females decode is the only group who decode it by Negotiated Reading. Besides, the decoding by Oppositional Reading is found only in the rest of the gay group.

6.1.7 Consumers' Recommendations for the Creation of Advertisements with Gay-Related Content

From the in-depth interviews and focus group interviews with gay and heterosexual consumers, both groups suggest three main guidelines for creating advertisements with gay-related content: to present a gay story in a normal or natural way, to avoid presenting gays as a clown, and to avoid presenting an exaggerating image of gays respectively. Other recommendations are “no violation of Thai morality”, “the presentation of positive images of gays”, “thorough and cautious presentation”, “the presentation of gays' equality right”, and “the reflection of genuine sex diversity.”

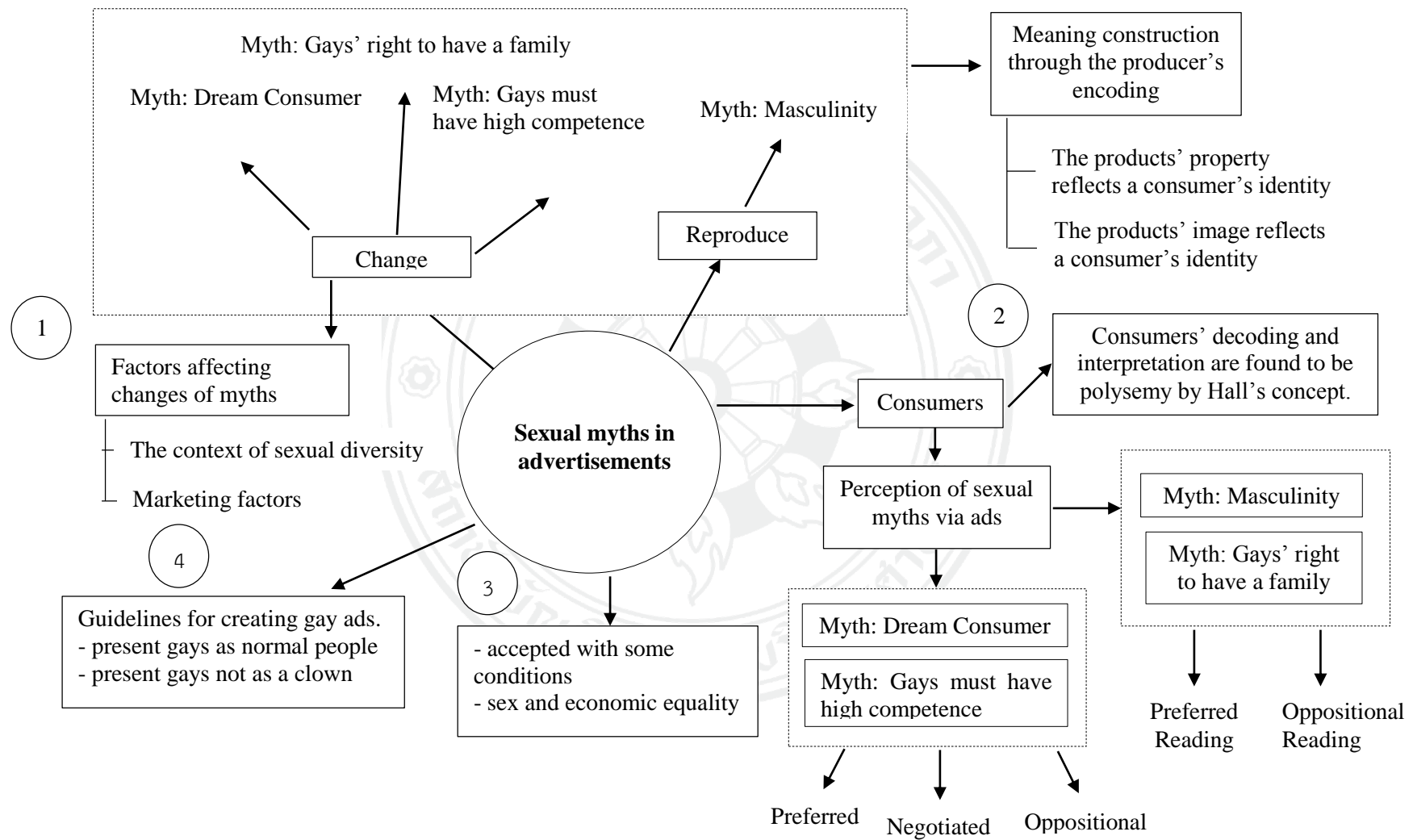


Figure 6.1 The overall findings of the study.

6.2 Discussion

Figure 6.1 illustrates an overall finding of the research, "Gay: the Construction of Sexual Myths in Advertisements." Four main topics are found in the study:

6.2.1 The construction, changes, and factors affecting changes in sexual myths in advertisements

6.2.2 The perception of sexual myths in advertisements and the consumers' decoding through the codes of advertisement elements or components

6.2.3 The use of gays as presenters in the advertisements and the use of a gay story as a part of the advertisement guidelines for creating advertisements with gay-related content in future.

6.2.1 The construction, changes, and factors affecting changes in sexual myths in advertisements

From the documentary research and textual analysis, there have been changes in sexual myths with gay-related content in each period depending on social context. In the period where internet grows rapidly and media industry presents gays increasingly in several dimensions, especially the trend in sex diversity and marketing factors. Therefore, changes in sexual myths are the consequences of the definition of gays in each period (Figure 6.2)

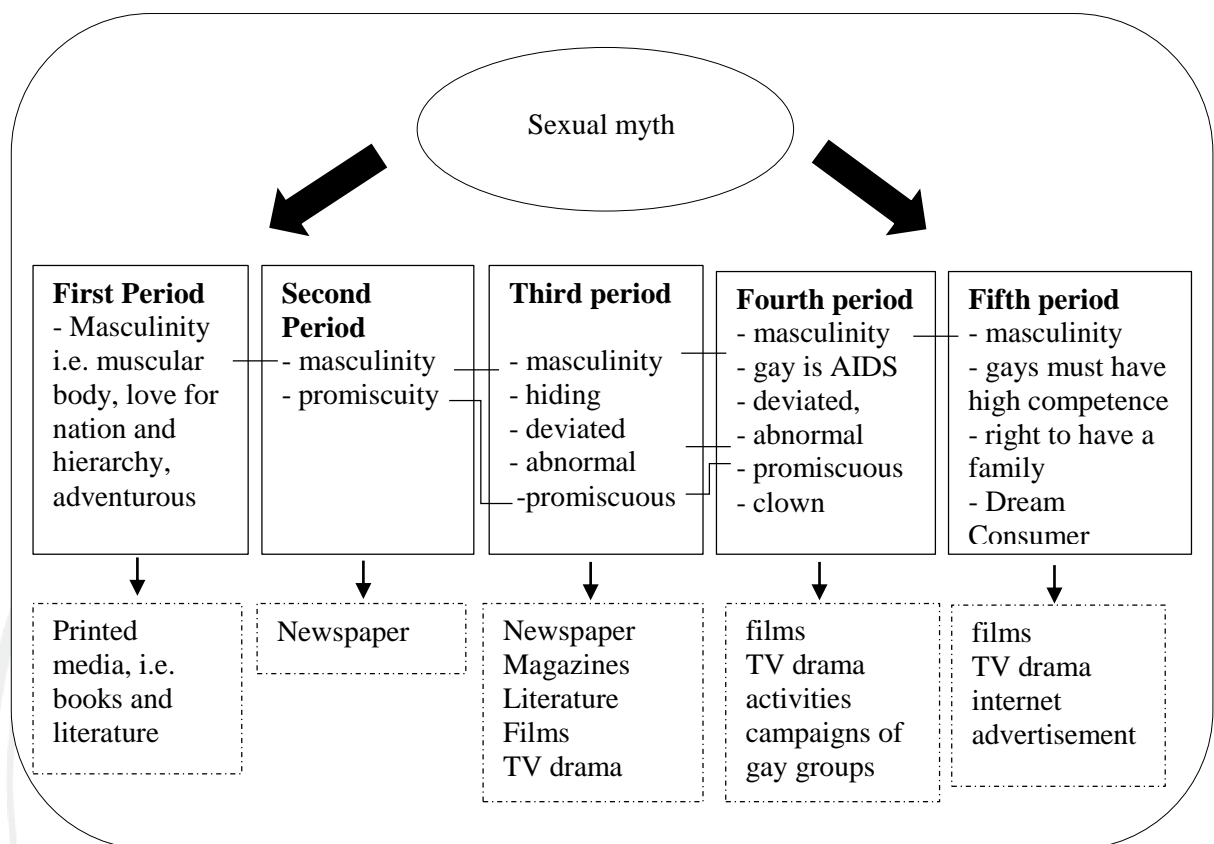


Figure 6.2 illustrates an overview of sexual myths as outputs of a social context in each period

Social context that passes by in each period is a discourse that makes the meaning of gay change. Media plays a great role in reflecting the image of gays, both positive and negative. Kaewthep and Hinwiman (2010) states that meanings are dispersed in the communication process, especially in the context or environment, i.e. time, place, economics, culture, etc. For example, in the period where there was an epidemic of AIDS, it was the Dark Age of gay images so it appeared the words, "AIDS is gay and gay is AIDS" (Wuttirode, 1991) until it became a mainstream myth that gays are promiscuous and are the cause of AIDS. Subsequently, the movement of social contexts in each period is like a discourse affecting changes in the definition of gay. Media plays a great role in reflecting gays' image, both positive and negative. Kaewthep and Hinwiman (2010) states that the meaning is dispersed in a communication process, especially in contexts or environment (i.e. time, place, economics, cultural conditions, etc.), which affect communicative meanings. For

example, in the period where the epidemics of AIDS occurred, it was the Dark Age of a gay image and the myth, "AIDS is gay and gay is AIDS" emerged. (Wuttirode, 1991). This myth became a mainstream myth that gays were promiscuous and the cause of AIDS. Because of such image, a group called "Fraternity for AIDS Cessation in Thailand" (F.A.C.T) was formed by civil society with the purposes for calling gays to be members and running campaigns against AIDS to upgrade the image of Thai gays. Nevertheless, their campaigns through social activities could create a positive meaning for gays just temporarily because it could not withstand the attack against gays with a negative attitude and this negative meaning led to the value of rejecting gays in Thai society. By the end of the fourth period, the Ministry of Culture issued some laws for prohibiting the presentation of homosexual love in a drama to avoid Thai youth's imitation (Wongmuang, 2016). Besides, from figure 6.2, it shows that there have been changes and reproduction of this sexual myth through media from period to period.

Besides, social contexts in each period, from the textual analysis of advertisements, which are subjects of this study, it is found that in the early of the fifth period it emerged advertisements mentioning about gays in various perspectives. These advertisements did not communicate directly but used signs to convey their intended meanings. However, the meanings found were still negative because it was originated from the constructed meaning from the old days. The advertisements reproduced such negative meanings repeatedly until they became myths, such as "gays are odd", "gays need to conceal their identity", "gays are clowns", and "gays have an exaggerating sexual expression." Furthermore, from the study, it is found that those myths appeared the most in advertisements. To illustrate this, in an advertisement, a man wearing a female dress with a heavy makeup acted like a woman to present a product in a mocking way. This claim accords with the study of Singhakowin (2013) who found that the portrayal of gays in mainstream media is filled with sexual bias, such as a clown must perform an exaggerating sexual expression with effeminate manner like a woman. This reinforces the negative myth about gays. Besides, Lazier and Kendrick (Keawthep, 2013) pointed out that advertising is the extreme form of a persuasion that aims to respond to marketing objectives. Consequently, a stereotype is formed in an advertisement that gays are

clowns, have an exaggerating sexual expression, and need to conceal their self. Lippmann (Keawthep, 2013) explained the occurrence of this stereotype that mass media work must be operated in a restricted place and time so it requires "an economy of effect" on both producers and receivers. For producers, they need to present the most precise message within the quickest time while receivers need the least effort and time in interpreting the transmitted message. Due to this economy of the effect of both sides, it brings about a stereotype or stereotyped image, which is easy for encoding and decoding.

Regarding the changes in sexual myths appearing in the advertisements, from the textual analysis, the researcher finds three new myths from the past: the myth that gays must have high competence, the myth of gays' right to have a gay family, and the myth of Dream Consumer. These changes are to avoid the old stereotyped images of gays, i.e. as a clown, exaggerating sexual expression, etc. This finding accords with the study of Tsai (2007) who found both positive and negative content in the advertisements with homosexual content. Tsai found that negative content or portrayal of gays, i.e. squeezing sound, effeminate manner, etc., is found in the products for non-gay targets. For the positive content, the advertisements avoid presenting stereotyped images and try to encode their gay-related message with more neutral meaning through nonverbal language codes, i.e. manner or body language, etc.

The myth that "gays must have high competence" is presented with a purpose for empowering gays through the success of some gays in various dimensions and for wiping out the negative meanings that have been embedded in Thai people since the old days. This newly-constructed myth is similar to what being explained in the article of Yodhong (2016) who said that gays have to struggle to evade the negative image of gays that has been stamped and stereotyped in Thai society. Gays must put more effort in proving themselves by all means, such as being diligent, devoted for their work and education, etc., until they can climb up to a higher position or a better career. Therefore, it emerges as a new myth that gays must have special talents and distinctive competence. Besides, from the study of Nusomton (2003), it is found that gays need to work two times harder than people of straight gender to prove their endeavor, effort, hardship, and distinguished competence in order to be accepted in

their profession. However, it is remarkable that such acceptance is based on their competence, not on their gender nor real identity.

For the myth of gays' right to have a gay family, it is found that the advertisement cannot present up to that point but only presents the scene of the wedding between man and man in contrast with the portrayal of a happy family appearing in most real estate's advertisements. This is because the core social structure of Thai society still bases on a heterosexual marriage and no legal laws for homosexual marriage yet. Consequently, the advertisement must concern about this mainstream discourse or what Stuart Hall (Procter, 2004) calls "dominant codes". These dominant codes determine all the advertising process. Especially advertising, a field of mass media, needs to transmit its message to the mass of people. Since the mass supports a marketing system, advertising must concern about the image of its brands and the mass who support the markets. Accordingly, this myth can display only a limitation of gays' love that ends with a wedding as a social ritual but cannot step over to display a gay family after their marriage. In fact, some gay organizations, i.e. Rainbow Sky Organization of Thailand, has tried to call for an act to endorse a legitimate homosexual marriage registration through many stages with all concerned. (Rainbow Sky Associate of Thailand, 2017). On the other hand, in the global context, at present 22 countries enacted a law to support a homosexual marriage. The most recent countries are Germany and Taiwan. Theraphacharaporn (2017) expressed his idea that in Thai society, people still have little knowledge about rights and sexual diversity. The legal offices also lack this knowledge while homosexuals themselves do not pay attention to participating in a bill. The worst is homosexuals do not give importance to this right and think that if they cannot get it, it is all right for them. Therefore, it is important to educate and provide them knowledge about human rights, especially the value of humanity. For instance, in Taiwan, an organization called, "Tongzhi Hotline Association", has been opened for over ten years to act as a hotline center for the youth to consult about their sexual or LGBT problems. Besides, Taiwan also has a "Gender Studies/ Sexuality" curriculum and is supported and instructed by Tongzhi Hotline Association. Once people in the society understand about this issue, it is easier to enact a law to support a homosexual marriage. Therefore, if mainstream media in Thailand have not moved towards a change, the

advertisements can only present the scene of the wedding of the gay lovers but cannot step over the dominant codes to present further than that. Signs and hidden myths of the destination of gay love will remain unrevealed.

The myth of Dream Consumer is another new myth found in this study. By this myth, the advertisement tries to construct some meanings by letting them see their desirable dream through it. The change of this myth is that gays are perceived as marketing targets, which never occurred in the past. Therefore, the myth of Dream Consumer is communicated through advertisements by making the consumers feel that if they use or consume the advertised product, their dream can be accomplished so they will be accepted and have a better life. Accordingly, the representation of gays in such myth is a middle-class gay with a buying power and being accepted by surrounding people. Due to such representation, other groups of gays are ignored, such as low-class, labor class, etc. The advertisement thus creates a stereotype via the myth of Dream Consumer that only gays with high income or with a buying power, who are called, “Work-Hard, Play Hard” or “Pink Double Income” group, can be accepted by the society. Tsai (2007) summarized from his study that the new stereotypes of gays are “white” and “middle-class.” The advertisements display presenters’ good lives from the use of products, or convey their dream or imagined life through the communication of the advertisement, i.e. to upgrade the quality of their life, to be accepted by the society, etc., that responds to the marketing objectives. Therefore, the use of Dream Consumer myth still exists because gays are perceived as high-potential targets. Furthermore, from the study of Pensiri (2007) indicates that gays are “New Comer and New Revenue” with high buying power. They prefer using branded products and have no kids as burdens. This enables them to spend money more freely and fully and accords with the study of Arthit (2009) who finds that Thai gays earn about 50,000-100,000 baht or can be called as “A Class Consumer”. The products they want to buy are those for improving their images and this makes the market perceive them as consumers with a buying power and induces a positive communication towards gays via advertisements. Accordingly, the myth of Dream Consumer can access gay targets with maximal effectiveness.

However, the reproduced sexual myth that has been embedded in Thai society, which gives high importance to males, since the first period (as shown in Figure 6.2)

is the myth of masculinity. In the past, such myth was related to politics, governance of the country, and culture creation. Consequently, the concept of masculinity was tied with the love for the nation and monarchy. Yodhong (2013) found that in the reign of King Rama VI, His Majesty the King gave high importance to the creation of being a man, i.e. the ultimate goal of being a man was to be a soldier. A man must be strong, have a muscular body, and be adventure-oriented. During this period, there had been a great attempt to prevent men from having female properties: fragile, passive, weak, and devalued. Some practical guidelines were thus given to men, such as no staying at home because the sphere of home means “domestic” or “domesticate” (making someone to be tame) and “domesticated” (tame), which should not be the property of a man. Therefore, the meaning of masculinity focused on “gender” (or which sex one has or the identity one thinks he is), which is innate. A man also was expected to comply with his role relationship, i.e. to be a husband, father, leader, etc. A man must be brave, patient, not weak, and not show his effeminate manner. A man was a pair of a woman and was the result of the sexual role determined by the society so it occurred a myth that a man must be strong and exert his power over a woman. (Kimmel, 1987; Connell, 2005) (Duangwises, 2016). This myth reflects no diversity nor complexity of masculinity. From the myth, “men must not be weak like women” affected the construction of the meaning of gay in the next period, in which an ideal masculinity was used as a benchmark to judge a man who did not possess, act, or perform as formulated by the society to be abnormal, and insane. It should be noted that from the study, it is found that studied advertisement tries to create a myth of masculinity for gays, i.e. having a strong and muscular body and a manly look, etc. This myth is created to dominate “the male gender” and “heterosexual” love romantic relationship. Nardi (2000) stated that gays have several means to display their masculinity that needs to be understood by the diverse masculinity. Some express themselves with a complete portrayal of a real man that requires a firm body and bravery. Some express themselves by imitating the look of a woman. Several kinds of masculinity need an integration between a traditional man and a sensitive man in gays’ daily life, i.e. when gays are with their friends, lovers, or when they face a class or ethnicity oppression. This notion is in accordance with the concept of R.W. Connell (1990) (Phanprasit, 2016) who stated that a masculinity must be considered

by the diversity of masculinity and by the truth that a masculinity has many layers. Therefore, it is important to understand that the relationship between a man and a man does not mean the “sex” issue but it would rather mean how a man and a man interact towards each other. Besides, it is better to understand how each group of men create their own image of the masculinity, which leads to a competition towards gaining more power over other groups of men.

Accordingly, when talking about a masculinity, it should be a diverse masculinity rather than a single meaning of masculinity monopolized by the concept of a particular group of men in a society.

All these four sexual myths are encoded through advertisement components from which the researcher finds two dominant meanings: the products’ property reflects a consumer’s identity and the products’ image reflects a consumer’s identity. The first dominant meaning tries to display the usefulness of utility of the products by persuading that from using or consuming the product, consumers will get a better personality or look. The second dominant meaning tries to recall consumers’ ideal identity by putting some symbolic meanings into the product, i.e. a man with freedom, a man with a certain identity who has a determined goal, etc. The advertisements try to persuade a consumer to see his or her identity reflected in the products used, which will arouse his or her needs to buy the products. This concept of dominant meanings in the advertisement accords with the concept of Wernick (1991). Wernick said that advertising is a trial in creating an attraction through the process of meaning construction. Finally, advertising will change a product to become a cultural symbol. Therefore, advertising deals with an ideology and is a channel that enables a receiver to be a consumer by inserting some psychological and cultural appeals into a product through the relationship between a consumer’s identity and a product, which is portrayed as something desired or wanted by the consumer. This leads to the sales of the desired or imagined product, using symbolic meanings full of mythical value, to the consumer. The myth of Dream Consumer found in this study is an explicit example illustrating that an advertisement creates a dream for a consumer towards what he or she wants to be or to have and then stimulates him or her to have needs in the product consumption. Nevertheless, it is hard to distinguish between “the fact” and “the sign” created by an advertisement because each type of products possesses

some kinds of complexity in the meaning construction. Specifically, a product is not defined by what kinds of property it contains since the starting of the production from the manufacturing factory. However, it is defined with some meanings through an advertisement, which displays the product's property. For example, the advertisement of a brow pencil for men of Mistine tries to display its properties through the slogan, "With bold brows, you can be a true man." Therefore, advertising is part of the signification process. Besides, advertising also draws the products to tie with culture until the consumers feel that these two things are identical. Consumers receive the advertising message and put some meanings they perceive existing in the culture into the product so this enables the cultural property to be contained in the product and makes the transmission of meaning from a culture to a product successful. Advertising is thus a communication through mass media that enables the process of the dream creation on the product access consumers widely.

However, according to Roland Barthes (1967), a large number of signs created in the world of meanings occur to support the myths of middle-class people. However, the signification found in this study supports the concept of Jean Baudrillard (Kaewthep & Hinwiman, 2010) who believes that capitalism creates those signs to organize a new human relationship through some mechanism of capitalism, i.e. advertising mechanism, etc. Such mechanism will stimulate human needs through the use of signs and signifiers. The sign consumption, according to the concept of Baudrillard, starts with the process of encoding an object to become a sign by various means, i.e. packaging, pricing, advertising, etc. The consequence of the signification of an object is to assign "Status" and "Prestige" to the object consumer. The reason why this study supports the concept of Baudrillard is that the studied text or advertisement is one of the capitalist mechanism. If the text is changed, the findings of this study may be changed too.

After discussing the changes in sexual myths found in the advertisements, the next topic to be discussed is the factors affecting those changes. From the study, it is found that sexual diversity and gender fluidity that has been mentioned widely around the world are the main factors that obstruct the reproduction of old negative myths about gays. Sexual diversity is discussed in various dimensions including gender fluidity. Sexual diversity is also paid more attention by Thai mass media. From the

study of Phanutaecha (2008), from 1997-2007, over 1,345 pieces of news presenting content about alternative genders, both personal news and campaign news. Most of the news was the stories about social movement such as the reaction against governmental policies relating to the violation of rights, the exclusion of alternative genders, and the call for rights in various issues, etc. Such movements were in the form of working networks, academic seminars on sexual diversity, the provision of knowledge on homosexuals in various perspectives by groups of people and organizations, and the revealing of homosexual identity, etc. This finding accords with the study of Archavanitkul (2011) who studied on "Sexual Transition in Thai Society." The finding reveals that due to the trend of sexual diversity around the world, the perception towards the alternative gender in Thai society is more positive. In other words, Thai society accepts the diversity of alternative gender much more than in the past. This is because the story of alternative gender has been mentioned and reported with a relatively more positive attitude widely around the world. Besides, owing to global current issues, such as the declaration of legal same-sex marriage in many countries, especially in the U.S.A. in 2015, in which all the world were awakened to this declaration and emerged "Gay Pride" worldwide current, including Thailand. Moreover, online media helps to disseminate information and create the widespread awareness rapidly without time and space borders. For example, Facebook created their profiles with rainbow symbols and "pride" icon, etc. Furthermore, Archavanitkul (2011) specified that the growth of information technology (IT) and information processing is one of the factors encouraging the opened area for learning changing sexuality based on sexual diversity. On the other hand, from the trend of the awareness of freedom, sexual diversity becomes a symbol representing the freedom of a society and reminding people in the society of this issue.

It is remarkable that the new changes in sexual myths found in the advertisements are all advertisements after 2015 in which the world alerts for the sexual diversity. Accordingly, this movement influences business sector, especially advertising, which is a major mechanism, on looking for new targets to reduce the condition of overwhelming supply. Gross (2012) pointed out that gays and the third sex or third gender should be the richest people in America with huge purchase

power. This turns gays to become high-potential consumers. From the study of Wattanapanit (2007), the reason why marketing circles turn to put an emphasis on gay consumers due to gays' adaptation. More gays start to reveal themselves increasingly through all kinds of media. Especially, recently a number of media present well-known gays, capable gays, and gays with high potentials in the society. These gay groups are consumers with high income or who are called, "Work Hard- Play Hard", or "Pink Double Income – No Kids". Subsequently, a large number of foreign research conducted to study how to communicate with gay consumers in order to sell their products and create a good image for their brands. Because of this perspective, gays have more negotiation power as one of the major consumers. This notion accords with the study of Kates (2000) who found that gays will purchase general products when those products present the image of gays with a respect and good understanding. On the contrary, they will not buy any products that portray improper gay image through the advertisements. Kates further found that the use of signs in the advertisements that reflects the value of gays will give more chances for creating the acceptance of gays under the circumstance where some groups of people still oppose gays. In short, the factors that affect the changes of sexual myths in advertisements are the trends of sexual diversity, marketing factors, and communication of new meanings and new myths by the usage of signs in advertisements.

6.2.2 Consumers' Decoding of Advertisements with Gay-Related Content

From the study, it is found that gay and heterosexual consumers decode the advertisement with gay-related content with a polysemy interpretation or with various meanings. For the dominant meaning, "the products' property reflects a consumer's identity", the consumers decode the meaning by Preferred Reading and Oppositional Reading in the same proportion. For the dominant meaning, "the products' image reflects a consumer's identity", both gay and heterosexual consumers decode it by Preferred Reading the most. The findings indicating the consumers' decoding with a polysemy interpretation accord with the concept of Stuart Hall (Procter, 2004) that the meanings encoded by the producer and the meanings decoded by the consumers can be varied. Therefore, the consumers are not the passive audience. On the contrary, they can determine the process of new signification as well, which will be

Oppositional Reading or the consumers reject the meaning or the interpretation of the producer. Especially, the decoding of meanings through advertising channels indicates the relationship between consumers' identity and frame of reference (or frame of experiences) referred in the products. When what a product claims is not in harmony with a consumer's frame of reference or experience, then Opposition Reading or the Rejection of the encoded meaning occurs. This finding is also in accordance with the concept of Williamson (1978) (Sinsuwan, 2010) that the meaning of a product is constructed by a receiver, not the meaning a sender tries to encode or transmit to a receiver. In other words, the meaning will occur again after the first meaning encoded by a sender is transmitted to a receiver. During the receiver's interpretation, another meaning is interpreted by the receiver. Therefore, there will be two sets of meanings happening. For the consumers' perception of sexual myths in the advertisements, two myths are found to be decoded by Preferred Reading or to dominate the consumers the most. These two myths are "gays must have high competence" and "Dream Consumer". According to Barthes (1967), myths operate through the conceptualization of people in the society in a certain issue. However, a myth is not a deception or a distorted propaganda. A myth does not hide something. Contrarily, everything appears in front of people openly; however, people are just so familiar with it so much that they do not notice that what they see is constructed, not a real thing, by the society and culture. For gay myths, the growth of consumption culture has created social space for Thai gays and this enables gays to have their position or a stand in a society. From their consumption, it also creates a sense of identity (Duangwises, 2010) to identify they are gays and how they are alike or different from others amidst a large number of signs. From both myths, they illustrate gays' individuation that gays have a good taste, are capable, have a buying power, and like to use branded products to create their image (Arthit, 2009). The concept of a sense of identity corresponds to the explanation about sexuality in a modern society of Giddens (1992) that gender is an issue of identity that responds to new consumption society in which sexual products serve lifestyles of individuals. An individual uses a product to identify his or her sexual identity or orientation. Therefore, gay consumers decode the myth that gays must have high competence and the myth of Dream

Consumer by Preferred Reading because gays are accepted as one of the high potential consumers in the market.

6.2.3 Guidelines for Producing Gay-Related Advertisements

From the study, it is found that both producers and receivers propose some common guidelines in producing advertisements with gay-related content. Firstly, advertisements should present gays as normal and ordinary people, not as clowns like in the past. They should also present gays' image or content with a neutral tone. This notion accords with the study of Chanasaereechai (2000) and Tsai (2007), which found that advertisements should not be too expressive or exaggerating, but should be neutral and avoid stereotyped images. Producers should use advertisement components to help consumers to interpret the message or their encoded codes. Besides, these guidelines are congruous with the findings of Wattanapanit (2007), which suggest that communication in an advertisement should be profound, thorough, and direct to gays but can also be acceptable for heterosexuals. Nevertheless, Lippmann (Keawthep, 2013) reminds that due to some restrictions that lead to an Economy of Effect, both producers and receivers will encode and decode the message within the shortest time or in the most precise form. Consequently, it is inevitable for an advertisement to use a stereotyped image of gays to let the receivers know to whom it communicates. In spite of this inevitability, the presentation of gays in advertisements should still look proper, positive, and not devalue their humanity.

6.2.4 Other Findings from the Study

From the overall finding of sexual myths appearing in Thai advertisements with gay-related content, it indicates that Thai society accepts gays more than before but such acceptance is conditional, i.e. gays must be started and have to prove themselves in several ways. Besides, it illustrates that gays might be able to free themselves from the traditional social structure but they cannot get away from mainstream social structure and discourse in terms of advertising. By an analogy, gay advertisements are covered by a two-layer ceiling. Although they can escape from the first layer as high-potential consumers, they are stuck with social structure in which people still accept heterosexual love relationship as correct and proper. Therefore, in

producing an advertisement, the producers need to concern about the mainstream discourse of the society or “Dominant Codes” as called by Stuart Hall (Procter, 2004). Dominant codes determine the whole process of the production of advertisements as shown in Figure 6.3.

Furthermore, advertising is a type of mass media that rely on the mass while the mass support markets or business. Accordingly, the advertisement production has to concern about the product brands and the mass who support their markets. This brings about the use of signs to convey the intended meaning and hide the sexual myths underneath. The finding accords with the research of Singhakowin (2013) studying the reproduction of gay myths of mainstream media in Thai society. It finds that there has been some misinterpretation that Thai society opens more for the diversity of sex or gender by judging from the increased public space for gays. On the contrary, it finds that the presentation of gays in mainstream media remains some social biases. Singhakowin states that Thai society "seems" apparently to accept sex diversity but in fact, it is not ready to support the love relationship of homosexuals like heterosexuals. In addition, it does not accept that the homosexual relationship is another form of love. Jackson and Cook (1999) (Archavanitkul, 2011) found that the attitude of Thai society towards the third sex is “bearable, but no acceptable” and sexual minorities are still treated unfairly in many aspects.

Consequently, the issue of sexual equality and economic equality in terms of consumption is complex. Some economic inequalities can sharpen a sexual inequality. For instance, middle-class gays with high income may have more economic power than lower-class gays with low income, etc. Besides, from the study of Bennie (Duangwises, 2017), the consumption culture operates in parallel to the baseline of mainstream discourse, specifically the discourse of heterosexual love in Thai society. Such discourse causes a paradox in viewing gays as high-potential targets and as those with deviated sexuality from the norms of heterosexual love. These conflicting views lead to two different myths. In terms of consumption culture, the myth is gays earn high-income with high buying power and like to consume branded products. Thus, this myth is perceived in reference to Pink Economy frame. All concerned business then creates marketing strategies to stimulate gays to purchase their products. It is obvious that the gays the markets desire are only middle-class gays with high

income. Therefore, the increasing presentation of gays in Thai advertisements covers gays in the position of consumers and thus this acceptance is conditional. From being so, it reflects that Thai society has not fully accepted "sexual diversity" and gays as a normal people genuinely.

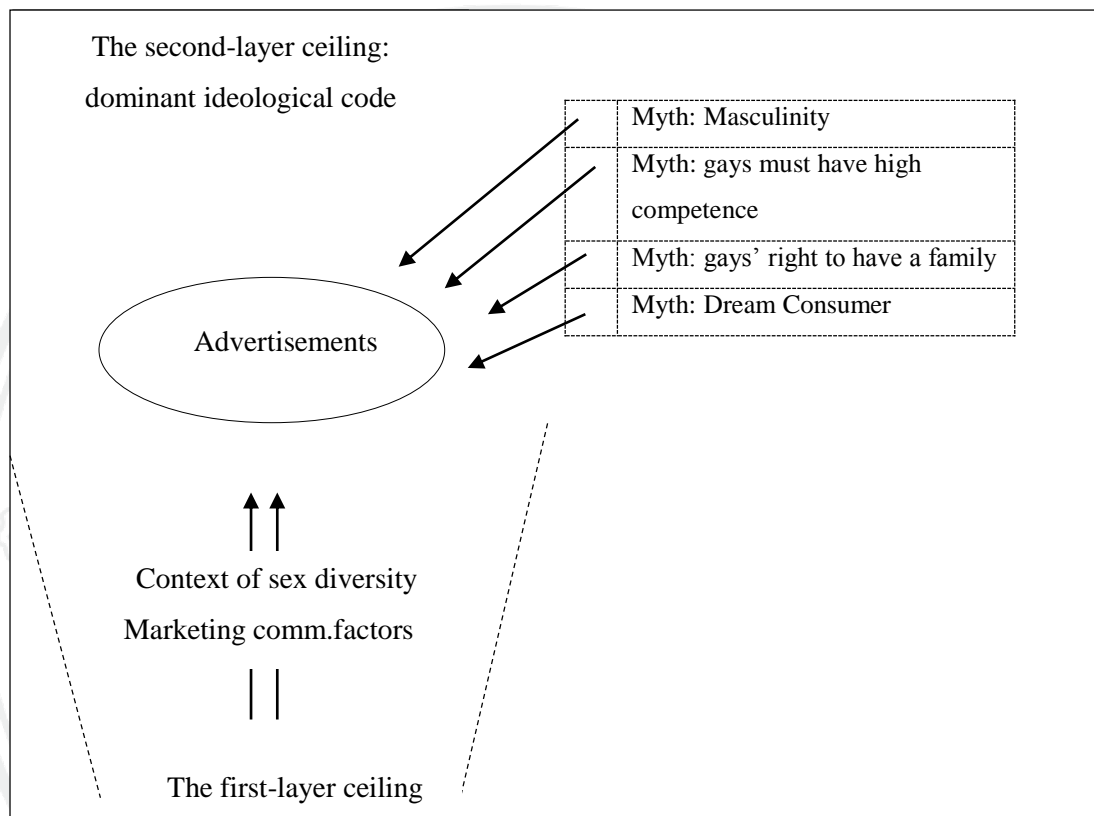


Figure 6.3 illustrates the regulation of dominant ideological code over the creation of advertisement with gay content.

6.3 General Recommendation

6.3.1 The findings from this research help to point out the meaning construction in gay-related advertisements through advertisement components. The findings can thus be applied to communicate to the target groups, especially gay consumers, more effectively. For instance, to transmit proper message in the form of a storytelling in order to create "a Touch Point" or to connect people of all groups and genders to access the story or message, etc.

6.3.2 From the study, gay consumers give high importance to an individuality or a sense of identity in their product consumption. Besides, it is also found that to use

rational or logical appeal by explaining the details of the products and to create a connection between their identity and frame of experiences referred in the products in the advertisements is interpreted by Oppositional Reading from gay consumers. In other words, the gay consumers oppose the advertisement using logical or rational appeal. Therefore, advertisement producers would rather use emotional and psychological appeal to arouse their desire in consuming their products through the usage of symbolic meanings instead, i.e. distinguished identity and lifestyle, freedom, determined life goal, etc., by considering types of products to be presented into the market as well.

6.3.3 In the advertisements with gay-related content, especially for business with gays as their marketing targets, producers should avoid using stereotyped images. They should use a non-judgment communication and a portrayal of gays as normal people like other consumers through some codes in advertisement components: verbal language codes, nonverbal language codes, and technical-practical codes, which can help gay consumers to be able to interpret such codes; although, heterosexual consumers may feel indifferent towards such codes. For instance, producers can use body language or gestures to convey their meanings. Since it might be inevitable to present gayness in the advertisements, the communication about them should be appropriate, positive, and not devalue their humanity.

6.3.4 The selection of a presenter is one of the utmost importance of which advertisement producers have to be well aware. Especially, when a gay is used as a presenter, the advertisement should not focus on sexuality but on the issues or other distinguished attributes of the presenter that can respond to the advertisement assumptions. The communication in advertisements should avoid a construction of a myth in a new form, either intentionally or unintentionally.

6.4 Recommendations for Future Studies

6.4.1 Since this research focuses on middle-class gays, future studies of gays of other classes should be conducted to see the possible differences of decoding. Besides, future research should study on the usage of signs in constructing meanings

for gays of other classes so that the advertisements can communicate to all groups of gay consumers.

6.4.2 This study focuses on gays only while sex diversity covers more than gays. Therefore, future research should study on other LGBTQ to know their variety of consumption.

6.4.3 A further study on sex or gender equality and economic equality should be conducted. The study might help to expand the perspective to view and accept gays beyond viewing them as only high-potential consumers of the markets but also as a human being.

6.4.4 The subjects of gays in this study are selected by the researcher's criteria for a qualitative research so it may not represent the actual population. Future studies should be conducted with quantitative research for more reliability and for wider coverage of gay population towards more precise findings.

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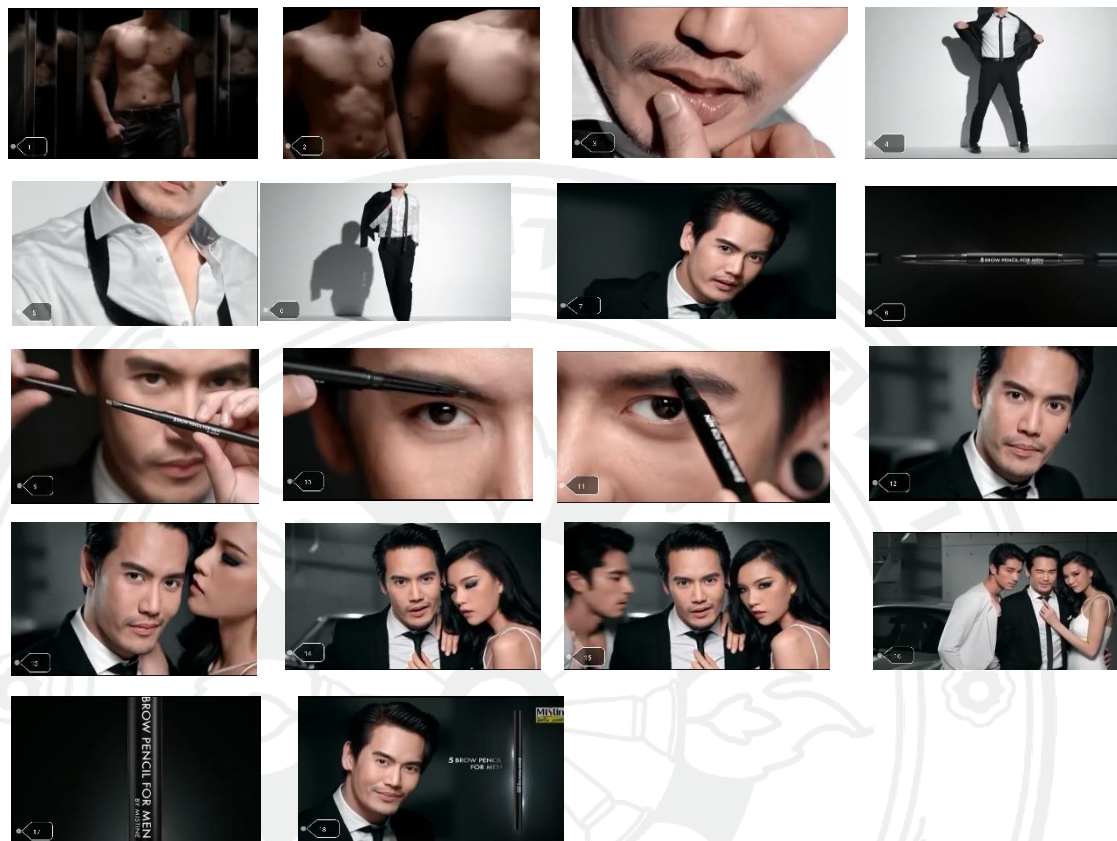
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APPENDIX

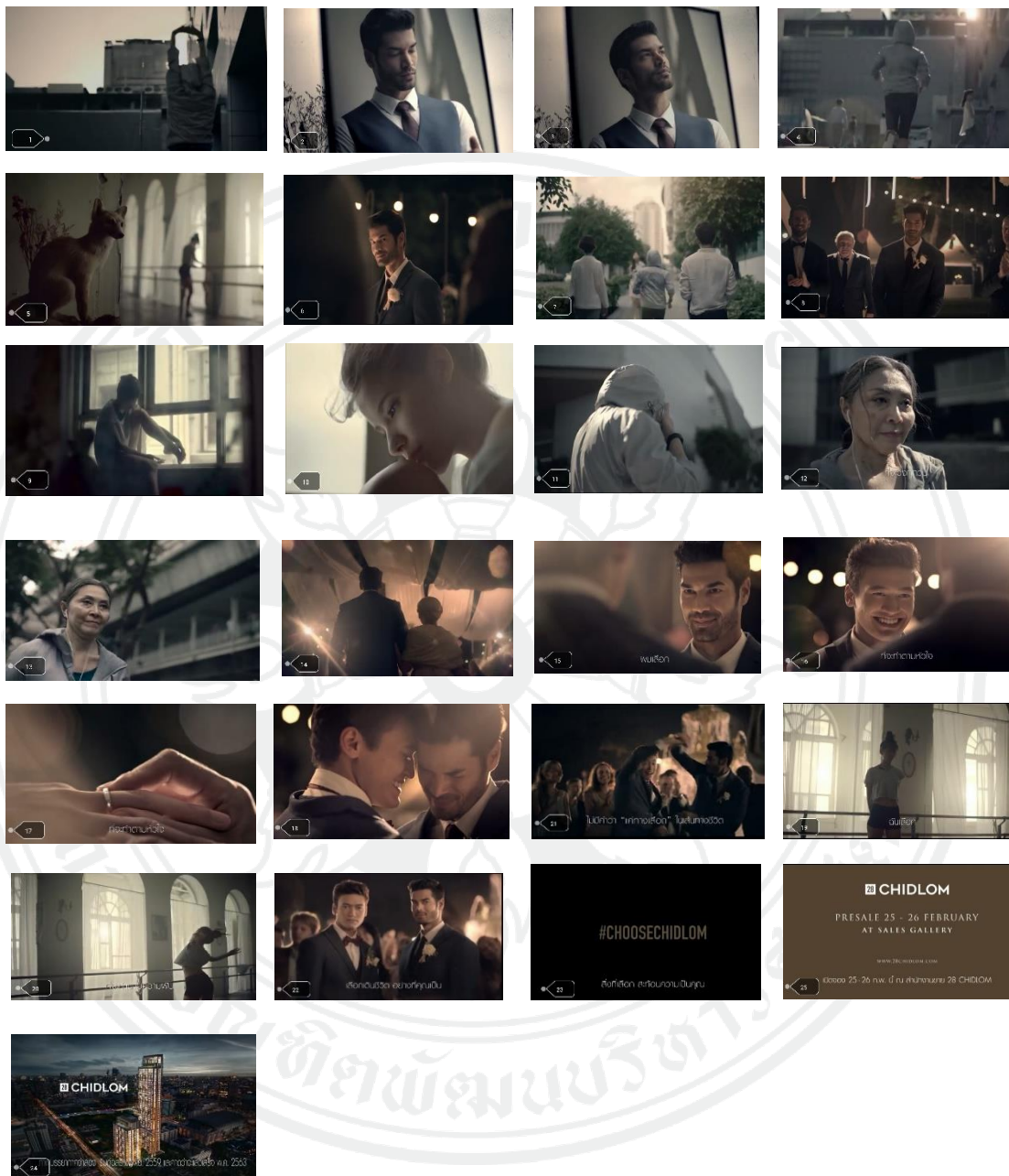
SK-II Advertisement



MISTINE Advertisement



SC ASSET Advertisement



BIOGRAPHY

NAME	Chachaya Sakuna
ACADEMIC BACKGROUND	Bachelor's Degree with a major in Public Relations, Communication Arts from Rangsit University, Thailand in 2011. Master's Degree in Communication Arts from Rangsit University, Thailand in 2014
EXPERIENCES	Present Position, Lecturer, Program in Digital Marketing Communication, Faculty of Communication Arts, Rangsit University. 2013-2014 Media Coordinator, Office of International Communication and Enrollment at Rangsit University 2011-2013 Public Relation Officer at Matchon Book Publishing.

