

*Community Radio Use to Provide Knowledge of Media Literacy among the Elderly in Rural, Thailand*

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Abstract

The objective of study in “Community Radio Use to Provide Knowledge of Media Literacy among the Elderly in Rural, Thailand” is to study operating structure, radio program production process, and analysis of radio content which was managed by the elderly group in Chiang Kham district, Phayao Province. The findings are; 1) There are three members in the elderly group with average age of 57 years old, living in Chiang Kham, graduated with bachelor degree, average experience in radio production program is 14 years, originally worked as government officers, and produce radio program at Community radio station regional area 2 (105.0 MHz) and they see the danger of consumption of non-standardized products, sold using deceptive advertising, as contributing to actual deaths amongst members in their community. 2) The group is an informal congregation set to work in the community radio, bonded by the long relationship in work among the members. They mostly used an informal communication in their group. The communication form is two-ways communication and the communication direction is horizontal communication. 3) The two main steps of pre-production and production are present in the group’s work, although some elements are missing in sub-steps of pre-production. In addition, the post-production does not include a quality check of radio broadcasting. 4) Overall, the analysis of radio content to assist the elderly for knowledge in media literacy, found that most of the content is mainly concentrated on analytical skills.

## **1. Introduction**

Radio broadcasting reform in Thailand, has been delayed for more than 15 years. As a consequence almost 8,000 stations throughout Thailand produce programs for commercial and political purposes and air content that is not monitored.

Despite efforts in 2011 by, the National Broadcasting and Telecommunication Commission to organise them only 2,312 stations have been registered and licensed. As a result the content of programs has been difficult to control. The main content of community radio remains focused on selling products especially medicines foods and health products such as nutritional supplements with exaggerated qualities.

According to The Food and Drug Administration's survey in 2006-2009 (Food and Drug Administration, 2013) the business sector has substantially increased advertising budgets for alternative media, including community radio, by up to 1.7 billion Baht per year because they realise that community radio is a key tool for advertising their products especially those which target the elderly in rural areas. As a consequence they are causing health risks. It has been shown that in some cases, death has been the result of non-standardized products from deceptive advertisers.

Although the elderly who are seen as victims and vulnerable to the uncontrollable media, there is strong elderly group in Chiang Kham district, Phayao Province in the North of Thailand who have started utilising community radio to fight back against any content used on radio that is harmful to their community by specifying content and motivate people in their community to media literacy, instructing them to think, analyze, and search for information before deciding to consume the product.

## **2. Objectives**

- 2.1 To study the structure of the elderly group and radio production programs produced by the elderly in Chiang Kham, Phayao.
- 2.2 To analyze the content of radio programs produced by a group of the elderly in  
Chiang Kham, Phayao

## **3. Literature Review**

### **1. Community Radio Concept**

Jumpol Rodkumdee (1999) addressed the presentation of community radio operation in the U.S.A. in the UNESCO annual general meeting in 1977. The meeting agreed that community radio is one section of participatory communication which focuses on 3 principles; easy to access and change the media, participation at all levels from initiation to production, and self management.

Kanchana Kaewthep (2003) addressed the process and criteria in content selection for program production which will fulfill community needs and become a device to develop a strong community, by employing the combination of both mechanism and process as follows;

1. Process to acquire content consists of 2 steps; survey of listener's need and the second step, program evaluation after broadcast.

2. Content selection criteria which effect by philosophy, nature, and significant characteristic of community radio. The content should have the following characteristics;
  - a) The content should mainly relate or close to community
  - b) The community radio should have varieties of contents and radio personalities.
  - c) The program schedule should match with the target's lifestyle.
  - d) Should select content that harmonize with or represent to belief/folk wisdom/culture of each region.
  - e) Stick with principle "equilibrium"
2. Communication Concept

There are two communication channels as follows; (Vichien Vithayaudom, 2007: 232)

1. One-way communication means communication which sender sends message to receiver only. There is no return message so that there is no reaction from the receiver.
2. Two-way communication means communication that the receiver responds and reacts to the sender.

An experiment in comparative of one-way and two-way communication (Harold J. Leavitt, 1964: 143) found that;

1. One-way communication is quicker than two-way communication
2. Two-way communication is more reliable than one-way communication
3. Two-way communication can generate more confident to the receiver than one-way communication can.
4. Although one-way communication is less reliable than two-way communication, it is easier to organize than two-way communication which is rather noisy and complicated.

#### Communication Direction

Could classify communication into 3 directions as follows; (Vichien Vithayaudom, 2007: 231)

1. Downward communication is the communication from higher level of the hierarchy to the lower level. It is one-way communication with communication method like circulation, poster, group meeting, etc.
2. Upward communication is the communication from subordinate to higher level superior. Communication channel is generally advice, consult, and complaint.
3. Horizontal communication is communication between persons in the same level. It is the exchange of information, idea to solve program and to create understanding.

#### 3. The concept of radio program production

Sumon Yusin (2005) described stages in community radio production for local development as the continuous program production process, consisted of 3 major steps and 8 minor steps as follows;

1. Pre-production step consists of several small steps as;
  - a) Data collection is the collection of several data of listener, pattern and type of program, content, production budget.

- b) Production planning is the advance decision process by using existing information to decide on the program objective and production process in order to fulfill the objective or program.
  - c) Radio authorship is process to write script that informs the steps of the program from the beginning to the end to keep the program in the direction as indicated in scope of content and program format.
  - d) Preparation of program material. By roughly study radio script, the producer will be able to prepare program material in advance such as recorder, tape recorder, audio disk, microphone, along with booking studio and making appointment with technician for equipment arrangement.
  - e) Program production, coordinating with working members in several departments as indicated in the script such as director, actor, technician, lecturer to ensure that the program is conducted as planned
  - f) Rehearsal. The benefit of rehearsal is to minimize mistakes in content, speech, and acting. If the program is complicated and many people involved, the rehearsal would consist of many stages and be punctual.
2. Production stage is broadcasting step which is divided into 2 types as follows;
    - a) Live broadcasting. Most of the radio programs in the present are live broadcasting to make the program lively. There is no time consuming in recording, editing and saving in equipment and personal.
    - b) Recording is the advance program recording to broadcast as scheduled in the station timetable. The benefit of program is its ability to correct the program.
  3. Post production stage
    - a) Quality control is the auditing and evaluating of broadcasted program in order to realize the failure of the broadcasting such as sound quality, time, program arrangement, etc. The evaluation should be in every step to ensure the quality as indicated in the objective.
  4. Concept in Content Analysis

Berelson (1971) provided the definition of content analysis as “the content analysis is a research technique which is objective, systematic, and quantitative by clearly presenting the content of communication.”

Unit of measurement of content will assist in content analysis by providing quantitative explanation. Unit of measurement is divided into;

1. Unit of Analysis. Berelson (1971) had divided content analysis into several units which are able to provide quantitative explanation as follows;
  - a) Word. Single word or group of words, symbol or unit of symbol or term
  - b) Theme is unit to analyze content which is presented in phrase, single sentence, or combination of sentences that describe main concept 1 concept in analysis
  - c) Character is defined unit by considering appearance property such as drama script, story. The decision in coding must consider the whole story in order to classify the property.
  - d) Item is broad story arrangement by analyzing of total story and each story could be further separated.

- e) Space and time measurement is the analysis to measure physical of communication, width column, number of page, length of line, may be in minutes for radio
2. Unit of Enumeration
- a) Space is the measurement of content in unit such as inched column, centimeter column, page, line, indent
  - b) Appearance is the property of content of required material. Counting will rely on the appearance of content material.
  - c) Frequency is the most frequently used in content analysis such as the frequency in using any word.
  - d) Intensity is the unit to identify number that use in the research related to social value and attitude that appear in content of material and make to scale, sorted by statement with high frequency of the same concept but using different words or sentence's components which indicate to different frequency.
5. Concept in media literacy

Potter (1998) explained that media literacy is about understanding media character and the ability to explain the meaning of what we have seen in media. We will be able to understand the characteristic of media and able to explain the meaning of information or content of media from our database. This database requires equipment and raw material to accumulate knowledge while equipment is our own skill in reading and writing for reading media and raw material is information from media and real world.

Pornthip Yenjabok et al. (2005) defined the media literacy as the ability to analyze, critique, and evaluate media, ability to access media, present media in own model, and produce media for varieties of communication. In addition, media education means learning to develop skills, analyzing, critiquing, and fabricating opportunity to access media. Detail information of each skill is as follows;

1. Access is fully and quickly accepted media, ability to realize and capable to understand a variety of media, searching for information from several kinds of media.
2. Analyze the interpretation of media content by component and form of the presentation of each kind of media that effects social, political, or the economy by the basic knowledge and experience in forecasting.
3. Evaluate is the ability to evaluate the quality of broadcasted content that creates value to the receiver, and ability to generate usage benefit for the receiver.
4. Create is media education, including skill development in creating media in own model in order to communicate as set in own objective.

The most important target of media literacy is analyzing and decision making with critical judgment regarding the format of communication and ability to distinguish opinion from fact and always realize propaganda and to show the decision accurately. Media literacy causes the people to empower the media receiver who is able to understand him/herself and understand the presentation. (Urjit Virojtrairat, 1997)

In education factor, Atkin (1973: 208) mentioned that person who opens to widely receive media and has enormous skill in searching for information will make that person to be more literacy.

#### **4. Methodology**

The study focused on an elderly group in Chiang Kham, Phayao province. It was both qualitative and quantitative research. The tools used to collected the data were

1. Formal and informal interview
2. Participation and non-participation observation
3. Content Analysis

Steps in research procedure

1. Field interview with the elderly who is 60 years and older, individually, from 10 community radio stations.
2. In-depth interview with the elderly group of Community radio station regional area 2 (105.0 MHz). The number of sample is 3 samples.
3. Observe the program production of radio program of elderly group who produce program at the
4. Content analysis of 3 radio programs for 6 weeks between 9 September – 20 October 2013 by using 2 kinds of analyzing units;
  - a) Unit of analysis. This research has employed analysis as a theme by considering the presentation of content in the program each time whether creating media literacy or not. If it did create media literacy, then considered if the elder group had expressed access skills, analysis skills, evaluation skills, and creative skills.
  - b) Unit of Enumeration. This research has applied appearance by counting media literacy content in several areas in analytical framework as appear or not appear. The counting of one appearance of media literacy is 1 unit.

#### **5. Result**

The study could be summarized in several topics as follows;

1. General information of the elderly group

There are three members in the elderly group with average age of 57 years old, living in Chiang Kham, graduated with bachelor degree, average experience in radio production program is 14 years, originally worked as government officers, and produce radio program at Community radio station regional area 2 (105.0 MHz). The reason to apply radio program to give education in media literacy is because the elderly in their community had consumed fermented fruit juice and passed away because of heart attack although she has no record in heart decease before and direct experience of a member in the elderly group who almost lost his life

2. Operating structure in elderly group

The group has informally gathered. Most of them use informal communication channel with two-way communication and horizontal communication direction because members in the group are familiar with each other. The elderly group will communicate by verbal discussion to exchange idea, information, and any situation in the community during the program production.

3. The Radio Program Production

The group had inserted media literacy to the listener during their programs so that the radio production process is as follows;

## 1. Pre-production

### a) Basic data collection

The elderly is independent to specify target group, program format, and main content in the program, length, and broadcasting period. The program which produced by the elderly group is;

- Folk music for health program is a music program. The main content of the program is to supply health knowledge. The target group is 40 years and older. The length of program is 1 hour, broadcasting every Saturday and Sunday during 8:00-9:00 a.m.

- Warrior in battlefield for citizen is music program. The main content of this program is to supply knowledge in pension welfare of military and civil officer along with information which provided benefits to the community. The target group is 60 years and older. The length of program is 1 hour, broadcasting every Monday-Sunday during 12:00-1:00 p.m.

- Fact and fact awareness today program is straight talk program. The main content of this program is to supply knowledge and information on politic, economic, social, and culture. The target group is 30 years and older. The length of program is 2 hours; broadcasting is every Monday-Friday during 9:00 – 11:00 a.m.

### b) Program production plan

All 3 programs have objectives in providing health knowledge, providing knowledge in benefit and useful information to military and civil officers, along with people in the community, and providing information and knowledge in politic, economic, social, and culture related to people in community. After fully investigated, the offering of knowledge in media literacy is minor objective in providing information and useful knowledge for people in the community.

### c) Program script editorializing

The group had not written program script for the program production. They utilized long time experience in program production by acquiring information from printing media such as newspaper, letter, and magazine from several public organizations such as Ministry of Health, Consumer Protection Department, Public Relation Department, etc., television media, radio broadcasting media, internet media, and personal media by discussion with several people formally and informally.

### d) Preparation of program material

The group had neatly prepared the program material by arranging speech content, selecting music from computer program, and controlling program production by themselves because the elderly group had limitation in computer usage so they avoid preparing program material which required complicated computer program.

### e) Coordination in Program Production

The group had not coordinated with technician to prepare before program production and there is no coordination with the speakers or specialists in several fields because of most of the operators in the station are volunteers. There are very few operators in the station so that the elderly group produce program without help from many persons.

### f) Program Rehearsal

The format of radio program that elderly group produced is live program so that there is no need for rehearsal but the elderly group will give precedence in content preparation for broadcasting by spending most of the time in collecting information from several media and sorting contents that closest to the audience.

2. Production

a) Live on-air broadcasting

The group will utilize their experience, knowledge, and own capability in live program production in order to make the program lively and generate familiarity with audience as much as possible. In addition, it will eliminate the recording and editing stage due to their limitation in computer programming skill.

3. Post-production

a) Program Quality Control

After the production of radio broadcasting program, the elderly group had not audited the program quality in sound quality, clearness, correction of content during the production stage nor after finished production.

4. Content Analysis

The analysis of content in radio program to provide knowledge in media literacy was analyzed content in 3 programs. The study discovered as the following detail.

Table 1: Content of knowledge in media literacy in folk music for health program, fact and fact awareness today program, and warrior battlefield for citizen.

Content in media literacy	Appearance(Times) (Percentage)		
	Folk music for health program	Warrior battlefield for citizen program	Fact and Fact Awareness today program
Access Skill	8 (20.51)	11 (17.74)	26 (31.70)
Analytical Skill	14 (35.89)	23 (37.09)	23 (28.04)
Media Evaluation Skill	11 (28.20)	19 (30.64)	21 (25.60)
Media Creativity Skill	6 (15.38)	9 (14.51)	12 (14.63)
<b>Total</b>	<b>39 (100.00)</b>	<b>62 (100.00)</b>	<b>82 (100.00)</b>

From Table 1, the media literacy content was appeared in folk music for health program 39 times. The most appearance skill in media literacy is analytical skill, 35.89%, followed by access skill, media evaluation skill, and media creativity skill, 28.20%, 20.51%, and 15.38% respectively. In warrior battlefield for citizen program, the number of appearance of media literacy is 64 times. Most appearance skills are analytical skill, 37.09%, followed by media evaluation skill, access skill, and media creativity skill, 30.64%, 17.74%, and 14.51% respectively. For the fact and fact awareness today program, the number of appearance of media literacy is 82 times. Most appearance skills are access skill, 31.70% followed by analytical skill, media evaluation skill, and media creativity skill, 28.04%, 25.60%, and 14.63% respectively.

Table 2: Media literacy content in 3 radio broadcasting programs.



Media Literacy Content	Appearance (Times)	Percentage of media literacy content
Access Skill	45	24.59
Analytical Skill	60	32.78
Media Evaluation Skill	51	27.86
Media Creativity Skill	27	14.75
Total	183	100.00

Table 2 shows that total number of appearance of media literacy in 3 radio broadcasting programs is 183 times. The most appearance of skill in media literacy is analytical skill, 60 times or 32.78%, followed by media evaluation skill, access skill, and media creativity skill, 51 times, 45 times, and 27 times accounted for 27.86%, 24.59%, and 14.76% respectively.

## 6. Discussion

### 1. General information of the elderly group

The Study found that only one member is over 60 years of age by the common standard criteria setting by the United Nation in 1982. In order to gain more diversified the sample size; we studied the elderly over 55 years old. The elderly live in Chiang Kham, Phayao Province, well educated, and high experience in radio program which confirmed with Jumpol Rodkumdee (1999) who commented on the access to media that easy to access, able to change, participation by all levels, from create, produce, self-management by elderly group in Chiang Kham, be member of community to participate in Community radio station regional area 2 (105.0 MHz) from creating, production, and self-management of the community radio station and the situation that the elderly in the community who consumed fermented fruit juice and passed away by heart attack was brought to present in the program. It created awareness in the community which confirmed with Kanchana Kaewthep (2003) which identifies the criteria in selection of content for community radio that should mainly relate or close to the local community.

### 2. Operating Structure in the elderly Group

The elderly group is informally assembled, using informal communication by discussion for exchange of idea, information, and various situations in the community during the program production in the radio station. It is two-way communication which makes communication more reliable and create more confidentiality to the audience than one-way communication which confirmed with the comparative study between one-way and two-way communication by Harold J. Leavitt (1964). In communication direction, the communication in the elderly group is horizontal communication which confirmed with Vichien Vithayaudom (2007) which commented on the horizontal communication as communication between people in the same level, communication for the exchange of information, idea, to solve problem, and construct understanding within the group.

### 3. The Radio Program Production

The radio program production consists of two main steps; pre-production stage and production stage. The elderly group had not operated some minor stages which are; in pre-production consisted of program script editorializing, program production coordination, and program rehearsal. In the post-production stage, there is no program quality control which is not confirmed with Sumon Yusin (2005) explained the process in community radio production which might cause by the experience and capability of the elderly who have been produced radio program for more than 14 years. The process is quicker due to decreasing in operation steps such as no need to for script editorializing while able to present all contents in the program. At the same time, the elderly group has some limitations which force them not to fulfill all radio program production process such as the limitation in using computer program, limitation in budget, equipment, and support person.

### 4. Content Analysis

The analysis of contents of three radio programs found that the folk music for health and the warrior battlefield for citizen included content with most appearance in analytical skill while the fact and fact awareness today included content with most appearance in access skill due to the possibility that each elderly has different experience, information, knowledge, and presentation skill. When considered full vision of all 3 programs, the analytical skill was the most appearance in the program which was confirmed by comment from Uarjit Virojtrirat (1997) that the important objectives of media literacy are analyze and critical judgment in all format of communication and able to separate idea from reality and be always conscious in propaganda in order to make the correct decision regarding the presentation of media. At the same time, the access skill and media creativity skill are rather low due to the limitation of the elderly group in understanding of several skills in media literacy so that the program production was concentrated in knowledge in analytical skill. In fact, other skills are important components to make receiver learn together which was confirmed by Atkin (1973: 208) who explained that people who widely opened for information and had great skill in getting information would generate more media literacy to that people and Potter (1998) who pronounced that the media literacy needed tool and raw material to accumulate knowledge. Tool is our own skill in reading and writing to able to read media and raw material is information from media and the real world.

### 7. Conclusion and Recommendation

The beginning of this study was ignited by the elderly group who has genuine concerns about the dangers of non-standardized products and deceptive advertising. They see this deception as the cause of death among members of their community. Therefore they promote media literacy in the radio program that they produce as much as they can. The group's informal, two-way, horizontal communication encourages participation and helps them to solve problems in their community efficiently. While radio program production consisted of 2 main steps, there was no post production that is considered as an important step. Overall, the content analysis of the radio program produced by the elderly group shows that it focus on the skill of analysis.

The research led to the following suggestions for developing community radio use to provide knowledge of media literacy among the elderly. It's positive in participating in their group to help each other solving the problems in their community.

1. The elderly group is vital for conveying knowledge of media literacy. Therefore their group should develop their skills and knowledge development as follows:-

a. Develop knowledge of media literacy, allowing the elderly group to lead their community from a position of strength. They will also be able to use that knowledge to create and select messages related to media literacy to talk in their radio programmes. These messages should be selected so as to improve all media literacy skills in the elderly community as a whole. The goal is for listeners to be able to use the knowledge gained from the radio to create their own message for communicating media literacy to others in the community, empowering them to make their own, informed, decisions.

b. Develop skills for radio program production in pre-production stage. Radio production materials must be prepared, such as a radio documentary, public service announcements and coordination with special guests who have knowledge, experience and skills. These should be added to the radio program in order to raise the interest level and in order to reach out to those with different tastes. In the post-production stage the elderly group need to check the quality of the radio program. This includes sound quality, the timing, the content and checking whether or not the programmes achieve its objectives. This should be done using simple methods to monitor the radio program production such as a phone-in from the audience, mail or directly talk to other members in community.

c. Integration with other organizations such as Health Promoting Hospitals, Municipality to share their knowledge of media literacy with other elderly people in monthly meetings or the discussion between the elderly group and other elderly people in each village about media literacy. This would be very effective as the elderly group is the media whom are respected and trusted by the member of community.

2. Community: Community radio station regional area 2 (105.0 MHz) is a community service radio; therefore, it has no income from commercial advertisement. Those who work in the station are all the volunteers. The station is still lacking people. This is an indirect effect on the elderly group that they have to use their existing skills to control the radio production equipment as much as they can. Therefore all members in the community should participate in the community radio at all steps including the planning, production and self-management to ensure that the community radio functions as a quality radio station and is able to maintain its efforts to help the community.

3. The government should allocate a budget to support the community radio and other community services and creative radio programmes that are truly beneficial to the community so that they can continue to operate independently. Moreover, the Government should reward the community radio stations for their creative radio programme in order to bring attention to their work, reduce health problems in rural areas and encourage more programmes like this in the future.

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