

**Advertising and Media Literacy:
Young People and Their Understanding of
the World of Advertising in Australia and Thailand**

Nonthasruang Kleebpung

B.A. (Advertising), Rangsit University, Thailand

M.A. (Advertising), Bangkok University, Thailand

**School of Communication and the Arts
Faculty of Arts, Education and Human Development
Victoria University**

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Abstract

Media literacy has a long international history, primarily in Western countries. It began in the 1960s in countries such as the United States, Canada and France, with the aim of empowering democratic citizens and enhancing citizen participation in society through a better understanding of the media. This thesis investigates young people's media literacy of advertising and in particular, how media literacy might vary across cultures. This thesis considers the media literacy of four groups of 18–25 year olds from different backgrounds: an Australian group in Australia, a Thai group in Thailand, a Thai-Australian group living in Australia, and an Asian international group living in Australia. The thesis considers their media usage, media involvement, media literacy and general opinions of advertising. Following a screening session of a sample DVD compilation of advertisements, individual participants in each group were interviewed to discover how readings of advertisements might differ in terms of understanding and literacy.

This thesis demonstrates that Thai, Thai-Australian, and Asian international participants have a stronger knowledge of advertising industry operation compared with Australian participants. Thai and Thai-Australian participants were more sceptical of the rhetorical claims of advertising and aware of global branding techniques. Differences are also apparent in readings of gender and sexuality in advertising. Australian participants focused more on questions of gender inequality, while Thai participants moralised more about sexuality. Thai participants were also more concerned with the ethics of over-consumption. Australian participants exhibited characteristics of low-context cultures and often used a direct style to demonstrate their knowledge of the media. Thai participants used characteristically elaborate and indirect styles, typical of high-context readings of the media.

Student Declaration

I, Nonthasruang Kleebspung, declare that the PhD thesis entitled *Advertising and Media Literacy: Young People and Their Understanding of the World of Advertising in Australia and Thailand* is no more than 100,000 words in length including quotes and exclusive of tables, figures, appendices, bibliography, references and footnotes. This thesis contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my own work.

Signature:

Date: 13 December 2010

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Literacy is a necessary component for citizenship in a democratic society (Burroughs, Brocato, Hopper & Sanders, 2009). Literacy complements communication, particularly in writing and speech. Williams (1988), a well-known literary and cultural theorist, notes that as a new word in the nineteenth century, ‘literacy meant both an ability to read and a condition of being well-read’ (pp. 187–188). Conversely, illiteracy referred to a lack of the ability to read and write (Williams, 1988, pp. 187–188). Williams poses this question very much in terms of a central debate of culture and society. Literacy is about the ability to read but it is also about being well read. Another related idea is that of ‘criticism’, which, for Williams (1988), refers to a specialised sense of taste. Kellner and Share (2005) noted of this older view of ‘literacy’ that it provided a kind of inoculation against the worst effects of mass civilisation: literacy was ‘a taste for book literacy, high culture, and the values of truth and beauty’ (p. 372).

Literacy creates the basis for culture and democratic participation. Some of these older ideas of literacy are also found within newer ideas of media literacy. Media literacy aims to increase individuals’ critical skills of media culture, enhance media resistance, and strengthen active uses of media for a democratic self-expression and participation. Media literacy is concerned with ‘cultivating skills in analysing media codes and conventions, abilities to criticize stereotypes, dominant values, and ideologies, and competencies to interpret the multiple meanings and messages generated by media texts’ (Kellner & Share, 2005, p. 372). Similarly, for the Aspen Media Literacy Leadership Institute (1992, cited in Center for Media Literacy [CML], 2010a), media literacy is ‘the ability to access, analyze, evaluate and produce communication in a wide variety of forms’. However, according to the National Telemedia Council (cited in Silverblatt & Eliceiri, 1997), it also refers importantly to issues of production: ‘the ability to choose, to understand within the context of content, form/style, impact, industry and production—to question, to evaluate, to create and/or produce and to respond

thoughtfully to the media we consume. It is mindful viewing, reflective judgment' (p. 48). The CML (2010c) develops the definition of media literacy this way:

Media Literacy ... provides a framework to access, analyze, evaluate and create messages in a variety of forms—from print to video to the Internet. Media literacy builds an understanding of the role of media in society as well as essential skills of inquiry and self-expression necessary for citizens of a democracy.

Importantly, Davis (1992) notes the relevance of media literacy to 'citizenship' and its implications for a democratic participation in a media-influenced society or 'the ability to analyze, augment and influence active reading (i.e. viewing) of media in order to be a more effective citizen' (pp. 12–13). Media analysis is a skill that requires a person to understand cultural factors affecting the media, and negotiate the meaning of media texts. It involves reading and decoding skills of latent message, genre and media convention. Evaluative analysis deals with the ability of an audience to appraise the quality and values of media content. A media-literate person should be able to distinguish between facts and value claims (Silverblatt & Eliceiri, 1997) and intelligently scrutinise the reliability and accuracy of sources of information (Covington, 2004; Rosenbaum, 2003). A media-literate person should also recognise the roles of media in socialising people in society through the dominant norms and values (Rosenbaum, 2003), as well as being aware of the social, cultural, economic, political and historical contexts that influence media contents (Alvarado & Boyd-Barrett, 1992; Buckingham, 1998; Messaris, 1998; Meyrowitz, 1998; Hobbs, 1998). Augmentation refers to the ability to locate and access different resources of additional information for further investigation. A media-literate person should also be able to deliberately transform the impact or meaning of a message into their own idiom, and produce a discourse understandable to other viewpoints (Davis, 1992; Rosenbaum, 2003). A media-literate person is engaged with the media and learns from all kinds of media 'texts' (Hobbs, 1997). Media literacy also involves literacy of a number of mediums, including computer literacy, internet literacy, cyber literacy, visual literacy and multimedia literacy (Burn & Durran, 2007; Gurak, 2001; Kellner & Share, 2007; Kubey, 1997; Tyner, 1998; Warnick, 2002).

Media literacy has often been seen as an imperative way of empowering citizens to have greater capacity for critical thought and autonomous action. Media education emerged in the late 1960s. It was introduced to generate an effective and 'literate' citizenship for a democratic society from kindergarten to Year 12 education in the United States (US) in the 1970s, and was an education requirement for grades seven through 12 in Ontario, Canada in the 1980s (Abreu, 2007; Hobbs, 1997; Hobbs, 1998; Rosenbaum, Beentjes & Konig, 2008; Silverblatt, 2001). Other countries such as France, India, Italy, Japan, New Zealand, Scotland and South Africa also developed a standard of media literacy education. Media education is expected to be taught at an early age for promoting media literacy: media education aims to increase consciousness of media effects, and to minimise the effects of media manipulation (Austin & Johnson, 1997; Kellner & Share, 2005; Potter & Byrne, 2007; Scharrer, 2005; Scharrer & Cooks, 2006). Media literacy depends greatly on the notion of the 'active viewer' and is associated with active and critical thinking. Active literacy involves making discriminating judgements about a range of media (Brown, 1998; Hinchey, 2003; Steinbrink & Cook, 2003). It involves the ability to question media agencies, media technologies, media languages, media audiences, media representations and media influences (Brown, 2001; Hobbs, 2001; Lewis & Jhally, 1998; Livingstone, 2004; Scharrer, 2003; Zettl, 1998). Importantly, it involves acts of self-creation or remaking of media texts for the purpose of self-expression and cultural participation (Kellner & Share, 2005; Livingston, 2004). As Tyner (1998) notes: 'the ability to decode information in a variety of forms ... Paolo Friere and Donaldo Macedo (1987) call[ed] "reading the world". If citizens can also manipulate and understand the processes to create messages and distribute them, that is, "writing the world"' (p. 4). However, as the CML (2010d) suggests, media production or creative discussion by audiences of the media are not examples of media literacy. Media literacy must involve some critical examination of the media.

The CML (2010b) identifies five core concepts of media literacy for media education: the understanding of the construction of media content; perception of media language; awareness of audience decoding; recognition of embedded

values; and recognition of economics and the power of media. Media-literate viewers should be aware of the constructions, codes and conventions of media message, and understand audience reading and interpretation of the media. They should acknowledge that people, with different experiences, perceive and interpret the message differently. This skill, for example, would be particularly important in cross-cultural interpretations of the media (although it is often not considered an important cross-cultural skill in this way). The CML (2010d) also focuses on the development of critical scepticism, particularly in relation to values and bias. Essentially, critical and developed media literacy is also associated with media literacy education. Teaching about media should encourage the ‘exploration of the systems’ of the media, models of the media and the various theoretical constructs associated with media studies (CML, 2010d).

General understanding of political agendas, media stereotypes and misrepresentations are often thought by themselves as not equating to the kind of broad understanding that might be required in media literacy. However, this is an ideal situation that may not be found in many empirical audiences, as for example, the one that is under study in this thesis. A more useful definition is that media literacy must in some way involve mindful television viewing, critical thinking and multi-perspective analysing of the messages. Media literacy does not involve, for example, limiting or consuming less media content: ‘media literacy does NOT mean “don’t watch”; it means “*watch carefully, think critically*”’ (CML, 2010d).

Media literacy has been developed for over 40 years as a concept and pedagogy. There is a range of views on media literacy. Early understandings of media literacy focused on pedagogy and relied heavily on the newly developing discipline of cultural studies. The initial aim in the first wave of media literacy education, beginning in the late 1960s, was to ‘inoculate’ viewers from the negative influences of media producers (Chen, 2007, p. 88). In some ways, this might be viewed as ‘the empty vessel’ approach to media literacy. Students are filled up with media literacy education in dedicated learning programs and are instructed on the differences between the positive and negative effects of media education, and thus immunised from the harmful effects of media influence (Cheung, 2009, pp. 3–4). Within this view is a strong notion of the hypodermic

model of the media in which negative media influences can be filtered or blocked out, depending on the degree of media literacy intervention. As suggested by Halloran and Jones (1992, cited in Chen, 2007) ‘viewers are like a piece of white paper, on which the media can freely paint its images’ (p. 88). Media literacy education aimed to guide media viewing and provide positive examples to counter the negative influences of the media such as sex and violence, and empower media resistances (Dezuanni, 2009; Masterman, 1989).

However, with the influence of cultural studies in the second phase, media education shifted to a ‘facing-it’ phase or as Walsh (cited in Chen, 2007) called it, a ‘suck them in’ (p. 88) approach, which was impelled in particular by the structuralist approaches in semiotics. The key in this approach was the idea of theoretical intervention or the teaching of theory to enable audiences to actively decode the symbolic effects of the media, and in so doing, gain some agency over media influences. The works of Buckingham (2003) were prominent in this period. He notes ‘media education is seen here not as a form of protection, but as a form of preparation’ (Buckingham, 2003, p. 13). The aim is not to inoculate audiences but to provide them with the necessary skills to analyse the media critically. As Masterman (1989) affirms, the media is made up of ‘symbolic (or sign) systems which need to be actively read’ (p. 20), otherwise the media becomes an unproblematic, self-explanatory reflection of external reality. Reading media reality, media representation and production involves questioning. In the second wave of media literacy education, the analyses of popular media such as songs and films were included as part of the curriculum in media education to enhance viewer’s participation in media cultures, and endorse their negotiation of hegemonic cultural formations (Dezuanni, 2009).

Media education again shifted to what is referred to by Chen (2007) as ‘the transitional phase’ (p. 88) that was clearly influenced by post-structuralist cultural studies. In this phase, interest developed in audiences as opposed to the ‘text’ as the primary locus of encoding and the production of meaning. This meant, as Chen (2007) notes, that: ‘teachers understood that both the media and its viewers were producers of meaning. Media literacy was considered more holistically and incorporated understanding of media messages and audience self-reflection of

belief experience, personality and background' (pp. 88–89). Importantly, in this phase, media educators became more interested in a wider range of media and the literacies required to consider them critically. Media literacy was broadened to include studies of digital literacy, print literacy, visual literacy and multi-literacies in computers, music, films and multimedia.

Both Potter (2004) and Silverblatt (2001) have been highly influential in the field of media literacy, and are therefore important to this study. Potter (2004) focuses on studying the social-cognitive media aspects of teaching media literacy: social and cognitive psychology and the information-processing behaviour of audiences. Potter's (1998, 2004) theory of media literacy is expansive and covers a number of domains of theoretical focus. He believes that media literacy has multiple dimensions: it consists of the cognitive, emotional, aesthetic and moral domains. The cognitive domain is a dimension of perceptions and thinking processes, while the emotional domain relates to the outcomes of feelings, attitudes and experiences. The aesthetic domain involves the ability to enjoy the media as an art form, as well as the capacity to understand and distinguish artistic styles of production. The moral domain focuses on the ability to evaluate underlying ethical values of media messages and their influences on audiences. (Potter, 2005, pp. 24-27).

However, Potter's (2004) focus is the cognitive domain. Here, he differs from Silverblatt (2001) who is more concerned with theories of mass communication and transmission rather than theories of learning and cognition. Potter (2004) focuses on developing a theory of pedagogy and learning. The cognitive model of media literacy for Potter (2004, pp. 68–72) emphasises four main factors: knowledge structures, personal locus, media literacy skills and information-processing tasks. The foundational knowledge structures of the media literate are media content, media industry, media effects, real world information and the self (Potter, 2004, pp. 75–95). Potter (2004, pp. 117–135) also elaborates on seven literacy skills—analysis, evaluation, grouping, induction, deduction, synthesis and abstracting—to filter and construct meaning of the messages for the self. Potter (2004) contends that media-literate audiences should have a strong personal locus, which is a preparedness for mental effort or 'drive states' (pp. 102–113). Media-

literate persons must be prepared to commit themselves to seek out, analyse and process information. Potter (2004, p. 68) sees media literacy as a key part of human self-development, and argues that literacy develops as a 'continuum' or as a form of life-long learning.

Silverblatt's (2001) work falls more centrally within the traditions of mass communication theory and transmission models of communication with a focus on cultural studies. In discussing media literacy, Silverblatt (2001, p. 14) therefore begins his work by discussing issues of feedback, channel interference and the function of the media, and extends his discussion into a theory of 'media function' that encompasses ideas of (latent) media effects and multiple functions of the media. This is later developed into a more sophisticated framework for textual analysis, or a list of skills that are required for media literacy. These skills include being aware of the illogical premises of advertisements or how advertising attempts to suspend rational belief; plot; explicit content or detailed recognition of the events and the activities in the narrative; critical use of affective (emotional) response; identification of implicit meaning; genre; and formula (Silverblatt, 2001, pp. 86–107). Production values are also important, and media literacy requires an understanding of issues such as editing, the use of colour, lighting, movement, point of view, camera angle, connotation and sound (Silverblatt, 2001, pp. 112–151).

Like Masterman (1998) and Buckingham (1998), Silverblatt (2001) is concerned with the development of ideological readings of media texts. Media-literate audiences must also consider issues of 'stereotyping', values and hierarchies and media effects; and be able to use 'content analysis' to identify these representations when they are deployed. For Silverblatt (2001) and indeed Potter (2004, p. 61), audiences are not completely lacking in media literacy and understanding. As Silverblatt (2001) notes, 'in some respects, you [audiences] are already media experts' (p. xi). The development of media literacy can enhance the independence of a person from media effects and improve critical judgment. Silverblatt, like theorists from the 'facing-it' phase in media literacies (Chen, 2007, p. 88), sees the media as the main producer of meaning and not audiences. Potter (2004), in contrast to Silverblatt (2001), is much more interested in the

pedagogy of learning media literacy and theories of learning, and thus more focused on audience decoding.

However, not all critics are as positive about the ability of media literacy to improve citizenship and critical function. Hobbs (2005) has criticised Potter's approach (and perhaps Silverblatt's approach by implication) for placing too much emphasis on the power of media literacy to combat negative effects of the media:

Potter is attempting to position media literacy within a media effects paradigm. Media literacy practitioners and scholars have engaged for nearly 20 years in a protracted and heated debate about the 'protectionist' stance, considered a particularly American approach to media literacy, which emphasizes media literacy as a 'solution' to the 'problem' of negative media influence ... Throughout the 1990s, however, as British, Canadian, Australian, and American media literacy practitioners and scholars enthusiastically marginalized the media effects paradigm, media literacy has been positioned within a cultural/critical studies paradigm paired with an emphasis on constructivist theories of teaching and learning ... Potter is clearly attempting to retake some lost ground. (p. 871)

For Hobbs (2005), Potter's (2004) approach is a throwback to the inoculation/protectionist phase of media literacy education. Hobbs (2005) is perhaps right to suggest that there are ranges of ways in which audiences decode and criticise messages, and indeed this is important for considering cross-cultural decoding of the media. However, to suggest that Potter's theories are merely a restatement of the inoculation theories of the 1960s is also to miss the point that Potter only assumes audiences will have 'greater' control of what they consume relative to those who have had no media literacy education. He is not suggesting media literacy will provide total 'shielding' or control over the negative effects of the media. Hence, audiences are not inoculated but may have greater agency over what they consume if they are more literate (Cheung, 2009, p. 41). As Potter (1998) notes, 'the purpose of media literacy is to give us more control over

interpretations ... this means avoiding mindless exposure to the media, which results in uncritically accepting the media interpretations by default' (p. 9).

However, the varied 'constructivist' ways in which audiences construct media texts are no doubt important, particularly for cross-cultural readings of advertisements. However, Potter (2004) and Silverblatt (2001) have not fully considered the cross-cultural ways in which media literacies might develop in Asian countries. Cheung (2009) draws our attention, for example, to ethnocentric development of media education project to date and its lack of attention to cultural and social differences in Asian countries:

Media education in Asia is a relatively young ... The dominant models of media education in the world are broadly Western and, more particularly, drawn from English-speaking countries; the question is whether a similar pattern exists in Asia, where there may be differences in culture, heritage, beliefs, values, education policy, as well as curriculum and pedagogy. (p. 1)

Cheung (2009, p. 1) further questions: are educators in Asia following the Western model in developing and implementing media education, or are they devising their own model? Media education in Asian societies, as Cheung (2009, p. 5) notes, has only a sporadic history of development in Asian countries from the late 1980s in countries such as South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Vietnam, Kyrgyzstan and India. What Cheung (2009) described appeared to be accurate, especially in Thailand. However, media education has not yet developed in many other countries (Buckingham & Domm, 2009). Such development may be quite important as Wan and Gut (2008) suggest, in large population countries such as China. China has the second largest number of internet users in the world, accounting for 12 per cent, or 137 million users (Wan & Gut, 2008, p. 5). It has more than 1,000 radio stations, 2,200 newspapers, 3,000 television stations, 8,000 magazines, and 371,600 Chinese language websites. Yet, there is an absence of governmental policy and official media literacy education support (Wan & Gut, 2008, p. 5). In Thailand, with the promise of the development of increased media freedom under the government of Thaksin Shinawatra in 2001, there was optimism that media education might also have received greater support.

However, as Langer and Dounghummes (2009) note, Thaksin appeared to be more interested in the business and economic development rather than in support for education (Connors, 2007, p. 248; McCargo & Pathmanand, 2005, p. 14). Although media literacy has been included in Thai university education programs since the 1970s, Thai governments have paid less attention to media education in secondary and primary curriculum (Langer & Dounghummes, 2009). Media literacy support in Thailand also tends to be fragmented across a range of non-government organisations (NGOs) and smaller government entities, which creates issues of coherency for both the delivery of education programs and policies (Langer & Dounghummes, 2009, pp. 206–211). Different development of media education had already been observed since the 1990s.

Thomas (1990) notes there are four levels of media education. The first is ‘firm foothold media education’, such as in most European countries, Canada (Ontario), Australia, England and Scotland. The second is ‘uneven media education’: countries where there may be a national curriculum but not a teaching policy or a framework, such as in Austria, Ireland, Italy, India and Philippines. The third level, ‘non-school situations’ or countries in which media literacy is not encouraged appears to represent media education in the US, as well as many Third World countries. Media education seems to be neglected in the public school system in those countries, and is instead being taught by other institutions such as churches and youth programs. Focuses on new opportunity media education are emerging in countries with political and social changes such as the Soviet Union and other Eastern bloc countries (Thomas, 1990, p. 3). Buckingham and Domaille (2009) note varied and uneven progress in media educational policy and practice among countries. The development of media education in many countries around the world encounters indifference and unresponsiveness from policy-makers and only depends upon committed teachers:

Whatever they may say about active citizenship, these are not necessarily qualities that governments wish to promote ... As a result of this indifference, media education suffers from a lack of funding, and a lack of recognition (for example, by universities); and particularly in poorer countries (though not only there), the efforts of teachers are hampered by a lack of basic equipment and resources. (p. 22)

Despite these problems, the CML (2008, cited in Galician, 2004) emphasises 'media literacy is education for life in a global media world' (p. 10). Kellner and Share (2005) also stress that media education should also be about creating a healthy multiculturalism and robust democracy:

Developing critical media literacy involves perceiving how media like film or video can be used positively to teach a wide range of topics, like multicultural understanding and education. If, for example, multicultural education is to champion genuine diversity and expand the curriculum it is important both for groups marginalized from mainstream education to learn about their own heritage and for dominant groups to explore the experiences and voices of minority and oppressed groups. When groups often under-represented or misrepresented in the media become investigators of their representations and creators of their own meaning the learning process becomes an empowering expression of voice and democratic transformation. (p. 372)

Mihailidis (2009) also acknowledges that with the global expansion of the media, the importance of cultivating media literacy education for students around the world increases. Some NGOs in the US have been early developers of global media literacy programs. One of these, the Salzburg Academy, runs international programs on media literacy: students from a range of diverse and international backgrounds are invited to participate. Lesson plans cover media in different countries. The Salzburg Academy is a non-government organisation affiliated with the International Center for Media and the Public Agenda and the University of Maryland. It partners with multiple institutions around the world, for example, the American University of Beirut (Lebanon), American University in Sharjah (United Arab Emirates, UAE), Bournemouth University (United Kingdom, UK), Hofstra University (US), Polytechnic University of Namibia (Namibia), Pontificia Universidad Catolica (Argentina), Quaid-i-Azam University (Pakistan), Stellenbosch University (South Africa), Tsinghua University (China), and Universidad Iberoamericana (Mexico). The Salzburg Academy's global media literacy curriculum places emphasis on students' critical thinking and analytical skills of media. It offers media education on the role of media in shaping global

issues, media literacy skills, analysis and evaluation of media, and strengthens students' freedom of expression. The curriculum puts students into 'supranational' groups and assigns them a media case study to consider in collaborative and critical ways. According to Mihailidis (2009), Director of the Salzburg Academy, the media literacy programme of the Academy aims to create better access to the media, awareness of the media's power, assessment of how the media represents international and supranational events and issues, the appreciation of media's role in creating civil societies, and action to encourage better communication across cultural, social, and political divides (Mihailidis, 2009).

This thesis considers the media literacy of 18–25 year old individuals who are Australian, Thai, Thai-Australian, and Asian international. A number of studies have shown that this age group internationally has a very high usage of a wide range of media. This makes this group important to study. Media usage across this group is high. The Kaiser Family Foundation and the Annenberg Public Policy Center reported that the majority of American children have a bedroom television, and some children own VCRs and DVD players, video game systems and internet hook-ups (Anderson et al., 2003). A media usage study completed by Roberts and Foehr (2004) in the US also confirmed the presence of media—televisions, VCR players, video game players, computers, radio, CD players in most young people's bedrooms—and found American young people engaged 8–10 hours per day with television, radio, and the internet. Roberts, Foehr and Rideout (2005, cited in Wan & Gut, 2008) are concerned that 'young people today live media saturated lives, spending an average of 6.5 hr a day using media, and are exposed to media more than 8.5 hr a day' (p. 178). Osgerby's work (2004) in Britain also found very high levels of media usage among children and young people: 'the media are a pervasive presence in young people's social and cultural experiences ... Young people's lives were dominated by their media usage—with the average American child growing up in a home with three televisions, three tape players, three radios, two video recorders, two CD players, one video game player and one computer ... Not including any media used in school or for homework' (2004, p. 6). Likewise, Wan and Gut (2008) also found high usage of the mass media among Chinese and American adolescents. The national study of young people's uses of media in China, and surveys from Kaiser Family Foundation and US Department of

Education show that 99 per cent of Chinese and American adolescents watch television, and 92 per cent use a computer. Additionally, 91 per cent of American adolescents also devote significant times to the video games (Wan & Gut, 2008, p. 182). This is perhaps because also as Wan and Gut (2008) note that there are less parental rules in both countries.

These media usage trends are also similar in Australia. The Australian Communications and Media Authority (2005–2006) reports that 94 per cent of the Australian population watching commercial television (Penman & Turnbull, 2007). In 2006, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) found that almost 97 per cent of Australian children had spent time watching television and devoted greater time to television viewing than any other leisure activity. Penman and Turnbull (2007) found that Australian children were averaging 20 hours of television watching a fortnight (Penman & Turnbull, 2007). ABS (2006) notes in an Australians Time Use Survey that young woman aged 15–24 years spent more than half of their total leisure and recreation time of 29 hours per week watching television and engaging with other audio/visual activities; while young men spent on average half of 34 hours of their leisure and recreation times involved with these activities. Likewise, in Thailand, the Thai Health Promotion Foundation (2003, cited in Yenjabok & Saenpakdee, 2006, p. 22) found that children and young people watched television for approximately three to five hours every day. High uses of media were not just limited to television. The Abac Poll Research Center, Assumption University (cited in Thai Health Promotion Foundation, 2007), also found high usage of electronic gaming and associated activities among young Thai people aged 10–24 in Bangkok: 93 per cent of young people played some form of electronic game and 53 per cent of those preferred fighting games.

Due to this higher frequency of usage, a number of scholars have suggested that this media generation, many of whom have always known the internet, may be very media literate (Buckingham, 1993). O'Donohoe (1997) notes an increased sophisticated capacity to understand imagery and intertextuality in advertising in this group. Indeed, this increased sophistication, as Strasburger and Wilson (2002) note, may create problems for advertisers because young people know a great deal

about how the media works and what its purposes are in terms of media presentation techniques and conventions. Youth audiences regularly decide and negotiate with the media and its contents in sophisticated ways (Drotner, 2000; O'Donohoe, 1994). However, other critics are more sceptical. As Galician (2004) notes, the supposed increase in media understanding in this group maybe an overgeneralisation, 'although many people in the US believe that they themselves are media savvy, the truth is that they are not. Most US media consumers—even and perhaps especially heavy consumers of media—have not been educated to be media literate' (p. 8).

This thesis considers how young people apply media literacy to advertising. Williams (1978) in *Keywords* was among the first to note the importance of developing literacies around the decoding of advertisements. Media literacy of advertising can refer to the capability to decode an advertising message and image in a critical way, and understand the advertising story, production technique, intertextuality and purposes of the advertising industry (Lacey, 1998; O'Shaughnessy & Stadler, 2002; Silverblatt, 2001; Williamson, 1978). Other theorists have also examined cultural and advertising knowledge and the way young people discuss the social influences of advertising and branding on society (Hackley, 2003; Meenaghan, 1995; Nicholson & Daniel, 1997; Pae, Samiee & Tai, 2002; Phillips, 1997; Punyapiroje, Morrison & Hoy, 2002; Ross & Harradine, 2004). As ubiquitous cultural products, advertising is an important area of study of for media literacy.

One would expect if we apply Potter's (2004) theory of media literacy to advertising that a media-literate person should have greater knowledge of advertising content, industry, effects, and be able to employ these knowledge structures to evaluate the advertising messages they encounter. Audiences should be able to analyse the contents and underlying values of advertising, for example, joke punchlines, advertising appeals, presentations of product spokespersons that promote consumerism and materialism. In addition, being media literate also involves awareness of advertising revenues and ownership that drives the industry, and an understanding of media influences on society. For Silverblatt (2001), this media literacy might also involve textual readings and an

understanding of production values: sophisticated reading of signs, images as well as an understanding of editing, colour, camera and movement techniques, and sound.

The reviews of definition and studies of media literacy are discussed in this and the following chapter for the purpose of the operation and assessment of media literacy. Based on the literature, critical thinking is clearly the most important component in media literacy that enhances audiences' analysis, decoding and scepticism of media messages and the influences. This study hence focuses on knowledge and critical-thinking skills such as the uses of analysis, evaluation, and comparison skill that help participants' engage in media construction. The study looks at participants' media literacy in terms of their understanding of the commercial and social implications of the production process, critical consideration of the construction of reality and aesthetic value, comprehension of the ability to digest and interpret media contents, cognisance of the awareness of media effects, and their ability to make judgements and criticise the credibility and accuracy of the media. The existence of previous research into media literacy is also taken into account in this current study and in particular how social and cultural differences impact upon media literacy in the global context.

This research aspires to explore the media generation and their media awareness. Rather than assuming a high level of media literacy among younger audiences, the study attempts to explore actual 'literacy' and the ways it is elaborated cross-culturally, with respect to one specific area of media communication—the world of television advertising. The study investigates young people, aged 18 to 25 years, who are exposed to advertising in order to examine what this age cohort knows about television advertising in terms of content, presentation techniques and the effects. The purpose here is to ascertain a wide range of outcomes and responses towards advertising, and to determine whether the media generation is as 'media literate' as some research claims (Hermes, 2002; Osgerby, 2004). Given that much advertising is global, the project investigates young audiences in the context of two countries, Australia and Thailand. In addition, Thai diaspora and Asian international diaspora are considered in the Australian context. If this media generation is media literate, and if the process of globalisation is connected to

advertising, media consumption and literacy of young people, it is increasingly important to provide cross-cultural comparisons and evaluations. This research applies the Western media literacy approach of Potter (2004) and Silverblatt (2001) as well as others to explore media knowledge and literacy of young Australian participants, Thai participants, Thai participants living in Australia, and Asian international participants living in Australia. However, it does so critically in the context of considering cross-cultural understanding and communication. The investigation also demonstrates the applicability of Western media literacy models in Asian countries and this investigation contributes to cross-cultural media education.

The thesis is divided into seven chapters. The next chapter reviews the relevant literature: it draws on different research traditions in media studies, audience research, media studies, and advertising. This review of the literature provides the background and context for my research, and demonstrates the need for the research study presented in this thesis. Chapter 3 outlines the methodology used in this study, and explains the research design, the sample, and the participants and methods used for recruitment of participants for this study. Chapter 4 considers the media usage and advertising literacy of Australian participants. Chapter 5 draws attention to Thai participants. Chapter 6 investigates Thai and Asian international participants living in Australia, and examines cross-cultural media literacy. The thesis investigates how high-context and low-context cultural understandings influence the media literacy of the participants in Chapter 4, 5 and 6. The last chapter concludes the thesis by confirming the main findings of this research, and provides some recommendations for global media literacy education.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

A number of research traditions are relevant to this particular study. Each of these traditions provides a useful background for the research under consideration. This chapter draws on works from different theoretical traditions. The areas of media effects and audience studies are firstly considered, in order to provide a thorough understanding of the traditions and changes in media studies that are relevant to this research. In the second half of this chapter, the concept and framework of media literacy are revealed. The chapter then provides an outline of the advertising industries in both Australia and Thailand. Finally, this chapter examines advertising strategies, theories of advertising, intertextuality and reception theory.

2.1 Media Effects and Audience Studies

A central aspect of research on young people and media has been the issue of effects. Early models of media influence based on the US social science tradition suggested there was a direct effect on audiences who were passively acted on by the effects of the media. The hypodermic model was historically associated with the Frankfurt school.

Although this approach offers another way of understanding the relationship of the media and its audiences, other theorists have questioned whether the media creates satisfaction or selective interests in audiences (Bertrand & Hughes, 2005, p. 40). Gauntlett (cited in Rayner, Wall & Kruger, 2004) challenges some of this media effects research by arguing that the supposed impacts discussed 'are simply not there to be found' (p. 112). Along with other media researchers (Lacey, 2002; Osgerby, 2004), he criticises the study of media effects in terms of their methodology, insignificant evidence, interpretation, and conclusion.

In the early 1960s, British cultural studies became more significant in the field of media studies, particularly in the study of linguistics and ideology (Procter, 2004,

pp. 37–44). The theorists of British cultural studies argued that cultural and ideological power were the major forces shaping society. Stuart Hall (1980, pp. 2–26), a member of the Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies and a prominent person in British cultural studies was instrumental in developing the influential encoding and decoding model that informed much of cultural studies for many years. Hall (1980) argued that a communication process was not just a simple transmission of a message from a sender to a receiver, but rather involved a sign system that ‘distorted’ a cultural producer’s intention. Senders ‘encode’ message through symbols and production systems. To understand the message, receivers must therefore ‘decode’ the symbols to get their meaning (Hall, 1980, pp. 117–122; Procter, 2004, pp. 57–70). According to Hall (1980), message construction was complicated by senders and receivers, active audiences and their decoding and reading positions.

However, a sign can be signified in multiple ways and has what Hall (1980) has called ‘polysemic values’ (p. 123). Hall’s encoding and decoding model offered a new way of looking at ‘audiences’. Audiences, in this sense, were active recipients in producing meaning. The act of decoding a media text could take a number of directions, depending on the social and historical contexts in which audience members found themselves. According to Hall (1980, pp. 125–127), there were three possibilities for audience response: the dominant hegemonic position—audiences totally believe and accept the message as common sense; the negotiated position—audiences to some degree agree with the message but also challenge or negotiate it; and the oppositional position—audiences reject the message (Davis, 2004; Lacey, 2002; Procter, 2004; Rayner et al., 2004).

The notion of the ‘active audience’ in Hall’s encoding and decoding model became a precedent for media studies. By the 1980s, media research was looking for a new way to study audiences. ‘New effects research’ also known as ‘audience-reception studies’ emerged as a mode of qualitative study—an attempt to investigate an audience’s understanding, knowledge, interpretation, and response to media messages. According to these reception studies, audiences are recognised to be ‘active’ and ‘literate’ in media consumption (Hermes, 2002; Osgerby, 2004). Audiences brought different readings, interpretations and textual

meanings to communication interactions, depending on their demographics, social class, cultural and ethnic background (Hall, 1980). Several studies developed out of this refocused approach and have become 'classics' in the areas of qualitative media studies and television studies. In the well-known study *The Nationwide audience: structure and decoding*, Morley (1980) examined the influences of socio-demographic differences of participants and how these differences influence the negotiation and interpretation of the text. A total of 227 participants participated in the study. They were assigned into 29 groups. Each group consisted of five to ten participants and participants shared a common demographic, education, economic, social and cultural background. The first BBC Nationwide was shown to 18 groups, and the second programme was shown to another 11 groups. Audiences decoding patterns fall into three forms similar to those assigned by Hall in his encoding-decoding model: dominant, negotiated and oppositional. Media texts will be accepted if audiences share the codes and meanings with cultural producers. In contrast, if the code is not matched then audiences will resist the preferred meaning of the text.

Uses and gratifications theories provide another way of thinking about critical audience communication. McQuail, Blumler and Brown (cited in Briggs & Coble, 2002, p. 283) argue that audiences exercise power over media to satisfy their needs and gratifications. Audiences may escape their reality to develop a personal relationship or to identify and understand the world around them (Lacey, 2002, p. 156; O'Donohoe, 1994, p. 71). The uses and gratification theory originated in Lasswell's (1948) study of television news programs. It was later developed further to explain other audience responses by other researchers such as Katz, Gurevitch & Haas (1973), Greenberg (1974) and Blumler (1979) (Palmgreen, Wenner & Rayburn, 1980). The focus of uses and gratification theory is on 'what people do with the media' (Quan-Haase & Young, 2010, p. 351). The audiences are seen as active and discerning in selecting and using media to respond to their needs. However, as Palmgreen, Wenner and Rayburn (1980, p. 164) note, audience uses and gratification may have much to do with audience expectation prior to using the media. It is sometime referred as the audiences' 'motives' (Palmgreen et al., 1980, p. 186). Audience gratifications associated with the media may then follow well-worn patterns of media consumption. From this

point of view, agenda setting begins to affect how audiences use the media. As Palmgreen, Wenner and Rayburn (1980) remind us:

The ability of the media to set the agenda of such discussion is well established, and conscious viewer awareness of this function may be the basis for the emergence of a single GS [Gratification Sought] interpersonal utility-surveillance factor. (p. 187)

The uses and gratification theory is, however, very helpful in providing an account of audience critical engagement as not all uses and gratifications of audiences will be pre-set prior to engagement with the media.

Liebes and Katz' (1993) comparative studies investigated how culture shapes audience construction of meanings in media texts such as in the *Dallas* television programme. Four hundred participants who regularly viewed *Dallas* were recruited from American, Israeli Arab, Japanese, Kibbutzim, Moroccan, and Russian backgrounds. Participants were put into 66 groups to view the programme and asked to respond to a questionnaire, and to participate in focus group discussion. The study supported Barthes' three forms of retelling—linear, segmented and thematic (Barthes, 1975)—and considered cross-cultural readings of *Dallas*. The Arab and Moroccan group retold a story of Dallas in a linear style and focused on the story line. The Kibbutz and American group, in contrast, focused upon the character and the emotional and psychological aspects of the actors in the programme and were characteristic of the segmented style. Russian participants were more typically thematic re-tellers of stories; they paid close attention to the message, and the relationship between encoders and audiences. Liebes and Katz (1993) suggest that thematic retellings correspond more often to oppositional readings and awareness of message manipulations.

In agenda-setting theory, scholars emphasise the importance of media frames, and the way these frames draw attention to certain subjects and contents for the public about 'what to think' and 'what to think about' (McCombs, Lopez-Escobar & Llamas, 2000, p. 2). These frames limit the choices of audience reception. The effects of agenda setting can be generalised to all types of media (McCombs, 2004, p. 20) Regardless of the medium, agenda-setting creates a tight focus on a

handful of issues that convey strong messages 'to the audience about what are the most important topics of the moment' (McCombs, 2004, p. 20; McCombs & Shaw, 1972). McCombs (2004) also points out that agenda-setting effects will have significant influence even if audiences seek information outside of their personal experience of the media.

With development of newer forms of network media, the traditional singular influence or the one-way power of the media associated with agenda setting has been questioned. (Anderson, 2006; Meraz, 2011). Social media such as blogs MySpace and Facebook allow users to integrate both online and offline media with other receivers in a two-way process (Quan-Haase & Young, 2010). Media agenda setting may not therefore be less effective since individuals have more control and use media to fulfil their communication needs. Nonetheless traditional media remains highly influential and the focus of this study has looked at the critical capacity of audiences to overcome agenda-setting effects.

Perhaps importantly for this study the two-step flow theory and the uses and gratification theory provide a more helpful account of the critical capacities associated with media literacy. Many researchers question direct media effects. A number of studies have suggested interpersonal communication in media agenda-setting contexts maybe quite important. (See McLeod, Becker & Byrnes, 1974; Erbring, Goldenberg & Miller, 1980; Weaver, Zhu & Willnat, 1992). Yang & Stone (2003) believe that the media is mediated strongly through interpersonal communications and that two-step flow communication may rely heavily on opinions expressed in small group situations. Opinion leaders in these contexts expose themselves to the media, filter messages, and interpret the messages for their groups which are then passed on through their social networks (Kayahara & Wellman, 2007; Lowery & DeFleur, 1995). The voices of opinion leaders become more important in circumstances in which groups decide upon actions or changes of beliefs. Significantly, Brosius & Weimann (1996, p. 564) note:

'The existence and activity of certain individuals, *the opinion leader*, should not be regarded as replacing the role of interpersonal networks but, in fact, as reemphasising the role of the group and interpersonal contacts. It is through social discourse, personal contacts, and social

networks that these more active individual can collect, diffuse, filter, and promote the flow of information. The media thus become part of the environment in which these active individuals function'

Two-step flow communication is thus not unusual but part of the way in which audiences enable their critical capacity through opinion leaders.

Realism is also an important way in which media communication influences audience belief systems and readings. Hall (2003) investigated how young adult audiences in the US Midwest perceived the realism of media. Forty-seven students were gathered into seven groups to participate in a focus group interview. Participants defined characteristics and attributes of 'realistic' media and non-realistic media. Participants conceptualised media realism as six concepts. The first was 'plausibility'. Participants viewed the media to be realistic if it represented situations that could possibly happen in real life. Programme content that featured paranormal power, the supernatural, fantasy, or an idealised perfect life was categorised as unrealistic. The second concept was 'typicality' or media content that was characteristic of a group or ideological category. Third, 'factuality' refers to media that uses as a reference point actual real world events, situations, or persons. The fourth was 'emotional involvement'. Audiences viewed media as realistic when it engaged with the audience's emotional responses. The fifth concept was the logic of media stories or so-called 'narrative consistency'. The last concept was 'perceptual persuasiveness' or an understanding of the constructed presentation of appearances and visual illusion.

Theories of advertising have also become an important focus for reception studies. O'Donohoe (1997), a well-known scholar who researched young adolescents in the early 1990s, investigated young adults' understanding of advertising and in particular, their 'advertising literacy'. O'Donohoe (1997) demonstrated that young adults were adept at identifying 'intertextually' and using their knowledge, memory and experiences of other advertisements, films and music, and other aspects of everyday media culture to create meaning from advertising. Schroder (1997), in the same edited book of articles (Nava, Blake, MacRury & Richards, 1997), conducted a study of audience attitudes and responses to 'corporate

responsibility advertising' (p. 284). Schroder found responses could be divided into three generalisable categories: sympathetic response—in which audiences agree with media contents; the agnostic response—in which audiences negotiate media contents; and the cynical response—in which audiences disagree with media contents. Hirschman and Thompson (1997) concluded that consumers decode and interpret the meaning of advertising by using knowledge and multiple frames of reference that are provided by the media such as advertising genres, and the aesthetic of production values. The mass media provides a set of ideology and belief through images. It shapes the frames of reference and perception of audiences that influences how they interpret advertising. McCracken (1987) elaborates on three models of reception: motivational interpretation, critical interpretation, and personalised interpretation. Twenty-eight consumers aged six to 54 completed individual interviews. McCracken showed how audiences and cultural producers shared cultural codes but also actively constructed the meaning of media based on their demographic background, personal experiences, and knowledge. Audiences that used motivational interpretation were often from similar backgrounds and tended to make sense of media images as aspiring or moving towards a particular idea. They were unlikely to accept media images without being critical of unacknowledged media images. Audiences that personalised interpretation tended to individualise perceptions and develop ideas through cultural images presented in the media that affected them. Audiences that used critical interpretation were aware of media influences, and realised they could resist media contents and persuasion.

Phillips (1997) investigated student interpretations of advertising images. Forty-nine undergraduate students aged 19 to 21 were divided into two groups and viewed three coloured print advertisements. The participants provided individual written responses to describe the advertisements and participated in a focus group interview to elicit their opinion and further explore their interpretations. Phillips (1997) found a strong correlation between the interpreted meaning of the participant and the advertising producer. Participants' interpretation of pictorial metaphors tended to match the advertising producers' intentions. Participants typically 'thought into' advertisements: looking for a 'connection' or 'association' to create meanings. These same strategies of association corresponded strongly

with the strategy used by cultural producers to create chains of association and generate meaning. Phillips (1997) also found young people actively read and made sense of media content, and were surprisingly 'literate' of the implied production values of advertisements.

2.2 Media Literacy

This project focuses on a sample of young people aged between 18 and 25. Recent studies have suggested that young people are becoming more literate consumers of the media, particular Generations X and Y (Hermes, 2002; Roberts & Foehr, 2004). According to Osgerby (2004, p. 51), 'the term "Generation X" was integrated into marketing discourse to denote a new cohort of young consumers whose media-savvy and cynical outlook seemed to contrast with the idealism and relative naivety of the earlier "Baby Boomers"'. Sheahan (n.d.) argued that young people are 'tech savvy' and gained insight from their use of technology. O'Donohoe (1997) similarly found in her study of advertising intertextuality that the young adults were clearly 'advertising literate' (p. 241). They demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of advertising strategies, styles, conventions and imagery, and often discussed these using the industry's specialist terminology. However, the literacy of young people may be overstated. As Hoffman (1999) notes in another study of middle and high school student participants, they might consume many forms of media but hardly read newspapers. Hoffman also found that higher media usage did not necessarily correspond with greater awareness of the programmes they had been watching; and the participants in the study more generally showed only a minimal understanding and knowledge of the media. Media literacy cannot be measured by media usage or by basic knowledge and understanding. As Hoffmann's (1999) study shows, it is necessary to determine and characterise the scope of the media literacy that is being considered. Other issues such as social class, cultural and ethnic background of readers should also be considered because the determinants shape perception, interpretations of audiences and notions of media literacy.

The term 'media literacy' was coined as a response to the need to develop media education in the secondary school system; it was centred on children and first applied in the area of K-12 education as part of standard teaching of other literacies in English, language and communication arts, visual media and social studies (Baker, 1999; Brown, 1998; Christ & Potter, 1998; Hobbs, 2004; Hobbs & Frost, 2003; Lewis & Jhally, 1998). Media literacy aims to increase critical skills and comprehension of constructed messages and representations in the media; it aims to sharpen awareness of media influences on students' perception and interpretation of media messages (Buckingham, 2003; Goodman, 2003; Hobbs, 2007; Kubey & Baker, 1999). The idea of media literacy emerged in the early 1990s in the US, as a way of improving 'citizenship' and increasing 'citizen' understanding in the political process through greater understanding of media processes. Illiteracy, according to Quigley (1997, pp. 41–42), could affect the capability of audiences to make decisions and make them voiceless. Media literacy, consequently, which had begun as an idea in the education sector, was greatly expanded to include other groups and other fields of studies. According to Silverblatt and Eliceiri (1997, p. 48), media literacy is defined as 'a critical-thinking skill that enables audiences to decipher the information that they receive through the channels of mass communications'. It empowers them to develop independent judgement of media content.

More recently, Potter (2004, 2005) has developed a theory of 'knowledge structures' (2004, p. 75) of media literacy. Knowledge structures cover message conventions used by media producers, understanding of the media industry, knowledge of media effects on the individual and society, and the experiences of the real world. For Potter (2005, p. 23) media literacy is a 'continuum': everybody is media literate, to a degree, and media literacy can be developed as a continuing process. However, the degree of media literacy is relative and depends on a person's knowledge and skills. Limited media literacy can be characterised as having inadequate understanding of meanings in the media, and accepting surface values without being critical (Potter, 2004, p. 61). In contrast, more sophisticated levels of media literacy unusually involve broad understanding of the multi-dimensionality of the media, critical scepticism and awareness of the media producer's intention, and knowledge of the media industry (Potter, 2004, p. 62).

For Potter (2004), media literacy also has four key domains: cognitive, emotion, aesthete, and moral. The cognitive domain deals with mental processes and thinking: the awareness of symbols, productions and constructed messages. The emotional domain is responsible for feelings during media exposure; positive or negative attitudes towards the media. The aesthetic domain is concerned with judgements and appreciations of media content from an artistic point of view (Potter, 2005, p. 24). The moral domain focuses on the ability to make moral judgements and identify values underlying media messages, for example, being able to differentiate between characters and their actions (Potter, 2005, p. 25).

For Potter (2004), media knowledge is important for developing media literacy: developed media literacy requires strong knowledge structures that consist of knowledge about effects, content and industries of the media, as well as an understanding of experiences of the real world and the self. Actors need to develop a personal locus of knowledge of the media and real world to participate in meaningful decision making. The personal locus comprises of goals, drives and consciousness dimensions (Potter, 2004, pp. 97–102). At the personal locus, person analyses strengths, weaknesses and options for issues across information sources, in order to determine the best decision. Competency and skills can be seen as a tool that assists people in dealing with a wide range of media information. It also enhances selectivity. Potter (2004, p. 124) suggests that media literacy has seven primary skills: analysis, evaluation, grouping, induction, deduction, synthesis, and abstraction. A media-literate person needs to be able to break media messages into meaningful elements, judge each value element by comparing the similar and different criteria, understand the patterns of all elements, generate new structures from the message, and concisely explain the essence of the message (Potter, 2004, pp. 125–135). Processes of filtering, meaning matching and meaning construction process are used in making the decision whether a message should be processed or ignored. If the message is recognised and matched with previous knowledge, the process of meaning construction will take place. Messages that have the highest utility will be first accessed and interpreted for multiple meanings (Potter, 2004, p. 71). Media literacy, according to Potter (2005, p. 27), is an active strategy of strengthening media knowledge and increasing the awareness of media exposure to reduce the

influence of the media. The more people made choices about the media, the higher level of media literacy the person obtains (Potter, 2004, p. 97).

According to Zettl (1998, pp. 84–93), media literacy is best understood as a model of encoding and decoding. It consists of a four level hierarchical relationship. Level one refers to the contextual and structuring aesthetic fields: production values that shape human perception. Level two considers the aesthetic and associative contexts: it illustrates the powers of aesthetic elements within the viewer's perception. Audiences must have developed perception, sensitivity and emotion to avoid manipulation by aesthetic elements, such as shape, scale, lighting, music, and camera movement. Level three focuses on the cognitive and affective mental maps of audiences and explains how audiences make sense of narrative positions in the media by creating a 'mental map' of relevant reference points. Level four relates to the audiences' analyses of media aesthetics. Meyrowitz (1998) outlines three forms of media literacy that are relevant to advertising: media content literacy, media grammar literacy, and medium literacy. The first form is media content literacy. It focuses on media elements, such as themes, topics, values, ideologies, persuasive appeals, narratives, and genres of media. The second form is media grammar literacy. It refers to the production variables of different mediums that are applied to the construction and manipulation of audiences, for example, shape, colour, camera angle, editing technique, sound, and light. The final form is medium literacy, which considers the capacity of the audience to understand the environment that influences media communication on a micro and macro level. Electronic media has for example, 'macro' flows of communication, and promotes globalisation. At the same time, it influences commerce, economy, politics, and social forces.

Silverblatt and Eliceiri (1997, p. 2) suggest that advertising media literacy can be looked at from four different positions. These positions are media impact, the cultural text, and the strategies and production of advertising. In *Approaches to Media Literacy*, Silverblatt, Ferry and Finan (1999) note that understanding of myths, non-verbal communication, production elements and ideology of media programming are all important elements of media literacy. Silverblatt (2001) notes that production values in media and advertising, which include editing,

composition, angle, graphic, colour, sound and special effects, are important for audience understanding. Messaris (1998) suggests that visual literacy may also be an important part of media literacy. Understanding visual languages such as image sequences, camera angles, style and structures of images and the way media producers use these elements to control viewer's emotions, attitudes and viewing experience maybe a key part of reading the media. Visual languages are implicit and have flexible syntax: they can convey several meanings and conventions. Visual syntax often creates a connection between drinking and sexuality in alcohol advertising, for example.

2.3 Advertising, Consumption and Globalisation

This study explores young people's understanding of advertising and how media literacy differs across cultures. Media literacy helps young people to be mindful when they are viewing advertising. It enhances their critical thinking in processing messages, which helps them understand the values of the media message. Advertising is a powerful marketing tool used to stimulate youth consumption. Burton (2007, p. 240) and Leiss, Kline and Jhally (1986, p. 24), however, argue that advertising is disadvantageous, wasteful and inefficient in business. Its cost increases product prices without any benefit to consumers and it creates 'false needs', 'false consciousnesses' and replaces reality with images and inauthenticity. Advertising persuades and ultimately controls consumer's ideas and behaviour: the consumer is trapped in a world of image and artificial symbols. Audiences are commodities: a product to be sold to marketing managers (Burton, 2007, p. 235). Advertising is seen as a form of business that 'trades audiences'. 'Neo-liberalist' theories of advertising focus on the way advertising benefits capitalist growth by increasing overall sales and production. Changes in demand and supply generated through advertising thus lead to product improvements, which bring about a better standard of living and consumer satisfaction. The neo-liberal approach defends advertising as a way of discovering and matching needs with products. According to this approach, advertising may increase the level of consumption but it cannot force people to buy things that they do not need (Leiss et al., 1986, p. 34).

However, work on advertising has expanded its focus to consider not only the ethical dimensions of advertising but also its symbolic importance as a medium for purchasing and displaying (Williamson, 1978). Veblen (2000), for example, noted in an early work how ‘conspicuous consumption’ (p. 31), was connected both to an era of economic development and status differentiation: people consume goods and services for well-being and for symbols of wealth. Bourdieu (2000, p. 85) has shown, for example, how tastes in consumption, lifestyle choices and patterns of cultural consumption are related to class distinction. Consumers choose ‘tasteful’ goods and ‘tasteless’ goods to represent and identify their class and status positions in society. Lifestyle and consumption are related to income, occupations and activities. Campbell (1987) sees the ‘insatiability of consumption’ (p. 48) as a key project of modernity, the result of which can be ‘an endless pursuit of want’ so that as soon as one need is satisfied, another makes an appearance. The ‘commodity-sign’ creates stylised identifications and varieties of lifestyle for young consumers. Young people are now consuming ‘style’ for distinction (Ewen, 1988; Featherstone, 1991). The advertising industry plays a critical role in this process (Lee, 2000; Leiss et al., 1986).

2.3.1 Advertising Industry

2.3.1.1 Australia

Advertising expenditure in Australia was \$9 billion in 2000 and by 2004 had jumped to \$10 billion (Catalano, 2004). In the first half of 2006, expenditure on television advertising was \$4.9 billion, which accounted for 29 per cent of all advertising expenditure. By the following year, expenditure had increased in television advertising to \$11 billion during July 2006 to June 2007 and by June 2008, it had increased to \$12 billion (Commercial Economic Advisory Service of Australia, n.d.; Nielsen, 2007). The top five product categories in television advertising were household products, insurance companies, cosmetics, entertainment, and communication (Adnews, 2007; Commercial Economic Advisory Service of Australia, n.d.; Higgs, 2001; Sinclair, 2002).

Like most advertising in developed countries, Australian advertising has moved progressively from ‘hard selling’ techniques (direct persuasions) to ‘soft selling’

techniques (subtle persuasions) and towards selling goods based on image rather than usefulness. As Sinclair (1987, p. 2) has noted, the 'ideological' content has gradually replaced the function of commodities. Advertising campaigns are significant transmitters of culture: beliefs, values and representations of relations between people and things in society (Melefytt & Moeran, 2003). Advertising styles and content have also changed with product values and visual presentation used as the main basis of persuasion.

In Australia, television remains the key medium for advertising communication. A comparative media consumer study conducted an online survey of a hundred media buyers, planners and strategists from Australian media agencies (Free TV, 2006). The study showed that most Australian households own a television, and 68 per cent own two or more television sets. Moreover, an average of one million viewers in metropolitan and 450,000 viewers in regional areas spent at least three hours watching television programmes. Eighty-nine per cent of advertisers and marketers surveyed in this study believed television to be the main influence upon consumer perception of products, brands and decision making, especially of new products and services (Free TV, 2006). Television therefore remains the main medium of brand building in Australia. About half of consumers in the study agreed that television was the best channel of communication to reach them: and believed the sound and moving image of television enhanced the effectiveness and power of advertising. Although 78 per cent of consumers thought television advertising was annoying, they agreed that it nonetheless 'got the message across', helped recall of advertisements and improved credibility and authenticity (Free TV, 2006). As a result, 40 per cent of viewers rated television advertising as the strongest influence on their decision making and buying behaviour (Free TV, 2006). In 2008, Roy Morgan (cited in Free TV, 2008) revealed that television was still the main media among Australian viewers and accounted for 43 per cent of all media viewing. Overall, viewers spent an average of 3.5 hours watching television a day.

2.3.1.2 Thailand

A report by Nielson Media Research showed expenditure on advertising was growing between 2000 to 2007 and over half of that spending has been committed to television commercials. Between 2005 to 2009, 5–5.3 million baht was spent on television advertising. This expenditure accounted for 55–60 per cent of all expenditure on advertising. Newspapers ranked second, followed by radio, magazines, outdoor cinema and public transit advertising (Advertising Association of Thailand, n.d.). The major categories of advertising included household products, communication corporation, motor vehicle advertising and recorded music (Advertising Association of Thailand, n.d.).

According to Chirapravati (1996), the nation, religion and the monarchy are the most important influences upon Thai people's behaviour and culture. Thai culture is often categorised as a 'high-context culture' and a number of studies have identified Thais' preference for indirect verbal and non-verbal styles of communication as indicative of this communication style. Important also in this communication style is the avoidance of conflict (Mooij, 1998, p. 158). In Thai advertising, the use of the 'soft selling' (subtle persuasions) or the 'emotional approach' is frequently found and is less direct than the 'subtle' styles of communication found in Australian advertising. In a strongly hierarchal society, status appeal is also regularly used in advertising (Chirapravati, 1996, p. 223). However, as other studies have also shown, Thai advertising agencies are also predominantly influenced by American culture in terms of their working style, agency management and research methods, and by Japanese culture in terms of creative strategy and advertising appeal (Punyapiroje et al., 2002). Research also suggests that Thai consumers are more readily persuaded by affective persuasion. Advertising tactics that agree with the Thai character, which is called '*sabai-sabai*' (easy going) (Punyapiroje et al., 2002, p. 61), succeed in Thai advertisements because they are non-conflictual. The uses of soft humour and unexpected situations are important in this strategy. Thai advertising that represents interpersonal relationships, such as love in families and friendships is also important. Given the traditional nature of Thai society, Thai drama, myths, beliefs and values are also used to strengthen authenticity. Wealth, social status, prestige, power and righteousness are also important as reinforcements of hierarchy, class structure and Thai values. Consequently, foreign products are also

easily accepted because of their connection with prestige, fashion, modernity, and technology and hence social status (Chaisingkananon, 2001).

2.3.2 Advertising Strategy

An understanding of the types of strategies used by advertisements to engage audiences is a key element of being media literate of their effects and tactical representations. The advertising strategies introduced here have been widely applied by advertisers and marketers in many forms.

2.3.2.1 Semiotic Theory

Semiotic analysis is a well-known method of analysing ‘latent meaning’ in advertising messages (Williamson, 1978). Semiology is a systematic method to investigate the ways in which advertisers and marketers attach particular meanings, images and symbols to brands. Signs are symbols of products: the images and its meanings are transferred to brands and products. Semiotic theory offers one way of considering audience media literacy and responses to advertising. Semiotics refers to the science of signs: what signs are, how they function, and how meaning is generated through the system of signs and symbols that appear in texts’ (Silverblatt & Eliceiri, 1997, p. 171).

Saussure’s linguistic concept of signifier and signified was first introduced to explain the relationship between language and meaning in cultural studies (Procter, 2004). Barthes (1975) further developed semiotic theory to apply to mass communication, especially in the advertising field. Semiotics consists of denotative meaning—the superficial description or literal meaning of the subject, and connotative meaning—associated meanings, values, and beliefs (O’Shaughnessy & Stadler, 2002). However, Hall (1980) noted that the signified meaning associated with signs was often plural or ‘polysemic’ and not merely denotative:

In actual discourse most signs will combine both the denotative and the connotative aspects ... signs appear to acquire their full ideological value—appear to be open to articulation with wider ideological

discourses and meaning—at the level of their ‘associative’ meaning (that is at the connotative level)—for here ‘meanings’ are not apparently fixed in natural perception, and their fluidity of meaning and association can be more fully exploited and transformed. So it is at the connotative level of the sign the situational ideologies alter and transform signification. (p. 122)

In terms of advertising, Hall (1980) argued against the possibility of normative reconstructions of meaning by audiences or ideas of ‘natural’ representations in advertising:

There is no purely denotative and certainly no ‘natural’ representation. Every visual sign in advertising connotes a quality, situation, value or inference, which is present as an implication or implied meaning, depending on the connotational positioning. (p. 123)

The uses of sign and its structures have been investigated in the field of advertising to explain the construction of symbolism, meaning transference and how audiences construct meaning. Williamson (1978) investigated the use of a sign system as a technique to persuade consumers to consume non-existent images and ideologies. According to Williamson (1978), an advertisement is not only used for selling products but also for creating structures of meaning: it is a link or symbol of exchange between consumers and goods. Products act as signifiers to carry certain meaning to consumers. When a connection is made, an object transfers exchange value. For example, diamonds are used to symbolise the meaning of love. Leiss, Kline and Jhally (1986) note the importance of the audiences as interpreters of advertising messages. The preferred meaning of signs is implicit. Advertisers expect the receiver to understand the sign and what it stands for, otherwise, encoding and decoding will be unsuccessful. Miller (1998) notes that audiences often ignore the preferred or intended meaning of the advertising producer. A message can be interpreted in various ways, depending on the readers’ background. Consumers may not understand or be able to interpret advertisements in the way that advertisers prefer. This may be particularly problematic in cross-cultural situations. Miller (1998, cited in Malefyt & Moeran, 2003) gives the example of the advertising campaign for a soft drink in India that

used the slogan 'Lazy Sunday Morning' (p. 81). The producers of the campaign aimed to symbolise a mood by attaching it to a time that Western audiences would understand was time to relax and have a drink. In India, however, consumers did not understand the symbolic meaning in the advertising message.

2.3.2.2 Intertextuality

Another strategy used in advertising is intertextuality, which refers to the relationship between texts. Intertextuality refers to the capacity of an audience to recognise, remember and identify the patterns and references from other media when reading media texts. The uses of intertextuality in the media may influence audiences' perception and sense-making of media contexts. Intertextuality has its origin of ideas in the field of linguistics. Saussure promotes the relation of meaning between texts in social contexts. Bakhtin (cited in Graham, 2000, pp. 10–14) is concerned with the role of the cultural producer in producing meanings; the texts refer to a plurality of others texts and plural points of reference. Intertextuality is focused on the relationships and transformations between the texts. According to Silverblatt and Eliceiri (1997), intertextuality refers to media content that shares cultural understandings and knowledge across sources of information and media. Cultural producers borrow denotations, connotations and presentation styles from other texts to derive meanings (O'Shaughnessy & Stadler, 2002). Silverblatt and Eliceiri (1997) suggest two distinct types of intertextuality, 'horizontal' and 'vertical' (p. 102), which can be encoded and decoded at the point of production and reception. Horizontal intertextuality refers to the relationship between the primary texts of the same order established through genre, character and content. While a vertical intertextuality refers to the relationship across different media forms of different orders such as, for example, a television programme, a film, or criticism (Ott & Walter, 2000, p. 433; Rayner et al., 2004, p. 71).

Many texts are intertextually framed in the field of advertising. Advertisers use references from other media to please and share cultural knowledge with audiences. Rayner, Wall and Kruger (2004) examine the intertextuality found in music, film, and advertising; and illustrate how images from famous artwork or

classical music from opera are often reproduced in advertisements as forms of vertical intertextuality (2004, p. 71). They also identify examples of intertextuality in the *Mad Max* film that reference a Foster's lager advertisement, and borrowings from cliff-hanger endings in romantic soap operas that were used to advertise Gold Blend coffee. Intertextuality in advertising is often noticed by audiences because it pleases and entertains. It provides comparative meanings to audiences, references of other texts, and highlights the high culture of classical arts presented in advertisements (Rayner et al., 2004, pp. 72–73).

Phillips' (1997) work *Thinking into It: Consumer Interpretation of Complex Advertising Images* investigates advertising image interpretations of 49 students aged 19 to 21. Participants were divided into focus groups and asked to discuss six printed advertisements. Many participants analysed the advertisements by considering intertextuality. They processed and read images by making connections and transferring meanings between different kinds of mediums and texts. Participants created meanings in advertisements by recognising advertising images that they had previously seen. Participants were also able to readily identify advertising formats and genres such as 'before and after', 'picture-in-a-sequence' or 'juxtaposition' techniques that they had previously associated with other genres and texts (Phillips, 1997, p. 82). According to the interviews of cultural producers, building 'connection' was a strategy used in developing ideas for advertisements. Participants understood these connections and were able to decode the producer's intention or preferred audience meaning. Langan (1998) explored the intertextuality of Silk Cut advertisements in the early 1990s and, like Phillips (1997), argued that intertextuality was a key strategy of advertising producers. His study suggests that the Silk Cut advertisements heavily invested in intertextuality because it helped sell their cigarette brand circuitously. The code of practice for tobacco advertising did not allow advertising producers to make any link with sport, success, masculinity or femininity, or to target a group of people. Direct rational appeals to the consumer were limited by laws and regulations. Silk Cut cigarettes therefore used intertextuality as a way to circumvent these regulations. Recognisable images of coffee and brandy were presented in printed advertisements to create syntax relations: establishing a relationship of strength, richness, high quality and luxuriousness between Silk Cut

cigarettes, and the coffee and the brandy. However, Langan notes that the intertextual relationships may also escape the attention of some audiences. Audiences may incorrectly associate the advertisement to unrelated intertextuality or make misconnections with the product.

2.3.2.3 Branding

No study of audience reception or indeed media literacy can ignore branding as an important advertising and marketing strategy to connect global consumers with products. Brands are built on symbolic imagery and visuals and are designed to convey the marketing values of a company (Morling & Strannegard, 2004). 'Brands' emerged in the nineteenth century initially from whisky producers who wished to market wooden whiskey casks. Brands attempt to link appearance, personality, concepts and lifestyles with consumers (Slater & Jones, 2003).

Slater and Jones (2003) show how a common way advertisers build brands is by reinforcing the bond between a brand and its users. Advertising uses branding to generate consumer loyalty, enhance purchase frequency, and increase market share. The success of advertising therefore relates to the success of a brand. Advertising is more effective if it produces brand and product awareness, brand loyalty, and repetitive purchasing. For advertisers, a brand is 'the shorthand for a set of values and attributes that differentiate one product from another' (Siriphongsukarn, 1998, pp. 22–25). Advertising is 'a marketing tool used to help shape consumer perception of brands and bring brands to life' (Siriphongsukarn, 1998, pp. 22–25).

2.3.3 Globalisation

This thesis considers the media literacy of young people in both Thailand and Australia. Many of the advertisements that are considered by the two cohorts are part of multinational advertising campaigns.

The term 'globalisation' was coined in the nineteenth century and was most highlighted in the context of the international trade. According to Steger (2003),

globalisation refers to the transformation of social processes, whereby economic, political, cultural and environmental realms begin to operate at a global level. According to Burton (2007), globalisation and attendant changes in new technology have created new forms of media culture. With globalisation comes an enlargement of media monopoly ownership, which enhances media industries' control over the media context that speaks to global audiences.

Over the past 15 years, the issue of globalisation has been the source of much debate. Critics argue that globalisation is merely a vehicle for the spread of Western ideology, 'cultural imperialism' (Rayner et al., 2004, p. 242) and inequality between the First and Third Worlds. For some critics, globalisation is merely a tool for facilitating the 'Americanisation' of culture, free market ideology, commercialism, cultural homogenisation and increasing individualism (Jones & Jones, 1999). McQuail, Golding and Bens (2005, pp. 26–33) argue that global media ownership and audiences have been expanded through the 1990s (Thussu, 2000). 'Media imperialism', the monopoly of ownership, distribution and content of media, and a concern for 'passive audiences' and their absorption of 'foreign' media output have been the major concern of this view (Rayner et al., 2004, p. 243). Advertising is now spreading Western lifestyles and values through brand products such as Coca-Cola, McDonald's, Levi and Nike (Frith & Mueller, 2003; Steger, 2003). According to MacRury (2002), global advertising expenditures in the US were \$167 billion in 1989, and then rose to \$276 billion by 1998. Thussu (2000, p. 167) points out that the expansion of global advertising is responsible for the promotion of Western lifestyles, values, languages and media cultures, which influence people's thinking about their cultural, regional and national identities.

Rayner, Wall and Kruger (2004) claim that 'globalisation is symbolic of the power of capitalism to dominate the world' (p. 242). Burton (2007) would certainly think so, as he argues that 'globalisation is an idea, a way of conceiving the world, as much as being a material phenomenon' (p. 330). Burton argues that globalisation is the only way to spread the phenomenon of capitalism, exploring new markets and strengthening economies. Rayner, Wall and Kruger (2004) argue that globalisation is 'media imperialism': first, it engages in the monopoly power

of media production. Second, it spreads a Western media commodity in a one-way information flow ‘from the West to the rest’; it connects to mass Western culture and transmits Western ideology (Rayner et al., 2004, pp. 243–244). According to Pieterse (2004, p. 60), globalisation involves plural dimensions of communication, technology, corporations and institutions, economics, politics, and culture imperialism, which are integrated into a single global society.

However, Jones and Jones (1999, pp. 226–227) see globalisation as a two-way process—as globalisation increases, so does concern for local and regional cultures. The more globalisation spreads, the more people are afraid that their traditions and cultures will vanish. As a result, people return to consuming local goods and cultural products. The local and the national are renewed and strengthened. A third view argues that globalisation brings about a ‘hybridity’ of culture—a blending of various elements derived from both global and local spheres—fashion, music, food, film and language are all cited as examples of cultural hybridity (1999, p. 231).

The increasing debate on globalisation led to the idea of ‘glocalisation’, which is a link between globalisation and localisation. The term ‘glocalisation’ was invented by Japanese economists business in 1980 due to failures of the Western style of marketing in Japan (Mooij, 2005). Glocalisation follows the concept of ‘think global, act local’ (Mooij, 2005, p. 3). Japanese business believed glocalisation would bring success to global products or services across culture. As Mooij (2005) emphasises, ‘tradition and modernity are seen as contradictions in the West; in Japan, they go side by side. The Japanese can be conservative and at the same time [be] attracted by new ways. Whereas in the West the old must be discarded and the new must be embraced, in much of Asia, the traditional is exploited, recycled into modern ways of life’ (pp. 1–2). In relation to marketing and consumption, a glocalisation strategy has been adapted in advertising industries in many countries. Jory (1999) demonstrates how Western companies applied the glocalisation strategy in advertising to promote products through Thai traditional culture. He claims Coca-Cola was the first company to promote their products through local identities by sponsoring the Thai folk-rock band *Carabao* in 1984. Coca-Cola also brought together Western and Thai pop singers, Tina

Turner and Thongchai Macintyre, in a television advertising campaign in the 1990s. In 1998, McDonald's introduced a Basil-Pork burger and its slogan 'McBasil Pork Burger—like real Thai food'. Regency, a whiskey brand, positions the image of the product on a background of Thai Arts. The slogan 'For that touch of class. Regency Thai Brandy', appeared in English scripts, and they inserted the sentence 'We love Thai culture' in Thai scripts. According to Onkvisit and Shaw (2004, p. 466), global advertising should combine both 'standardization and localization' and assume both 'homogeneity and heterogeneity'. The standardisation refers to market homogeneity while localisation refers to heterogeneity. Global advertising is multinational and universal, and contradictorily the homogeneous and heterogeneous. The use of visuals, common themes and appeals and identifiable international scenes are necessary to obtain both standard and local elements. Onkvisit and Shaw (2004) suggest local advertisements should be centrally produced and locally edited if they are to be successful. This allows the idea and concept of advertisements to be translated into different local markets.

Pae, Samiee and Tai (2002) investigated consumer's perceptions of local and global brands in advertisements. The qualitative surveys were carried out with Masters of Business Administration students from various universities in Hong Kong. A total of 308 participants were put into 16 groups to watch a pair of local and foreign advertisements and later completed a survey. Pae, Saimee and Tai suggest (2002) that participants were more favourable to local advertising. The researchers commented that global advertising was likely to succeed only if consumers were familiar with the brands. Regardless of the source of advertising, Hong Kong participants preferred 'transformational creative style'—advertisements that focus on the product functions and attributes, rather than 'informational style'—advertisements that are associated with product values, symbols, and branding.

2.3.4 Audience's Reactions to Advertising

In a related study of Thai young people, Fam and Waller (2006) conducted a cross-cultural qualitative study of Asian consumers' attitudes towards television advertising messages. Focus group interviews were conducted in four countries,

China, India, Indonesia and Thailand, with participants aged 25 to 30. The participants were asked to view selected advertisements from their countries and describe the advertisements that they most liked and explain the reasons. Thai participants were fascinated by advertisements that used an amusing and creative story, a slice of life style, or feminism.

Roberts and Manolis' (2000) study of Baby Boomers and Generation X's attitude towards marketing and advertising that surveyed found that Generation X was more optimistic about advertising and considered advertising and marketing less offensive, useless, and socially irresponsible, compared to the Baby Boomers. Ritchie (1995, cited in Osgerby, 2004) notes that Generation X have:

Both a healthy scepticism about advertising and a love/hate relationship with the media ... Generation X learned to handle television like a team of lawyers handle a hostile witness ... Generation X would take from the media what they needed and what they found entertaining, but they would never accept information from the media at face value. They would learn to be critical. They would learn to recognise hype, 'weasel words', and exaggeration. And, like all good lawyers, they would always seek to control the communication. (pp. 51–52)

Waller (1999), in another study, focused on attitudes towards offensive advertisements and the reasons for being offensive. Questionnaires were carried out with 125 university students, aged 19 to 43. He found that females were more likely to be offended by alcohol advertisement than males. In general, advertisements tended to insult participants if they were racist, showed anti-social behaviour or were sexist. O'Sullivan (2005) examined the influence of advertising on children aged eight and nine years old. Although the number of participants was limited, the interviews interestingly illustrated children's ability to recall details of advertising, and the jingles. Catchphrases or jingles of the ads were brought into 'playground culture', even though they did not understand the meanings and languages used in the advertisements. Mallalieu, Palan and Lacznia (2005) re-examined a previous study of Robertson and Rossiter (1974) on children's knowledge and understanding of advertising content. Forty-three American children, born in 1990, were recruited from sport teams, and a private

kindergarten to participate in six focus group studies. Participants answered general questions about advertising, then viewed four television advertisements and answered a set of questions that covered different categories of advertisements. Children in both age groups were sceptical of advertisements. They acknowledged the differences between advertisements and television programmes and were able to identify simple strategies used in advertisements. Children in both age groups knew how the real product differed from what was represented in the advertisements. However, younger children seemed to be more persuaded by advertisements and did not understand advertising production. Older children understood advertising persuasiveness but had a higher degree of scepticism and mistrust of advertisements. According to a comparison between the two studies, children of the current study had a better knowledge and understanding of advertisements than those in the previous study. Especially, younger children seemed to have a higher degree of understanding of ads than the original participants did. Although children born in 1990 were more sophisticated in their understanding of advertisements than the previous generation, overall, children did not have a fully developed understanding of television advertisements. Between the ages of five to seven, children only understood the basic differences between advertising and television programmes, and had little knowledge about advertising persuasiveness.

This chapter reviewed the relevant literature about the media knowledge of young people in Thailand and Australia. The review started with a discussion of media effects and audience studies, and continued with a discussion of media literacy theory. A review of literature on the advertising industry and a debate of globalisation was also provided. The chapter concluded with the audience's reactions to advertising. The following chapter describes the research methodology for the study.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

This thesis considers a series of interrelated questions concerned with young people's knowledge and interpretation of television advertising, and the reception of television advertising by different audiences in Australia and Thailand. It explores four main issues. Firstly, what is the attitude of young people towards advertisements targeted to their age group? What kind of advertisements do they most appreciate? What aspect influences their attitude and opinion towards advertising appreciation? Studies on attitude and opinion towards advertising have previously been undertaken by Roberts and Manolis (2000), Volkov, Harker and Harker (2002) and Fam and Waller (2006). These studies have examined advertising influence, brand recalls and persuasiveness, and their impact on participants in Hong Kong, Shanghai, Jakarta, Bangkok and Mumbai.

Secondly, how do young people understand advertising persuasiveness, purpose, presentation techniques, and the advertising industry? How much are they aware of the constructed reality of the media? Mallalieu et al. (2005) conducted a related study on young children. They explored the young children's knowledge and beliefs in relation to advertising, as well as their cynicism about the reality of advertising. Similarly, Hall (2003) examined how audiences perceived the reality of the media.

Thirdly, how do young people interpret television advertising and how does the advertising influence their identity and consumption? Several audience studies have been focused on audience interpretation of media texts, for example, Hall's (1980) encoding and decoding approach and Morley's work on the *Nationwide* programme (1980). Hirschman and Thompson (1997) examine the way consumers construct meanings of advertisement. Hung (2000) investigates how viewers combine presentation techniques, such as visuals and music, in making sense and creating meaning of television commercials. Several theorists are concerned with the extent to which audiences display media literacy in encountering and responding to advertising. Meyrowitz (1998), Zettl (1998) and

Silverblatt (2001) refer to media literacy in terms of the knowledge, awareness, and interpretation of media aesthetics and other presentation techniques. Alternatively, Potter (2005) pays attention to audience knowledge of the media industry and the awareness of media effects on the individual and society.

Lastly, how do social and cultural factors influence interpretation, consumption, and the media culture of the young? How do different cross-cultural understandings affect young people's knowledge, literacy, and responses to advertising? How does globalisation create similarities and differences between young people in two countries? The purpose of this chapter is to detail research methodology and procedures. The chapter explores the research instrument, participants and recruitment, the ethical and confidentiality issues for the participants, data collection and analysis.

3.1 Research Design

In order to answer the research questions for this thesis, a research design that incorporated both qualitative and quantitative methods was employed. Four groups of participants were shown a compilation DVD, individually interviewed about the DVD and then surveyed. There were two versions of compilation DVDs used in the study: 1) an Australian compilation of advertisements by James Boag, Schick, Garnier, Nescafé cappuccino, Nokia, Holden, McDonald's, Nestlé hot chocolate, and Ford advertisements, which was shown to Australian participants and Asian international participants; and 2) a Thai compilation of Heineken, AXE, Pantene, Benice, Nokia, Sprite, Pizza Hut, Cute Press, and Mitsubishi advertisements, which was shown to Thai and Thai-Australian participants. The advertisements were selected based on their comparable production values: they are rich in signification, intertextuality and production techniques such as camera angles, colours, editing and special effects. All advertisements were also global brands and were recognisable to most young participants.

Morley (1980) showed the *Nationwide* television programme to participants prior to group interview research. Katz and Liebes (1986), in addition, applied the same

technique to a study on the *Dallas* soap opera: first providing a screening to their subjects and then conducting focus group interviews during and after the television show. Hung (2000) used the same research design for a study on narrative music in television advertising. A group of participants viewed four edited advertisements before completing a questionnaire relating to their perception of music and visuals in several television commercials. Once finished, all research instruments were evaluated in a small pilot study to achieve validity and reliability.

3.2 Research Methodology

The primary method used in this study is qualitative interviews. However, a small survey was conducted of interview participants to examine their media usage and opinions in relation to media content. Quantitative data is used to enlarge qualitative data (Punch, 1998, pp. 246–247). According to the literature review, both quantitative and qualitative approaches have been incorporated in media reception and cultural studies to understand how different readers interpret, construct, and choose meaning from the text and how texts are read within cultural contexts (Bertrand & Hughes, 2005). The use of mixed methodology maximises the strength of methodologies. Hansen, Cottle, Negrine and Newbold (1998) explain:

If we cannot accept that any one approach is as good as another, then we have to take a stance, albeit a provisional one. We cannot afford to be dogmatic or exclusive and, whatever stance we take about research, we must recognise its limitations, its tentative nature, the various circumscriptions and the factors that impinge on the research process. (p. 11)

The aim of the interviews was to assess young people's knowledge of advertising persuasiveness, presentation techniques and their media literacy of television advertising. Television was chosen because of its strengths. Television advertising has a higher frequency of audience viewing than other media, which ensures viewer's exposure to it. It is a high impact form of advertising because visuals and

sound maximise brand identity as well as stimulate the senses, emotions and imagination of the audience. Television advertising is accessible to all households and reaches a large audience (Bryant & Zillmann, 1994). Evidence from the Marketing Science Institute Staff Report (cited in Bryant & Zillmann, 1994, p. 329) suggests that 38 per cent of consumers enjoy television advertising and 31 per cent think it is informative. Although another 27 per cent of them agree that the advertising is annoying, only five per cent found it offensive. Advertising influence had studied and suggested the effect towards viewers (Ferle & Wei-Na, 2003; Jiang & Chia, 2009). According to Nielsen Media Research, 99 per cent of all Australian households own at least one television set (Nielsen Media, 2007). A report by the Australian Film Commission also found multiple television ownership in most households. Sixty-nine per cent of households possessed two or more television sets, and 31 per cent owned up to three or more sets in 2006. Television is still the most popular medium people spend time with. Sixty per cent of Australians were likely to switch on the television when they first arrive home prior to other activities. Television's daily reach is 13.4 million Australians (OzTAM, 2007). Most Australians spend at least 22 hours a week watching television. In general, Australians devoted around three hours each day to television watching from 2003 to 2006. In 2007, Australians spent an average of three hours per day watching television; peak viewing times were between 7 pm to 9 pm.

Qualitative methods provide in-depth and detailed information of participants' feelings, thoughts, expressions, perceptions, experiences, behaviours and responses of participants. This method also expands the understanding of communicative performance of participants, and their relationships and reactions to the interviews and interviewee (Baxter & Babbie, 2004, p. 344). Qualitative research typically uses 'inductive logic'. Researchers start with a research problem then conduct a study to discover results that contribute to knowledge and generate new theory. Moreover, qualitative research provides rich data in the form of words, and the data can be analysed and presented into coherent and consistent themes, concepts and generalisations (Neuman, 2001, p. 88). Qualitative approaches are not only limited to the interview or observation, but can also be applied to a wide range of research data, such as documents, music, films and

novels. Qualitative data can be coded and analysed by thematising, conceptualising, reducing, elaborating, and presented in a written report (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The often-cited weakness of this approach is researcher bias because 'analysis is the interplay between researchers and data' (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 13). Qualitative research involves both 'science and art' in which researchers need to balance 'critical and creative thinking' in the process of data analysis, balancing issues of research design and validity with creativity when developing connections in the data and categorised themes (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 13). Qualitative approaches are also not suited for collecting data from a large number of subjects because of the process of collecting and transcribing data (Berger, 1998, p. 57).

The interview, group interview and focus group are the most commonly used methods in qualitative research. However, the use of the individual interview is considered the most appropriate methodology to be used for data collection in this study rather than other research techniques. Individual interviews, according to Bauer and Gaskell (2000, p. 48), aim to explore individual subjectivity in depth: individual experiences, choices and sensitivity. It allows participants to respond to questions and express their point of view freely without the influence of other participants that may shape a person's responses (Baxter & Babbie, 2004; Punch, 1998). This method is also suitable for investigating participants' experiences and reactions to advertisements, as well as for understanding how young people perceive and make sense of advertising in a cultural context.

The individual interviews also tend to be more culturally sensitive. The researcher is Thai, and the researcher has a better understanding of the nature and characteristics of potential Thai participants. The majority of Thais are polite, value interpersonal relations, and respect hierarchy. They also tend to avoid arguments, and avoid creating embarrassment or discomfort to others (Knutson, 2004; Knutson, Komolsevin, Chatiketu & Smith, 2002; Iamsudha & Hale, 2003). Culture plays a great role in shaping Thais' way of thinking and behaving. Some of them may have difficulty in providing comments or expressing their feelings to a group of people, especially on the topic of self-perception and sexual appeal techniques used in advertising. Individual interviewing gave me a chance to

approach each participant differently. Some participants need to be encouraged and motivated to talk more than others do. Individual interviews allows me to have an in-depth discussion using structured interview questions with individual participants without any interference from other participants as, for example, in a group interview situation, because only one participant is involved in the conversation with me. Whereas in a focus group or group interview situation, several participants attend the same group, share and challenge their ideas, knowledge and experiences. The researcher often plays the role of moderator: introducing topics, asking questions, and making sure that all participants are involved and share their opinions (Dawson, 2002). Individual interviews offer greater opportunity to use 'probes' or 'follow-up questions' from individual contributions. Participants can be asked to clarify terms and meanings, express their ideas and justifications, and provide further examples (Berger, 1998, p. 57; Gillham, 2000a, p. 69).

The in-depth interview assists in comprehending how young people understand advertising and how they apply their knowledge and literacy to the media. This method has been used widely in media communication research. Morley (1986) used an in-depth unstructured interview in a study of television and VCR uses of 18 families in London. Silverstone (1989) collected information on the use of television and other domestic technology from 16 British families by employing the use of diaries, in-depth interviews and ethnographic observation. Similarly, Lull (1982, cited in Gunter, 2000, pp. 126–133) observed and interviewed families about their television usage. Hall (2003) conducted interviews and focus groups with 47 young adults to investigate how audiences perceived the reality of media, and were aware of techniques of media realism.

In addition to an in-depth interview, participants completed a short survey to complement the individual interview. Prior to conducting the interviews, all research participants were asked to complete a questionnaire to gather demographic data, information on media usage and involvement, and general opinions on advertisement and buying behaviour. Questionnaire research assists systematic data collection and presentation of empirical data in the form of percentages and figures (Neuman, 2001). Questionnaire research is widely used in

experimental research by positivist researchers (Neuman, 2001, p. 29; Priest, 1996, p. 8). Roberts and Manolis (2000) conducted a quantitative study that investigated attitudes towards marketing and advertising, and the compulsive buying behaviours of Baby Boomers and Generation X. A telephone questionnaire was employed by Volkov et al. (2002) in order to obtain opinions about advertising from an Australian participant aged over 18. In Livingstone and Bovill's study (2002), quantitative methods were used to investigate generational media usage and to examine the generation gap between young people and their parents. Waller (2006) used questionnaires to study attitudes towards offensive advertisements among university students aged 19 to 43.

3.2.1 Research Instruments

3.2.1.1 Screening of Advertisements

The twin compilation DVDs of Australian advertisements and Thai advertisements were shown to young people prior to the in-depth interviews. Australian participants and Asian international participants were shown advertisements taken from Australian television. Thai participants were shown the Thai compilation of advertisements taken from Thai television, whereas Thai-Australian participants viewed both the Australian and Thai versions of the compilation.

The first compilation DVD, consisting of the Australian commercials James Boag, Schick, Garnier, Nescafé cappuccino, Nokia, Holden, McDonald's, Nestlé hot chocolate and Ford was shown to Australian and Asian international young people in Melbourne, Australia. The other DVD compilation made up of the Thai commercials for Heineken, AXE, Pantene, Benice, Nokia, Sprite, Pizza Hut, Cute Press and Mitsubishi were shown to a group of Thai young people living in Bangkok, Thailand and another group in Melbourne, Australia. The compilations importantly created a standard reference point for the interpretation of each of the participants. This was of advertisements in Australia and Thailand; therefore corresponding advertisements are discussed in the two countries. The researcher needed to provide specific advertisements that mostly share similarities in product categories, themes, appeals and production techniques between the two countries

for the purpose of comparison. The advertisement screening is an important for not only ensuring the validity of the research but also for ensuring responses were comparable and focused around the same media 'texts'.

A series of advertisements were alternately taped off-air from Channel 10 in Australia and Channel 3 in Thailand because these channels are industry recognised as targeting young people. Channel 10 in Australia, in particular, has been targeting young people or the 16–39 year old demographic as its 'core' audience from at least 2000 (The perfect TV age, 2005). Grant Blackley, General Sales Manager of Network 10, stated that 40 per cent of their advertising clients bought air time on 10 specifically because they wished to target younger audiences. According to Blackley, 'we had a suite of product (programs) that gave us the option of going in a direction and focusing on a particular (viewer) profile, which we felt would be profitable ... we have continued to strengthen our position in the 16 to 39s' (The perfect TV age, 2005). Advertisements for the Australian compilation DVD were therefore recorded from Network 10, randomly from Wednesday 3 July 2005 to Sunday 15 October 2005, between 8.30pm to 10.30pm. This time slot was heavily loaded with 'youth-programming' such as Big Brother and Australian Idol at a prime time that young people were likely to watch television (The perfect TV age, 2005). These two programs were ranked thirteenth out of the top 20 television programmes in 2005 and had a total of 2,282,000 viewers (Australian Film Commission, 2007).

The Thai advertisements were also chosen from prime times for young people. Advertisements for the Thai compilation DVD were recorded from Channel 3, randomly from Thursday 16 June 2005 to Friday 16 September 2005, between 8.30pm to 10.30pm. Thai Television Channel 3 is the Television station that has the second largest television rating. In 2003, Channel 3 targeted young people by launching Asian series (related to love and young people), every Friday after the evening news, which is classified as the prime time that generates the highest revenues for many stations (Business Thai, 2003). Prawit Maleenont, the director of Bangkok Entertainment Company Limited (Thailand) revealed the goal of Channel 3 is to produce a variety of television programmes aimed at the highest nationwide audience (Positioning Magazine, 2008). Their high advertising

revenues came from consumer products (Thansettakij, 2009). It earned approximately 130.5 million baht monthly from 7pm to 8pm, and 378 million baht from 8.30pm to 10.30pm (A crossroads, 2007).

Once the recordings were completed, all advertisements were reviewed and advertisements were selected for the final DVD compilation based on product categories, advertising appeals, presentation techniques and global circulation. Beverage, fast food, personal care and communication technology advertisements were often selected because they often focused on consumerism, politics, and social issues, which would promote discussion. Eighteen television commercials, nine advertisements from each country, were finally selected to make the compilation DVDs, based on product categories.

The Australian compilation included nine advertisements. The first advertisement selected was a James Boag advertisement. Music and sound effects play through the advertisement. The scene starts with a woman walking into a pub. She goes straight to her friends who are sitting on a couch and greets them. Men who are drinking at the bar immediately move the couch with her friend on it so she can sit down. The audience then see the brand logo 'Boags St. George' followed by the voice over 'gallantry is back'. The second advertisement was for Schick, a men's razor advertisement. This advertisement opens with young men sitting in a room in a clinic. Within a few seconds, a woman in a laboratory coat walks into the room. She ignores a patient but goes straight to the male friend of the patient and looks closely at his shaving line, which she then touches. A male announcer describes the product benefits of Schick-Quattro; the slogan 'get ready' is then shown for 15 seconds. Cheerful music continues from the start to the end. The next advertisement specifically targeted females. The Garnier advertisement is presented by Sarah Jessica Parker. She appears in a room in an apartment. She talks about hair colour and introduces the product's attributes. She describes the product ingredients of Garnier-Nutrisse. A melody plays over the visuals for 30 seconds. A brand logo appears at the end of the advertisement. Nescafé cappuccino, the fourth advertisement shows a scene of a woman sitting at a coffee lounge with friends. She suddenly notices the coffee froth on a man's lip, who is drinking coffee and sitting opposite to her. Without dialogue, she licks her lip to

give him a signal about the froth. Different facial expressions and postures are used as a warning sign. However, the man misunderstands and thinks the woman is attracted to him. A female voice over articulates the slogan ‘deliciously frothy coffee’ at the end of the advertisement.

The fifth advertisement, a Nokia phone advertisement, starts with a black background and a slow melody. A second later, a glittering mobile phone is displayed at a different angle. A fluorescent light and the image of the mobile phone are in the background. Different visuals, such as jewellery and a vehicle are superimposed over these images. Female and male voiceovers outline the product attributes. Metaphors are used to stress the luxury product. The commercial ends with a slogan ‘designed for the senses’. The sixth advertisement, a Holden advertisement, uses graphic animation and upbeat music. A group of American young people are playing basketball on top of a building. The orange car drives in, and bounces and plays with the young people. Product information is presented in a graffiti style and voice over is provided by a male announcer. The seventh advertisement is a McDonald’s advertisement. The noise of traffic is used as background noise. A woman interviews people on the street in various places. She asks people to test a burger salad and questions them about the taste. The nutrition facts are presented. Ronald McDonald later appears on the screen. A male announcer then introduces the product, ‘McDonald’s DeliChoices’, and the slogan.

The eighth advertisement is a Nestlé hot chocolate advertisement. Images of a semi-naked African woman and Anglo woman are used as visuals. They are drinking hot chocolate and melting in the fluid. Visuals of the two women and product are exchanged throughout the advertisement. A mellow melody is used throughout the advertisement. A catchphrase, ‘surrender to your senses’, of ‘Nestlé Double Blend hot chocolate’ is announced by a male announcer. Ford, the last advertisement, presents a story of a boy playing with a toy car racing. A sound of car acceleration and other sound effects play as the commercial starts and are sequenced with the visuals to catch the audiences’ attention. The car goes faster around the track. The boy thinks he is no longer able to control the car anymore. Exciting music plays and a male voice over proclaims ‘Ford Falcon’

and the slogan 'Nothing drives like the new Falcon'. A logo of the product appears on a black screen as the advertisement ends.

The Thai compilation comprises nine advertisements. The first Thai advertisement is a Heineken advertisement. This advertisement is set in a place that appears to be a man's apartment. A stimulating international song, Amii Stewart's *Knock on wood*, is shortened and played in the background: 'I don't want to lose you. This good thing ... It's like thunder and lightning ... you better knock, knock on wood, baby'. A dim light and cheerful song helps create a party scene. The room is crowded with people who are partying. A man walks through the crowd to the fridge, and finds that there is only one beer left. The camera zooms in as he looks at his watch. Without speaking, the Thai sentence, translated as 'too late, be considerate to neighbours', appears on the screen. A man points at his watch to friends, shakes his head, and then walks them to the door. Heineken is the last beer in the fridge. No dialogue is used in the advertisement; only a male voice over announces the brand product at the end. AXE, the second advertisement, is filmed outdoor and at a supermarket. A fast international inspired song plays for 30 seconds. Male and female presenters who appear in this commercial are all foreign. The advertising starts with a young man walking on the street to the supermarket. Women who pass close by to the man are bounced away because of his body odour. A male voice over makes claims about the product as the man sprays AXE deodorant on his body. After using this personal care product, a mannequin in a shop window is drawn like a magnet to him through the glass window.

The third advertisement is the Pantene advertisement. Noon Woranuch Wongsawan, the Thai actor, appears in the advertisement. She describes her appreciation of her hair and the product she uses. The images of healthy hair are alternately sequenced with the image of presenter. The product benefits are introduced by a male presenter. Benice, a personal care product, is the fourth advertisement. A young male and female are playing on the mattress. A female presenter develops a narrative to describe their pleasure and represents the female as a sheep and male as a lion. The presenter foregrounds the natural ingredients used in the product at the end of the advertisement. The fifth advertisement is a

Nokia mobile phone advertisement. This global advertisement was also broadcast in Australia. The Thai version was cut down to 15 seconds. A slow melody is used in the background. The Nokia brand name is presented on a plain black background. Some part of a black sparkle mobile phone appears on the screen and is sequenced with glitter lines and fluorescent lights, which are transformed into jewellery, a vehicle, and a sword. Voiceover and music are sequenced through the whole story. A female voice over describes the product attributes. A Nokia mobile phone and slogan 'designed for the senses' appear in the last scene of the advertisement. The sixth advertisement is a Sprite advertisement and it is filmed in sepia colour. A song plays through the advertising from the start to the end. The location is set outdoors in a basketball court on top of a building. The camera zooms in on exhausted American basketball players. One player drinks Sprite before he runs into the court and jumps into the ground. The ground suddenly becomes a pool of water and everyone joins in swimming. The product and its slogan appear at the end of the advertisement.

Pizza Hut, the seventh advertisement, starts the first scene with staff serving a large pizza. The advertisement is produced at a real Pizza Hut fast food restaurant. A few customers are sitting at the table, trying the new pizza and dipping sauce. Delightful music is used to catch the viewers' attention. Visuals of raw ingredients, such as garlic, sesame and chilli are shown in the advertisement: a female presenter describes the ingredients. Visual effects, such as smoke and melting cheese are used to increase the attractiveness of the food. The product logo appears in the last scene. The eighth advertisement, Cute Press, shows a travel sequence of a half-naked woman journeying through natural landscapes such as the Dead Sea and grasslands. A female voice over describes the natural ingredients of the cosmetic. Computer graphics are heavily used in all the natural scenes. The advertisement closes with the product and slogan. Mitsubishi, the last advertisement, shows the image of a car driving fast across land through dirt and dusts. There is a camera close up on the car engine, battery, and gearbox. The advertisement cuts back to the car. It is driving up the hill and jumps into the air to prove its strength. The car drives to the town that suddenly transforms into a modern city. A logo of the brand appears on the black screen, followed by a male voice over.

After recording the advertisements, all advertisements were converted from master VHR tapes and placed on the two DVDs so that they could be played on a laptop. Other irrelevant advertisements were excluded. The screening of each DVD took only five minutes in total to play on Microsoft Windows Media Player programme from a laptop, with headphones. This viewing technique enabled me to conduct interviews in various places to offer participants comfort and convenience. All research participants were asked to view a series of advertisements and discuss the same questions. The researcher could then examine these questions to discover trends, similarities and differences of attitude, opinions, ideas and knowledge among the different participants.

3.2.1.2 Interview Questions

The aim of a qualitative approach is to investigate young people's knowledge, understanding, interpretation and responses to advertising. The interview questions were partly constructed based on the concept of media literacy that was defined as knowledge and the ability to discuss and identify narrative structure, genres, production values, preferred reading of cultural producers, purpose, potential audiences and the production process of advertising, as well as the economics of advertising, media ownership, government policy on media and advertising content, and advertising effects (Potter, 1998; Silverblatt, 2001; Silverblatt & Eliceiri, 1997). The questions focused specifically on what young people knew and their ability to elaborate on a reading of the screened advertisements in the interviews. The level of knowledge of young people was measured by the level of knowledge and ability to discuss an advertisement. The more participants were able to generate critical discussion, the more knowledge the researcher assumed they had. A comparison between Australia and Thailand was made to examine the knowledge gap of young people regarding cultural context and globalisation.

The interview questions were developed using the semi-structured interview technique. Open-ended questions were pre-set and standardised to ensure that the same questions would be asked to all participants (Baxter & Babbie, 2004, p. 329). However, the order of questions was flexible. It was sometimes alternated or paraphrased depending on the flow of conversation. Occasionally, the researcher

asked further questions to participants to clarify the meanings and provide examples related to each point mentioned. Examples of types of questions are: can you please tell me more about...?, What do you mean by...?, Can you give me an example of...? Transitions between questions were also used to guide participants. The interview schedule was divided into four parts. The first part considered advertising appreciation. The section included general questions to explore young people's attitudes and opinions about the entertainment facets of advertising and its truthfulness. Examples of questions in this part are: Which advertisements did you like and dislike most and why? Which advertising is the most and the least realistic? Which advertising tries to give you a really good feeling and how does it do this? Which advertisement tells the best story?

The second part focused on young people's knowledge and awareness of production values and how they make meaning from the style of advertising. These questions focused on participants' capacity to recognise storytelling, appeal, music, visual style, and computer generated images. They included questions like: Which advertising uses visual images in the most interesting way? Do you know what a camera angle is? Which advertising has the most interesting use of camera angle? Why do advertisements use music? Which advertising has the most interesting use of music? Knowledge of colour and editing are also important aspects of media literacy. According to Silverblatt, Ferry and Finan (1999), comprehension of production elements is an important part of advertising literacy and important in terms of young people's media engagement with advertising. Silverblatt and Eliceiri (1997) also argue that knowledge of advertising production is an important facet of media literacy. Zettl (1998) notes that the aesthetic element of media impacts on the viewer's perception and emotion, and the literacy of media aesthetic leads to media awareness and depends on the literacy of the media aesthetic. As Messaris (1998) notes the use of camera angles, styles, image structures and sequences are important devices for controlling the emotion, attitude and experience of the viewers. The literacy of visual images would therefore intensify an awareness of the influence and persuasiveness of the media and contribute to media literacy.

The third group of questions attempted to explore participants' knowledge of the

advertising industry and its economic function. In this section, the researcher attempted to establish what interviewees knew about the advertising industry. Questions in this section included questions such as: Why does television have advertising? Who would have the highest authority in making decisions in the production process? What advertising agency do you know or have heard about? Do you know about any laws or regulations that are applied to advertisements that go on TV? Participants were also asked to explain how the process of advertising production worked from the beginning to the end. The last group of questions considered socialisation and values. This section explored young people's awareness and critical thinking about advertising and product consumption. Some examples of these questions were: Could the advertisements you have just watched create any personal or social problems? Do you know how 'branding' works? Which advertising reflects (local or national) cultural values the least and why? How do you think the roles of men and women are portrayed in these advertisements? Young people were asked to express their opinions on the how advertisements promote materialism and globalisation. In developing these interview questions, Potter's (2005) theory of media literacy was drawn upon. According to Potter, issues of media effects and their influence on individuals and society, media content, media industry and the experiences of the real world are basic knowledge structures associated with media literacy.

The interview questions were divided into two versions: English and Thai language. The English version of the interview questions was applied to Australian participants and Asian international participants living in Australia. The Thai version of the interview questions was applied to Thai participants living in Thailand and Thai-Australian participants living in Australian. A small pilot study was conducted to test the interview questions with participants. It was revised before use with the research participants.

3.2.1.3 Questionnaires

A short questionnaire was completed by all participants. The face-to-face interview questionnaire design was used whereby the interviewer asked participants questions and helped them fill in the form (Hansen et al., 1998, p.

233). The questionnaire was in English; however, it was translated into Thai when asking Thai participants living in Thailand and Thai-Australia participants living in Australia. The questionnaire looks at demographics, media usage and habits. The questionnaire was helpful because it enabled me to obtain straightforward information quickly in various locations. It was also measurable and systematic. The questionnaire was divided into three parts. The first part addressed demographics and general background of the participants. Research participants were asked about their gender, age, education and career. The second part explored types of usage and time spent with each medium, including television, radio, CD and DVD player, internet, and mobile phone. Participants were asked how many media appliances they owned and to estimate how much time they spent using these appliances. They were also asked to nominate favourite programmes and broadcasters. The last section of questions considered attitudes towards advertising. Examples of questions were: Which media do you consider the most powerful media for advertising? What television advertisements stand out for you? What would make television advertising most appealing to you? Types of questions used to gather this information included multiple choice, ratio, ordinal and open-ended questions (Singleton, Straits & Straits, 1993), which could be later analysed in a numerical form and percentages.

A pilot study was tested with a small number of participants aged 18–25 years old who had no prior education in media studies. However, the testing showed that some questions about media uses were not clear enough for participants. The researcher then redeveloped those questions to collect more accurate data because some questions about education and work status were confusing: some participants were working after graduation, while some participants were also working while studying, so a clearer distinction needed to be made. Additionally, the question ‘please indicate the number of media appliances you own’ was changed to ‘please indicate the number of media appliances you have in your own room and in your house or apartment’ to more fully consider multiple domestic use in households by various individuals. The researcher also added options to consider hybrid and ‘smart technologies’, which also might have multiple uses: for example, DVD and CD players in the same device and options for iPod and

MP3. Open-ended questions were also added so participants could provide additional comments about advertising.

3.2.2 Research Participants and Recruitment

Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected from 18–25 year olds who were either: Australian participants living in Australia, Thai participants living in Thailand, Thai participants living in Australia (henceforth Thai-Australian participants), and Asian participants, from other countries, living in Australia but not of Thai backgrounds (henceforth Asian international participants) who had not previously studied tertiary-level media studies at university. The age of young participant was set as a main criterion for recruiting research participants. The aim was to specifically target young people considered the ‘media generation’ with a high involvement with the media. As the study was based on a qualitative method that depended on participants elaborating in in-depth interviews, it was also important to recruit the participants who were regular consumers of the media. However, participants who had undertaken courses or units of study in media studies were specifically excluded from the sample to limit the effects of ‘education’ on their media literacy.

Young people were randomly approached and selected from various public places where young people gather, such as public parks, universities, coffee shops, shopping malls and offices at various times. After agreement was reached with the participants to participate in the study, the researcher made an appointment at an appropriate date, time and location that suited the participants. Flyers were also placed on notice boards at various universities inviting participants to take part in the study; however, this method of recruitment elicited few responses. The direct request approach worked best and a snowball technique was used to recruit more young people to participate in the interviews. Participants were asked whether they knew other people such as friends and relatives who might be willing to participate in the research.

This research involved 76 young participants, consisting of 19 Australian participants, 20 Thai participants, 20 Thai-Australian participants, and 17 Asian

international participants, including one Japanese, one Taiwanese, two Vietnamese, three Korean, four Chinese, and six Indonesian participants. The participants of the study were mixed in gender, age, living area, education and work status. Tables 1 to 4 provide demographic details of their background.

Table 1: Demographics of Australian Participants

| Australian participants | Gender | Age | Suburb | Education | Current work |
|--------------------------------|---------------|------------|----------------|----------------------|--|
| Participant 1 | Male | 23 | Preston | TAFE Part-time | Dental assistant Full-time |
| Participant 2 | Male | 20 | Maribyrnong | BA. Full-time | Bar person Casual |
| Participant 3 | Male | 20 | Maribyrnong | BA. Full-time | Toll worker Part-time |
| Participant 4 | Female | 21 | Box Hill | BA. Part-time | Operations manager Full-time |
| Participant 5 | Female | 19 | Reservoir | Year 12 Graduated | Customer service Part-time |
| Participant 6 | Male | 22 | Essendon | BA. Full-time | Sales assistant Casual |
| Participant 7 | Female | 21 | Cheltenham | Year 9 Graduated | IT consultant Full-time |
| Participant 8 | Female | 23 | South Morang | Year 12 Graduated | Secretary Full-time |
| Participant 9 | Male | 22 | South Morang | Year 10 Graduated | Plumber Full-time |
| Participant 10 | Female | 25 | West Brunswick | Year 11 Graduated | Debt collector Full-time |
| Participant 11 | Male | 23 | Sandringham | Year 12 Graduated | Airfare consultant Full-time |
| Participant 12 | Male | 21 | Keilor | BA. Full-time | Sales assistant Part-time |
| Participant 13 | Female | 23 | Rowville | TAFE Graduated | Front office receptionist supervisor Full-time |
| Participant 14 | Male | 22 | Sandringham | TAFE Full-time | Front officer receptionist Casual |
| Participant 15 | Male | 25 | Reservoir | Year 12 Graduated | Receptionist Full-time |
| Participant 16 | Male | 23 | Moonee Ponds | BA. Full-time | Not working |
| Participant 17 | Male | 19 | Bentleigh | TAFE Full-time | Storeman Part-time |
| Participant 18 | Female | 22 | Glenroy | Year 11 Graduated | Housekeeper Casual |
| Participant 19 | Female | 22 | Footscray | BA. Full-time | Not working |

Table 2: Demographics of Thai Participants

| Thai participants | Gender | Age | Suburb | Education | Current work |
|--------------------------|---------------|------------|----------------|----------------------|---|
| Participant 1 | Female | 25 | Pharkhanong | BA. Graduated | Marketing executive Full-time |
| Participant 2 | Male | 22 | Tharang | BA. Graduated | Assistant account manager Full-time |
| Participant 3 | Female | 21 | Dusit | BA. Full-time | Not working |
| Participant 4 | Female | 22 | Nonthaburi | Dip. Graduated | Sales assistant Full-time |
| Participant 5 | Male | 25 | Klongsan | BA. Graduated | Human resource officer Full-time |
| Participant 6 | Male | 22 | Bangkoknoi | Year 12 Part-time | Sales assistant Full-time |
| Participant 7 | Female | 23 | Thaweewattana | MA. Part-time | Academic assistant Full-time |
| Participant 8 | Female | 24 | Lardpraw | BA. Graduated | Project Officer Full-time |
| Participant 9 | Female | 24 | Donmung | Dip. Graduated | Officer Full-time |
| Participant 10 | Female | 19 | Yannawa | BA. Full-time | Not working |
| Participant 11 | Male | 23 | Yannawa | BA. Graduated | Financial (trainee) Full-time |
| Participant 12 | Male | 19 | Ramkhumhang | BA. Full-time | Not working |
| Participant 13 | Male | 19 | Talingchan | BA. Full-time | Not working |
| Participant 14 | Female | 22 | Talingchan | BA. Full-time | Not working |
| Participant 15 | Female | 20 | Rajburana | BA. Full-time | Teacher Part-time |
| Participant 16 | Female | 24 | Phutthamonthon | BA. Graduated | Secretary Full-time |
| Participant 17 | Male | 20 | Talingchan | BA. Full-time | Not working |
| Participant 18 | Male | 19 | Talingchan | BA. Full-time | Not working |
| Participant 19 | Female | 23 | Yannawa | BA. Full-time | Not working |
| Participant 20 | Male | 20 | Talingchan | BA. Full-time | Not working |

Table 3: Demographics of Thai Participants Living in Australia

| Thai-Australian participants | Gender | Age | Suburb | Education | Current work |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|------------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| Participant 1 | Female | 23 | Caulfield | MA. Full-time | Waitress Part-time |
| Participant 2 | Female | 25 | North Melbourne | BA. Graduated | Self employed Full-time |
| Participant 3 | Female | 25 | North Melbourne | BA. Graduated | Waitress Part-time |
| Participant 4 | Female | 24 | Melbourne CBD | MA. Graduated | Waitress Part-time |
| Participant 5 | Male | 23 | Abbotsford | BA. Graduated | Waiter Part-time |
| Participant 6 | Female | 24 | Abbotsford | MA. Graduated | Not working |
| Participant 7 | Male | 21 | Kew | BA. Full-time | Waiter Part-time |
| Participant 8 | Male | 23 | Richmond | Dip. Full-time | Chef Part-time |
| Participant 9 | Female | 25 | Heidelberg West | MA. Graduated | Sandwich maker Part-time |
| Participant 10 | Female | 23 | Craigieburn | MA. Graduated | Not working |
| Participant 11 | Female | 24 | Glen Iris | MA. Graduated | Not working |
| Participant 12 | Male | 25 | Melbourne CBD | MA. Graduated | Waiter Part-time |
| Participant 13 | Female | 23 | Caulfield East | MA. Full-time | Waitress Part-time |
| Participant 14 | Female | 21 | Glenhuntly | MA. Full-time | Not working |
| Participant 15 | Female | 25 | East Brunswick | BA. Full-time | Waitress Part-time |
| Participant 16 | Male | 22 | Melbourne CBD | BA. Full-time | Not working |
| Participant 17 | Female | 20 | Melbourne CBD | BA. Full-time | Not working |
| Participant 18 | Male | 25 | Melbourne CBD | BA. Full-time | Not working |
| Participant 19 | Male | 21 | Melbourne CBD | BA. Full-time | Not working |
| Participant 20 | Male | 20 | Melbourne CBD | BA. Full-time | Not working |

Table 4: Demographics of Asian International Participants Living in Australia

| Asian international participants | Gender | Age | Suburb | Education | Current work |
|---|---------------|------------|---------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Participant 1 | Female | 21 | Glenferrie | BA. Full-time | Not working |
| Participant 2 | Female | 24 | Melbourne CBD | MA. Graduated | Waitress Part-time |
| Participant 3 | Male | 25 | Footscray | BA. Graduated | Not working |
| Participant 4 | Female | 25 | St. Albans | BA. Withdrew | Sales assistant Full-time |
| Participant 5 | Male | 21 | Kew | MA. Full-time | Not working |
| Participant 6 | Female | 24 | Reservoir | BA. Full-time | Cashier Part-time |
| Participant 7 | Female | 25 | Brunswick | BA. Graduated | Laboratory analyst Full-time |
| Participant 8 | Female | 22 | Chadstone | Advanced Dip. Graduated | Team leader Part-time |
| Participant 9 | Male | 25 | Chadstone | MA. Full-time | Team leader Part-time |
| Participant 10 | Female | 24 | Balwyn | BA. Graduated | Waitress Part-time |
| Participant 11 | Female | 23 | Balwyn | BA. Graduated | Waitress Part-time |
| Participant 12 | Female | 23 | Brunswick | Dip. Graduated | Chef Casual |
| Participant 13 | Male | 24 | Brunswick | MA. Graduated | Not working |
| Participant 14 | Male | 25 | Box Hill | MA. Full-time | Education advisor Part-time |
| Participant 15 | Male | 25 | Burnley | MA. Full-time | Engineer analyst Full-time |
| Participant 16 | Female | 25 | Murrumbeena | MA. Full-time | Not working |
| Participant 17 | Male | 22 | Kew | TAFE Full-time | Chef Casual |

3.2.3 The Interview Process

Prior to beginning the interviews, the researcher explained the purpose, scope, format and process of the interview and participants' ethical rights. All participants were also asked whether they had any previous media education and were excluded if they answered yes. The participants then filled in a consent form. At the start of the interview, research participants were introduced to the study (Baxter & Babbie, 2004, p. 331). The participants were first asked to spend 15 to 20 minutes of their time answering the questionnaire about their media usage and use of television, internet, radio, and printed media. Assisted by me, participants were also asked their opinion about television advertising. After filling in the questionnaire and a small break, participants then watched the DVD compilation specific to their participant group and were interviewed.

The Australian DVD compilation was shown to Australian participants, and Asian international participants. The Thai compilation was shown to Thai participants and the Australian and Thai compilations were shown to Thai-Australian participants. After watching the advertisements, participants were interviewed. The interviews were conducted in either Thai or English depending on the research participant. Advertisements were replayed during the interview if participants had difficulty recalling the advertisements. All interviews were taped on audio tape; the process took approximately 45 minutes to an hour per interview.

During the interview, the researcher attempted to create and maintain a positive relationship with the participants. Non-verbal gestures such as facial expression, eye contact, and nodding of the head were used to encourage young people to talk (Baxter & Babbie, 2004; Gillham, 2000a). Participants seem to be more active in expressing their attitudes and feelings when the researcher showed supportiveness and interest in their point of view. Australian participants had no difficulty speaking, but Thai participants were less vocal and declarative. The researcher provided more support and direction for Thai participants and was careful with the use of tone of voice (Gillham, 2000a). Thai participants were also given more

time to answer questions; although it was important also to move to the next question sometimes if the participant appeared uncertain or under confident.

3.2.4 Ethical and Confidential Considerations

3.2.4.1 Informed Consent

At the beginning of each survey and interview, the researcher discussed with participants the purpose of the project and dealt with any ethical issues that might be of concern to the participant. Participants were advised of their right to withdraw from the process at any time should they wish to do so. Each interview participant signed a consent form, which clearly set out the purposes of the project and the way information would be used. The contact details of the Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee were also provided on the consent form so that participants could contact the Committee if any problems arose in the research process. At the end of the completion of the questionnaire, each interview, and at the beginning of any follow-up work with the participant, the researcher reviewed the process to identify and manage any ethical problems that emerged.

3.2.4.2 Anonymity

The project focused on young people's understanding and interpretation of advertising, and knowledge of the advertising industry. Procedures were adopted to protect anonymity to ensure that any possibility of disadvantaging participants could be avoided. Data collected from questionnaires and interviews was completely anonymous in the write-up and presentation of the thesis. The informed consent process was used to ensure that all participants were supportive of the representation of the citations used in this thesis. Pseudonyms were used for all direct attribution to participants in the study.

3.2.5 Data Analysis and Interpretation

Survey data was summarised as simple descriptive percentages, showing media use and involvement, and attitudinal results for participants towards television

advertising. For qualitative data, interview records were transcribed and checked for accuracy (Baxter & Babbie, 2004, pp. 365–368). All the data was read through to obtain a broad perspective of the information, a line-by-line coding process was applied and patterns and trends were identified. From this analysis, a list of topics commonly mentioned was then developed and further grouped into themes and categories. Topics that did not fall into any category were set as new themes. The researcher then reviewed all categories and checked for the similarities and differences between them.

This chapter has described the research design and methodology for this thesis. It has included details of research tools, research participants and recruitment, ethical and confidential considerations and data analysis and interpretation. The next chapter discusses the findings of Australian participants in relation to their media consumption, attitudes towards advertisements, knowledge of the advertising industry and media production, and understanding of media content, and media influences.

Chapter 4: Australian Participants in Australia

This chapter examines the media usage, media knowledge and media literacy of the Australian participants in this study. Audience comprehension of advertising production and effects are considered to assess audience awareness of media techniques and the rhetorical claims of advertising used to persuade audiences. The Australian participants' perception of media reality and their uses of literacy skills, particularly in relation to Potter's (2004) cognitive theory of media literacy and Silverblatt's (2001) analysis of media representation, are also discussed to illustrate the Australian participants' processing, reading and responses of the media.

4.1 Media Usage

This section illustrates the demographics and media uses of the Australian participants. Nineteen Australian participants were recruited for the in-depth interviews and each completed a questionnaire and an individual interview session. Eleven males and eight females participated in the survey. The majority of participants were aged between 18 and 25 years old. Half of them had graduated, while the rest were studying either full-time or part-time. As can be seen in Figure 1, 11 participants, 58 per cent, were taking a Bachelor Degree and Further Education (Technical And Further Education [TAFE]) such as a Certificate and Diploma, and the rest of the participants, 42 per cent, graduated only from high school or Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE). Overall, most participants were working either full-time or part-time, which accounted for 47 and 42 per cent respectively. However, another 11 per cent were unemployed.

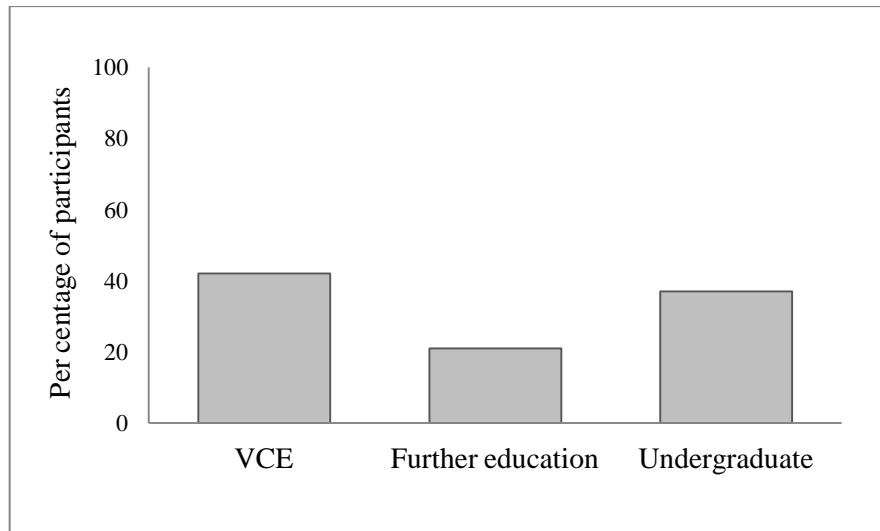


Figure 1: The Education Level of the Australian Participants

These results show that Australian participants have substantial exposure to the media and ownership of media devices. Most participants owned one television, a DVD player, a radio and a CD player in their bedroom. Nearly half of the participants owned a computer with access to the internet, and an MP3 player. Television is the main media for most Australian participants. Figure 2 shows that 63 per cent of the participants spent one to three hours daily on watching television. Most of the Australian participants had the television on during their meals and at bedtime; that is, 44 per cent in both cases, whereas another 11 per cent turned the television on when they woke up.

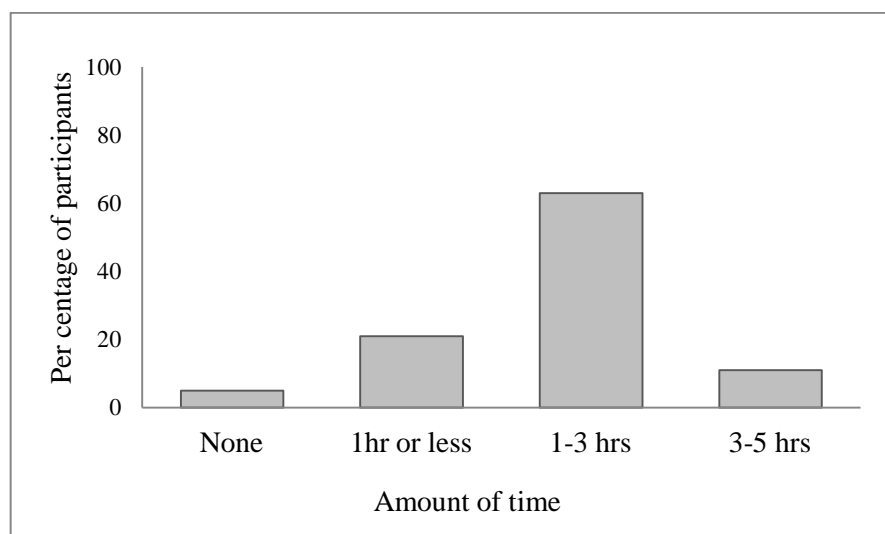


Figure 2: Daily Time Spent by Australian Participants Watching Television

The secondary medium for Australian participants was radio and the internet. As shown in Figure 3, 37 per cent spent one hour to three hours listening to the radio, and 47 per cent devoted about an hour or less to the internet. Nevertheless, there were about 26 per cent of participants spending more time on average listening to the radio, and 16 per cent on the internet each day.

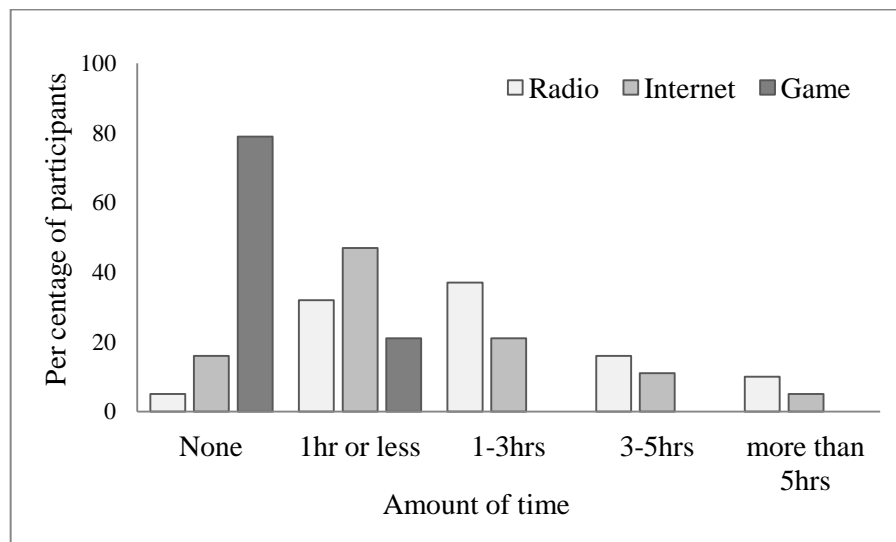


Figure 3: Daily Time Spent by Australian Participants on Other Media

In addition, 52 per cent of Australian participants also regularly read newspapers, 18 per cent browse online newspapers, 21 per cent read magazines, and 9 per cent read online magazines. Nevertheless, Australian media usage generally was lower than Thai media usage. For example, as compared to the Thai group, Australian participants spent fewer hours on the internet and playing games. This could be due to cultural differences but it is worth acknowledging that a possible reason for these differences is the greater involvement of the Australian group with full-time work and commitments to studies.

Additionally, Australian participants also revealed their attitude towards the advertisements. Television and radio appeared to be the most powerful media for advertising to young Australian participants, accounting for 42 and 37 per cent of exposure, respectively. Another 16 per cent suggested that outdoor media, particularly billboards had an influence on them; while only five per cent thought of the internet. Nevertheless, nearly half of the Australian participants noted that they were annoyed by television commercials, and another 26 per cent were only

tolerant of it. The other 21 per cent said they liked advertising, while 53 per cent said they only liked it from time to time. The Australian participants had less appreciation of advertisements than Thai participants did. Australian participants also showed different attitudes towards advertising appeals. Humour and the use of presentation techniques were the most interesting to young Australian participants, as shown in Figure 4.

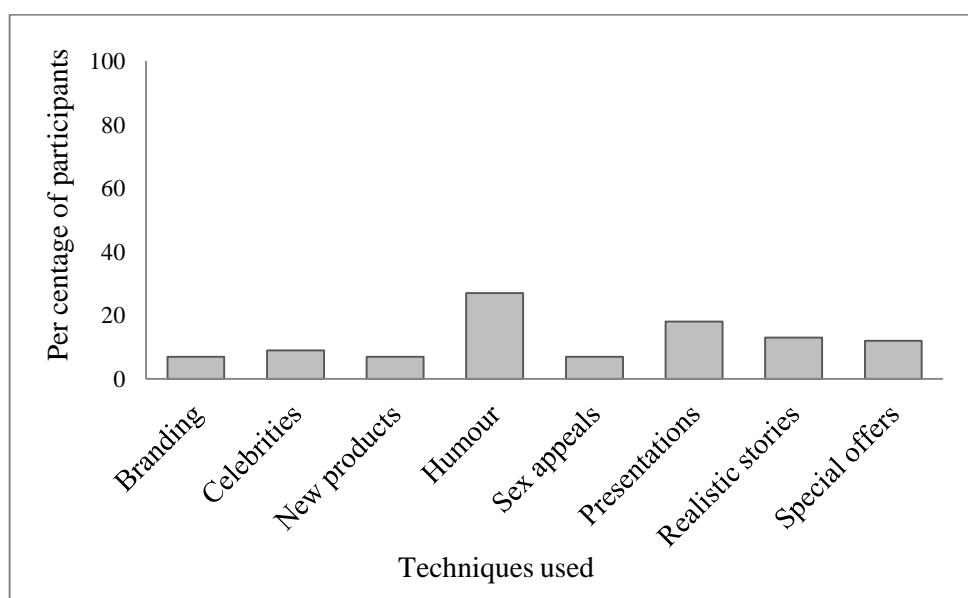


Figure 4: Attitude of Australian Participants towards Advertising Appeals

The attitude of young Australian participants towards advertising demonstrates their appreciation of advertisements.

4.2 Australian Literacy of the Advertising Industry

This chapter also examines Australian participants' media knowledge, literacy skills and comprehension of the media. For Silverblatt (2001), audience media literacy is closely associated with the ability to question and evaluate media production techniques. The uncritical consumption of media frameworks and production values leads to excessive media influence and mindless consumption (Silverblatt, 2001). Television advertising is a tool of the media industry that reinforces illogical premises by the use of presentation techniques to influence attitudes, beliefs and behaviours. Silverblatt's (2001) work therefore focuses on the importance of the possession of a media education: the ability to identify

elements of production values such as camera techniques and lighting, and the interpretation of these techniques as a form of understanding. An apprehension of the production of media representations such as contexts and ideology, style and production is also seen as a key to developing literacy (Silverblatt, 1999, p. 196). Media literacy involves being well read and having the capacity to evaluate style, aesthetic elements, and productions of the media (Kellner & Share, 2005, p. 372; Hobbs, 1998); it also involves media experiences and how well audiences use literacy skills to strengthen their criticism of the media.

Potter (2004), alternatively, places equal emphasis on audience reception and in particular the capacity of audiences to develop knowledge structures that enhance media literacy. Potter (2004) therefore values audiences' experiences of reception and consumption of the media—if they are also supported by strong interpretive skills:

Both skills and information are important. If we have a great deal of information but weak skills, we will not be able to make much sense of the information ... On the other hand, if we have strong skills but don't expose ourselves to a range of media messages or real world experiences, our knowledge structures will be limited and unbalanced (p. 59).

Like Silverblatt (2001), Potter (2004) values the knowledge of media production and manipulation; however, he elaborates on a broader range of types of knowledge structures that must be acquired by audiences if they are to be media literate. They include knowledge of media content, media industries, media effects, and real world information, or an understanding of the difference between media constructions and their referents. Media-literate people tend to put in the effort to make reasonable and logical evaluations based on all areas of these existing knowledge and skills, while people with lower literacy levels will 'most often feel the effort is not worth it' and make superficial judgements 'based only on superficial intuition' (Potter, 2004, p. 127).

Both Silverblatt (2001) and Potter (2004) do not deal with the importance of cultural and social factors that may affect audiences' responses to the media, and how these factors impact upon media comprehension and literacy. This chapter

considers both Silverblatt (2001) and Potter (2004) in relation to Australian study group and how this group critically examines advertising. This group's general understanding of media economics, ownership and production is examined. Participants' interpretation of media contents, the use of literacy skills and their responses towards the media, and cross-cultural comparisons among groups of participants is also considered.

In Potter's (2004) terms, Australian participants were likely to have limited real world knowledge of the advertising industry. They were aware of advertising produced by advertising companies; however, they were unaware of who produced these advertisements, the structure of ownership or the commercial details of advertising companies. Australian participants', in Potter's (2004) terms, lacked comprehension of media development; understanding of media economics, ownership and control; and awareness of the marketing message. Real world knowledge of the concentration of media industry is a key to understanding the concentration of media companies, and the control and influence the media have over media content (Potter, 2004). Some participants confused advertising agencies with media agencies, who might buy and sell media space for advertising but might not produce advertisements themselves, and technology specialists that provided infrastructure solutions: 'Mediacom, Mitchell & Partners [Mitchell communication group], Starcom Icon media and Optus media' were all identified incorrectly as advertising agencies (Australian 4, female, 03/06/06; Australian 7, female, 09/06/06). Most participants, however, did not have any knowledge whatsoever of advertising agencies or of their role in the production of advertisements.

Likewise, few participants understood the business operations of the industry and the network of exchanges between buyers and sellers. Only about one-third of the participants had some idea of how advertising might work as an industry. Australian young participants understood that media entertainment was supported by advertising: 'so they can purchase good shows' (Australian 4, female, 03/06/06); 'Television needs advertising to fund the programme, without advertising you wouldn't have TV. I mean advertising keeps the TV station in the business to get their most revenues from' (Australian 6, male, 08/06/06). This

conclusion was restated in another way: 'It's simple. So, the television company can afford to buy their programmes ... Advertising pays for their forecasting and also the product itself' (Australian 17, male, 26/06/06). However, overall, few participants understood the dependency of advertising agencies on television stations. These findings concur with Potter's (2004, p. 78) conclusions that, audiences in general have a 'poorly developed' knowledge of media industries and the structure of media ownerships, dependencies and operations. However, most Australian participants had some understanding of the 'real' purposes of advertising as a revenue generator, which is the primary goal of the industry and the motivation that drives all marketing. One participant noted, 'Make money. They've advertisements to sell and make money for the TV company, and to get an avenue ... to get their brand across so people buy it' (Australian 16, male, 26/06/06). There were many examples of this type of comment.

Some other participants included marketing research as a necessary part of the advertising process:

You would research that product which is the good point that you bring out in the ad ... You do a big brainstorm with people ... Then, have a different kind of set up to get a different angle, and you go into each scene and put it all together. Then, you probably get people outside of the group to review it, and see what they thought about it. (Australian 13, female, 24/06/06)

Another participant put it this way:

You would hire people to help create your ideas and then buy some advertising space on television and show it ... You might bring people in from that age group to see how they respond to the ads, and whether or not they feel positive towards them. Or it doesn't make an impact on them at all, that way maybe you can change some aspects. (Australian 19, female, 28/07/06)

Australian participants also seemed to have a more complex understanding of marketing and in particular 'branding', when compared to Thai and the Asian international participants. This was another 'real' world understanding

demonstrated by these participants and indeed a more complex media framework from which recipients used to decode advertising messages. For Silverblatt (2001), audience understanding of branding must go beyond the 'false impressions' conjured up by the branding. Audiences who understand branding must have an understanding of its 'latent' meaning as a marketing tool to create immediate recognisability. They must be aware of the illogical premises contained within branding (for example, a food product claims it is 'lite' when it is actually full of calories): the purported distinctiveness of the product, positioning against other products and false selling points of the product (Silverblatt, 2001, pp. 24–25; Williamson, 1978, p. 19).

Many of the participants were aware of the rhetorical effects of advertising. Australian participants showed they had a strong critical understanding of the purposes of branding and how it might manipulate audiences. The majority of Australian participants confidently criticised media frameworks and provided examples of the 'illogical premises' contained in slogan advertising. For instance, Nokia's slogan 'minimalism meets functionality' referred not to the simplicity of the product but its complicated multitasking capabilities (Australian 12, male, 20/06/06); James Boag's slogan 'Gallantry is back' proffered a confusing vision of masculinity as a rustic 'bread winner' (Australian 2, male, 01/06/06; Australian 4, female, 03/06/06; Australian 12, male, 20/06/06).

Australian participants, moreover, were able to understand the purpose of positioning and creation of distinctiveness in an advert:

One way of branding is to have several advertisements from the same company that are very similar. We would've seen this in McDonald's. All their advertisements are very similar, for example, the colour and the McDonald's logo at the end ... The Garnier is very similar as well with the colour green, the music in the background and celebrities. These advertisements will be good for branding the product (Australian 6, male, 08/06/06).

Another participant demonstrated that she had a sophisticated understanding of product placement in television shows, visual messaging and logos:

They create a product or brand and market it, market it, market it and market it until that brand is stuck in our head, and we associate it with many different things. Like Garnier, their logo is three different colours, pink, blue and something else. I've noticed the way that Garnier market, also sometime speak quite subtly. For example, in *Australian Idol*, before the contestants go out and sing, there're three cushions on the couches, and those are actually those three symbols of the Garnier logos. You generally don't notice it unless you're looking for it (Australian 7, female, 09/06/06).

Other participants criticised the artificiality of 'personality' and 'values' that are often attached to brands and attempt to influence consumers: 'If there're five similar products, most people will pick up the brand that they know. Creating a brand is giving a personality to your products or services' (Australian 4, female, 03/06/06). A brand name introduces a 'false impression' of the products (Silverblatt, 2001, p. 233) and, according to an Australian participant, constructs explicit content, particularly a 'false hope of materialism' (Australian 12, male, 20/06/06). Another participant remarked:

The branding is like an association. When you think of the name of the company, you think of certain images or certain products. For example, Nokia brand is like an exclusive product. It has good technology behind it. Throughout the ad, they might not say those words but you get the feeling that it's what they're trying to tell you ... They keep advertising so the name becomes familiar to you (Australian 19, female, 28/07/06).

Participant 19, for example, showed her understanding of how advertising generates a 'sign value', by turning commodities into brands and so adding to a commodity's exchange value. In this 'sign value' system, branding creates exchange value and adds to the real features or use values of a product. A product is often associated with the prestige, class and identity of the owner (Goldman & Papson, 1996, pp. 5–14). Other participants remarked upon how branding tried to shape identity:

They develop the brand and put more emphasis on it, so they don't have to spend much money on making a good product. Instead, they spend

money on enhancing their brand and selling more through that brand (Australian 2, male, 01/06/06).

Other techniques such as ‘hyperbole’ and Americanised exaggerated storytelling were also easily identified (Silverblatt, 2001, p. 237):

The whole idea is that of the perfect life. Perfect people are driving a perfect car in a perfect house and a perfect road. You couldn’t have an ugly person. It’s just the ways people want it. When they see an advert, they want something. It’s like a dream. It’s like a fantasy. If you buy these cloths you’re going to have this wonderful miscellaneous body and you’re going to have women all over you. You’re going to be rich and successful, just because you have this T-shirt ... (Australian 16, male, 26/06/06).

He further expressed his antipathy to the over-consumption created by advertising:

I think you buy too much crap that we don’t need ... You just buy it because everyone else buys it ... You don’t need three TVs. You don’t need five bathrooms. You don’t need four cars, but that’s what people are doing. Definitely advertising is having a negative effect ... It’s a waste (Australian 16, male, 26/06/06).

Australian participants were also critical of audiences who accepted the ‘identities’ assigned to them by advertising campaigns, and had become victims of marketing campaigns and consumers rather than critical audiences (Silverblatt, 2001, p. 235). As one participant stated: ‘It’s completely your choice. They’re trying to persuade you ... if you don’t like what they advertise don’t go out and spend money on it’ (Australian 5, female, 07/06/06). Another participant made clear:

Branding or advertisement is nothing. It’s just materialisation in people. They think, they need the brand to have an identity ... I’m not sort of that person. Like people’s clothes and stuff, they always need to have brand name clothes or the car they drive. It’s an identity. It’s buying an

identity. It applies to nearly everyone I know. I try to get away from it, but I'd say it's difficult. (Australian 2, male, 01/06/06)

Young Australian participants were not only insightful about the 'values' being constructed by the media but also had knowledge about how these values were being represented as communication in advertisements. Media literacy, according to Silverblatt (2001), involves critical thinking about 'production values' and media presentation styles. Many participants were conscious of the fact that all visuals were manipulated and were 'how the movie makers or producers wanted to show the images or the product' rather than 'true to life' (Australian 3, male, 01/06/06; Australian 19, female, 28/07/06). A number of young Australian participants were able to explain the technical visual management of advertisements, particularly camera movement:

Camera angle means the direction which the camera was and has taken the images from. Well, it can be a bird eyes angle where it's up in the sky, looking down, or it can be an opposite angle, or a reflecting angle so just using a mirror to reflect the original image in the mirror back at the camera (Australian 17, male, 26/06/06).

About one-third of participants were able to discuss how defined camera angles could create metaphor and innuendo in 'love scenes' in the media: 'They use camera angles when the actors have a love scene ... They use camera angles to conceal something. It makes it look like the actor really kisses the actress' (Australian 7, female, 09/06/06). Thai participants had even a better understanding of camera angles: perhaps because sexual explicitness was more repressed in mainstream popular television and much of the narrative had to be conveyed by visual innuendo. Fotiadis and Englander (2010) note, for example, the restriction of television and film censorship laws in Thailand that censor the sexual content, depiction of sexual promiscuity, and suggestions of prostitution to preserve Thai morality.

The Australian participants described other ways camera movement and perspective could be used to create effects, for instance, 'long lens', 'shot lens', 'close up', 'up high' or 'down below'. The Ford advertisement was one of the

advertisements most picked by participants—especially men—as an example of an advertisement that used camera effects. This was perhaps because of the way the camera positioned the viewer in the action and is perhaps an example of what Messaris (1997) calls a ‘subjective shot’ or shots that ‘draws the viewer into the situation’ (p. 32). Although unable to provide a technical term to explain the visual or camera operation, the majority of participants understood the way in which camera movement could create latent meanings: ‘The Ford ... camera lies on the ground and it’s looking up at the child ... the camera angle makes the ad more extreme, like more in your face’ (Australian 12, male, 20/06/06); ‘It [the camera used in Ford advertisement] goes around the racing track. It’s a kind of flow off, and then from one corner, the car’s flying at the camera. I thought that was good’ (Australian 1, male, 27/05/06). Participants understood how the camera could be moved to shape audiences’ perspectives.

Some Australian participants were also able to identify how camera work and editing created metonyms and implied meanings for audiences:

They [advertisers] try to portray the audience, say manoeuvre it in different angles. The phone [Nokia] looks like a samurai sword and an old car, so that refers to excellence, prestige. They refer to the jewellery which portrays that the phone’s going to be expensive, long lasting and durable ... They use the camera to make the object or the product to be seen like the car (Australian 3, male, 01/06/06).

This is an important aspect of both visual literacy and the understanding of what Silverblatt (2001) generally refers to as production values. As Barry (1997, cited in Duffelmeyer, 2004) suggests, a key problem for many audiences is the way critical awareness is suspended and audiences enter into a state very like daydreaming: ‘we become emotionally but not logically involved in the medium and images stream into our psyche, accepted without critical analysis’ (p. 170).

Several participants demonstrated that they could both critically and logically deduce the implied audience responses from the camera work and representations that were being deployed by the producers of advertisements. Participant 13, in particular, criticised the producer’s intention to attract and shape viewer’s

perspectives and feelings by the use of 'production values': 'The Garnier one, Sarah Jessica Parker, they sort of use a down angle looking up at her, they shoot like she's the biggest person in the room' (Australian 13, female, 24/06/06). In this advertisement, the actor was placed alone in the room and surrounded with small decorations and she was looking at herself in the mirror while a low-camera angle captured her image, making her a figure that women are supposed to look up to and admire. A woman facing in the mirror represents 'two selves' that are the 'real self' and the 'mask' as 'separate and disconnected' (Leeuwen, 2005, p. 7). The 'framing' divides the 'two selves' of Sarah Jessica Parker, the 'true self' and the way she presents herself to the world through a hair colour product. Although this participant failed to recognise the uses of semiology that may influence audiences on a psychological level, she was aware of both the effect of the camera angle and what reaction it might be trying to elicit from an audience. Many other participants were able to understand what Silverblatt (2001, p. 135) calls the use of camera angles to create the 'second person' perspective. Participant 19 understood, for example, how camera position and movement might manipulate the emotional responses of audiences to position and incorporate them into the advertisement. This participant, in particular, mentioned the use of an eye-level angle in the McDonald's advertisement as a way of incorporating the audience and creating a simulated face-to-face interaction (Silverblatt, 1999, pp. 208–209).

Although most participants were critical of camera movement that manipulates the 'worldview' of audiences, three out of 19 participants could not provide definitions or examples of techniques. A limited knowledge of the media left these three participants at risk of media influence. They would as Silverblatt (2001, p. 55) notes suspect media construction of their 'worldview' if only they had more media knowledge and real world information.

In addition to an understanding of camera angles, many participants also understood the uses of other production values such as editing, colour and lighting and how they might be used to create effects (Silverblatt, 2001). For example, how manipulation of time, space and sequencing; and relationship between

content that controls the composition and rhythm of the media image might be used to achieve certain effects (Silverblatt, 1999, pp. 197–202):

Editing helps the way the advertising flows. It may be a single shot, or different shots of the same person ... arranging and sequencing ... Editing helps tell a story in a very short time, without going into too much detail ... so you have an idea of what the progress is but in a very short and precise segment (Australian 19, female, 28/07/06).

The majority of Australian participants had a basic understanding of editing in terms of deleting irrelevant scenes, and changing the uses of lights, colours and backgrounds. Australian participants extended the meaning of editing to include sequence, merge, and retouch and other techniques: 'I already know with advertising, especially magazines, that after they take photos, they air brush and make it up to make them look perfect' (Australian 18, female, 01/07/06). This kind of retouching, according to this participant, resulted in 'perfect' visuals that were unnatural. Some other Australian participants were aware of an advanced use of 'editing for contrast' and correlation. In the Nestlé advertisement, participants noticed the way colour was used to create meaning between objects as Silverblatt notes (1999, pp. 199–201): 'The Nestlé hot chocolate ... The images are mirrored. That's very clever when the faces come out of the bowl of the chocolate ... It's very interesting, very unique and clever' (Australian 6, male, 08/06/06). Although the participants use the technical term of 'juxtaposition' or opposition to describe the process of positioning images of a white woman and coloured woman together, they clearly understood the implied metaphorical meanings of the juxtaposition of colour in this advert: 'the company co-operates colours ... In the Nestlé ad, ... they use the colour ... to merge the white lady and African lady. They're contrasty' (Australian 4, female, 03/06/06).

A number of media theorists have pointed to the use of colour in advertisements, as an important production technique used to shape the thoughts of audiences. Understanding how colour might be used to shape audience perception is thus a critical component of audience media literacy. Leeuwen (2005) believes that colour is a social semiotic. He illustrates the uses of 'colour rhyme' or the technique used by media producers to make a connection between colour and

media texts. *Lenor Care* magazine advertisement, for example, uses tinted pink on a child's face and flower, but monochrome blue on the banner and the rest of picture. As Leeuwen (2005, pp. 9–12) notes, the aim of the advertisement is to correlate the text with the blue and pink to signify both softness and freshness. Australian participants were sensitive to the correlation of colour and its use to build product/brand identity. They focused on an association between the colour of an actual product and logo, and the colour used in the advertising: 'Garnier uses a lot of green and citrus ... those colours are associated with the product ... The Nokia one ... the phone is like stainless steel silver. So they use blue and silver' (Australian 8, female, 10/06/06); 'Nestlé uses warm colours, brown and red. Garnier uses green, the fruity light. Ford uses the bright colour of the cars ... That's sort of attracting people to watch' (Australian 10, female, 13/06/06). The uses of colours, according to participants, influenced their feelings: 'I'm sure it does but at a sub-conscious level' (Australian 6, male, 08/06/06). They further identified different meanings and emotional responses conveyed by each colour (Silverblatt, 1999, pp. 223–229).

The Australian participants' understanding of production values was not only limited to visuals, but also included audio. They were mindful of media effects that were constructed through sequencing of image and music that create temporary reaction and arousal (Potter, 2004, p. 80). One participant noted, 'Music has a strong emotional affect. People often remember things when they're more emotional. If they hear an emotive kind of music ... then they're likely to remember the product' (Australian 2, male, 01/06/06). Others suggested, 'Music makes you feel relaxed. I would want to sit through an ad if I like the music. Doesn't matter what the product is, I'll still listen to the music from start to end' (Australian 10, female, 13/06/06); 'Different people have different senses and different things to appeal to them. It's like learning ability, everyone learns differently ... so they use different styles and music to get people into seeing that ad' (Australian 13, female, 24/06/06).

Australian participants were notably less critically aware of how audio effects could be used to manipulate an audience; although they were often aware of the audio technique that was being used. Australian participants found that music in

the Holden advertisement, in particular, highly memorable. A few participants sang the signature turn 'I like to move it, move it' shook their heads like the bouncing Holden, and some of them moved along while they talked about this advertisement. The 'up beat' music undoubtedly captured them: 'With the Holden ... It has a dancing beat to it ... The music, the dancing, and the sort of culture like street basketball is an association. I really have a positive emotion' (Australian 12, male, 20/06/06). Music in the Holden advertisement appeared to command the participants' attention. As Bailey (2005) notes, music creates for audiences 'a doubly powerful connection between the social subject and ... musical discourses' (p. 103).

Some Australian participants showed a limited capacity to understand the constructions of advertising effects and simply reproduced the preferred meanings and positioning of the producer. For example, many female participants conceded that Nestlé hot chocolate 'looks really yummy' and 'It just makes you feel warm and fuzzy inside' (Australian 4, female, 03/06/06; Australian 7, female, 09/06/06; Australian 8, female, 10/06/06; Australian 13, female, 24/06/06). Some other participants simply accepted the messaging of the advertisement and its call to action: 'There're two that stood out to me. It's the Schick, the shaving one. I thought that is simple, but you know, it's a hot women ... I use another kind of razor but that interests me; the four razors, and I'm going to get it now ... ' (Australian 1, male, 27/05/06); 'Maybe the Nokia phone, it looks great, to be honest. That's really nice, I do like classical things. It's very nice' (Australian 6, male, 08/06/06). This study appeared to reproduce the same result as Huan's (2000) investigation, which considers consumer compulsion in relation to advertising. Production values directly affect an audience's emotion and experiences of the media, which influences the interpretation, and reaction of audiences (Silverblatt, 1999). Audience understanding of these production values is a key to media literacy.

Few Australian participants could elaborate a fuller understanding of the whole process of media production. Most participants gave only a very rough explanation using keywords such as filming, editing, and putting on-air or they simply repeated key words from the interview questions such as 'camera angles',

‘lighting’, ‘colours’ or ‘music’. Many participants were confused and uncertain about the how the production process worked: ‘Not too sure. Just get people to shoot the ad and then they go and act and then they put it on TV’ (Australian 9, male, 10/06/06); ‘I guess they come up with a storyboard. They find something that sticks in everyone’s head, something catchy. Then they hire the actor and make the clip of story that came, and put it on TV’ (Australian 15, male, 25/06/06). Another participant could only think of the advertising process in terms of its business operation but could not elaborate about the creative process: ‘The company hires an advertising company to come up with some creative ideas. They give them the target that they want to achieve ... choose the one that they like. The advertising company then goes to the media buyer to purchase the media for the client’ (Australian 4, female, 03/06/06). Although overall, only a few participants could logically outline the production process in detail:

You need to have an idea for ads, you need to cast for it, and you need to get the right scene, the right props. You need the money to fund the whole commercial, not only making but also putting it on the TV. You need to edit it, get it down to 30 seconds, so quite a lot of factors are involved in just producing advertisements ... It does cost a lot of money to produce the ads and also to it run on TV ... Like the Ford, they need to get the race track, get the kid’s bedroom and the toys on the ground. They need to set all that up. (Australian 6, male, 08/06/06)

If Australian participants’ understanding was limited here, their understanding of media content, effects and realism was stronger. Media literacy, according to Potter (2004), also involves a comprehension of media content and effects. To be literate of media content, a person should be able to identify, the so-called ‘content formulas’—certain courses of action, and ‘aggregate figures’—types of plots, characters, and patterns in media that indicate the type and genre of media message that is being deployed. Exposure to a wide range of media patterns helps a person to understand a big picture of what and how the media presents. For example, participants should be able to understand how advertising claims to address problems and offers the solution, and be mindful of consumer and advertising appeals, and use of celebrity (Potter, 2004, p. 76). Australian participants examined in this study demonstrated they understood the ways in

which advertising positioned audience desire in messaging and developed persuasive narratives to sell goods. They were particularly aware of repetitive narratives and stereotypical romantic and sexual situations and identified these situations as having wider cultural significance in terms of 'sexist' attitudes displayed by the advertiser and company. The Schick advertisement was criticised because 'it's insulting to women' because it targeted male audiences by the use of sex appeal (Australian 19, female, 28/07/06). An attractive, good-looking woman was used in the advertisement to grasp male audience's attention: 'The Schick ... The guy was sitting back and waiting for this beautiful woman. She looks like a sex object' (Australian 2, male, 01/06/06). Many male participants were sensitive towards sexuality and tended to focus on lewd images: 'The lady in the Schick, she was in a dress that tightens her breasts, and the men were trying to impress her with their skin' (Australian 15, male, 25/06/06). The participants were slightly emotional at times, criticising female representation in the Schick advertisements:

The Schick is slightly chauvinistic. It's derogatory toward women. The way that she's displayed, I don't think it's very ethical. Women don't nurse or play around like that. They aren't just immediately attracted to men because they have shaved. It's just a misconception and slightly offensive because it shows that she just looks like an object (Australian 7, female, 09/06/06).

Another male participant shared his view:

It might be a bit sexist with the girls because they showed her cleavage ... They always do that. Nothing you can do ... At the end of the day, the company doesn't care whether their product is good or not. They just wanna sell it. I'm sure that people might not need the product, but it might make them feel good by buying it because everybody else has it. (Australian 17, male, 26/06/06)

Australian participants were very good at drawing conclusions about the meaning of narratives of adverts: they were able to induct the meaning of advertisements without necessarily being able to elaborate the steps in the analysis to reach these conclusions. The majority of Australian participants applied induction skills when discussing ethical stances in relation to sexism and gender stereotypes. Potter

(2004, p. 13) sees induction as an important way of reaching a general conclusion about media content. Characteristically, Australian participants tended to give summary answers in their responses to interview questions: 'They really try to sell the sexy images instead of the product' (Australian 6, male, 08/06/06); 'They're just trying to promote things to guys that they think guys would like and girls would want' (Australian 14, male, 24/06/06). More elaborate examples of summary answers that criticised the sexism of advertising included:

Some of them were slightly sexist. The Schick one was a bit sexist because it mainly faces a camera to that girl, her boobs and her arse ... I always think we objectify women too much already and maybe, I mean, this encourages that, especially advertising. An advertisement is shocking us by the way it objectifies people ... Look, I don't mind sexual images because it works sometimes but it does apply to what I say about having a self-image. It's such an issue for teenagers or even adults as well (Australian 2, male, 01/06/06).

Recognition of the advertising formulas helps audiences to have a better understanding of media messages.

Many Australian participants were familiar also with the trope of celebrity and how it might be used as generalised pattern of media representation to titillate audiences. Celebrity is a 'human pseudo-event' (Turner, 2004, p. 24) that is produced by the media to gain public attention and promote American culture. It is a phenomenon of 'fan clubs' and a result of the media establishing a relationship with audiences that quickly spreads around the world across all cultures. In culture and media studies, critics have pointed to the way in which the celebrity industry has focused on the production of images and the roles and representation to drive cultural change. The production of celebrity constructs social and cultural identities, real content, and a para-social interaction that is attractive and affects audiences' responses (Turner, 2004, p. 24). The majority of participants in this study were immediately able to identify the use of celebrity in advertising as a form of persuasion and construction of a commodity's identity. They were sceptical about the manufactured characters of celebrity, and 'the rule of the role model' spread throughout the media. According to Leeuwen (2005),

‘The rule of the role model not only provides choice, it also allows for rapid and frequent change, for semiotic mobility’ (p. 56). Australian participants thought the production of celebrity manipulated audiences in many ways. As one participant noted: ‘Audiences will look at the beautiful people and think if I use this product or if I eat or drink this, I can be beautiful as well’ (Australian 3, male, 01/06/06). This participant understood the way in which celebrities could be used as role models: what Leeuwen (2005) has called ‘because so-and-so does it’ (p. 56). The emergence of celebrity is a form of social semiotics: ‘Social control is exercised through examples given by high-status people, whether in the peer group, the workplace, or the wider community, including the mass media’ (Leeuwen, 2005, p. 56).

The Australian participants understood that the purpose of celebrity was to establish relationships and inspire audiences, and as consequence motivate buying behaviours. The uses of a ‘familiar face’ helps when ‘pushing brands’ to the public (Australian 3, male, 01/06/06) and makes the advertising become ‘trustworthy’ (Australian 5, female, 07/06/06; Australian 10, female, 13/06/06; Australian 12, male, 20/06/06). This participant explained: ‘it gives the product a sort of authority. If somebody who is famous is using it then it must be good’ (Australian 2, male, 01/06/06).

Australian participants understood that the appearance, personality, character, and performance of celebrities were managed to ‘appeal and match’ audiences to the products advertisers were ‘selling’ (Australian 15, male, 25/06/06; Australian 18, female, 01/07/06). A celebrity needed to be able to ‘show the brand as well as identity’ in order to catch the attention of the public (Australian 16, male, 26/06/06). As one participant noted, advertisers are ‘hoping that people aspire to be in the ads and think I’ll buy that because I want to be like that’ (Australian 4, female, 03/06/06). Young participants were also able to identify how the ‘aura’ of the celebrity could be transferred to the product. The Garnier advertisement, for example, used audience familiarity of celebrity to gain the attention of audiences. A celebrity is not just simply a presenter who presents products, but a personality/identity who implicitly conveys certain product images and values.

All participants understood how the notion of celebrity could be deployed as a rhetorical and persuasive device in creating ‘media’ effects for viewers (Horton & Wohl, 1956; Marshall, 1997; Turner, 2004). One participant was aware of the intertextual effects of celebrity and how the uninterrupted ‘flow’ of celebrity as a commodity streamed between advertisements and televisions shows: ‘She [Sarah Jessica Parker] starts doing a number of those advertisements [Garnier] in different colours. She works on “Sex and the City”. So I guess it’s something that would help promote her in the show as well’ (Australian 1, male, 27/05/06). Many Australian participants were mindful of the social effects of celebrity as an identity construction: ‘That’s what television is all about. It’s giving you that that ultra-ego. There’re people who will let them influence you ... I’m sure there’s plenty of girls out there who love Sarah Jessica Parker, go out and buy that product because she bought Garnier’ (Australian 11, male, 14/06/06). Another interviewed participant suggested:

It doesn’t do anything to my self-esteem but there would be some people out there who don’t necessary like continuously looking at gorgeous people on TV. That’s where eating disorders come from ... I think it might affect my sister. She’s at a very impressionable age at the moment, she’s 15. I’m sure she gets sick of looking at gorgeous people on TV and wants to look just like them, which is probably why she goes out and buys so many things (Australian 5, female, 07/06/06).

Participant 2 could elaborate more and explained how celebrity affected the identity formation and self-esteem of viewers:

Interviewer: Many of the people we have seen in these advertisements are beautiful and attractive, but most people in our society are not like that. How do you think this can influence your self-esteem?

Participant 2: ... that is the nature of advertising because they put somebody there that you aspire to be like. Make you want that product so you can be that person. They’re never ever going to have somebody that is not better than the

average person in the way they look, the way they talk, because that is the nature of it ... I think that is a problem because it means that people will never be happy with who they actually are. They'll never accept, 'okay well I'm me. I don't actually need to be like anybody else' ... It makes everybody sick that they need to be somebody else.

(Australian 2, male, 01/06/06)

Some participants were particularly sensitive to North American 'content formulas' in the media and were able to identify it as an ideology. Holden, Garnier and McDonald's advertisements received the most comments in this regard: 'The Holden one. It looks very American. We don't have basketball courts like that around here that are on top of buildings. People didn't look very Australian, they just looked American' (Australian 8, female, 10/06/06). Another participant illustrated how an Australian advert was adapted from a US advertisement: 'They're trying to use an Australian voice over and use people who look familiar, sound familiar. I think because they make the effect ... The person who is interviewing people on the street, she's an Australian. The people who she's interviewing, they've all got a familiar Australian accent' (Australian 19, female, 28/07/06). The participants were able to analyse how advertisements uses such techniques to reflect American values. They further expressed the influences of global advertisements on Australian culture: 'The McDonald's in Australia or being in any country is expressing the American way of life. The more American companies like McDonald's we have, the less Australian culture it's going be. It's going to take over and there already is not enough Australian culture ... It's going to get worse' (Australian 2, male, 01/06/06). Others had similar points of view: 'the American culture, from the Australian point of view, is portrayed as eating out and getting take away, not cooking our own meals. McDonald's is being advertised in Australia and is sort of pushing Australians toward the notion of it's a lot easier to go out and buy something as opposed to a process of cooking something healthy' (Australian 3, male, 01/06/06). Another two Australian participants also noted how audiences' decoding of advertisements

might be negatively affected across cultures: 'I think that some people who come from a different culture may be offended by something that they see' (Australian 16, male, 26/06/06).

Many Australian participants' were also able to identify other ways in which advertising derived from other texts. A media-literate person should be able to extract the elements and recognise forms of media references, such as voice, music, sound effects and screen movements that are circulating in other advertisements and the wider global culture. Recognition of patterns means the reader understands compositions, sequences and connections among elements of the media (Potter, 2004, pp. 118–120). O'Donohoe (1997) in a study of young people's awareness of advertising found that young people were able to connect forms and styles that existed in prior advertisements, films and music. Participants demonstrated that they were able to read advertisements 'intertextually'. Likewise, ten out of 19 Australian participants showed they were able to read advertisements intertextually.

Some participants recognised formulas typically used in advertisements. They identified camera and production techniques, vox pop sequences in the McDonald's advertisements, obstacle scenes in the car advertisements, and narrative patterns and sequences in the alcohol advertising, which had been used in previous media productions: 'McDonald's reminds me of the zoot review' (Australian 7, female, 09/06/06). While another person thought the McDonald's advertisement reminded her of a 'video camcorder' interview she had seen (Australian 18, female, 01/07/06). One participant noted how the James Boag beer advertisement reminded him of a number of other advertisements: 'The James Boag ad reminds me of the other beer advertising, actually not necessary the beer ad, other alcohol ads. I'm thinking of a Baileys commercial, Empire Lager ... and the Tooheys extra dry. They all have a party scene. It's all to do with, like, sex appeal and alcohol combining' (Australian 12, male, 20/06/06).

A number of participants were also correctly able to associate media intertextuality with particular genres of advertising and movie making. This was particularly the case with car advertising: 'Definitely with the Ford one, also the

Holden one. They used to have an ad where a car was referred to as a hurricane or a tornado. It's sort of plays to a similar audience, the fast and accelerated adrenaline rush' (Australian 3, male, 01/06/06); 'The Ford was like the *Fast and Furious* sort of movie scene. When the car crashed, it reminded me of watching that particular movie' (Australian 2, male, 01/06/06). Many participants appeared to understand 'content formulas' and were able to compare, and evaluate media elements across advertisements. The participants were able to connect media elements, particularly music. About half of all participants were sure that they had heard of the song used in the Holden advertisement; although they could not, remember the source: 'I heard it on the radio and it used to be my mum's favourite song. I heard it on CD, I heard in clubs. It's an old song in the 90s but they've been remixing a new song'. She associated it with music videos from the 90s: 'Holden would be similar to music videos in the 90s ... when I hear that song I think of the 90s and MTV' (Australian 18, female, 01/07/06). Many Australian participants were able to recognise referents and patterns borrowed from other advertisements (Potter, 2004, pp. 118–120). Participants had developed 'schemas' in Potter's words 'knowledge structures' or ways of evaluating advertisements that took into account prior referents and intertextuality. These literacy skills helped improve Australian participants in insights into advertising. Well-built knowledge structures of the media industry, media content, media production and its effects help reading of advertisements and assist critical consideration of the media.

Media 'realism' is a key way in which advertisements add authenticity to their effects on audiences. Australian participants also showed they had developed understanding and 'schemas' to evaluate realism in advertising both in terms of understanding representation and also audience reception. Media realism involves a number of well-known techniques and production effects. According to Hall (2003), media realism uses the following techniques: plausibility, typicality, factuality, emotional involvement, narrative consistency, and perceptual persuasiveness. Shapiro and Chock (2003, pp. 165–184) further observes that audiences become more sophisticated readers of realism with the increasing of age, and greater exposure to television and real world information. Awareness and more 'literacy' may have the effect of diminishing the media effects of realism

because audiences are far more aware of the ‘constructed’ nature of the effects and attempts at manipulating their response as Hall (2003) notes.

The majority of Australian participants interviewed showed that they understood some of these effects and were able to deploy schemas to recognise and evaluate them in their critical appraisal of advertisements. ‘Plausibility’ and ‘factuality’ effects were often identified by a number of participants. Participants doubted the ‘factuality’ of advertisements and pointed to the ‘constructedness’ of the media presentation: ‘Isn’t that set up? You never know with those sorts of advertisements if it’s actually people walking up at the people on street or if it’s already ... pre-recorded’ (Australian 14, male, 24/06/06). Two other participants added: ‘I didn’t really like the McDonald’s ad. It doesn’t seem natural. It seems like they stage it. They set up the people to answer in a certain way. It wasn’t believable’ (Australian 19, female, 28/07/06); ‘The Schick shaving isn’t realistic. It shows that, if you shave with it then this girl ... will come straight to you ... It’s stupid. Well, realistically a girl with attractive big boobs, who is a nurse or a doctor, isn’t going to go to someone who got a clean shave ... They’ll go to the knee injury person first’ (Australian 18, female, 01/07/06).

Many of the Australian participants believed that if advertisements were to be persuasive they should be ‘true to life’ and ‘honest’ (Australian 3, male, 01/06/06; Australian 11, male, 14/06/06; Australian 13, female, 24/06/06). Advertisements were therefore not ‘real-to-life’ or plausible if they were blatantly one-sided. As participant 14 said, the McDonald’s advertisement only showed the positive feedback given by customers about their products. He explained ‘The McDonald’s interview, if someone says this [the product] is crap, they [the advertising agency] probably wouldn’t use it’ (Australian 14, male, 24/06/06). Another participant noted perceptively that the plausibility of advertisements might have much to do with advertising producers pragmatically assessing what audiences might be willing to accept as plausible: ‘Some of them [advertisements] are needed to meet a level, between a middle ground, between realistic and unrealistic ... Like the pimple ads, why don’t the girls ever have pimples? All of them, the Clearasil and the Nivea one, they never have bad skin’ (Australian 8,

female, 10/06/06). Another participant noted that if advertisements wanted to be believable then their immediacy needed to be authentic:

If they [advertising agency] want to give the impression that somebody is getting interviewed on the spot, then they actually need to do it. If they [the public] aren't happy to do that, then they [advertising agency] should try a different form of ad because it isn't genuine. It gives you a sort of feeling that the company shouldn't be honest about things. It doesn't feel right. This one is a little bit misleading because I doubt very much that those [interviews] were just taken off the street (Australian 19, female, 28/07/06).

The greater majority of participants were critical readers of the realism effects in advertisements; a minority nonetheless continued to read the media in naive ways that emphasised entertainment values rather than critical readings of the advertisements. While one-third of participants suggested that the narrative story of the McDonald's advertising were 'staged', 'fake', and 'unbelievable', participants 6 and 13, looked at the advertisement as a real event and television as a 'window on the world': presenting a 'direct sight' of the reality (Rayner et al., 2004, pp. 55–56). 'The McDonald's ad was generally going around the street ... getting people to try their food. Getting honest feedback and explaining the fat content. I think that is the most realistic story. It shows something actually happening as a fact' (Australian 6, male, 08/06/06); 'the McDonald's interviews. It looks like they had people on the street just asking everyday people. They didn't look like they had actresses join in. You pretty much get real life people's responses to what they tasted' (Australian 11, male, 14/06/06); 'I like the McDonald's because it's the actual people being interviewed ... They go out and ask the people out there in the world what they think about the product that they try to sell, and portray back in the ad' (Australian 13, female, 24/06/06).

Authenticity and whether an advertisement 'typically' represented a situation or person was an important part of the realism effect for participants, particularly in terms of how it related to the participants' emotional involvement with the subject material and how it represented a 'typical' experience for them. Participants developed a 'schema' (Potter, 2004, p. 53) from which they were able to draw

from a number of categorised or typical points of reference when they assessed the authenticity of media texts. Participants were required to use the cognitive function involved in media literacy and to understand that represented reality in advertisements was more than a mirror. Personal experiences tended to be the main factor participants used in making sense of the advertisements (Phillips, 1997). Most Australian participants evaluated the advertisements by comparing media content and presentation to their own life 'schema' or their own life experiences and memories and whether advertisements managed to connect successfully with this schema. The advertisements were likely to be searched for associations that were related to familiar everyday life situations that defined for participants their notion of realism: 'something I've experienced it before, or I've seen people experience it' (Australian 14, male, 24/06/06). A number of participants used the word 'relate' to explain media typicality. Potter (2004) notes that contrasting and comparing is pivotal in the use of schemas to understand the media. This is an important part of the 'relating process' for participants: 'I probably like the James Boag, the alcohol beverage one. The reason why is because it's something that I can, I guess, I can relate to. Something that I do on the Friday and Saturday night—go and have a drink' (Australian 11, male, 14/06/06). Participants had seen narratives in screened advertisements as a repetition or confirmation of their perception—a correspondence between the real world as they lived it and the fictional world of the advertisements.

Emotional involvement was particularly important for this connection. Schemas, according to Potter (2004, p. 53), are compiled through the five senses: sound, smell, touch, taste and feelings. Memories of emotions are key ways in which these senses connect with referents and in turn representation of referents in advertisements. Participants 12 and 18, for example, made a linkage between music and memory in this way: 'Being able to recall the advertising is really important. Like music, it's useful because it conjures up lots of memories and emotions. It's powerful in a sense that when you hear music it goes into your memory' (Australian 12, male, 20/06/06). However, another participant made a linkage with his gendered experiences of childhood: 'Ford, playing the racing ... It just reminds me of when I was little, and I played with a racing car and it makes

me think about wanting to buy car, I'm thinking of having a hot colour' (Australian 1, male, 27/05/06).

For Potter (2004, pp. 134–135), abstraction is another important aspect of media literacy, referring to the capability to logically and coherently abstract the essence of a message. In order to abstract, a person must be able to analyse, evaluate and break down the messages to identify the core components. A number of participants were able to 'cognitively' abstract and generalise from the particular to the general as part of the critical process. Participant 19 was able to abstract from the effects of the Ford advertisement to consider how the effects might more 'generally' impact upon participants. She had a clear understanding of how advertisers make an association with their audiences and spoke in the objective voice in the third person:

In the Ford ad, the child plays with the car. It was something that most people would relate to. It makes them think about when they were little. Cars were really important to them. Now they can afford one, they might get a good one ... It relates because they understand like—that is a realistic situation whether they were a kid or have kids (Australian 19, female, 28/07/06).

She was also able to consider critically the media techniques that shape audience feelings and perspective from a more objective position:

In the McDonald's interview, it was like people were talking to you in a way because they were right at the same level ... So with McDonald's, if we were there we would be talking to the people, whereas with the Ford, we are sort of a spectator. You were looking at in the scene, not interacting with it (Australian 19, female, 28/07/06).

Although most Australian participants were knowledgeable and sceptically processed the media content, their real world information of government regulations appeared to be limited. They tended to use common sense to guess what might be the current laws covering broadcasting. Advertising regulations were assumed to be the same as they are for television programmes:

Marketing people abuse their rights. Advertising quite frequently has an issue of sexual and provocative advertisement that ... a young child shouldn't be viewing during day time hours. It doesn't set a very good standard for younger people who have no choice in what they have seen. I know there's a law on certain times and when they can show certain ads. (Australian 7, female, 09/06/06)

Generally, comments about advertising regulation were framed around issues of morality and what the government ought to do or around issues of personal responsibility. However, few participants understood the various voluntary and regulatory arrangements that govern Australian advertising:

The advertisers are always trying to sell some more beer. In Australia maybe it's a little bit different from other countries where it's a trend in our culture. You just drink ridiculous amounts for whatever time of the day. I think it comes down to the individual person, you can't drink that much. As long as advertisers or companies can sell their product and they can advertise it on TV, but in some ways they have to have a responsibility to make sure that people aren't drinking too much. Well, if you give a person a gun and they shoot someone it is that person's responsibility. It's not the gun manufacturer's fault, same with alcohol. (Australian 16, male, 26/06/06)

Few participants understood their legal and consumer rights about advertising. Indeed, many believed if you complained it would get you nowhere: 'I believe you have a right to complain about anything. Whether or not your complaint is listened to or heard and addressed. That's another question all together' (Australian 6, male, 08/06/06). Participants lacked real world knowledge of policy and an understanding of government regulation of censorship. In general, Australian participants had a high degree of tolerance for advertising material that might be considered offensive: 'I would never find anything offensive. I'm not getting offended very easy. But, I think if people get offended by stuff, they should have a right to be able to complain about it' (Australian 2, male, 01/06/06); 'I don't really care that much. I don't watch much TV ... Most stuff on TV is pretty good anyway' (Australian 9, male, 10/06/06). One participant indicated that

she would not formally complain to a government broadcasting authority even if the advertisement were distasteful or offensive:

I don't know. I'm just one person. They could offend me and if an ad offends me, I would probably think, okay that is just a stupid ad. I know that they do classify TV, I think I've seen see a couple times, where you call up an actual Department of Advertising classifications. If you have a problem, you just give them a call. I think that even if it's so offensive or it's very distasteful, I would not call. (Australian 1, male, 27/05/06)

Few participants were willing to exercise their democratic rights as citizens, even if they knew which government department was responsible for receiving complaints.

The findings in this chapter reveal that Australian participants have developed media literacy in understanding styles and patterns in media representations, particularly concerning types of appeals, gender stereotypes and the use of celebrity spokespersons. Australian participants also had a good understanding of media realism and the uses of media techniques that manipulate authenticity. Although some participants demonstrated good media knowledge and were mindful of the social effects of advertising, other participants were less critical and tended to believe in advertising claims. Moreover, they were unlikely to exercise their regulatory rights as viewers to broadcasting authorities. The next chapter explores the Thai participants' use of media and media knowledge. The next chapter also examines the context of the culture that may influence Thai participants' reading of the media, and compares it with that of the Australian group.

Chapter 5: Thai Participants in Thailand

This thesis previously reviewed Australian participants' comprehension of the advertising industry, advertising production, media effects and perception of realism. This chapter investigates Thai participants in those areas to provide a cross-cultural comparison of Western and Asian countries and explain how culture influences media responses and the literacy of audiences.

This chapter explores Thai knowledge of media usage, knowledge and literacy of advertising content and production. It considers the participants' consciousness of media manipulation of 'realism', and the participants' ability to employ literacy skills in the reading of advertisements. The differences between the high- and low-context cultures of Thailand and Australia are also considered in order to expand the concept and assessment of media literacy.

5.1 Media Usage

This section describes the demographics and media use of Thai participants who live in Bangkok, Thailand. Twenty Thai participants completed surveys of their media usage and undertook in-depth interviews to consider their knowledge of advertising content, industry, production and the effect. There were nine males and 11 females, aged 18 to 25 years in the Thai study. The majority of Thai participants either was undertaking or had obtained a Bachelor degree. They also tended to finish an undergraduate degree before working full-time. In contrast, only 36 per cent of Australian participants were undertaking a Bachelor degree at the time this study was conducted. The Australian participants who had completed high school (VCE) were unlikely to have continued with further study because of commitments to full-time careers.

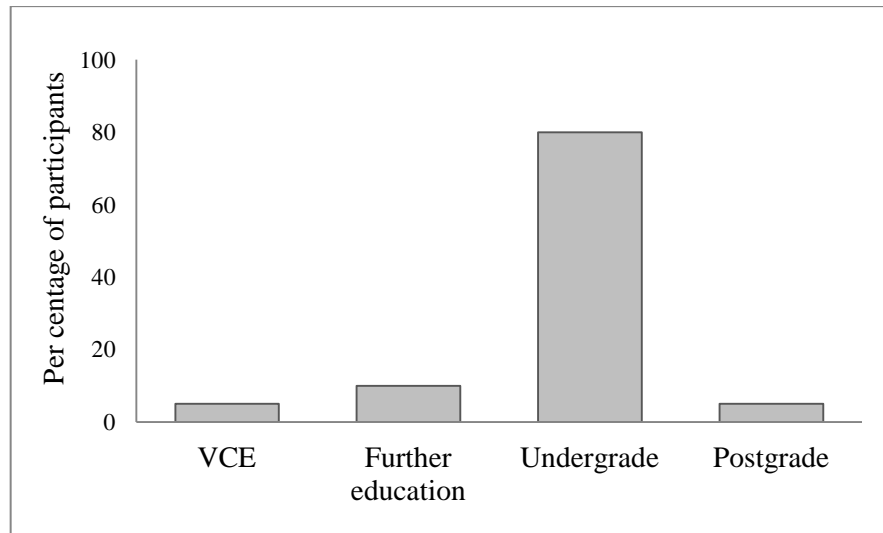


Figure 5: The Education Level of Thai Participants

A degree appears to be necessary in Thai society. According to Knutson (2004), ‘the role of knowledge in Thai culture operates to maintain social hierarchy and reinforce social status conditions’ (p. 151). As shown in Figure 5, 80 per cent of Thai participants had obtained an undergraduate degree compared to 37 per cent of Australian participants. Another five per cent of Thai participants also had a postgraduate degree, compared to no participants among the Australian group in this study. With higher rates of higher education among the study sample and also the Thai population in general, it could be expected that the Thai interview sample would have higher degrees of media literacy. However, as this chapter demonstrates, the cross-cultural impacts affect both how criticism is managed by Thai participants and how literacy is demonstrated.

The Thai participants owned a similar level of media devices as the Australian participants. They owned at least one television, radio and CD player in their bedroom, as did the Australian participants. DVD players, however, appeared to be owned more by Australia participants, which might imply less consumption of advertising by Australian participants. Nevertheless, DVDs are not entirely advertising free, and the effects of ‘product placement’ and advertising trailers incorporated on DVDs should not be underestimated. The findings relating to Thai participants’ media use was slightly different to the Australian participants. Television was the main media outlet used by Thai participants. A high proportion of them, 41 per cent, had the television on during their meal. Another 38 per cent

of the participants watched television before bedtime and the other 21 per cent upon awakening. Figure 6 shows a high media consumption by Thai participants. Many Thai participants, 40 per cent, devoted an average of one to three hours to television viewing, and another 40 per cent watched more than three hours of television per day. This high consumption contrasted to 63 per cent of Australia participants who spent one to three hours, and 11 per cent who spent three to five hours.

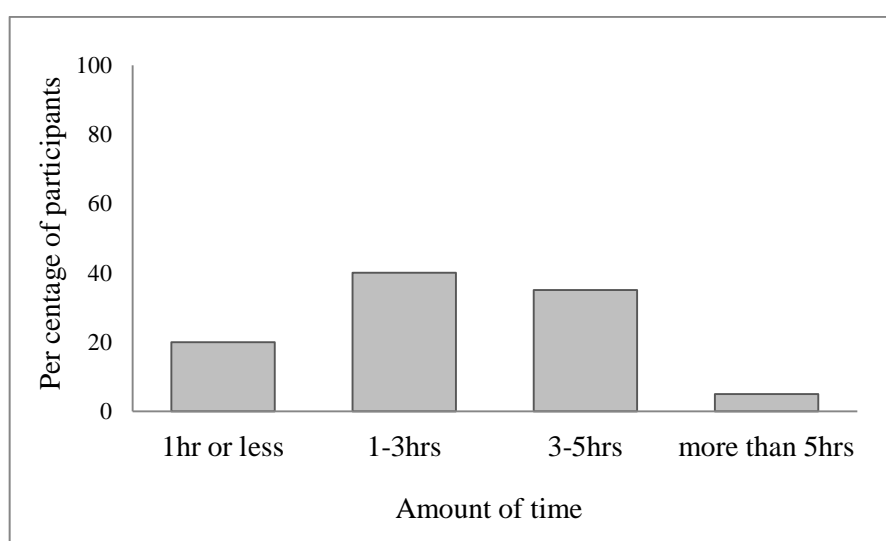


Figure 6: Daily Time Spent by Thai Participants Watching Television

The result could be seen to reflect the fact that more Australian participants are in full-time paid work than Thai participants. Students in Thailand are more likely not to be in paid work because family support in middle class families is more extensive and students are required to focus more on education than work. Education in middle class families is also highly prized in terms of status (Hongladarom, 2002). With more time on their hands, Thai student media consumption is therefore likely to be higher. A survey from the Ministry of Culture in Thailand illustrates the increasing influence of communication technology in Thai society. In 2006, Thai young people spent at least eight hours daily engaged with media, including mobile phones, computer games, MP3players, televisions and the internet (Cultural Surveillance Department, Ministry of Culture, 2006).

Thai participants also had higher media consumption than Australian participants, especially in terms of the internet and games. Seventy per cent of Thai participants owned a computer with access to the internet in their bedroom. As shown in Figure 7, 35 per cent of Thai participants devoted an average of one to three hours daily to other media; another 35 per cent spent more than three hours. This contrasted to 47 per cent of Australian participants who spent only one hour or less on the radio and internet, and another 16 per cent who spent more than three hours. Additionally, time spent on electronic gaming was also higher than Australian participants: 15 per cent of them spent around one to three hours and another 15 per cent played for more than five hours, compared to 21 per cent of Australian participants that spent only an hour or less.

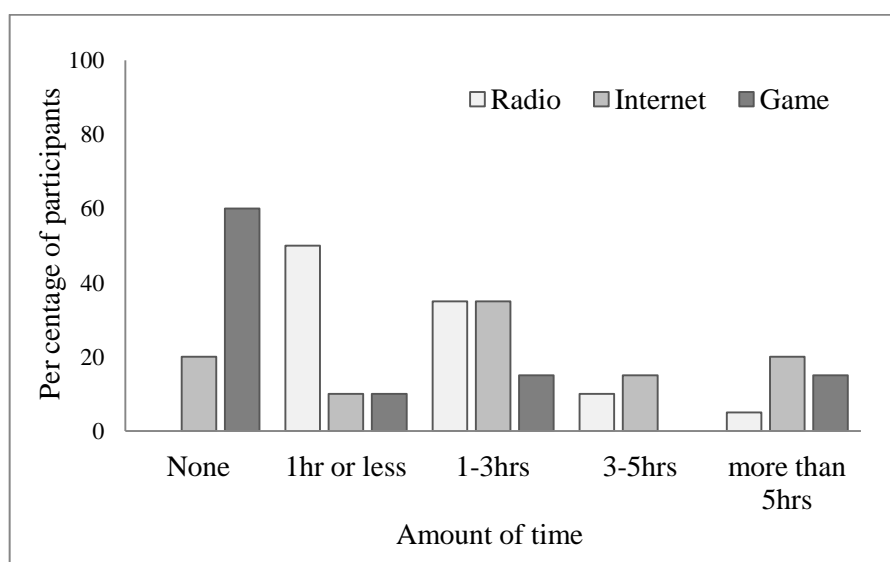


Figure 7: Daily Time Spent by Thai Participants on Other Media

The greater internet usage in the interview sample is also reflected in internet statistics. According to a survey of information and communications technology in Thailand, 36 per cent of Thai young people aged 15–24 regularly use the internet. Fifteen to 24 year olds were also the main internet user, compared to the whole population (National Statistical Office, 2006).

Additionally, 31 per cent of Thai young participants regularly read newspapers, 26 per cent read online newspapers, 25 per cent read magazines, and 18 per cent read online magazines. It was also usual for the participants in the Thai interview

sample to multi-task and consume more than one media outlet at the same time, compared to Australians. The findings showed that 95 per cent of Thai participants also used other media while using the internet or watching television, while there were only 58 per cent of Australian participants who did this.

Thai participants further discussed their attitudes towards the advertisements. Television appeared to be the most persuasive media for Thai participants. Most of them (75 per cent) thought television was influential, followed by ten per cent for radio and five per cent for internet. However, both Thai and Australian participants were likely to focus on internet advertising. Unlike Australian participants, Thai participants had a more positive attitude towards television commercials. There were 45 per cent of Thai participants who liked the advertisements, and another 45 per cent liked them sometimes. Only ten per cent agreed with the purposes of advertisements, unlike the two-thirds of Australian participants who had a negative attitude to advertising. In regards to advertising appeals, Thai participants most liked presentation techniques, such as camera angles, colours, the uses of sound, and special effects. As presented in Figure 8, participants also liked advertisements that used new products, celebrities, humour and realistic stories.

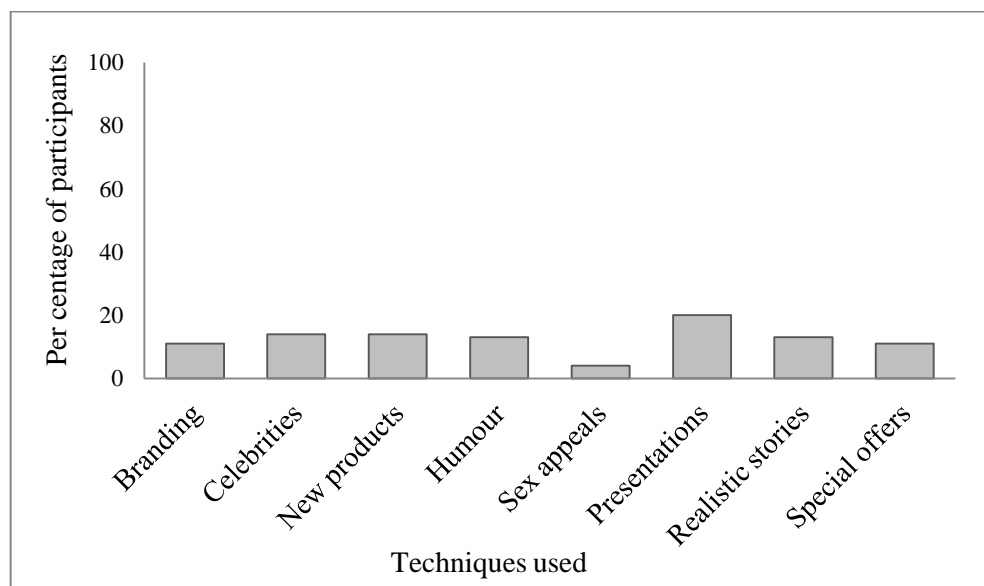


Figure 8: Attitude of Thai Participants towards Advertising Appeals

5.2 Thai Literacy of the Advertising Industry

This chapter compares the media literacy of Thai participants with Australian participants and considers the cross-cultural and demographic differences. The critical capacities of both Thai participants and Australian participants are compared in relation to the media and media effects.

The concept of contextuality explored by Edward T. Hall (1976) proposes that global cultural differences strongly influence the social and communication behaviour of people in each country. In much of the theoretical literature, high-context culture is usually associated with countries such as China, Korea, Japan, Thailand and other Asian countries; whereas the low-context cultures are usually associated with the US, the UK, Germany, Switzerland, Scandinavia and some other European countries (An, 2007; Knutson et al., 2002; Zhou, Zhou & Xue, 2005). Some researchers make note of the imprecise nature of cultural dimensions that constitutes a high- and low-context culture; there is also often a marked difference between regions in the same country. However, the idea of low-context culture and high-context culture is helpful in thinking about the differences in social orientation, commitment, and responsibility and confrontation avoidance within different cultures, in subcultures and within different regions of the same country (Kim, Pan & Park, 1998).

High-context culture is usually associated with collectivism, social hierarchy, social harmony, intimate human relationships, loyalty and selflessness. High-context cultures privilege non-verbal communication, and other non-verbal variables such as status, values and association. Conversely, low-context cultures privilege individualism and personal recognition. Communication and negotiation is also direct and explicit without highly evolved forms of ritualistic communication. Communication is often also officious without attendance to personalised forms of ritual and expressed verbally without the same emphasis on elaborated forms of non-verbal communication, which is a feature of high-context cultures (Cho, Kwon, Gentry, Jun & Kropp, 1999; Knutson et al., 2002; Shao, Bao & Gray, 2004).

Within Thai culture, high-context cultural values are often reflected in processes of negotiation such as advertising. Thai advertising is often very indirect, focused on the group and the socio-emotional rather than the individual; whereas advertising in a low-context culture is likely to use personalisation, direct descriptions, and 'hard selling'. These differences can be seen, for example, in the different uses of visual appearance and values between cultures. For example, Chinese television commercials have fewer stand-alone or complete visual story lines and used less direct product comparison and brand acknowledgement than the US commercials (Zhou et al., 2005). Thai commercials, in particular, are '*sabai-sabai*', or easy going in nature. They rely more on a 'soft selling', the use of indirect persuasions such as the use of humour and status are more typical (Punyapiroje et al., 2002).

In addition, issues of social harmony, and the way in which criticism and argument is raised, also has implications for media literacy for Thai audiences as compared to Australian audiences. Thai criticism and evaluation of advertising tends for this reason to be more indirect, subdued and replete with implied criticism. It focuses on improvements rather than shortcomings of the advertisement under review. This is the direct influence of cultural norms operating in Thailand. In order to maintain social harmony, Thai people tend to take into account the 'heart' ('*jai*') of others as the way to show respect and politeness. Thais are unlikely to criticise or appraise because it may bring conflict or argument into social intercourse (Knutson, 2004, p. 151). Knutson's comparison study of communication apprehension between Thai and US student samples supported that Thai student are less willing to communicate compared to Americans. He concluded that there were several significant communication differences associated with young Thai student communication, such as less participation in family discussions and reluctance to communicate in direct ways because of lack of encouragement from parents and teachers, and unwillingness to disagree with the elderly and the opposite gender (Knutson et al., 2002).

Thai 'socio-emotional emphasis' or *jai* refers to oneness of the heart and the mind that forges the Thai worldview (Knutson, 2004, p. 151). Thai people believe that being considerate (*khwamkrenjai*) is a quality or an expected manner of high-

status people. The Thai phrase '*krengjai*' is translated as 'consideration for others' (Redmond, 1998). It is an expression of respect in Thai culture and characteristic of 'the incredible degree of politeness and civility found in exchanges between Thai people' (Moore, 1992, p. 84). *Krengjai* is, however, sometimes used for 'self-effacing' or as a mechanism to withdraw oneself from activities, which may result in social conflict or disharmony (Knutson et al., 2002). For example, some Thai participants may feel *krengjai* when evaluating advertisements, because making a judgement or criticising can sometime upset or embarrass a person or alternatively show disrespect to the media producer. Thai people therefore prefer to 'save the face' of others by being indirect to *tanormnamjai* or preserve their feelings. Thai people are 'fearful of offending those of equal or greater stature' (Punyapiroje et al., 2002, p. 58). Thai audiences also place far greater emphasis on social responsibility, family and consequently have an expectation that individuals will exercise social restraint when making consumer decisions. Other forms of 'literacy' that are not directly critical or confrontational may be more important in assessing the media literacy of the Thai participant group. Perhaps an important test concerning media literacy of Thai participants therefore is whether the advertisement in question has decisively influenced the participant to purchase the product. For example, in many cases, Australian participants were highly critical of products in advertising that they then purchased. This chapter examines media usage, perception, reading and the responses of Thai participants. Knowledge and understanding of media economics, content, production and effects of the participants are highlighted. This chapter also considers how Thai high-context culture might influence literacy of the media and specifically advertising.

Both Thai participants and Australian participants show that they lacked an adequate level of media comprehension of what Potter has referred to as real world knowledge of the media. Thai participants' understanding of the industry of advertising was perhaps slightly better than Australian participants, most likely because of their higher exposure to the media, particularly television. As the initial survey data of participants shows, Thai participants spent much more time watching television than the Australian samples. This in turn is associated with differences in leisure time between the two samples. Thai middle class students are more likely to be supported by their families; whereas Australian students

often work in paid employment more. According to national surveys in 2006, Thai young people spend at least eight hours daily consuming media; while Australian young people spend an average of only four hours on the media and other leisure activities. An employed Australian young person was likely to devote less time to the media than those who were unemployed (ABS, 2006; Cultural Surveillance Department, Ministry of Culture, 2006). Television advertising in Thailand is also more pervasive with a higher per capita expenditure than Australia. Television advertising expenditure accounted for 58 per cent of the total advertising expenditure from July 2007 to June 2008 in Thailand, compared to only 29 per cent of all Australian advertising expenditure (Free TV Australia, 2009; Advertising Association of Thailand, n.d.).

Thai participants readily deployed knowledge about the purpose of advertising, comprehended how advertising operated as a business and they understood the dependencies between television networks and advertising agencies and how revenue was generated in the industry. Many Thai participants focused on the business motivations behind advertising, as is shown here by what they said during the interviews: ‘increasing sales’ (Thai 4, female, 25/11/06; Thai 7, female, 03/12/06); ‘the advertising stimulates trading and creates needs ... It’s a form of capitalism that makes us see various products and have more needs’ (Thai 16, female, 27/12/06); ‘The advertising sometime exaggerates and makes consumers want to have products. This is a waste’ (Thai 18, male, 06/01/07); ‘The main purpose is to increase sales. Second is to make people be more aware about the brand. Third is to create a specific style to a product’ (Thai 14, female, 24/12/06).

Moreover, Thai participants were able to articulate clear understandings of demographics, ratings, sponsorships and the revenue-making purpose of advertising: ‘money supports programmes. They give free time between programmes for sponsors ... Sponsors pay for programmes. Mama sponsors *Chingroychinglarn* [Thai television show] therefore the programme needs to do something in return’ (Thai 18, male, 06/01/07). Others show a similar understanding:

To be sponsors for television stations, advertisements benefit producers of game shows, for example. Having no advertising means no

programme sponsor, having advertisements means they get support money from product companies ... They spend it on prizes in game shows, for example. I saw ... Mistine [a sponsor company] gives 50,000 or something like that. (Thai 8, female, 06/12/06)

Another participant showed her knowledge of television revenues in relation to the advertisement:

All dramas, films or programme shows get their income from advertisements. Television ratings are also important for advertisers to consider. They preferred prime time; that is the time where most people watch programmes ... For example, if we compare Oishi and Moshi [green tea drinks], consumers are likely to see Oishi more often because ... Oishi advertising is shown in the peak period ... which is around eight to 11pm ... Advertising time during a peak period is likely to be more expensive ... Most advertisements compete for this best time. (Thai 1, female, 17/11/06)

This demonstration of 'insider' industry knowledge was at a different level to Australian participants who did not have the same sophisticated understanding of sponsorship, knowledge of the relationship of audience demographics to sponsorship and grasp of the connection of ratings to advertising. This may well be as a result of Thai participants' greater exposure to advertising.

Thai participants also understood the purpose of advertising as a marketing tool to 'build recognition' of a company and its 'brand' (Thai 2, male, 17/11/06). 'They want people to recognise products and brands. It makes a brand become famous and is spread by word of mouth' (Thai 14, female, 24/12/06); 'They want to tell consumers that this product is being sold in a country. Sometime they prefer to promote the company and the brand [through non-profit community and charitable advertising] ... So, people feel that if they use this product it means that they're supporting a good cause' (Thai 19, female, 14/01/07). Unlike Australian participants, Thai participants were unable to develop sustained ideological critique of the function of branding. However, Thai participants were much more adept at explaining the business function of advertising and in particular, the idea

of brand recognition and the functions and techniques of branding associated with persuasion. Thai participants thus displayed a different set of skills at the level of argument and narrative rather than at the level of inferred cultural meaning.

A high number of Thai participants discussed the purposes of 'branding' in creating a rhetorical identity for the product: 'Advertising helps market a brand. It makes people accept a brand, by making people recognise and remember a logo, which result in a stronger branding. All businesses want to make a profit' (Thai 1, female, 17/11/06). Thai participants understood the semiotic uses of branding as a method of creating consumer awareness and shaping consumer identification. A logo, according to the participants, is a 'representation' that increases a recognition and popularity of a company and trademark (Thai 5, male, 28/11/06): 'An image of a brand makes people think about what it is represented, like it's cool or in trend' (Thai 2, male, 17/11/06); 'Logo is a way they create brands, for example. It needs to stand out and easily be recognised. When consumers see this logo, they should think of the product' (Thai 4, female, 25/11/06). Another participant was able to illustrate the literal connection between the brand as sign or a metonym with its inferred product:

Johnny walker uses a symbol of a human. People recognise that it's a symbol of this whiskey ... Logo is more likely to be an image that makes people be more interested. Singha, another example, has its symbol in all products, such as soda and beer. Also, sport wear like Nike, it's only a line but clear. They make it simple just like a pen mark ... It's a way to do branding, just like product's packaging (Thai 6, male, 29/11/06).

Participant 9 and 13 noted, 'Nokia uses a capital N' (Thai 9, female, 14/12/06); 'Pizza Hut uses English words as a logo' (Thai 13, male, 24/12/06); while other participants recognised a 'portrait logo': 'Narai Pizzeria uses a pizza cartoon character' (Thai 14, female, 24/12/06) and a 'descriptor logo': 'Ferrari has a logo of a horse and Heineken is a star' (Thai 20, male, 26/01/07) (Danesi, 2008, pp. 85–87). Participant 5 and 17 observed: 'Advertisements stress a logo of a product; for example, in Heineken they clearly filmed and showed a beer bottle with its logo' (Thai 5, male, 28/11/06); 'All Nike advertisements ended with its symbol,

as does Heineken that puts a star and the word Heineken last' (Thai 17, male, 04/01/07). Participants were able to decode denotations of symbols—the basic reading of an image, and the connotations—the second level of reading such as a rose is used to represent the meaning of love (Danesi, 2008, pp. 17–24). Participants stated that symbols can be represented in various forms, such as 'signs', 'alphabets', 'artwork from computer graphic', 'images that represent symbols', 'the uses of colour or naming', or 'cartoons' (Thai 5, male, 28/11/06; Thai 13, male, 24/12/06; Thai 14, female, 24/12/06). Signifiers in themselves are arbitrary; however, it is the cultural meaning or preferred associated meaning of the advertiser that is important for audiences to criticise. As Neumeier suggests: 'The term "logo" caught on with people because it sounds cool ... what really matters here is that a logo, or any other kind of trademark, is not the brand itself. It is merely a symbol for it' (Neumeier, 2006, p. 1).

Thai participants also understood how signature tunes played an important part in brand identification. Danesi notes that the four main techniques of messaging used in branding are the brand name, the logo, the jingle, and the advertisement itself (Danesi, 2008, p. 38). Thai participants were literate in most of these techniques. Most Thai participants were able to identify a clever or catchy slogan and explain how a slogan might generate consumer identification and the 'spirit of the product' (Silverblatt, 2001, pp. 233): 'AIS [a wireless communication entrepreneur], it doesn't show anything about mobile phones in the ad, but stresses freedom' (Thai 5, male, 28/11/06). A few other participants commented on a Nokia slogan, 'Connecting People': 'It's saying that Nokia connects and cements people' (Thai 18, male, 06/01/07); 'Nokia not only presents a product but also places meanings through a brand. It reinforces that Nokia is about communication ... and a master of technology ... So, consumers remember this good image and ... are persuaded by the product. It creates brand loyalty' (Thai 1, female, 17/11/06). Another participant gave an example of a 'homophonic slogan':

Advertising needs to have a slogan when branding. A slogan is like a rhyme or a rhythmic song that make advertising recognisable, otherwise, it can be a jingle or gag. A scalp shampoo advertisement, for example, showed a guy climbing a cliff ... the first person said 'I'm going to fall',

when poking his friend. The second person then replied 'I'm not going to fall because I use Bergamot' (Thai 11, male, 18/12/06).

Participant 11 stressed the uses of a homophone to make a slogan become catchier and increase the recognitions of audiences. The Bergamot commercial played with the word 'I' but the 'I' had multiple meanings. The word 'I' can be translated as a masculine 'me' or '*phom*' in the Thai language, which only refers to the male 'me'. The word '*phom*', with the same pronunciation and spelling, however, can mean masculine and feminine 'hair'. When placing an appropriate meaning of 'I', 'me' or '*phom*' into the appropriate context in an advertising appeal, participant 11 could translate the Bergamot advert as saying 'I am [my hair is] not going to fall because 'I' [myself] use Bergamot. Participant 11 thought a catchy slogan could influence audiences in many ways, by persuading and positioning an advertisement memorably in an audience's minds: 'MK's music is a hit among Thai people'. At this point, he started singing:

Kin aria, kin aria, pai kin MK [what to eat, what to eat, let's go MK]. It reminds us of daily life when we are with a friend and keep asking each other 'what to eat?' ... They were singing this song in the advertisement which was better and more memorable than talking. If it was not rhythmic, people cannot remember by their first time watched ... Some people use their song as a ring tone. It helps promote their product automatically (Thai 11, male, 18/12/06).

Although Thai participants had media knowledge of brand recognition and the uses of messaging in branding, they were less critical about the influences of the media on audiences when compared to Australian participants. For example, Thai participants failed to decode the 'false impression' or 'hyperbolic' exaggeration deliberately constructed by advertisements to persuade audiences (Silverblatt, 2001, pp. 233, 237). As Knutson and Posirisuk have observed in relation to Thai interpersonal modes of communication:

A core element of Thai culture is the avoidance of confrontation ... Thais will display significantly more rhetorical sensitivity as a relationship develops ... all Thai conversations involve the 'Me' and the 'I'. The 'I' refers to an internal and personal self, while the 'Me'

signifies external and social self. The 'Me' self is reserved for evanescent encounters, while the 'I' emerges as Thais build a meaningful, grateful relationship characterized by psychological investment (Knutson & Posirisuk, 2006, p. 211).

In this context, particularly in relation to 'criticisms' and readings of an advertisement that are presented in a formal situation, such as with an interviewer, it is not surprising that Thai participants did not confront directly issues of media influence. Thai participants were clearly more interested in the way the music, word play, signature tunes, slogans and other rhetorical devices of the advertisement established a relationship with the audience, or spoke to the 'social me' rather than the 'social I' in the audience (Bailey, 2005). Evanescent encounters with the 'social me', or critical encounters with advertising were perhaps left to private moments of reflection but not expressed socially or within the context of interpersonal engagement.

Despite recognising social influences of the media, Thai participants also see media influence as a shared responsibility and not simply the responsibility of the media producers. Resistance to media influence is seen as an individual responsibility because the individual is responsible to society. 'Negative' media influence is not the responsibility of the media producer or 'society'. In contrast, Australian participants tended to see media influence as solely the responsibility of the media producer and this way of thinking is perhaps more indicative of a low-context way of perceiving this influence. This way of seeing perhaps also points to a different notion of identity and construction of a social 'I': a realisation by each individual that they are not independent from social collectivity or responsibility for social morality but are connected in various ways to a wider set of social customs and standards. This perhaps creates a different set of assumptions about resistance to advertising. A number of Thai participants thought individuals should also be responsible for the self-regulation of consumer desire in this way: 'Advertising always wants us to buy products. It's the aim of advertising. We have to think whether we really want it or not and why' (Thai 14, female, 24/12/06); 'I changed mobiles because of the duration of products, but also because of trends. Eighty per cent of the reason I bought the phone is a result

of seeing the advertisement. Anyway, there is trading in business. They make profits ... So, I think it's the responsibility of the individual or each family' (Thai 11, male, 18/12/06). Other Thai participants agreed:

The advertisement builds recognition and controls which makes us want to use products ... but, we cannot blame the advertisement because it depends on ourselves ... An example would be the L'Oreal white perfect that Pop Areeya endorsed. Most of my friends use it. When the first one used it, others followed ... I didn't use it though because it's too expensive and think that Pop already has a good face. (Thai 15, female, 26/12/06)

Thai participants tended to see media influence as far more an individual responsibility than the responsibility of an all-powerful, overarching media influence, and were far more concerned about the impacts of advertising on 'social harmony' than Australian participants. Thai participants thought they should be responsible for the media's impact. In contrast, Australian participants tended to emphasise personal goals and their unrestrained individuality. As noted in Yoon and Yoon's study (2002) of cross-cultural attitudes to advertising, people in individualistic societies tend to base their responses on their immediate reaction to their own individual situation, while people from collectivist societies rely more on socially mediated evaluations of events. They notes that when participants are asked to give their emotional responses toward advertising: 'respondents in low-context communication environments respond with what they feel from the given advertising. However, participants in a high-context communication environment think about more than just advertising' (Yoon & Yoon, 2002, p. 72). Existing knowledge, personal preferences, prior attitudes and emotional responses are often considered in collectivist cultures to make judgements of the advertising.

The majority of Thai young participants appeared to have a good understanding of production techniques, perhaps more so than Australians because of the greater attendance to issues such as 'forms of address' and how an advertisement might establish a relationship with an audience. However, in many respects there was minimal difference between the Australian participants and Thai participants in

this area. With the better knowledge people have of production values, camera techniques, editing, and graphics colours, audiences can effectively interpret media messages and will have media literacy in these areas of advertising production (Silverblatt, 2001, p. 148). Like Australian participants, Thai participants were able to critically read and interpret the media 'grammar' used in the production of advertisements and understand media communicators' selections and intentions in using different techniques. They were aware that visuals are usually shown in the manner that cultural producers want to focus and present. Thai participants discussed how camera angles could be applied to direct and manipulate the audiences' perspective. For them, any use of a camera angle was 'a distortion' (Thai 12, male, 23/12/06). It can be used to present different images depending on the producers' decision: 'If we give a camera to two producers to film the same thing, the result will be different because each producer has their own idea of which angle is better' (Thai 2, male, 17/11/06).

The majority of Thai participants were readily able to identify a range of camera techniques: 'Angles can show different visuals, for example, the use of 'depth of field' technique ... The visual of a person who is close to the camera is clear, while a person behind is a blur' (Thai 5, male, 28/11/06); 'Shooting from a close distance, far distance or turning angle. A camera angle is like you stand close and film far and near or below something like that. It's shooting from a different angle' (Thai 16, female, 27/12/06). Similar to Australian participants, Thai participants comprehended how producers might position audiences through camera editing, techniques and perspective: 'Mitsubishi firstly showed a product from a distance then specified each part of the vehicle. It zoomed on the side to show a coachwork of the vehicle, then showed the front to show the model ... and zoomed at the door and the cap ... in order to enlarge what they want to present' (Thai 1, female, 17/11/06); 'Mitsubishi showed an image of a car running on a cliff. It looked powerful' (Thai 15, female, 26/12/06). Thai participants were also aware of how the production techniques constructed advertising to influence audiences' perception and emotions: 'Heineken filmed from above ... It zoomed from the top to show a crowded party. It looks realistic, when a man presses into a crowd. It made us believe that he walked through a narrow space ... Camera angles help conduct and balance a story' (Thai 19, female, 14/01/07); 'Pantene

showed Noon who is leaning with her long hair. It doesn't look fake that way ... It looks like she really has beautiful hair when shot from a distance' (Thai 9, female, 14/12/06).

Moreover, one-third of Thai participants also noted how media communicators 'distorted' visuals in the 'love scenes', and were interested in discussing these techniques in detail. In Thailand soap opera is a particularly prevalent genre on most television stations and it is perhaps not surprising that Thai participants had great familiarity with the techniques of this genre. A high number of Thai participants were particularly cued into these techniques: 'In love scenes, they use many cameras to film from different angles then do editing later on. So, it looks like they're kissing (Thai participant 3, female, age 21, 22/11/06). Young Thai participants differently thought of practical ways to use such a technique: 'they use camera angles to block us from seeing something. It makes them look like the actor really kisses the actors' (Thai 7, female, 03/12/06). 'Love scene' camera techniques appeared to be familiar among Thai participants. Most Thai soap operas use this kind of camera technique because of cultural restrictions on kissing. Thai television conforms to sexual norms: 'Traditionally, Thai teenagers have been expected to move smoothly from childhood into adulthood while respecting their parents and their religion; girls are required to be ... disinterested in sex until marriage. Male and female individuals ... should not be alone together' (Vuttanont, Greenhalgh, Griffin & Boynton, 2006, p. 2068). Thai women are expected to cherish their virginity until they get married. Barne (2002) also emphasises in his study of Thai socio-cultural values of sexuality that a female's virginity—the 'purity' [*khwamborisut*—was traditionally seen as an individual's 'treasure' or 'wealth' (p. 158): 'If an unmarried woman was physically violated, and this included touching (any part of the body), hugging, or kissing, her parents were to be financially compensated in line with the nature of the particular offense' (Barne, 2002, p. 158). Although with globalisation Thai culture has also begun to accept some modification of sexual values, partly because of the influence of the media: 'the world of the sexes in Thailand is quite sharply divided culturally ... Western-style feminism never caught on in Thailand, and in some ways relations between the sexes there remain more traditional but also easier' (Lewis, 2006, p. 172).

Thai participants demonstrated that they understood the manipulation and effects of film techniques and other production techniques in detailed ways, like Australian participants. For Thai participants, media literacy maybe more accentuated in the area of 'technique' because the discussion of the advertisement does not require 'direct' conformation with the underlying values of the production but is 'indirect'. Many Thai participants were quite adept at understanding the purpose of editing and how juxtaposition and selection might be used to produce audience significations by 'arranging visuals': Deleting unnecessary scenes and making it concise. It also includes graphics, adding sound, music or dialogue for the producer's satisfaction' (Thai 16, female, 27/12/06). Another participant noted: 'The film may be placed in a computer to cut or insert the scenes. It may be similar to the use of the Photoshop programme' (Thai 1, female, 17/11/06). It helps the advertisement 'be brief within a timeframe' (Thai 11, male, 18/12/06) to 'decrease the [advertising] spending' (Thai 13, male, 24/12/06). Thai participants gave examples: 'Nokia ... applied graphics in the background of the ads. The mobile phone was rotating to show the image of the product' (Thai 12, male, 23/12/06); 'In the Sprite ad, a normal basketball became a pool when a guy jumped in ... They used graphics on the ground which were edited by a computer' (Thai 9, female, 14/12/06); 'Sprite, they threw people into a green mattress instead of the ground. Then they filmed a basketball court and it became a swimming pool' (Thai 7, female, 03/12/06). Thai participants were also much more focused on the contextual 'detail' of the media they were watching and focused on details that were not mentioned by the Australian participant group. For example, one Thai participant was fascinated by how in Thai drama (*lakorn*) one actor might play rival twins competing for the audiences' affection in a family melodrama: 'They show two people together; although we already know that a person didn't have a twin' (Thai 3, female, 22/11/06). Although this is an obvious stock film device, it is perhaps worth mentioning. Thai participants also brought up examples themselves unprompted by the interviewer of adverts, which used constructed visual metaphors to produce signification: 'There was an alcohol advertising company [Johnny Walker] talking about a programmer who uses graphics. He makes snow fall wherever he walks in Thailand and turns Chaw Praya river into ice where people are skating and all the fish are swimming' (Thai

6, male, 29/11/06). Whereas the Australian participants seemed much more interested in an ideological analysis of advertising that directly linked advertising to a completed meaning, without perhaps consideration of any of the intermediary steps of analysis to reach that conclusion, Thai participants were much more focused on both the narrative and process of achieving signification rather than elaborating end-meaning: perhaps because to complete meaning in many instances might also be to make direct criticism.

In Thai culture, colour is particularly important as a social signifier of prestige and social class and Thai people have a highly developed sense of the use of colour as symbolic. The colour of the Thai flag, for example, has a connotation of 'Nation, Religion, and King' (*chat satsana phramahakasat*). Red refers to blood that is devoted to the nation. White is the purity of Buddhism, while blue is the colour of King Rama 6. White is also associated with 'power' because of its emblematic attachment to the 'whiteness' of the white elephant (a royal symbol), which was on the previous Thai flag: it is a sign of imperial power (Chawingam, 2002). These highly rendered and traditional associations of colour were not obvious in the comments of Thai participants. However, Thai participants mentioned the use of colour much more in their analysis of adverts and focused on colour much more than Australians as having 'hidden' indirect meaning, and had a highly developed sense of media literacy in this area. In relation to editing, Thai participants noted cooperation between colour and lighting: 'Nokia stressed the colour black ... Black is a colour of silence, solemnity and prudence. The product suits people who are wise and bland. It doesn't suit teenagers because of the style and image. It more suits a businessman' (Thai 1, female, 17/11/06); 'the Nokia stood out to me. I may not understand the functions of this mobile phone but the black colour gives the feeling of being expensive and luxurious' (Thai 3, female, 22/11/06). The colour black, according to young Thai participants, could be associated with meanings of classic, elegance, 'high-so' [high society], 'technology' and 'mystery'. Other participants were sceptical: 'There must be a reason for Nokia advertising using this particular colour ... Luxury can be represented with only a few colours. Black is classic, as well as gold and white. These colours make the product look luxurious' (Thai 14, female, 24/12/06). Other participants agreed: 'A gold colour [Ferrero Rocher advertisement] means expensive

... It makes buyers feel that it's delicious and valuable' (Interview participant 14, female, age 22, 24/12/06); '[The] Heineken ad ... played with different tones like black, brown and other dark tones to make it harmonious' (Thai 13, male, 24/12/06). Each colour has its own distinct meaning for the Thais and could be used to transfer meanings to the products.

Thai participants were also very much aware of how colour could be used to signify 'newness' and modernity: 'They displayed a white bright condominium. Presenters also wore dark or black colours. I think it's a design, a trend. Accommodation and decorations were in black and white which is a vogue and modern style' (Thai 2, male, 17/11/06); 'A pale colour or colourlessness in the ad, means turning back time. Mitsubishi used bright colours to indicate that it's a vehicle of the future. It's a design for the future' (Thai 4, female, 25/11/06); 'Mitsubishi is the millennium. The vehicle was silver and the colour also changed into silver wherever the car drove to. A woman who dressed normally suddenly looked abreast of time and high technology when this car drove past' (Thai 14, female, 24/12/06). Unlike Australian participants, Thai participants appeared to have a finer sense of colour and how it might imply a range of symbolic meanings, and focused on colour as pivotal in meaning transference in their interviews more so than Australian participants. In Halliday's (1978) sense, Thai participants are acutely aware of how the inner workings of the semiotics of colour and correspondence were a 'resource of making meanings' (p. 192). Conversely, Australian participants were less focused on colour or at least did not mention it as a determinant in their understanding of advertisements.

Sound as well as colour was also an important aspect of Thai media literacy. This aspect of media literacy was perhaps also important for the Australian participants. However, Thai participants were able to identify in more detail how music worked as a production device to heighten the narrative or 'flow' of the advertisement. Thai participants were mindful, as Silverblatt (2001, p. 147) suggests, that music arouses feelings, manipulates attitude and behaviours of the audience and produces a narrative continuity: 'It evokes emotion. Like in drama, they use a certain sound in exciting and romance scenes' (Thai 15, female, 26/12/06). According to this Thai young participant, music is 'a form of

communication without words'. She thought music 'helps audiences understand the feelings of advertising. Sad advertisings use sad songs, for example. A producer doesn't need to say that it's a sad story' (Thai 19, female, 14/01/07). Another participant thought it was an intention of media communicators to propose music that 'communicates with the visuals' (Thai 12, male, 23/12/06). Other participants suggested: 'all of these commercials use music that matched with ads' (Thai 8, female, 06/12/06). The majority of Thai participants illustrated the intention of media communicators to promote advertising narration. The song 'knock on wood' by Ammi Stewart in the Heineken advertisement, for example, has a 'harmonious' rhythm that best suited the ambiance (Thai 16, female, 27/12/06): 'There was a party in the Heineken advertisement, so they used jolly, rousing music' (Thai 9, female, 14/12/06); 'Heineken is selling beer. Drinkers shall not drink in a quiet atmosphere. They preferred to listen to music, so it should be a pop-jazz song that agrees with the concept of beers. It helps stimulate moods for drinking' (Thai 2, male, 17/11/06). The song was edited to fit within the timeframe and 'matches with the product': 'Heineken is trendy. Listening to the song then you know that it's an alcohol advertisement. The song sounds gallant' (Thai 7, female, 03/12/06). Some other participants provided different examples: 'The song in Sprite suits the basketball playing. I think they select the song that corresponds to the advertising concept. Sprite is for young people and sport, so they chose a song that has the same trend' (Thai 9, female, 14/12/06). Another participant suggested:

Nokia has interesting music. It was a slow rhythm that sounds soft and classic ... It represents that this model is for people who has medium to high income. It's for people who use products to identify their self-image as being elegant ... The song stresses that the product is luxurious and that may catch a customer's attention ... The use of music should depend on the target group of the product. For example, adults may like slow or easy-listening songs while teenagers may prefer a faster or rap song (Thai 14, female, 24/12/06).

Thai participants were also able to extrapolate from advertisements on the DVD compilation, in which they watched other advertisements to contrast and compare music jingles: 'Some scenes in Thai life advertisements didn't say a word but

used a song that makes us know how sad the character feels' (Thai 7, female, 03/12/06); 'It's AIS advertisement. They composed this song themselves. It's about dispatching whatever you want to do. Freedom is their slogan' (Thai 18, male, 06/01/07). A few Thai participants discussed music usage in One-2-call [AIS advertisement] and how it narrates a story and conveys the concept of the product:

One-2-call also used a song that has good content. There was not much conversation, but people were interested in it because it's tuneful. The lyric also talked about the advertisement. It was saying that there are obstacles but don't stop whatever we are doing. Do what you want to do and be mindful of expiration. Do it before we die. It's freedom. It's the same as using One-2-call. It's freedom, another aspect of the mobile phone. (Thai 10, female, 14/12/06)

The majority of Thai participants understood also the advertising producer's intention of using music as a form of media gratification to create brand memory and recognition of a product: 'The song talks about MK foods ... The song helps remembering. Plain words ... can't make us remember the advertisement at first time hearing ... Some of my friends set it as their ring tone. It automatically helps promote their product' (Thai 11, male, 18/12/06).

Thai participants, for example, are able to elaborate in much greater detail and appear considerably more literate about the business aspects of advertising and how the industry works. Thai participants had more knowledge of the process and procedures of advertising agencies than the Australian participants did. The majority of Thai informants understood the client relationship between advertising agencies and their client companies: 'If we were an advertising company, we must ask the clients what they want, what is the product and its prominences, what is the concept they want to present' (Thai 3, female, 22/11/06); 'It starts from the product company creating the concept of the product —what they want to present, for example, elegance or modernity, and what advertising style they want in order to make the product stand out' (Thai 14, female, 24/12/06). Some Thai participants also had a detailed knowledge of audience research and suggested that it might be put into marketing plans: 'Advertising agencies need to observe the

target consumers by surveying their behaviours and lifestyle, and then make the decision about advertising style, location and presenter' (Thai 1, female, 17/11/06); 'We need to do a survey and analyse the product, who is the target market we are going to communicate to. The next step is choosing the media ... and producing the advertisement. Different target consumers have different perceptions' (Thai 5, male, 28/11/06); 'we need to pull out the strength and concept of the product ... Thinking of advertising style, how to make the viewer interested. Then, conduct the research by asking about fifty people, if they like it or not, to find out the demand ... The next step is producing the advertising' (Thai 11, male, 18/12/06).

Thai participants had better real world knowledge and understanding of advertising production. For example, a number of Thai participants were able to give concise definitions of the term 'storyboard': 'Storyboard is a reproduction of the story. It could be made by hand drawing or generated by computer in order to show sequences of the situations that are going to happen in the actual advertisement' (Thai 5, male, 28/11/06); 'It may be visuals or the structure of the story saying what is going to be in the first and second scene. It may indicate, for example, when the actor is going to see the actors. The advertiser must have a structure. It needed to be clearly stated and drawn as a storyboard' (Thai 7, female, 03/12/06). Moreover, when compared to the Australian group, Thai participants were able to outline the techniques of production of advertising in sequential detail: 'They have a discussion and select a presenter, film and add techniques. Next, we will check the editing: for example, how many minutes we filmed. We may need to edit it to be shorter after being broadcast for a period' (Thai 3, female, 22/11/06); 'when they are finished filming the advertisement, it needs to be reviewed [to see] if it will later need to be edited or censored. Then passed to some department of government whether it'll be passed or not because the contents can sometime be against the law, violent or pornographic' (Thai 18, male, 06/01/07).

Although Australia participants were more critical of the ideological intent of advertising, interestingly they showed much less consumer resistance to the influence of advertising than Thai participants. Thai participants more frequently

questioned the consumerist ethic and emphasised that the purchase of goods must not be based solely on advertising appeals but researched for benefits and connected to real personal needs: 'I'm more likely to buy an everyday-needed product. Maybe shampoo, personal care products' (Thai 6, male, 29/11/06); 'If I really want to buy it I must find out more information. Only the advertisement is not enough. It didn't give enough details ... Buying a vehicle, for example, is big spending. So, it relates to buying power and high impact decision making' (Thai 11, male, 18/12/06). This higher degree of critical scepticism is most likely associated with *porpeng* [a philosophy of self-sufficiency and economy established by His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej] (Kantabutra, 2007), which holds that consumption should only be for essential need, even if this is contradicted by a strong consumerist culture more generally in Thailand. Thailand's Sufficiency Economy Philosophy, according to Kantabutra (2007), emphasises the 'middle' path, which is a concept based on Buddhist religion values:

It stresses the 'middle' path as the overriding principle for Thai people's conduct and way of life at the individual, family, and community levels. Within the philosophical framework, choice of balanced development strategies for the nation in line with the forces of globalisation is allowed, with the need for adequate protection from internal and external shocks. In particular, after the Asian economic crisis in 1997 in which numerous business organisations in Thailand went bankrupt, His Majesty reiterated the philosophy as the way to recovery that would lead to a more resilient and sustainable economy. (p. 4)

Notwithstanding Thai ambivalence about consumerism, *porpeng* creates greater social pressures on Thai participants than on Australian participants to consider the social purposes of consumption: 'It's the personal attitude of the individual. Someone may want to be or possess like the others, but for me it's about *porpeng* ... We should be mindful of our limit' (Thai 4, female, 25/11/06); 'I didn't really want to buy products because of the advertisement. It depends on a need at that time. If I want something and I see the advertising now, then it may help me made a decision easier ... Advertising didn't actually have a great role in my buying decision. Watching the advertisement is entertaining' (Thai 8, female, 06/12/06);

‘I don’t drink beer ... I didn’t like Pantene, it’s not good. I didn’t like Nokia. Sprite and pizza, again I didn’t like them. I didn’t use cute press. Mitsubishi is unnecessary at this time’ (Thai 9, female, 14/12/06); ‘Normally, I don’t drink soft drink ... About mobile phone, I can use any model. In my opinion, advertisings don’t have anything to do with me. I’ll buy a product only if it’s satisfying and needed’ (Thai 20, male, 26/01/07).

Thai participants, like Australian participants, demonstrated knowledge of content formulas—courses of action, and ‘aggregate’—media patterns (Potter, 2004, p. 76). They observed media patterns, and employed induction skills to make generalised comments about advertising techniques. The Thai participants’ particularly focused on the use of sexuality in advertisements perhaps because of more conservative attitudes towards explicit sexuality as an issue of potential controversy. Thai participants may have also been concerned about impacts on social harmony and how explicit sexual representation might have an effect on social relationships and moral values. As one male participant noted, stating the obvious: ‘They used sexuality to sell the product’ (Thai 2, male, 17/11/06); ‘They either represent a female attracting men or men attracting a female’ (Thai 7, female, 03/12/06). Many participants complained about the producers’ intention of using sexual images: ‘I don’t like AXE. It has a hidden sexual agenda ... All women dressed in the advertisement were very provocative. It sexually attracted audiences, but it’s hyperbolic when compared with other advertisements ... it showed a close up of women’s cleavage’ (Thai 15, female, 26/12/06); ‘It implied sexual attraction. It said a tiger was trying to catch something and characters were playing on the bed. Actions, words and visuals of people teased on the bed, made us think in sexually way’ (Thai 3, female, 22/11/06). One-third of Thai participants named advertisements that were sexually offensive. A few participants criticised Tros (a roll-on product) that represented a woman running to a man. However, a woman was represented as a rhino. A rhino, in Thai metaphor, is commonly imputed to be a woman who pursues men: ‘When a guy used roll-on, the rhino came to kiss and smell a guy. The guy then said—doesn’t your mum complain? We all know that the guy reproached the girl that she was a rhino’ (Thai 7, female, 03/12/06); ‘A man uses the product ... a rhino blinks and runs to the man ... It disparaged women’ (Thai 10, female, 14/12/06).

Other participants illustrated different examples: 'There is an advertisement showing a woman, in a bunny dress, falling from the sky. Another advertisement showed a woman who was performing pole dancing. I don't understand why they thought of and presented women that way' (Thai 8, female, 06/12/06). The use of sexuality in television advertisements was more controversial for the Thai group, than the Australian group perhaps because it was incongruent with Thai culture and values. Thai participants strongly criticised the ethics and social effects regarding the prevalence of sexual representations: 'Advertising content communicates about sexual intercourse, which makes viewers imagine the next step. We are still traditional and hold on to our culture. By frequently showing this content on television, the media offered erroneous values' (Thai 16, female, 27/12/06). A number of Thai participants stressed the influence of global advertising that has slowly changed the Thai ways of being: 'Sexual presentation may be usual in the Western perspective. But, we have a different culture in Thailand' (Thai 7, female, 03/12/06); 'Children may imitate the advertising. I think it was international advertising because it displayed sexual images more than other advertisements' (Thai 8, female, 06/12/06); 'The advertisements reflect the Western style, which is different from Thai society ... Women should wear an entirely covered dress and not be too close to men. Now, it's okay if we dress or behave like the advertising' (Thai 5, male, 28/11/06).

Thai participants, in similar ways to the Australian group, clearly understood the techniques of celebrity endorsement and how it was applied to advertising: 'They want to inform audiences that celebrities also use the product. It's a way to attract and persuade the public ... to use the same product' (Thai 5, male, 28/11/06); 'A well-known celebrity persuades and reaches the public more easily' (Thai 1, female, 17/11/06); 'Pantene uses a famous presenter, otherwise no one listens to them ... I think it is based on their target group. For example, Heineken aims at young adults so their presenter is in that age group ... Celebrities have a strong impact on teenagers, especially those who are between 18 and 20' (Thai 7, female, 03/12/06).

However, a key difference for Thai participants was the recognition of the importance of organised audience participation through fan clubs that are well-entrenched in Thai culture and have a role in supporting celebrity-endorsed advertising and marketing. Celebrity endorsement in turn is able to establish a more intimate, high-context, relationship with the product because of this fan base. Thai participants commented: 'There are still people who are crazy celebrities. They don't care about products but look at the presenter because they're thoughtless. They just want to be a presenter. A guy wants to be handsome and a woman wants to be sexy' (Thai 12, male, 23/12/06); 'One of my friends is really crazy for Dan [Thai male celebrity singer]. She bought all the magazines he appeared in' (Thai 20, male, 26/01/07). A number of Thai participants had a clear understanding of 'fandom' and were mindful of the influences:

There are a lot of fan clubs for singers. Fan clubs know all the details and are influenced by the singers. Whatever they do, these fan clubs follow ... My customers bought music albums of those singers without looking at the lyrics. It was not melodious ... The same as computer games, they didn't consider whether it is good or not. They'll buy, as long as it belongs to a big company such as TV soft and sierra games. (Thai 6, male, 29/11/06)

Another participant admitted that she is a part of the fandom experience:

A fan is a person who has a high regard for a superstar ... I also belong to a fan club of a Japanese male singer ... We check information from the internet and web board, and give comments on his work. I'm not as bad as the others who follow him everywhere, including all the concerts. I only check on information, load songs ... and suggest friends to check out his work ... We know his characteristics and personal life. We know what he does each day and how he plays with friends. (Thai 14, female, 24/12/06)

Thai participants also understood the notion of 'intertextuality'. Like the Australian group, many Thai participants were able to identify media referencing to prior media and advertisements: 'A male voice in Nokia, sounds like Noi [Thai male celebrity singer] from Pru [Thai music band]' (Thai 2, male, 17/11/06); 'The

use of a basketball court in Sprite reminded me of American movies' (Thai 10, female, 14/12/06). While Australian participants were more interested in production elements such as music and camera techniques, Thai participants focused their attention on advertising plot and storyline: 'Mitsubishi is similar to a movie. It shows a car that was driving and a powerful engine like in those action movies' (Thai 19, female, 14/01/07); 'Car advertisements, for example, Toyota, Benz, BMW, all present car functions, horsepower and cubic centimetres, something like that' (Thai 13, male, 24/12/06); 'Mobile advertisements often show functions like camera pixels, emailing something like that' (Thai 20, male, 26/01/07).

Thai participants like Australian participants were also acutely adept at decoding the 'realism' of an advertisement and able to explain the techniques used for its construction in sophisticated ways. Thai participants defined inauthenticity as 'over-exaggeration' of the narrative (Thai 6, male, 29/11/06; Thai 9, female, 14/12/06; Thai 12, male, 23/12/06). The participants often talked about 'unusual situations' and events that they were not familiar with: 'I don't think the normal shampoos from the supermarket can quickly increase the length ... For example, the hair should be a centimetre longer in a month. We shouldn't be able to speed it up' (Thai 7, female, 03/12/06); 'Cute Press is least realistic. They're trying to say that they offer the best things from many different places to you. Of course, not. The advertising is persuading consumers that their product is the best. They are using a beautiful presenter to inspire consumers' (Thai 1, female, 17/11/06). A few other participants criticised the lack of realism in AXE that represented a man magnetising a woman: 'It's impossible that you will be surrounded by women because of using the product. There are a lot of these kinds of advertisements, not only AXE. Twelve Plus, for example, shows a girl using a product then guys look back and follow her. I've seen it often ... (Thai 8, female, 06/12/06). Thai participants also considered realism in different cross-cultural ways to the Australian group: 'editing may be used in the whitening lotion advertisement, Cute Press for example. They filled the effects by turning a dark into a white skin colour. They may film at a different time but re-arrange the light and colour' (Thai 10, female, 14/12/06); 'It promotes an effective result within three days ... Whitening facial cream, for example ... It's impossible for such a great result by

using products' (Thai 15, female, 26/12/06). 'Whitening' in Thai culture is closely associated with social and economic status, and improving social identity. Whitening products had the largest share (49 per cent) of a skin care product market in 1998, worth 880 million baht (Goon & Craven, 2003). The result of Thai consumers' survey also shows that 70 per cent of Thai consumers age 20–30 in the study had used the whitening products (Edlund, 2006). In Thai culture, to be white is to be healthy and wealthy. The obsession with whiteness also appears not only in Thai culture but other Asian cultures. According to Horne (cited in Martin, 2009), 'those who had skin burnt by the sun were working in the fields; therefore the whitening of the skin was a reflection of labour status'. Wealthy people had fair skins because they did not work in the fields. Martin (2009), an executive producer for a non-profit public radio journalism company, notes that Asian people spend an estimated \$18 billion each year 'to appear pale'. A study conducted by Synovate, a global marketing firm, in 2004 also indicated that nearly 40 per cent of women in Taiwan, Hong Kong, South Korea, Malaysia and the Philippines used skin whitening and lightening products that year (Martin, 2009).

Thai young participants considered 'narrative consistency' and the logic of an advertising story to judge media reality. Some participants strongly criticised narratives for not providing verisimilitude: 'It has a catch line and narrates the story as steps. The audience didn't have to guess what it is' (Thai 7, female, 03/12/06). Thai participants thought advertising plot should be logical and harmonious with Thai culture and convention. Narrative consistency may be more important to the Thai group because of high-context production values that value elaboration in communication. Thai participants tended to make judgements about the realism in advertisements by considering the context of the advertisement; not only what it is saying but how it is being said. Thai participants proved also to be more adept at understanding indirect meaning, particularly the use of 'metaphor' and understanding how devices might imply indirect 'contextual' meaning. Thai participants were able to decode the implicit meaning in advertisements, perhaps because they were more familiar with decoding indirect communication. For Thai participants, elaboration and indirectness in advertisements added aesthetic values and 'emotional involvement'. Sprite [a soft drink product] was evaluated in

relation to its aesthetic ability to create a mood. The advertisement represented a man who was playing basketball. A camera filmed a close up of the sun, signifying a hot tiring day. It then focused on a man jumping into the basketball court that suddenly turned out to be a swimming pool to emphasise the refreshment: 'I like their metaphor, "drink Sprite for the freshness" ... It said, drink Sprite then you will be refreshed' (Thai 11, male, 18/12/06); 'Sprite is just plain soft drink, but the advertisement was well presented ... It was telling that the freshness is everywhere' (Thai 16, female, 27/12/06); 'It shows freedom and made me feel that it's going to be cold and fresh when drinking' (Thai 20, male, 26/01/07). Thai participants were able to trace the meanings of narratives through changes of metaphors, almost displaying a semiotic like attention to how signifiers might correlate in narratives.

Thai participants' reading of media realism appears to be mediated by high-context cultural concerns. Although negotiating the media text, Thai participants expressed stronger views about the social effects of advertising and its potential effects on social harmony and were more likely to support censorship and television advertising regulation. They also had stronger real world knowledge more generally about these issues and understanding of the social and ethical contexts in which advertising is produced: 'They now ban alcohol advertising, I think. Also, they don't allow obscene images at certain times so it will not be seen by children, but I'm not really sure if this reduces the problem' (Thai 7, female, 03/12/06); 'Advertising needs to provide a declaration. For example, alcohol advertisement needs to warn a consumer that it will impair driving ability. Consumer products also need to state the use of camera effects that are unrealistic' (Thai 19, female, 14/01/07); 'Advertisement prohibits violence, sexuality and anything against the king and religion ... Alcohol and stimulant drinks need to show warnings in their adverts. For example, it must tell consumers not to drink more than two bottles per day' (Thai 17, male, 04/01/07). Other participants gave similar examples: 'The advertising must not make comments against the religion' (Thai 14, female, 24/12/06); 'Advertisements must not show nudity or obscene visuals, and swearing' (Thai 4, female, 25/11/06).

Perhaps because of greater scrutiny of consumerist values, Thai participants have a better understanding of their consumer rights and were more likely to be aware of official government complaints procedures. The majority of participants had clear views about their consumer rights: 'You are selling products to consumers so you need to listen to their opinion. All of your income is from us' (Thai 1, female, 17/11/06); 'I think we have the right to make complaints. Some people suggest turning the television off and ignoring it, but I don't think so. If the advertisement isn't good we should do something about it because there maybe immature children present' (Thai 2, male, 17/11/06). However, a number of Thai participants were unsure which Thai government organisation regulated advertising. A number of participants identified the Ministry of Culture Thailand but only a few participants correctly identified the Office of the Consumer Protection Board as the responsible body for receiving consumer complaints.

This chapter illustrates the understanding of the media of Thai and Australia participants. Although both groups appeared to have a strong media knowledge structure, they demonstrated a different set of comprehension skills. Australian participants, for example, were critical towards media content and persuasiveness. However, Thai participants had more 'real knowledge' of the advertising industry and production. The findings also illustrate the different readings of Thai and Australian participants of advertisements that was influenced by high-context and low-context cultural readings. High-context cultural values affect the participants' willingness to communicate and criticise the media. The high-context culture of Thai participants, for example, enhanced their reading of implicit media texts, and understanding of 'contextuality' and collective social rules. Conversely, the low-context culture of Australian participants encourages direct, critical readings of ideological messages.

Chapter 6: Thai and Asian International Participants in Australia

This chapter reviews Thai-Australian and Asian international participants' media usage and knowledge, and compares it to the Australian and Thai participants. This chapter also examines the extent to which culture influences the development of media experiences and literacy. Australian participants from a low-context culture focused more on media content, particularly concerning the direct verbal messaging of the advertisement. In contrast, Thai participants from a high-context culture were more concerned about contextuality of the advertisement and how it was said. As Hall and Hall (1990) suggest, there are considerable differences between the way words, rhetoric and symbolism are used in Asian and Western countries. Most Asian countries are categorised as 'typically' of a high-context culture. High-context cultures value implicitness, indirect verbal expression, and symbolic modes of communication in advertisements. In contrast, most Western cultures are 'typically' thought of as low-context culture. According to Mooij (2005, p. 56), and Reynolds and Valentine, (2004, pp. 3–27), Westerners rely on direct and explicit contents. Western advertising tends to use a clear direct argumentation and rhetoric. Other important dimensions of cross-cultural communication, as Hofstede's (1980) has noted, include power/distance (i.e. perceptions of authority and the appropriateness and/or acceptability of criticism in different cultural situations), individualism/collectivism (i.e. giving priority to issues of social cohesion over individual needs), uncertainty/avoidance (respect, politeness and avoiding situations that will create conflict), and long-term orientation (sustained relationships as a prerequisite for communicative openness). As Mooij (2005, pp. 59–73) has argued cross-cultural communication has consequences for global advertisers and how they must carefully consider how to pitch their advertisements in different countries.

According to cross-cultural theories, culture strongly shapes how people think and behave. Thai people support collectivism, respect social hierarchy and norms, and privilege relationships between people. They consequently place more emphasis

on the 'heart' and avoid hurting people's feelings. A well-known phrase 'land of smiles' is used to refer to Thailand and connotes a stereotype of Thai politeness and avoidance of social conflict in day-to-day communication and interactions (Knutson, 2004, p. 151). This may be a reason why Thai participants tended to be reluctant critics of the media compared to young Australian participants. High-context culture can forge a strong 'social me', which is orientated towards respect for social relationships and it can limit the capacity to express free ideas and criticism. In contrast, the low-context culture of Australian participants reinforces a strong perception of the 'I' or the 'personal self' that allows individuals to criticise the media freely without social and cultural encumbrances. To understand media literacy, it is necessary to consider what the differences between cultures are and how this influences the media responses of young participants. As Mooij (2004) states, 'Culture is not only in the head, but also 'out there', and it is the combination of mental processes, situation, and context that influences behaviour' (p. 28). This chapter therefore focuses on how culture and transnational experiences affect media responses and the literacy of the Thai-Australian participants and Asian international participants and to what extent they differ from Thai participants and Australian participants.

6.1 Media Usage

This section describes the demographics and media uses of the 18 Thai-Australian participants, and the 17 Asian international participants who were surveyed and interviewed in this study. Both the Thai-Australian participants and Asian international participants lived in Melbourne, Australia. The Thai-Australian group included eight males and 12 females. A majority of both groups of participants (see Figure 9) had obtained undergraduate degrees and postgraduate degrees. The group of Thai-Australian participants, however, had a higher level of education compared to the Asian international participants, and had the highest level of achieved education for all groups. Participants of both groups also typically mostly worked part-time while studying or after graduating.

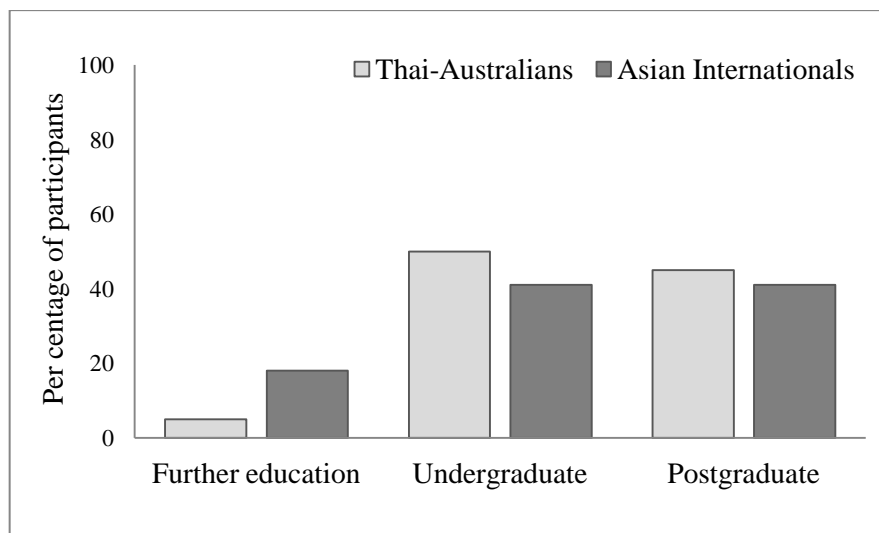


Figure 9: The Education Level of Thai-Australian and Asian International Participants

The Asian international participant group consisted of seven males and ten females. As Figure 9 shows, 41 per cent had obtained undergraduate degrees and postgraduate degrees and a few participants had completed a certificate or diploma degree. Half of the Asian international participants were working part-time while living in Australia.

Media use was significant for both groups. Thai-Australian participants and Asian international participants appeared to have the highest level of computer ownership among all groups. Most Thai-Australian participants and Asian international participants, 95 per cent in each group, owned their own computer and had access to the internet, compared to 50 per cent of Australian participants and 70 per cent of Thai participants. Forty per cent of Thai-Australian participants had televisions that they owned in their bedroom compared to 24 per cent of Asian international participants. Nearly half of the Thai-Australian participants owned a radio and an iPod.

Figure 10 shows that 45 per cent of Thai-Australian participants spent one to three hours watching television every day. This compares against 76 per cent of Asian international participants, who devoted an hour or less viewing the same media.

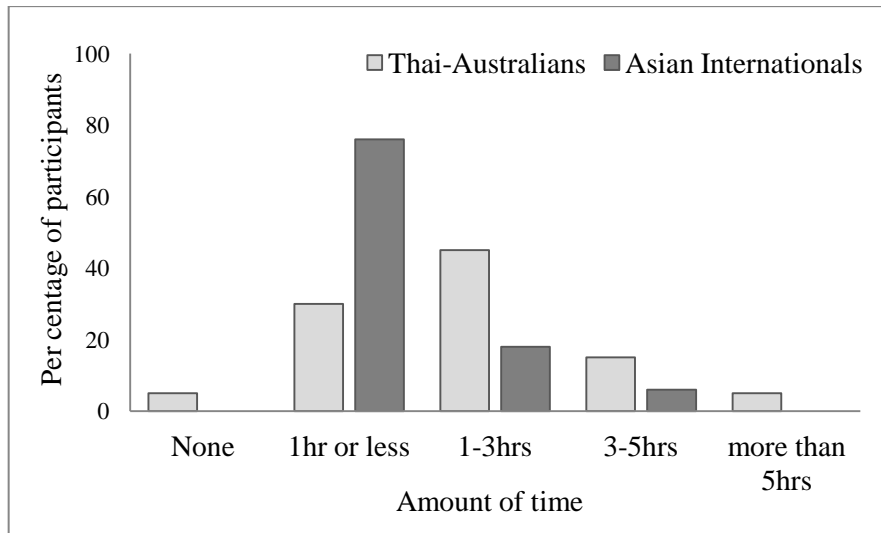


Figure 10: Daily Time Spent by Thai-Australian and Asian International Participants Watching Television

The internet, in particular, seemed to be an important medium for the participants in both groups and appeared to be related to maintaining social networks. Asian international participants had the highest usage of the internet among all groups. The majority, 41 per cent, devoted three to five hours daily, interacting with the internet and another 41 per cent five hours each day. For, Thai-Australian participants, 35 per cent of them spent three to five hours daily, and another 25 per cent spent more than five hours on the internet. This contrasts to Thai and Australian media usage that was considerably less than these two groups.

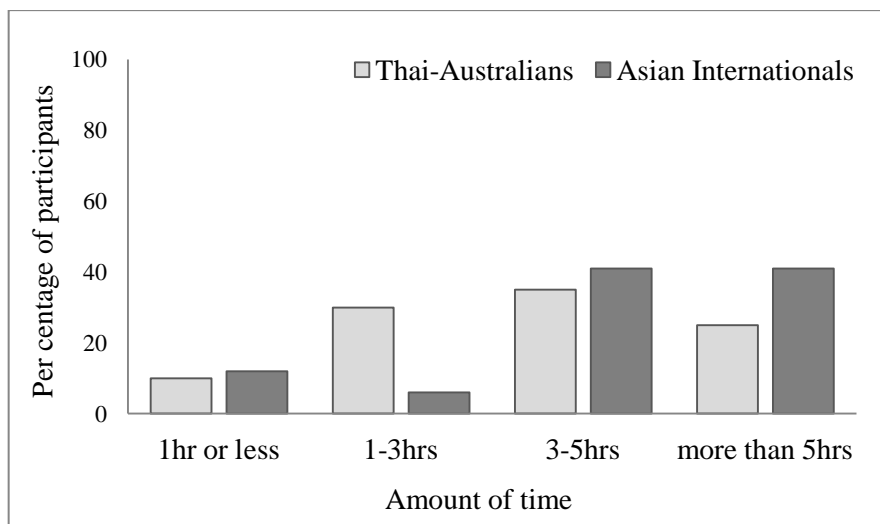


Figure 11: Daily Time Spent by Thai-Australian and Asian International Participants on the Internet

Media use of other types of media was broadly similar for the two groups. Sixty-five per cent of the Thai-Australian group and 64 per cent of the Asia international group spent an average of up to an hour listening to the radio each day. Thirty-three per cent of Thai-Australian participants regularly read a newspaper while another 33 per cent chose online newspapers. Eighteen per cent of them also regularly read a magazine, while another 19 per cent preferred an online publication. This was similar to the Asian international participants: 28 per cent read newspapers; another 39 per cent chose an online publication. Sixteen per cent of Asian international participants read magazines while another 17 per cent accessed it online. Multitasking was also a feature of both group's use of the media. Sixty per cent of Thai-Australian participants indicated they watched television while accessing the internet. Twenty-three per cent of Asia international participants watched the television while accessing the internet. While a further 29 per cent used a mobile phone and the internet at the same time.

Participants were also surveyed about their attitudes to advertising. Generally speaking, Thai participants and the Thai-Australian group had positive attitudes towards television commercials, compared to Australian group. The majority of Thai-Australian participants admitted to liking advertising. Compared to other media such as the internet, 85 per cent of the Thai-Australia participants agreed that television was the most powerful media for advertising presentation. Most

Asian international participants said they liked television commercials: 41 per cent liked television commercials, 29 per cent liked it sometimes, 24 per cent tolerated it and the remaining participants found television advertising annoying. However, 65 per cent of the Asian international group found television still the most persuasive media compared to all over media, including the internet. As Figure 12 shows, the Thai-Australian participants and Asian international participants tended to dislike the use of sexual appeal in advertisements.

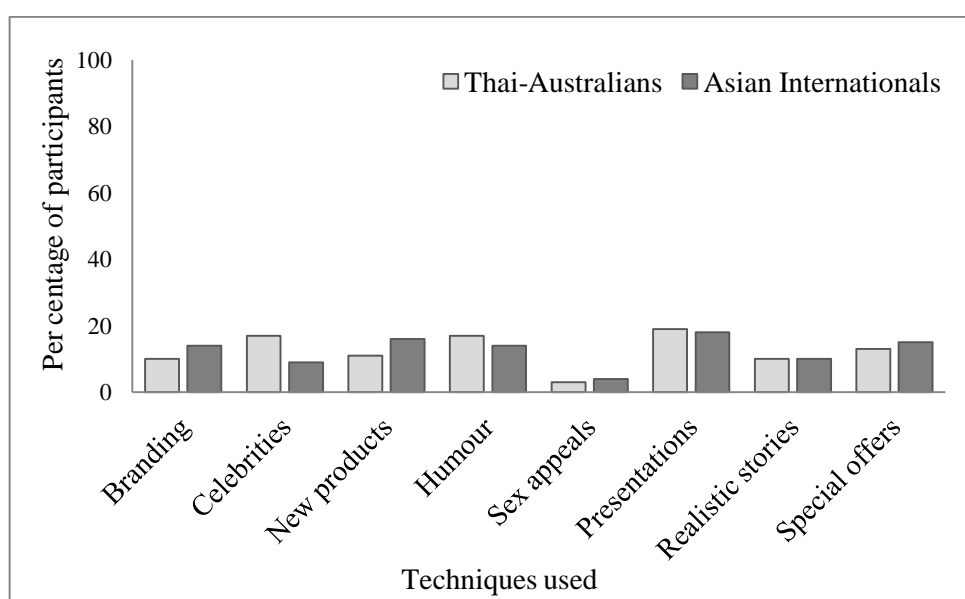


Figure 12: Attitude of Thai-Australian and Asian International Participants towards Advertising Appeals

6.2 Thai-Australian and Asian International Literacy of the Advertising Industry

Thai-Australian participants seemed to have a similar industry knowledge or real world knowledge to Thai participants. For example, Thai-Australian participants could readily identify the key global advertising agencies and place them within an industry context:

Leo Burnett ... I saw in the interview about the agency and their advertising in a magazine. I also often heard the name of the advertising agency from advertising award in Thailand ... Nowadays, there are websites like 'Ad in Trend' that collect all ads where people can

download and view it ... I'm also interested in a good advertising, and sometime a friend sends me a link with interesting advertisements (Thai-Australian 6, female, 20/12/07).

Thai-Australian participants like Thai participants had a clear understanding of sponsorship and the dependency of private television stations on advertisers and advertising agencies for revenue. About half of the Thai-Australian participants were aware of the nexus between television production and advertising revenues: 'Media producers need to support their costs. They spend a lot of money to produce programs and on-air television, while we only pay for our electric bills. Producers earn income from the advertisements, and advertisers make money by selling products' (Thai-Australian 2, female, 15/01/08). Thai-Australian participants also had a good knowledge of the audience rating system and prime times of advertising for different audiences: 'The time after the news has a higher cost. Consumer products usually advertise from the early evening until the time of television series because it has general audiences and children ... They advertise at the same time everyday based on their target audiences' (Thai-Australian 6, female, 20/12/07).

Asian international participants appeared to have less knowledge of the advertising industry than Thai-Australian participants did. The majority of Asian international participants could not name an advertising agency either in Australia or in their hometown. A few Asian international participants were aware of the economic purpose of advertising: 'Advertisements sell products and tell people about the brand, to make money. An advertisement that is on television will be charged ... The money will increase the quality of the channel' (Asian international 2, female, 22/01/08); 'In order to make a programme, many companies have to spent a lot of money. And the company [Advertising agency] will have to pay for the permission to the company [television station] ... to put advertisements on TV ... Consumers buy products and that's the money for them' (Asian international 14, male, 01/06/08). However, this more in-depth understanding was not wide spread among Asian international participants and a few Asian international participants commented on the advertising rating system.

Thai-Australian participants, unlike Thai participants, were also acutely aware of the cross-cultural differences between Thai and Australian advertisements and their different ways of addressing audiences. Thai-Australian participants, unlike the Thai participants, viewed the Australian advertising DVD as well as the Thai advertising DVD. However, very few Thai-Australian participants referred to advertisements on the Australian DVD. Participants were more likely to talk about advertisements they had seen elsewhere on Australian televisions that were more relevant in their day-to-day media usage. As a Thai diaspora located in Australia, they were able to negotiate and understand much more readily the different forms of cross-cultural address of advertisements in both Australia and Thailand, perhaps demonstrating also a greater degree of cross-cultural media literacy as one might expect from a group forced to negotiate between two different cultures. Thai-Australian participants applied literacy skills, for example, to compare and analyse the ‘soft selling’ (indirect) appeals and ‘hard selling’ (direct) appeals of Thai and Australian advertisements: ‘The Sprite [Thai advertisement] shows a creative idea by saying what the product signifies ... It’s a symbol of something that relieves thirst. It’s indirect communication’ (Thai-Australian 3, female, 16/01/08); ‘Most Australian advertisings stress the sale event. It’s hard selling that gives product information with less advertising story. The advertisements for sale gave information on what is on sale, their contact number ... ‘Buy this one, now’, something like that’ (Thai-Australian 13, female, 24/01/08); ‘Most Australian advertisements are direct sale ... ‘buy now, one tree for one dollar’. ’ There is nothing to remember and [it] has no attraction’ (Thai-Australian 11, female, 19/02/08). Thai-Australian participants observed that in contrast to the direct ‘call-to-action’ approach of Australian advertisements, Thai adverts were more concerned with building relationships with their audience and used a public relations approach rather than a direct sell approach. One participant noted the importance of ‘building recognition of the organisation’ (Thai-Australian 9, female, 22/01/08). Another participant stated, ‘some advertisements promote an image of company and their responsibilities toward the society ... For example, the Seven-Eleven [Thai] advertisement presents a story of a dog that never forgets who feeds it. It’s a metaphor of a good friend and warms the heart’ (Thai-Australian 6, female, 20/12/07).

Thai-Australian participants also had a good understanding of the purposes of branding: 'The brand is the name of the product. In order to build recognition ... they need to stress the name of that product. For example, Ford and Nokia presented their brand in the middle of the screen' (Thai-Australian 2, female, 15/01/08). Many Thai-Australian participants focused on the construction of product identity in terms of its marketing orientation: 'Branding is creating a name, a product position in the market and defining target consumers ... Nokia presented itself as a luxury product. It's a brand of hi-so [hi-society] people in which a low income person cannot afford' (Thai-Australian 7, male, 16/03/08). Other participants had a similar view:

Brands shape our perception. We don't even need to see the product but know what it's about and have a certain perception towards it. As I mentioned about Thai life insurance advertisement, it didn't give much details ... but build their brand image as a caring company. AXE builds a brand as an attraction to the opposite sex. Heineken has an image of play time (Thai-Australian 6, female, 20/12/07).

They provided different examples: 'Branding helps people remembering the product, function or some other theme. For example, if talking about a safe car, most people will think of Volvo. It can be a slogan that links to our perception' (Thai-Australian 3, female, 16/01/08); 'Brand building can be done by advertising and promotions ... So, the product becomes well-known and stands out from competitions. An example is Nokia. It shows an image of being indulgent which implies that you will look affluent by using this product' (Thai-Australian 11, female, 19/02/08).

In contrast, Asian international participants appeared to have less understanding of the marketing purposes of branding: 'To make the market bigger and make everyone know about it' (Asian international 14, male, 01/06/08); 'Use the brand to advertise ... you promote that it's better than the others' (Asian international 2, female, 22/01/08); 'In Indonesia, we call the name of the brand. That's the way they advertise ... Nokia, for example, everybody knows that Nokia is a mobile phone' (Asian international 7, female, 04/03/08).

Thai-Australian participants, like Thai participants, were adept at reading correlation, positioning, semiotic meaning and the implied meaning of advertisements. Thai-Australian participants understood colour correlation and the emblematic meaning of colour: 'Branding is a symbol ... It can be a name or logo ... For example, Sprite stresses the slogan of freedom. Drink this soft drink then you feel release' (Thai-Australian 13, female, 24/01/08); 'Heineken and Pizza Hut use the name as a logo, while McDonald's has a symbol of Ronald McDonald' (Thai-Australian 14, female, 15/02/08); 'Pizza Hut's symbol is in red therefore they use a red tone to reinforce the product with audiences' (Thai-Australian 5, male, 20/12/07); 'They know how audiences feel towards the colours. I heard that blue colour gives you a feeling of stability; it is often used in a logo of a financial institution, bank or life insurance company' (Thai-Australian 6, female, 20/12/07). Thai-Australians also noted the way colour was used to convey harmony in the hot chocolate advertisement, which 'used a very clear colour. It showed a contrast of two presenters and two skin-colours that referred to black and white chocolate. It was contrasted but smooth when it was combined. It was a nice metaphor' (Thai-Australian 4, female, 11/03/08); 'Nokia used black colour and lighting to make it looks like a high-end product. Black could also refer to something else ... such as violence and the death. Other compositions could change the meanings' (Thai-Australian 6, female, 20/12/07). Slightly different from other groups, Thai-Australian participants also thought colour was associated with particular target audiences: 'Most advertisings for children are colourful, such as bright blue, red or yellow ... Dark tone colours, such as grey, black, or blue are often used for men ... Pink themes are used to sell to women' (Thai-Australian 1, female, 17/01/08); 'Products are also associated with gender. Male products are often presented as strength with a dark tone. Benice, Pantene or Cute Press use soft tone colour for women. Pink, for example, is associated with feminine products' (Thai-Australian 12, male, 15/02/08). Similarly, the Asian international participants provided some examples: 'In [Nestlé] hot chocolate, they used black and dark brown to show that this is an advertisement about hot chocolate' (Asian international 5, male, 16/02/08); 'Nokia uses black. It looks very exclusive and luxurious ... Garnier uses more colour because they advertise a hair colour ... to make it attractive' (Asian international 7, female, 04/03/08).

Thai-Australian participants and the Asian international participants like the other two participant groups were able to correctly identify and critically consider production and camera techniques 'It's the shooting or viewing of advertising. The position they shoot the picture or actress. They have to choose the angle that makes it look good' (Asian international 7, female, 04/03/08); 'the camera shows what they want to communicate and represents ... a wide angle or zoom' (Thai-Australian 3, female, 16/01/08); 'the camera angle relates to lighting. Different camera angles give different shading and perspectives. The Ford, Australian advertisement, shows cars falling off the track by the use of rotating, and zooming in and out' (Thai-Australian 18, male, 24/03/08). Both participant groups also gave some interesting examples of how the camera techniques were able to manipulate perspective and create the artifice of movement: 'A wide perspective made everything look small. Filming from above enlarges images, while filming from below ... emphasises the emotions of characters. For Thai advertising, Pizza Hut makes audiences feel like we are there in that moment. The Ford [Australian advert], zoomed and focused on the front of toy cars likes it was really moving fast' (Thai-Australian 9, female, 22/01/08).

Like the Thai participants in Chapter 5, Thai-Australian participants were aware of the camera techniques used in Thai drama (lakorn) that were commonly applied to Thai advertising: 'Camera angle is a distortion of image. It makes visuals realistic. This Technique is most used in sexual scenes in Thailand. It's not real kissing but distorted by the camera' (Thai-Australian 2, female, 15/01/08); 'It was not real kissing in Thai drama. They just turn their faces facing each other with a camera filming from a different angle' (Thai-Australian 4, female, 11/03/08). However, only a few of the Thai-Australian group identified this technique as important in Thai advertising production values as compared to more than half in the Thai participant group, perhaps because of the lesser engagement of the Thai-Australian group with Thai media as compared to the Thai group.

Both the Thai-Australian participants and the Asian international participants understood other production values, such as editing, lighting, music, and other special effects that manipulated advertising presentation: 'they add animation, insert images or adjust colours by the use of computer graphics' (Thai-Australian

3, female, 16/01/08); ‘adding the objects, for example, twins in Thai drama’ (Thai-Australian 20, male, 30/03/08); ‘The Pantene, Thailand advertisement, added more light to make the hair look shiny. Also, the Garnier, Australia advertisement, deleted freckles ... and brightened the face of presenters so they could be more beautiful’ (Thai-Australian 2, female, 15/01/08). Thai-Australian participants were also aware of how music and image could be used to affect the audience’s interpretation of advertising: ‘It’s brain washing, one way of persuading people ... Beer is associated with a fun time so they use a cheerful song’ (Thai-Australian 11, female, 19/02/08); ‘Ford stresses ... safety, driving ability ... So, they used rock music to show the strength’ (Thai-Australian 5, male, 20/12/07); ‘Holden matched fast and exciting music with car functions and performance’ (Thai-Australian 4, female, 11/03/08); ‘Sprite and Heineken are aimed at teenagers. So, they used fast music that is refreshing and corresponds with target audiences’ (Thai-Australian 18, male, 24/03/08); ‘Soft music helps build up atmosphere and feelings for the advertisement and presents a love story’ (Thai-Australian 1, female, 17/01/08). Another Thai-Australian participant shared her experiences:

Sometime they film a very long advertisement, but shorten and release each part every two months. My friend works in an advertising company. She said you need to have a story board, you film then edit ... I also used to hire a person to edit a video interview of a French restaurant. I walked for a long distance to get to the restaurant but they can speed it up within 10 seconds. (Thai-Australian 1, female, 17/01/08)

Asian international participants were also able to provide similar explanations and examples of production editing: ‘Editing helps cut the part you don’t like ... and put things together. Choose only something that is really interesting because it’s boring if the advertising is too long’ (Asian international 7, female, 04/03/08); ‘if there are some parts that are worst, then you have to cut and edit it so it can continue beautifully ... I think all of them use editing’ (Asian international 12, female, 04/04/08); ‘Obviously, the Holden. No one opened the car but the car serves the ball ... I think they use the CG [computer graphics] on the advertisement... they took the shot of the car first and then add the ball’ (Asian international 5, male, 16/02/08); ‘If you shoot the picture for one hour, you

abstract it ... Or you can put the music in' (Asian international 14, male, 01/06/08).

When compared to other participants, both the Thai-Australian participants and Thai participants appeared to have a greater 'insider' or real world knowledge of the advertising industry. They showed an understanding of the business relationship between the product company and advertising agency, illustrated through their knowledge of advertising management arrangements in the industry: 'We must know details of products, advertising themes and selling points to make it stand out and easily understood ... The product company will probably hire and outsource services and bid for prices' (Thai-Australian 4, female, 11/03/08); 'Product companies give information to the advertising agency, particularly about the ... concept, and objective ... ' (Thai-Australian 6, female, 20/12/07). Another participant explained:

It may be hard for the product company to produce the advertising themselves, therefore they need to find an advertising agency that is reliable, popular or successful in the market ... They'll discuss the creative strategy ... production. The product company briefs and provides details to the agency, for example, the strengths of the new product or how it's different from others. Then, the agency works on the story and the selling point ... Next, an agency produces an advertisement under the control of a production director and the staff from the product company ... and contacts television stations to put it on-air. (Thai-Australian 9, female, 22/01/08)

Storyboarding, according to Thai-Australian participants, was the first and the most important step in making the advertisements: 'After developing the product, you discuss with the advertising company about creative writing and advertising plot, select presenters, film and edit ... then contact television stations' (Thai-Australian 8, male, 20/03/08); 'We create a storyboard first. It tells a story, timeline and dialog. Then, we select a presenter and location, film the advertising, and edit it within 30 seconds and show it to the public' (Thai-Australian 1, female, 17/01/08). A few participants provided specific details about storyboarding: 'It tells the advertising story ... It's like a block of sketched pictures that shows

visuals, dialogue and has a brief story of what and how it is' (Thai-Australian 13, female, 24/01/08); 'The Storyboard shows visuals of each scene and a storyline, which will be used by the advertising director' (Thai-Australian 17, female, 22/02/08).

Asian international participants also showed some 'insider' knowledge of the advertising industry. The Asian international participants explained how the commercial relationship between the client and the advertising agency worked: 'They'll need to hire people from the advertising agency ... First, they have to do the proposal to give details such as the idea of advertisement, budget, prop ... and location ... When it's approved, the other company will start the project to film that advertisement ... ' (Asian international 5, male, 16/02/08); 'I have the product and I'm going to show people how to use it, what the functions are and what is good about it ... Probably give to people who specialise in advertising ... They draw a picture as a story and do a proposal to the company whether they agree or not' (Asian international 7, female, 04/03/08); 'First time, I have to ask people what they need. I mean doing research and bring it into a discussion. They choose the concepts and the way to show the product ... Choose superstar, make the film ... edit, and do research of their advertisement again before putting it on the television' (Asian international 1, female, 15/01/08).

Like other participants, Thai-Australian participants had a limited awareness of advertising laws and regulation. However, most Thai-Australian participants and the Asian international group had a good knowledge of government regulation. They were able to provide various examples of how advertising should be controlled: 'Advertisement must not destroy Thai culture. They must not use violence ... or lead audiences in a wrong direction, for example, the idea that smoking will make you look good' (Thai-Australian 2, female, 15/01/08); 'Advertisers cannot falsely compare the advantages and disadvantages of products or make any reference to the King of Thailand' (Thai-Australian 17, female, 22/02/08); 'Although they do not ban or censor nude sexual advertisements, they are regulated and controlled' (Thai-Australian 14, female, 15/02/08); 'Advertisers must not humiliate religions or politics' (Thai-Australian 3, female, 16/01/08).

The Asian international participants similarly thought regulation important: 'Sexist and offensive material, you cannot show' (Asian international 5, male, 16/02/08); 'I think it also has to pass rating standards, like PG [Parental Guidance Suggested]. Australia also has this rating' (Asian international 5, male, 16/02/08). The participants also demonstrated a good comparative understanding of advertising regulation in different countries: 'They try to restrict times for controversial advertisements. Alcohol advertisements must show a warning ... and can only be advertised after 10pm ... Thailand does not allow alcohol advertisement now ... Australia, however, is worst. There are a lot of sexually suggestive advertisements' (Thai-Australian 6, female, 20/12/07); 'Some advertisements can only be shown at night ... In China, every advertisement will be checked by some department of the Government. If you have references to clubbing or sexuality, I don't think it'll be allowed' (Asian international 2, female, 22/01/08); 'They don't allow Japanese advertisements in Korea. Historically, over time the Korean people and Japanese people have fought, so many wars, Korean people don't like the Japanese. Another law is not to distort Korean history' (Asian international 1, female, 15/01/08).

Most Thai expatriates and the Asian international participant group understood their consumer rights: 'We have rights to complain. The government, probably the Consumer Affairs Department, deals with this issue' (Thai-Australian 2, female, 15/01/08); 'We can lodge a complaint for an inappropriate advertising story, such as a humiliation of religion' (Thai-Australian 7, male, 16/03/08); 'Some advertising is violent and unrealistic ... it affects children's perception and imitation' (Thai-Australian 12, male, 15/02/08); 'We have free speech. I think we can complain' (Asian international 5, male, 16/02/08); One Indonesian participant from the Asian international group also compared the consumer rights processes in Australia and her home country:

You can make a complaint to consumer affairs. I know that you can complain about something. Just call them ... they will investigate more about the product ... Consumer Affairs will contact the company, and tell them that there is some complaints and people aren't happy about the product. In Australia you have rights to complain ... Indonesia is a Muslim country ... Most of them are very rich. Normally, advertising

companies have money. For small people you can't do anything to fight them. But here [Australia] you have the right to fight. (Asian international 7, female, 04/03/08)

Most Thai-Australian participants correctly understood that government organisations regulated advertising and were even able to name the relevant regulating bodies in different countries such as 'Office of the Consumer Protection Board' (Thai-Australian 12, male, 15/02/08; Thai-Australian 14, female, 15/02/08; Thai-Australian 17, female, 22/02/08) and the 'National Telecommunication Commissions' (Thai-Australian 3, female, 16/01/08; Thai-Australian 6, female, 20/12/07; Thai-Australian 18, male, 24/03/08). This is in contrast to the Asian international participants who were unable to identify the relevant government bodies that dealt with regulation.

Media literacy, according to Potter (2004), also includes strong knowledge of media content, particularly the ability to 'aggregate' or recognise more general patterns in media representations and what they mean. Like Australian and Thai participants, Thai-Australian participants tended to apply gender stereotypes to their readings of advertisements or 'induce' broader ideological generalisations without proper critical consideration of what these stereotypes might mean (Potter, 2004, p. 76): 'women are being used to present the beauty, for example, in Cute Press, Garnier or Pantene. While men are being used to attract the opposite gender, like in the AXE advertisement' (Thai-Australian 15, female, 21/02/08); 'It's about the characteristic of each gender. Men are often associated with being social and outgoing, partying and friends, as seen in Heineken or James Boags' (Thai-Australian 14, female, 15/02/08); 'Women are often connected with sexuality, showing nudity ... Men are presented as orientated towards strength. They're always strong' (Thai-Australian 16, male, 22/02/08). Another participant noted:

The role is sometime determined by the product. Men represent strength. It's more suitable for them to present sport shoes, rather than promote washing detergent. In contrast, the roles of housework should be represented by feminine images, a women and a housewife. Another example, Mobile phones will seem more reliable if being presented by

men because males are associated with the roles of a leader in Thai society. (Thai-Australian 2, female, 15/01/08)

The Asian international group also considered gender roles and how they were stereotyped in advertisements: 'If they want to sell housework items, advertisements will show so many women working in the house. It reflects that housework is woman's work. It reflects a woman's image and roles. The advertisement gives butterfly [i.e. small] effects, the big effects' (Asian international 1, female, 15/01/08). Australian participants, however, were also critical of the 'sexist' attitudes of advertisers: 'The lady in the Schick, she was in a dress that tightens her breasts, and the men were trying to impress her with their skin' (Australian 15, male, 25/06/06); 'They're using females [in advertisements] to allure [men] as a carrot to the donkey' (Australian 10, female, 13/06/06).

According to Messaris (1998, pp. 76–77), a comprehension of visual language and the implicitness of visual syntax are an important component of media literacy. The understanding of visual language enhances cognitive skills and analogical thinking; it also minimises media influences upon audiences (1998, p. 70). Other critics including Reichert, Latour, Lambiase and Adkins (2007) have found strong correlations between media literacy and the awareness of the sexual portrayal of women in the media. In their study, participants were more likely to view sexual portrayal negatively in advertising if they first had media literacy training in sexual objectification and how it was portrayed in the media. This training was enhanced if this training also considered critically negative representations of women in the media. Thai-Australian participants were mindful of sexual objectification in advertising: 'Nescafé attracts audiences by using [explicit] sexual [innuendo]. A man drinks a cappuccino and makes a mess of his nose, and a woman responds indirectly by licking her lips' (Thai-Australian 13, female, 24/01/08); 'Schick showed a woman in a short dress touching a patient. Nestlé hot chocolate [shows a woman] half-naked. It may be unnecessary to sell hot chocolate this way, presented with naked women' (Thai-Australian 19, male, 04/03/08); 'Benice [Thai] advertisement over-uses sexuality, for example, a couple is playing and touching ... It'll be a more reliable advertisement if it presents product benefit ... But they use sex appeal to present products. Similarly,

products targeting males also emphasise female attraction' (Thai-Australian 6, female, 20/12/07).

Thai-Australian participants applied different criteria in criticising sexual explicitness in the media. Whereas for Australian participants a key issue was the 'sexism' of these advertisements, for Thai-Australian participants a key concern was the potentially negative social impacts such as disruption of social harmony and offence to moral and religious values: 'A character in Schick, an Australian ad, wore the uniform of a doctor and was represented in a sexual way. It disagrees with Thai people's opinions toward the image of a doctor or nurse. We are positive and respect them' (Thai-Australian 2, female, 15/01/08); 'Advertisements want to attract the audiences, but it may not be suitable for Thai culture' (Thai-Australian 5, male, 20/12/07). Others emphasised Thai social values: 'A woman in an AXE advertisement showed crazed desire for a guy. It's against Thai social norms to be open about this ... Expression of emotion must be carefully measured' (Thai-Australian 11, female, 19/02/08); 'Australians may not worry about sexuality as Thai people. But, I personally think women should still preserve their purity [*raknuansanguandtua*]' (Thai-Australian 2, female, 15/01/08). Thai participants in Thailand and Australia tended to regard any explicit display of sexual attraction as potentially socially unacceptable and something to avoid.

Other Asian international participants also commented about gender stereotyping and explicit sexual portraying: 'the way they present the advertisement is not what I really like ... the shaving is good but it focuses too much on sexual attractiveness' (Asian international 5, male, 16/02/08). 'The lady [presented in Schick advertisements], is too sexy ... because of the breasts, and ... in Nescafé, because of the way she licked her lips' (Asian international 12, female, 04/04/08). As Garcia and Yang (2006, p. 33) state, high-context culture countries are likely to be more irritable with sexual content than low-context culture countries such as Australia, which expects more stringent rules and social norms applied to media content.

Thai-Australian participants and Asian international participants, like Australian participants, understood the uses of celebrity commodity in advertisements. Thai-Australians were perhaps slightly more aware of the way in which advertisers might be used by celebrities to signify or personify a product. Both the Asian international and the Thai-Australian groups thought celebrity promotion was an effective marketing tool to influence audiences. One Asian international participant commented: 'Customers will think if a particular famous celebrity uses it, I'll use the same stuff because it is what they use' (Asian international 14, male, 01/06/08); 'Everybody wants to have the same image as the celebrity. They use celebrity endorsements because they want people to try the products' (Asian international 2, female, 22/01/08); Thai-Australian participants also had similar views:

It creates a 'role model' ... we think 'if we use this product, we will be like those celebrities' ... They're a logo for the product. The more we see them, the more we remember the brand ... They help promote the brand image ... Their personality is transferred to the product ... Using celebrity benefits, the brand, especially a new brand that has less recognition ... People are more able to easily connect with a product that is endorsed by a celebrity. (Thai-Australian 6, female, 20/12/07)

Others agreed: 'Celebrity is either directly or indirectly related to the product ... For example, using a sports player to promote sport shoes, or using Paradorn [a Thai professional tennis player] to advertise a vehicle. It associates the vehicle with strength' (Thai-Australian 7, male, 16/03/08); 'everyone has a hero ... The advertising agencies use psychology and use a popular superstar or celebrity in advertisements that will be remembered. The public looks at them as an idol' (Thai-Australian 1, female, 17/01/08).

One Asian international participant also noted how celebrity 'fan clubs' were used as an important marketing tool in advertising and product promotion, particularly in Asian countries: 'It's more attractive and more people are interested in endorsements. Maybe they have many fans. Fan clubs know what celebrities do or say' (Asian international 9, male, 01/04/08). Thai participants and Thai-Australian participants were also aware of the importance of fan clubs in Thailand and its

importance in constructing identities, audiences and markets for advertising. These two Thai-Australian participants explained the use of fan clubs in this way:

A fan club is a group of people who admire celebrities ... They're interested and follow all the works of celebrity ... They're crazy and love celebrities. They do, act and buy everything the same as celebrities ... For example, there is an advertisement telling audiences to buy Pepsi in order to exchange for a concert ticket. So, many of my friends were buying it. (Thai-Australian 13, female, 24/01/08)

Another Thai-Australian participant similarly explained:

Teenagers follow behaviours of celebrities they liked, and adapt their personalities into their own. It's a stage where they're on a search for their own identity and looking for a role model. Therefore, advertisements use celebrities to attract more audiences, for example, using a singer who is a trendy teen and already has a fan club to promote ... products. (Thai-Australian 2, female, 15/01/08)

Thai-Australian participants like other groups in the study also grasped notions of 'intertextuality'. They were able to identify pre-existing references to representation in advertisements across media: 'Sprite [uses advertisements] which are ... similar to an American movie, using stock images of people playing basketball ... When the basketball players jump into the swimming pool, it reminds me of Eminem's music video' (Thai-Australian 1, female, 17/01/08); 'The Schick advert is similar to House [Australian television show]. They use a setting of a doctor working in a hospital which is very similar' (Thai-Australian 2, female, 15/01/08). Thai-Australian participants also noted how intertextuality was used in car advertising: 'Holden showed a lively car. It refers to a foreign movie [*Herbie Fully Loaded*] of an old, alive beetle car' (Thai-Australian 9, female, 22/01/08). In contrast, the Asian international participants hardly mentioned the use of intertextuality in advertising.

Thai-Australians also valued media realism as an important part of advertising presentation. Some participants focused on media 'plausibility or the ability of media to represent situations that 'happens in daily life' (Thai-Australian 19,

male, 04/03/08); 'being realistic, for example, using a real life situation that audiences can feel the possibility or relate to is important ... or using ordinary people with an interesting story' (Thai-Australian 3, female, 16/01/08); 'I like realistic advertisements that give information about the product benefit, and advertisements that don't use too much effects or techniques to make it an over-exaggeration' (Thai-Australian 2, female, 15/01/08). Similarly, the Asian international group identified realism as: 'something that is real and makes sense' (Asian international 17, male, 18/07/08) or 'it does happen' (Asian international 5, male, 16/02/08; Asian international 8, female, 08/03/08) or is part of 'real life' (Asian international 4, female, 01/02/08; Asian international 13, male, 05/04/08).

McDonald's advertisements, in particular, were criticised for their disingenuousness by many Thai-Australian participants: 'McDonald's used a setting of interviewing people ... walking on the street. Really? Some people may not like McDonald's but they only present people who agreed with the product' (Thai-Australian 3, female, 16/01/08); 'McDonald's, for example, used the interviewing of people on the street because they wanted to show that it's a real story and make people relate to the advert' (Thai-Australian 4, female, 11/03/08); 'It interviewed people about its test ... ignored bad answers, and only put good answers into the advertisement' (Thai-Australian 5, male, 20/12/07). Another participant compared McDonald's advertising to her direct experience of the product:

Most advertisements are unrealistic. To be realistic means products should offer what is being said. One example is McDonald's. I was really angry about it. The advertisement said 'we give a big piece of fish' and it showed a visual of a piece of fish which was bigger than a hamburger, but it was so small when I bought it ... I feel that it's unfair. It's not like in the advertisement ... If the products are not that good or 100 per cent as what you said, better not to say it. I personally think the quality of the product is most important. (Thai-Australian 1, female, 17/01/08)

Thai-Australian participants also valued the importance of production techniques that constructed authenticity and were critical of 'over-exaggeration' and fantasy

sequences (Thai-Australian 13, female, 24/01/08): ‘The car [Holden advertisement] cannot play basketball but they animated it by graphics to appear as if it was playing. Another example, the Omo advertisement presented an alien. Johnny Walker showed snow falling in Thailand and a human walking on top of water. They’re impossible’ (Thai-Australian 16, male, 22/02/08); ‘The Presenter’s hair [Pantene advertisement] is very shiny. They definitely used graphics’ (Thai-Australian 19, male, 04/03/08). Thai-Australian participants found these advertisements less enjoyable because they were not believable.

Unlike Asian international participants, Thai-Australian participants stressed ‘advertising must not “lie to the consumer” (Thai-Australian 13, female, 24/01/08) or wash the consumer’s brain by claiming impossible results, such as “whiten face within seven days” (Thai-Australian 11, female, 19/02/08). Several participants thought that the illogical claims of advertisements were implausible: ‘I don’t think “the three or seven weeks, money back guarantee” works. I don’t like that kind of advertisement’ (Thai-Australian 3, female, 16/01/08). This participant made clear:

Everybody in the advertisement has no pimple ... It’s impossible to get rid of those pimples or wrinkles ... A dermatologist told me that it takes time. I don’t really believe ... Advertisements are propagandist and persuade people to buy products by telling us that ‘within seven days’ it will be fixed ... Also, the whitening product ... Nobody in this world can be that white ... Advertisements increase people’s inferiority complex and effects on their self-esteem ... It makes people think ‘I can also be white. I should buy this expensive product’, even though they have dark skin (Thai-Australian 1, female, 17/01/08).

Another participant questioned the credibility of a product’s claim to speed up hair growth:

A simple example is cosmetic advertisements that claim a result within seven days. You should consider that we have different skin types. It may be good for one group but not others ... I feel that it’s unrealistic ... Similar to Porn’s, whitening product, that claims a result within 15 days ... shampoo advertisements are also unrealistic, according to my direct experience. Our hair is a centimetre longer each month, but not two

centimetres for every seven days ... For the Australian ad, Garnier tended to use presentation techniques that makes it unrealistic. (Thai-Australian 2, female, 15/01/08)

Other Thai-Australian participants expressed disappointment when finding a product did not match the claims that were made about it in an advertisement:

Pantene was not as good as what they showed in the advertisement ... Advertising content showed shampoo ingredients. Then they tied hair on a pole and pulled it hard to make it look realistic in order to demonstrate strengthened hair ... It said it was protecting hair loss ... but my hair fell out in handfuls because of using it. (Thai-Australian 11, female, 19/02/08)

Asian international participants appeared to be less concerned about whether an advertisement was making realistic claims and liked the fantasy sequences in advertisements. Like Thai-Australian participants, some of the Asian international participants thought the car advertisements showing a car playing basketball were unrealistic. However, about half of the participants seemed to believe in the illogical claims of some of the advertisements: 'because McDonald's interview people on the street ... You give the food a try ... Nescafé is realistic and it might happen to people' (Asian international 12, female, 04/04/08); 'Nescafé cappuccino, whenever I drink ... I get the froth under my nose like in the advertisement' (Asian international 1, female, 15/01/08); 'Nokia is about communication and its function and how it connects people' (Asian international 7, female, 04/03/08).

In general, Thai-Australian participants, similar to Thai participants living in Thailand, were also more critical of materialism, promotion and consumerism (*boriphokniyom*): 'we all know that advertisements always say good things' (Thai-Australian 1, female, 17/01/08); 'Advertising shows only the goodness and beauty. The product always gives a better result' (Thai-Australian 4, female, 11/03/08); 'Most advertising sells unnecessary products, particularly mobile phone adverts and other technology advertisements ... It wastes our money ... I think community and social cause advertisements are more useful' (Thai-

Australian 5, male, 20/12/07). Unlike Thai and Thai-Australian participants, the Asian international and Australian groups were less critical of consumerism of advertisements. More than half of Asian international participants agreed that they were tempted to buy products and in general articulated a stronger consumerist ethos: 'Nokia, and probably the hot chocolate because it's looks tasty', (Asian international 1, female, 15/01/08); 'I'll probably buy Garnier because of the advertisements. I'll try it if I want to dye my hair. And Nokia, it's more about the brand itself', (Asian international 2, female, 22/01/08); 'I want to try McDonald's as well because they make a daily fresh meal ... and Nokia. I like Nokia if I'm going to change mobiles I'll choose Nokia again' (Asian international 7, female, 04/03/08). Another participant admitted advertising influenced her identity: 'So many advertisements use a very beautiful woman and a handsome guy ... and so many people try too much to become beautiful and nice ... Some of my friends do plastic surgery that is so expensive. For me, I try to lose weight' (Asian international 1, female, 15/01/08). Although Asian international participants showed evidence of media literacy development, they were much more likely to express consumerist views than Thai or Thai-Australian participants.

Thai-Australian participants and the Asian international group agreed that media influence was not entirely to blame for consumerism or the negative effects of consumerism. High-context issues to do with social collectivism and issues of individual moral 'duty' were important in terms of considering the media's influence for Asian international participants, Thai participants and Thai-Australian participants. Like Thai participants, Thai-Australian participants and Asian international participants shared the same views: 'Advertising itself doesn't create a social problem. The problem is a person who has strong consumerist desires and then commits a crime, stealing, or becoming a prostitute is a problem ... There is lots of this kind of news in the newspaper ... It's about the maturity of a person' (Thai-Australian 11, female, 19/02/08); 'People can get information about the new product from advertising. I think it depends on the person. It's not forcing them to buy the product' (Asian international 1, female, 15/01/08); 'Advertisement doesn't really change my esteem. It's about self-confidence (Asian international 5, male, 16/02/08); 'It's not a big effect for me because of the advertisement. It depends on the person who sees it. Advertisements just want to

promote the product and want people to know about the new brand' (Asian international 12, female, 04/04/08). This participant thought:

People are different ... You have to believe in yourself ... It depends on how you educate your children and yourself. It's not really about advertising. Advertising is good and bad. The only thing to think is if you are really able to choose the good thing and not follow advertising. Of course, they're not showing everything. Everything is good and there are no negatives (Asian international 7, female, 04/03/08).

Some Thai-Australian participants were more positive than others were; they evaluated the pros and cons of advertisements: 'Advertisers want to do their job. It's their rights to do. Some products offer new innovations, for example, vehicles that save the environment, have a high technology without relying on the petrol. It depends on ourselves whether or not we're materialist. They cannot force you to buy' (Thai-Australian 3, female, 16/01/08). Another participant agreed:

Advertising was not always bad, it has some advantages. It's a medium for informing audiences about products, and some of them are necessary ... As long as it's realistic, it benefits the consumer. It also depends on the individual. People who have low self-esteem would probably believe in the advertisement more than others ... Fat people, for example, want to be skinnier because they have an inferiority complex. There're many factors involved, and it's not purely the influence of adverts. It's unlikely that they believed in the weight loss advertisement which claims slimness within 30 days. (Thai-Australian 2, female, 15/01/08)

Another two Thai-Australian participants made a comparison: 'We need to look at each society. Consumers in a developing country have a good judgement of what is good and what is not, which contrasts with a country that has a low standard of living. Governments need to be more responsible for their citizens' (Thai-Australian 18, male, 24/03/08). Another participant compared consumerism in Thailand and Australia: 'Most Thai teenagers often change to a new mobile. It's not because of the influences of the advertisement, but they rely on their peers, and try to save face. I don't see Australian teenagers change their mobile that

often, even though advertisements are similar' (Thai-Australian 4, female, 11/03/08).

Thai-Australian participants showed less resentment to multinational and global advertising than Australian and Thai participants did. Thai-Australian participants welcomed multinational advertising because it was recognisable as a familiar global advertising that was part of Thai as well as the Australian cultural landscape. Global advertising was able to provide a cultural reference point and position. Thai-Australian participants as a diaspora connected not only to local but a global culture. One participant noted, 'It may change food culture. Pizza Hut is influencing teenagers even though it has less value than Thai food ... But people thought it's an image of America and want to follow it ... It's actually good for the Thai economy, because Pizza Hut spent big budget for ads and that creates an economy flow' (Thai-Australian 18, male, 24/03/08). Other participants saw global advertising as an important part of modernisation and development in Thailand's economy: 'An advertisement is just a form of media ... I also don't think bringing in junk food [Pizza Hut] destroys Thai culture ... it's a widespread culture ... We need to accept the change. We need to take in not only food culture, but also technology ... advertising doesn't destroy cultureThe world changes all the time' (Thai-Australian 2, female, 15/01/08); 'I think it's a multi-culture nowadays' (Thai-Australian 14, female, 15/02/08). Another participant noted multinational culture: 'gives options for people ... and increases innovation' (Thai-Australian 3, female, 16/01/08). 'It's hard to accept only one culture but not the others. It's worldwide, even though we don't always watch advertisements, we use the internet. I think it's unavoidable' (Thai-Australian 13, female, 24/01/08). Thai-Australian participants appeared to accept globalisation and global corporations. They did not think that globalisation implied the media homogeneity or that it might dominate or their nation identity.

Interestingly, Thai participants were more constrained in speaking about the global effects of the advertising industry whereas Thai-Australian participants discussed the media more freely and openly. Particularly in a discussion about the Pizza Hut commercial, Thai participants seemed to be positive towards global business and advertisement: 'I tended to look at it as an expression of food culture

in Western countries' (Thai 2, male, 17/11/06); 'I think most Thai people regularly have Thai food, and only change to pizza occasionally for different tastes' (Thai 6, male, 29/11/06); 'Thai culture still exists. It's just something new in Thailand' (Thai 8, female, 06/12/06). Globalisation remains an important aspect of Thai economic development and shared social values and collectivism. Few Thai participants were therefore willing to openly criticise or speak directly about what is regarded as a key social feature of Thai development. Thai high-context cultural values of social hierarchy and harmony were important here (Knutson et al., 2002). Thai-Australian participants exhibited much more lower-context or more direct ways of talking about globalisation than Thai participants in Thailand.

This chapter has illustrated that Thai-Australian participants and Asian international participants' knowledge of the media industry, production and content is similar to that of the Thai participant group but stronger than the Australian groups. Thai-Australian participants appear to be more media literate than the Asian international group of participants. Thai-Australian participants had stronger real world knowledge and critical understanding of branding; and understanding of semiology in advertising and manipulation of audiences. Cross-cultural effects in media understanding were perhaps important here. Australian participants were more likely to make direct economical criticisms of advertisements, while Thai participants tended to focus on detail and the way an advertisement was able to elaborate its message. Thai participants in Thailand paid much greater attention to issues of politeness, and avoiding disagreement than Thai-Australian participants did. Issues of social harmony and preservation of the 'social me' were foregrounded. Conversely, Thai-Australian participants were more forthright in their criticism of advertisements. They maintained Thai norms and values, but also exhibited examples of a 'hybrid' approach to media literacy. Thai-Australian participants were more confident and challenged more directly the messages and effects of advertisements. They valued their freedom of speech and were less circumspect about voicing criticism in public and social situations. The Asian international group was broadly similar to the Thai-Australian group, although less knowledgeable on many issues than the other groups. Language difficulties and less exposure to the media in Australia and in

their homeland countries as compared to the Thai groups and Australian group, perhaps affects their ability to evaluate the media.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

This chapter endeavours to discuss the findings and proposes a new approach to media literacy that considers cross-cultural decoding of advertisements. The chapter attempts to improve upon the knowledge of media literacy thus far developed from Western perspectives, in particular in the work of Potter (2004) and Silverblatt's (2001), in order to understand media literacy in different cultural contexts. This thesis has undertaken to review media use, knowledge, response and the resistance of Australian participants, Thai participants living in Australia, Thai participants living in Thailand and Asian international participants living in Australia but not of Thai or Australian backgrounds. This study has explored young participants' understanding of the advertising industry, representation, production values, media realism and effects. This thesis has illustrated how these cohorts apply their knowledge in making sense of the media. The study explores how young participants develop media literacy, and the similarities and differences between the groups of participants. The research also critically considers social and cultural factors that influence their reading and responses.

This study has found that there are different degrees of media use, knowledge, skills and responses among the different groups of participants. Unlike, Thai and Thai-Australian participants, Australian participants watched less television but exhibited slightly stronger literacy skills in terms of understanding of the representations of advertising. Australian participants critically understood the rhetorical and social effects of advertisements and in particular were able to criticise the 'illogical claims' of marketing and advertising. They were also mindful of persuasive devices, issues of authenticity in media realism and how these devices might generate media effects in audiences. Interestingly, Australian participants, though more critical, did not show the same degree of consumer resistance to advertising that the two Thai groups demonstrated. As noted by Eagle (2007), the 'awareness of persuasiveness intent does not necessarily promote the ability to resist it' (p. 103). Thai and Thai-Australians typically were critical of the commercialism of advertising, often were aware of consumer

complaint processes and believed that consumers were responsible for their buying behaviours. The Thai groups believed that consumer desire should be tempered by social and moral rules and that the identity constructions of advertising should be resisted by the individual. Economy, thrift and only using what one needs (*porpeng*, a philosophy of self-sufficiency and economy) are important notions in Thai social values and are important to views about consumerism in Thailand. In contrast, Asian international participants and Australian participants were more uncritical consumers and decoders of advertising. After only one viewing, they were often interested in buying products in advertisements on the compilation DVD.

Thai participants also had better real world knowledge of the advertising industry and its techniques of production and forms of manipulation: possibly because of the greater use by this group of the internet and television media than other participants. They also showed they understood production values, such as ‘love scene’ techniques, computer graphic techniques and colour techniques. They were also able to provide a clear explanation of how those techniques might distort, create associative meanings or construct meanings in a range of media narratives. Thai participants were able to read the detail of media texts, comment on the correlative techniques in advertisements, and were mindful of the way this representation established a relationship with audiences. However, Thai participants were also less willing to often directly criticise advertising because of the importance in Thai social discourse of preserving ‘social harmony’. They were likely to avoid a direct argument and criticism of the media. This different cultural approach to media literacy also reduced the observe ability of their literacy skills.

One of the reasons for this difference of ‘knowledge’ may well be associated with different levels of exposure to the media by the different participant groups, although watching more media by itself does not necessarily lead to enhanced literacy. As the CML in the US (2010d) notes ‘media literacy does not mean “don’t watch”; it means “watch carefully, think critically”’. However, in Potter’s (2004) view, gaining media information from the media is helpful because it provides ‘the raw material’ (p. 59) for building a strong knowledge structures and media literacy. Thai participants of all groups had the highest level of television

use and greater understanding of media production and manipulation. Forty per cent spent more than three hours watching television per day, compared to 11 per cent of the Australian participants. The nature of the extended family in Thailand provides financial support for family members: young Thai participants therefore do not need to commit themselves to the workforce early and have more leisure time to watch media and socialise with their peers. While higher exposure to media influences does not necessarily improve media literacy, it may make audiences more able to contrast and compare and aggregate advertisements into different styles, narrative patterns and genres.

Exposure to diverse sources of media also appeared to enhance participants' breadth of knowledge about the media. In this study, Thai-Australian participants were the only group that viewed both Thai advertisements and Australian advertisements. Thai-Australian participants were adept at comparison, evaluation, and induction skills when making judgements about media messages. For example, they were able to compare different uses of media claims and techniques made by advertisements, and apply such knowledge to evaluate and generalise to other advertisements and media such as videos. Increased exposure to a variety of media appears to enhance media literacy. To develop global media literacy, media education should promote an appropriate level of media exposure, and provide broad, assorted cross-cultural media information to build strong knowledge structures and stimulate the uses of literacy skills.

Thai-Australian participants demonstrated media literacy skills that incorporated aspects of Thai high-context readings and the Australian low-context readings of the media. Thai-Australian participants characteristically negotiated cultural differences and displayed 'hybridity' (Bhabha, 1994, pp. 19–38; Meredith, 1998, pp. 2–3) in their assessment of advertisements. They had similar real world knowledge of the industry and a high media resistance to consumer culture like the Thai group of participants. Yet, like Australian participants, they were more direct, critical and argumentative in their judgements of the media than the Thai participant group. They also frequently used evaluation skills to compare Thai and Australian advertisements. Thai-Australians were able to integrate aspects of both

high- and low-context culture judgements in their arguments and elaborate both textual and contextual judgements about the media.

Asian international participants appeared to be less media literate than Thai-Australian participants were. Their understanding of media content, production and techniques appeared to be limited: they were less aware of the symbolic meaning of logos, association and colour. They were also less knowledgeable about the uses of celebrity in advertisements, forms of media manipulation and constructions of media authenticity. Asian international participants showed slightly greater resistance to the media than Australian participants, but they were more likely to be manipulated by advertising presentations and claims. Like Thai participants, Asian international participants were less likely to be openly critical of advertising or to evaluate or criticise the media: they tended to avoid conflict.

Morality, ethics and approaches to sexuality are also important differences in cross-cultural considerations of media literacy between the different groups in this study. Australian, Thai and Thai-Australian participants have quite different responses to sexual representation in advertising. Ethics and social rules are assumed a shared commitment in a high-context culture to preserve harmonious relations within the society. For Thai participants, moral criticism is applied to sexual representation in advertisements, whereas for Australian participants such representation is 'sexist'. As Yoon and Yoon (2002), note regulation of sexual representation tends to be more authoritarian in high-context cultures than in low and medium context countries. Thai and Thai-Australian groups were not passive consumers but took responsibility for the effects of advertising. Cross-cultural notions of collectivism were important in this idea. Individuals are expected 'to identify with and work well in groups' (Zhou et al., 2005, p. 112). This is in contrast to the individualist culture of the Australian group. The Australian group tended to blame 'the media' and not the audience and expected media producers to be responsible for the consequences of the effects of advertisements on audiences. The Thai group and Thai-Australian group also showed greater resistance to the consumerist sales pitches of products advertised on the compilation DVD. Unlike the Australian and Asian international group, the Thai groups were unlikely to be influenced by advertising persuasiveness. For many

Thais, the issue of what must be objectively socially represented rather than held as a deep personal value may be contradictory. The rise of globalism and the rise of consumerism in Thailand are often cited as examples of this contradiction, with ever-increasing pressure on Thais to abandon deeply held social values. Nowhere can this contradiction be seen more than in the ever-burgeoning growth of the sex industry in Thailand. According to Associate Professor Sukhum Chaloeysup, Vice Rector of Suan Dusit Poll, Suan Dusit Rajabhat University, a survey of 3,197 sex industry workers, including young Thai student prostitutes, madams of the brothel and customers indicated that 29 per cent of the young Thai students in the study became a prostitute because of a desire for consumer goods (Regret the thought of students, 2001). Similarly, Phra Duangsisen (2003), a Buddhist priest in the article, 'Consumerism, Prostitution and Buddhist Ethics' stated that a key motivation for prostitution in Phayao, Thailand is consumerism. Prostitutes in this underprivileged area 'are not only working for the survival of their families, they are also building big houses that reflect the superior financial status of their owners' (p. 111). The spread of globalisation and accompanying consumer culture in many ways is the antithesis of *porpeng* philosophy and the 'middle' way of Buddhist philosophy. The presence of these social problems represents a break away from traditional social hierarchy (Stearns, 2006, pp. 83–100). Individual Thais feel deeply conflicted by these issues and decay within society. Thai participants' resistance towards advertising may be an important way in which they are socially able to express collectivist social norms or *porpeng* but it may also hide underlying consumerist desire that is manifest in many of Thai society's problems.

Cross-cultural communication has been shown to be highly important in the ways that the different interview groups decode advertising. As shown in the thesis, Thai participants, Australian-Thai participants and Asian international participants were much more concerned with the semiological elements of advertising than Australian participants who were more concerned with the 'direct message'. While the Australian group appeared to be good at decoding the explicit ideological messages in advertising and Americanisations in the media. As Yoon and Yoon (2002) note, 'high-context cultures are intuitive and contemplative, and tend to utilise indirect and ambiguous messages. Low-context cultures are

analytical and action-oriented, and tend to use clearly articulated messages' (p. 58). Asian communicators tend to rely on their ability to decode symbolic meaning, implicitness and the contextuality of media messages (Chen & Starosta, 1998; Hall & Hall, 1990; Hofstede, 1980; Knutson, 2004). Both Thai groups paid attention to the symbolism and the latent effects of advertisements. In this sense, the audiences' reading of the media is different from country to country. Thai participants and Asian international participants tended to use a softer-tone of voice, were quiet and indirect and showed respect when criticising advertisements. Interestingly, Thai-Australian participants, appeared to have assimilated both Australian and Thai critical styles and were both critical in elaborate styles and direct styles of communication. High-context cultural values influence many aspects of critical processing and responses to media texts. Thai and Asian international group may fail to exhibit some of the 'classic' Western critical skills of media literacy because they are unwilling to make strong criticism of the media because of cultural concerns about social harmony. Nevertheless, these same participants provide evidence of a strong understanding of narrative and of the semiological elements of advertising. Australian participants showed strong skills in generic direct and critical skills associated with low-context approaches. Some examples are their comments towards marketing and advertising: 'I think you buy too much crap that we don't need ... You just buy it because everyone else buys it ... You don't need three TVs ... You don't need four cars, but that's what people are. Definitely advertising is having a negative ... It's a waste (Australian 16, male, 26/06/06); 'At the end of the day, the company doesn't care whether their product is good or not. They just wanna sell it' (Australian 17, male, 26/06/06); 'That what television is all about. It's giving you that ultra-ego' (Australian 11, male, 14/06/06). Rather than making assumptions that Thai groups had less developed 'direct critical styles', it should be acknowledged that these skills are understated and not verbalised because of greater priority given to issues of social context and preservation of harmony. A new kind of analysis is perhaps required to consider issues of cross-cultural media literacy. As Mooij (2004, p. 26) has noted: 'individuals are products of their culture and their social grouping; therefore they are conditioned by their socio-cultural environment to act in certain manners'.

A new cross-cultural study of media literacy should consider non-verbal communication and how criticism is re-directed to other forms of indirect criticism. Guerin (1989) shows, for example, how non-linguistic communication can serve social norms. He observes that social situations can affect paralinguistic vocalisation. For example, students in a university science laboratory will work quietly and not create disturbances because of social norms that apply to these types of situations. These types of rules also apply in intercultural communication situations. As Park (2008) notes, politeness and the desire to reduce social friction often have paralinguistic effects on communicators from high-context backgrounds in terms of reducing vocalisation. Likewise 'saving face' or face-work, in Park's terms for Korean, Japanese, and Chinese speakers is an important lexicon during social interaction and can affect critical situations: 'softer' implied criticism through non-verbal communication may therefore speak volumes about someone's underlying disposition. Eye contact may have relevance in some situations. During an interview, participants from high-context cultures may not look at the interviewer indirectly even though they are confident and know what they are talking about. This is because younger people looking directly at the elder would be conveying impoliteness and disrespect in high-context countries. This may be interpreted again as lack of knowledge or critical orientation. Reynolds and Valentine (2004, p. 81) have noted that African-Americans tend to look down or away while listening, but attentively look at a listener while speaking. Euro-Americans maintain direct eye contact while listening, and only glance to a listener when speaking.

Several studies pinpoint the significance of non-verbal communication and paralanguage in conveying the feelings of communicators. Eighty-five per cent of communication is non-verbal communication (Lincoln, 2008; Reynolds & Valentine, 2004, p. 77). It is as important as the verbal communication. As cited in Lincoln (2008), 'nonverbal behaviours are a key element in maintaining the truth of the performance' (p. 55). Paralinguistics such as voice, volume, pitch, intonation of speech, silence and pauses are also perceived as a sign language that implies different meanings in different cultures. Lincoln's study (2008) demonstrates the helpfulness of non-verbal communication in building rapport with students in the classroom. He acknowledges that non-verbal messages can

replace, reinforce, and contradict a communicator's verbal messages. The meaning of messages can be conveyed quickly, easily and more comprehensively, when reinforced with non-verbal messages. Non-verbal messages also reveal the true intentions and emotions of the communicator. The participants in this study also show the uses of non-verbal communication. For example, some Australian participants shook their heads, and some of them moved along with the 'up beat' music used in advertisements. Some other participants appeared from their facial expressions and tones of voice to be emotional when describing the uses of visuals and sounds. Considering non-verbal communication will expand the understanding of audiences' interpretation and response to the media.

A number of academics have mentioned the relevance of considering kinetics and paralanguage as a form of implied criticism or critical approach in communication. In Lincoln's (2008, pp. 57–60) terms, kinetics relates to body posture and movement such as nodding, eye contact, facial expressions and smiling. Paralinguistics deals with a person's voice. The quality of voices such as pronunciation, speed, volume, pitch, style, pauses, hesitations (Mishra, 2009, pp. 31–32); and vocalisation (non-linguistic noise) such as grunting, moaning, laughing are included. The use of non-verbal communication differs across cultures. Audience researchers who seek to understand media literacy therefore need to understand the full range of non-verbal markers that might be used in making implied criticism through non-verbal interactions.

Gestures may also be significant. A researcher may look for a shrug of the shoulder as a sign, or an implication of 'I don't know', among participants from low-context cultures. Participants from low-context cultures nodding their head may imply that they strongly agree or perhaps just simply acknowledgement (Lincoln, 2008, p. 58). Reynolds and Valentine (2004, p. 83) find that nodding carries both positive and negative responses in high-context countries. Nodding in high-context countries can mean that a listener is listening and agreeing with a speaker; a listener is listening but may not agree with a speaker; a listener may be confused but prefer a speaker to keep talking in order to develop a fuller outline of the meaning; or alternatively a listener seeks to encourage a speaker to keep speaking. It is important to be aware of the different uses and meanings of non-

verbal communication in different countries. Researchers of media literacy need develop more sophisticated interpretations of their subjects that consider cultural sensitivity. Paralinguistics can also provide insights into the emotional state and critical skills of participants. Many of the Australian participants were forthright, gave direct responses to questions, but were unable to provide a detailed analysis of the advertisements. Culturally biased interpreters may think a fast and loud voice implies more confidence, experience and knowledge than a voice at a slower speed, lower pitch and volume (Kimble & Seidel, 1991; Mishra, 2009; Pearce & Conklin, 1971). Lincoln (2008, p. 100) draws attention to the indirect messages that speakers use to communicate to listeners in cross-cultural situations. He shows how Japanese speakers find it offensive to reject other people and therefore tend to say 'that may be difficult' instead of saying 'no'. Thai participants also tended to restrain their criticism. For example, some participants could not 'blame the advertisement' (Thai 15, female, 26/12/06); or saw it as an issue of personal responsibility rather than the fault of advertising: 'It's personal attitude of the individual ... for me it's about *porpeng* ... We should be mindful of our limit' (Thai 4, female, 25/11/06). In contrast, Australian participants in this study developed a more 'black and white' discussion. While Thai-Australian participants developed a hybrid style of communicating, which exhibited both a more argumentative and critical style than the Thai group. They are more likely to adopt 'the two sides of the same coin' approach—'pros and cons'—during a conversation about the possible negative effects of advertisements: 'Advertising ... has some advantages. It's a medium for informing audiences about products, and some of them are necessary ... People who have low self-esteem would probably believe in the advertisement more than others ... it's not purely the influence of adverts' (Thai-Australian 2, female, 15/01/08). Asian international participants certainly thought so: 'People can get information about the new product from advertising. I think it depends on the person. It's not forcing them to buy the product' (Asian international 1, female, 15/01/08); 'It's not really about advertising. Advertising is good and bad. The only thing to think is if you are really able to choose the good thing and not follow advertising ... Everything is good and there are no negatives (Asian international 7, female, 04/03/08).

According to Reynolds and Valentine (2004, pp. 18–26), high-context culture countries such as Thailand and some other Asian countries are collectivist and collaborative: loyalty to social relationships and family relationships is important. Non-verbal language and silence is of greater significance to high-context cultures. ‘The speaker is a fool; the listener is wise’ (Reynolds & Valentine, 2004, p. 61). Therefore, living in harmony is more important than confrontation. In contrast, low-context culture cultures place greater stress on individual opinion and belief. Although there are exceptions, people from a low-context culture in Western countries are often competitive, direct and readily willing to share opinion and perceptions. Low-context cultures place greater emphasis on verbal communication and more direct, explicit and linear communication; listening is not as valued.

Global media literacy education must be by its nature ‘polysemic’ (Ceccarelli, 1998; Condit, 1989; Hall, 1980). Different encodings and representations in advertising clearly activate global audiences in a range of cross-cultural ways. Polysemic cultural readings develop critical and multiple interpretations of narrative meanings of media culture. Diasporic groups may be particularly valuable in developing greater understanding of cross-cultural media literacy. A cross-cultural media-literate person will be able to negotiate texts and should understand how reception and the interpretation of the meanings will differ culturally.

High-context culture mediates audiences’ reading as well as the production of media texts. Many theorists call attention to the significance of high-context culture and its significant influence on the visuals, production techniques, storytelling, themes, execution and strategising of advertisements (An, 2007; Cho et al., 1999; Punyapiroje et al., 2002; Shao et al., 2004). Zhou, Zhou and Xue (2005) also note that ‘context can be a predictor of advertising content’ (p. 112) because the reception and social factors are the determining influence. Thus, global media education should address both textual and contextual readings to accomplish viewers’ critical understanding of the media. Critical viewers should be able to make sense of textual representations in advertising in cross-cultural ways: they should be able to analyse the semiology, construction, symbolism,

metaphor, word play, deployments of celebrity and grammar of the media within the context in which these representations are produced for specific audiences. As Mihailidis (2009) notes: 'The challenge is not just to provide criteria and instrument so ... youth can critically face off to the media, but also to understand that the media contextualise and often determine the ways the people exercise their rights culturally, politically, economically, and socially' (p. 37). It is important therefore that audiences are literate enough to negotiate and resist advertising not only as consumers but also as citizens of different cultures.

As Potter (2004) has noted, media literacy is not just simply about the development of understanding but about the development of self: 'People need a strong knowledge structure about their own self to be media literate ... People are constantly developing their personality—the essence of who they are, as psychologists call it ... People search out stories with characters who serve as models ... people identify with characters and try to imitate them in some form' (p. 93). Importantly for this study, the self must be understood also as a product of cross-cultural and transnational contexts. Audiences operate within their own forms of media literacies that are culturally and geographically circumscribed, within countries and between nation states. With awareness of their own responses to advertising, for the participants there are also deficits of awareness about other countries advertising production techniques and how other audiences will decode and cross-culturally make use of the products. Alternatively, there is also much to benefit from diasporic or cross-cultural readings of advertising that can be of benefit to creating new understandings and expanding the field of literacy. Many of the participants in this study are aware of what is at stake for them personally when they read and interpret adverts and the consequences for their identity. As Australian participant 7 acknowledged, 'So, eventually if you get caught up with saturation of marketing ... You know how you constantly need to be one of the beautiful people ... it can affect you in the long term' (Australian 7, female, 09/06/06). These long-term effects clearly have importance for citizenship and the development of critical understanding of the media and advertising. Advertising, as one participant has noted, should not always have to 'manipulate you' (Australian 12, male, 20/06/06).

To develop global media literacy education, the biggest challenge is to develop better ways to assess media literacy across cultures. A media literacy model that considers cross-cultural media literacy should not only focus on cognitive knowledge of media, but also consider social and cultural values that can be applied globally. An understanding of cultural differences is important, as some scholars have emphasised for several years: ‘Many instances of failure are caused ... by lack of cultural sensitivity’ (Reynolds & Valentine, 2004, p. vii). People from different countries have different cultural background that affects values, attitudes, and responses towards the media. As stated earlier, there is a lack of research in cross-cultural media literacy, especially in Asian countries.

This study contributes to new knowledge about media literacy. It draws the attention to the relevance of intercultural communication and how this impacts significantly on participants’ critical discussion of media contents and ability to interpret the semiological elements of advertisements, and responses to media effects. Potter (2004) does not sufficiently investigate these elements and the way in which they affect knowledge structures, cognitive understanding and literacy skill. Advertising is a form of communication that ‘has great cultural significance’ (Silverbaltt, 1995 cited in Malmelin, 2010, p. 131). Media literacy theories need to embrace cross-cultural studies to strengthen cross-cultural knowledge of audience responses to advertising and to help researchers understand how audiences critically decode symbolic meaning of the media in a global context. In this study global issues associated with advertising and media literacy have been compared across four different cultural groups. Further research is needed in the field, in different cultures. When this research is conducted, researchers need to be aware of the nature of their participants and look for the implications of media literacy that may or not be explicit.

7.1 Limitations and Implications

Like all research projects, this research has some limitations. The first relates to the accuracy of the translations between Thai and English. The interviews with Thai participants were conducted in Thai and translated into English. This method

was chosen to foster clear communication and understanding, and to overcome problems of communication in English for Thai participants living in Thailand. However, like all translation, there are some aspects of one language that do not translate exactly into another. The next limitation relates to the limited comparison between the media knowledge of participants. This research specifically focused on young participants who have not previously studied tertiary-level media studies at university. This research is therefore unable to provide information on the differences between the media literacy of tertiary-level media students and those who have not studied the media. Future research could compare these two groups to explore the knowledge gap between them and investigate factors influencing the development of media literacy. The limitation of this research also includes the limited comparison between cultural groups. More research could be conducted to compare a wider range of cultural groups. There is also a paucity of research on different Asian countries and comparing the media literacy of the people in these countries. It would also be interesting to compare media literacy in older generations, as this research focused on young people.

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Appendix A: Consent Form (English)

Young People's Interpretations of Television Advertising

Consent Form for Interviewees

Information to Participants

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study on advertising and young people. I am interviewing you to find out what you think about television advertising and your general knowledge about the production and advertising industry. I also want to find out what you think about the place of advertising in Australian culture.

The comments you make will be completely confidential. If I use your comments in the research report, your name will not be mentioned and all personal information will be confidential as well. The reason for using a tape recorder is to have an accurate record of your valued contribution. I could not do this if I was just writing down your comments. Once the research is written up in full, you can have access to the final document in order to read about my findings.

Certification by Subject

I,

Of

certify that I am at least 18 years old* and that I am voluntarily giving my consent to participate in the research project: *Advertising and the 'media generation': young people and their understanding of the world of advertising in Australia and Thailand*. Being conducted at Victoria University of Technology by: *Nonthasruang Kleepong, postgraduate researcher*.

I certify that the objectives of the study, together with any risks and safeguards associated with the procedures listed hereunder to be carried out in the research, have been fully explained to me and that I freely consent to participation in the research. I certify that I have had the opportunity to have any questions answered and that I understand that I can withdraw from this research at any time and that this withdrawal will not jeopardise me in any way.

I have been informed that the information I provide will be kept confidential.

Signed: }

Witness other than the researcher: }

Date: }

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to the researcher, Nonthasruang Kleepong, ph: (+61) 403-595-597 or the principal investigator, Professor Paul Adams, ph: (+613) 9919-2194. If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Secretary, University Human Research Ethics Committee, Victoria University of Technology, PO Box 14428 MCMC, Melbourne, 8001. Telephone: (+613) 9688-4710.

Appendix B: Consent Form (Thai)

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18

Victoria University

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..... }

. 081-430-4466, (+61) 403-595-597

Associate Professor John Langer . (+613) 9366-2244

Human Research Ethics, Victoria University,

PO Box 14428 MCMC, Melbourne, 8001 . (+613) 9688-4710

Appendix C: Questionnaires

No: _____ Details: _____

A comparative study of young people's perceptions of the world of advertising in Australia and Thailand

I am Phon, from Victoria University. We are doing some research on people's understanding of advertising. We want to talk to people aged 18–25 to find out about how they use the media, what they like and dislike most, and what they think about advertising. With this questionnaire, there are no right or wrong answers. All your views are valuable. This short interview will take only 10 minutes. Please be as honest as possible. All material will be treated with total privacy and your name will not be indicated anywhere in the study.

Part 1: Background information

1. Gender:

- ☐ Male
☐ Female

2. Age: _____

3. Suburb where you live: _____

4. Highest educational qualification obtained: _____

Faculty/School: _____

University/Institute: _____

Other _____

Status: ☐ Graduated

☐ Still studying: ☐ Full time

☐ Part time

5. Your current work, position, type of company, organization:

Status: ☐ Full time

☐ Part time

☐ Casual

6. For Australians & Thais: Have you spent time outside Australia studying/living?

☐ Yes, country _____ Time period _____

☐ No

For Thai & Internationals: How long have you stay in Australia studying/living?

☐ Yes, country _____ Time period _____

☐ No

Part 2: Media Use

7. Please indicate number of the media appliances in your own room and in your house or apartment.

| Media | Own room | Rest of household | Comments |
|--|----------|-------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Televisions | | | |
| Radios | | | |
| CD player | | | <input type="checkbox"/> Same device |
| DVD player | | | |
| DVD recorder | | | |
| Computer with the internet | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> iPod <input type="checkbox"/> MP3 player | | | |
| Video games | | | |
| Mobile phone | | | |
| Other, please indicate _____ | | | |

8. Please estimate how much time per day you spend with the following:

| Time | Television | Radio | Internet at home | Other (e.g.) games |
|-------------------------|--|---|---|----------------------------------|
| 1 hour or less | | | | |
| 1–3 hours | | | | |
| 3–5 hours | | | | |
| 5 hours or more | | | | |
| Favourite output | Programme & Channel 1) _____ 2) _____ 3) _____ | Stations 1) _____ 2) _____ 3) _____ | Websites 1) _____ 2) _____ 3) _____ | 1) _____ 2) _____ 3) _____ |

9. Do you spend time with more than one medium at the same time, for example, online and have TV. on, online with radio?

Specify: _____

10. Do you read a newspaper regularly?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Sometimes

If yes or sometimes, please indicate the name of newspaper

1) _____ 2) _____ 3) _____

11. Do you read *an online newspaper*?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Sometimes

12. Do you buy any magazines?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Sometimes

If yes or sometimes, please indicate the name of magazine

1) _____ 2) _____ 3) _____

13. Do you read *an online magazine*?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Sometimes

14. Have you ever 'voted' by telephone or SMS for a programme like
Big Brother, Australia Idol or others?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

15. Have you ever recorded television programs when you cannot watch them if
you are busy?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Sometimes

If yes or sometimes, which television programme is you have recorded most
over the past year?

1) _____ 2) _____ 3) _____

16. Do you turn the television on the first thing in the morning when you get up?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Sometimes

17. Do you have the television on the last thing at night before you go to bed?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Sometimes

18. Do you watch television programme while you eat your meals?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Sometimes

Part 3: Views about Television Advertising

19. What is the first thing that comes into your mind when you hear the word 'advertising'?

20. Which media do you consider the most powerful for advertising?

(Please indicate first 2 choices)

- _____ Radio
- _____ Television
- _____ Internet
- _____ Print media (newspapers and magazines)
- _____ Outdoor, billboards and posters

Additional comments: _____

21. What is your general opinion about television advertising?

- ☐ Like it
- ☐ Like it sometime
- ☐ Tolerate it
- ☐ Find it annoying
- ☐ Other: _____

Additional comments: _____

22. What television advertisements stand out for you?

Please indicate as a name of product, and describe the ad as best you can.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

What makes you remember of these advertisements? (Optional, depend on response to question 22)

23. Have you purchased product because of the television advertising?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

What? _____

Why? _____

24. What would make television advertising most appealing to you? (Multiple answers can apply)

- ☐ Brand of product
- ☐ Presenters in ads
- ☐ New product
- ☐ Humour
- ☐ Use of sex appeal
- ☐ Interesting presentation techniques
(e.g. Use of music, computer animation, use of colour, clever camera angles etc.)
- ☐ A realistic story
- ☐ Special offers e.g. sales, bargains

Is there something I have not mentioned that would make the ad appealing?

Additional comments:

Thank you for your participation.

The research we are doing at Victoria University has two parts. This is the first. We are interested to follow up on your opinions and get more understanding about your views on advertising.

We would like to show some television ads to get your opinion about them. This has nothing to do with market research. Some researchers say that young people like you are part of a ‘media generation’ – you are very heavily involved with all kinds of media. So, we would like to find out more about your ‘generation’, especially how you relate to the world of advertising. Would you be interested to be involved in a follow up interview?

The follow-up interview would involve a time where I can meet you to show some ads and get your opinion about them. It will take about 30–45 minutes. If you wish to be participate, please provide your contact details. I will be getting in touch to you in the next couple of weeks to organize our meeting.

Name/surname _____

Contact number _____

E-mail address _____

Appendix D: Interview Questions (English)

Interview Questions

Remember, there are no right or wrong answers to the questions. This is not a test. I want to get you honest opinions about television advertising and the advertising industry.

Ad Appreciation

1. Which ads did you like most? Why?
2. Which ad is the worst?
If you were an adviser to the people who made this ad, what would you recommend to improve it?
3. Which ad is most realistic? Why?
Which ad is least realistic? Why?
4. Which ad would your parents consider the worst ad? Why?
5. Which ad tries to give you really good feeling? How does it do this?
6. Would you be tempted to buy any of products advertised in the ads you have just seen? Why?
7. Which ad tells the best story? Why?
8. Why do you think they use celebrities in TV ads?
One of the ads has Sarah Jessica Parker. Why do they use this particular celebrity in this particular ad?

Style and Production Values

9. Which ad uses visual images in the most interesting way? Can you please explain?
10. Why do ads use music? Which ad has the most interesting use of music?
11. Does anything in these ads remind you of other media that you have seen and heard?
(For examples, music videos, TV shows, films, computer games)
12. When I use the word 'camera angle', do you know what I am talking about? Which ad has the most interesting use of camera angles/image? Why?

13. How do you think they choose the actors who appear in these ads?
14. If I talk about 'editing' in describing these ads, what would I be talking about? Please give me examples from the ads.
15. Did you notice the way that colour was used in any of this ads? Can you give an example?

Ad Industry and Economy

16. Why does television have advertising?
17. Imagine you had to explain how ads are made to people who don't know anything about it. How would you explain the process of ad production, from the beginning to the end?
18. Who would have the highest authority in making decisions in the production process?
19. Who pay for making the ads?
20. What advertising agency do you know or have heard about?
21. If you found an ad very offensive and you thought it should be banned from being shown on television, do you think you have a right to complain about it? What would you do or where would you go to make a complaint?
22. Do you know about any laws or regulations that are applied to ads that go on television?

Socialisation and Values

23. Could the ads you have just seen create any personal or social problems?
24. Advertisers like to use the word 'branding'. Do you know how this works? Please give an example from ads you have just seen.
25. Which ad reflects Australian/Thai values the least? Why?
26. Lots of people said McDonald's/Pizza Hut advertising imports American culture and destroys Australian/Thai culture. What do you think?
27. How do you think the roles of men and women are portrayed in these ads?
28. Some people say advertising creates materialistic values, encourages endless spending of money, and relies on selling unnecessary products. What do you think?

29. Many of the people we have seen in these ads are beautiful and attractive, but most people in our society are not like that. How do you think this can influence your self-esteem?
30. Some people say that ads use too many sexual images to sell products. Does this apply to any of the ads you have just seen?
31. Some people said car ads encourage too much car use. This wastes natural resources, creates pollution and leads to global warming. What is your view?
32. What do you think about alcohol being advertised on television?
33. Imagine that you were asked to give some advice to advertisers and marketers about promoting products to young people in your age group. What would you tell them?

Appendix E: Interview Questions (Thai)

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Appendix F: Interview Coding Sheet

A. Cognitive media literacy

1. Analysis
2. Evaluation
 - a. Contrast of comparison
 - b. Critical appraisal and distancing
3. Grouping
4. Induction
 - a. Recognitions of patterns and tropes
5. Deduction
6. Synthesis
7. Abstraction

B. Literacy of Media cultural theories and techniques

1. Awareness of audience negotiations, reception theory, effects and decoding
 - 1.1 Awareness of audience's knowledge and literacy of media
2. Deeper understanding of pleasure and involvement in the
 - 2.1 Awareness of style, form and genre
 - 2.2 Awareness of realism
3. Understanding of narrative and how it works
4. Awareness of media influence and social effects of the media
5. Understanding of explicit and implicit media content
 - a. Understanding of representation symbolism, metaphor and simile
6. Understanding forms of persuasion and rhetoric
7. Ideology and discourse
8. Production of advert: Encoding and polysemic
9. Understanding of intertextuality
10. Understanding of media monopoly

C. Literacy of Production values

1. Awareness of media industry
 - 1.1 Functions of ad, social responsibility
 - 1.2 Authority
 - 1.3 Ad production
 - 1.4 Branding
2. Producers, agencies and writers – styles and communities
3. Camera movement and editing effects
4. Production style, montage
5. Colour, lighting and technical affects
6. Sound effects, music
7. Effect of production values, appeal, style and forms of ads on audiences
8. Ad regulation, consumer rights
9. Synthesis – creating new form or style of media

D. Literacy of cross-cultural/international media effects and how it is deployed in different countries.

1. Cross-cultural effects of audience negotiations, reception theory, effects and decoding, high-context and low-context
2. Understanding of differences in international style, form and genre regarding cultural affect
3. Understanding of cultural effects of narrative and how it works
4. Awareness of cultural effects of media influence and social effects of the media
5. Understanding of cultural effects of explicit and implicit media content
 - a. Understanding of representation symbolism, metaphor and simile
6. Understanding cultural effects of forms of persuasion and rhetoric
7. Ideology and discourse of cultural effects
8. Production of advert: cultural effects of Encoding and polysemy
9. Understanding cultural effects of intertextuality.

Appendix G: Flyer

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT ADVERTISING?

Like it? Hate it?

A pain in the butt? Who cares?

If you're between 18–25, never done media studies,
we want your opinion for a study of
'young people's attitudes to advertising'.

- Watch some TV ads and give us your views.
- Takes about 30 minutes.
- Time and location can be arranged.
- Confidentiality assured.
- The study is a part of a research project at Victoria University.

Your opinion counts!!

Please contact: Phon 0403-595-597

non_kl@hotmail.com