Experiences of Exploitation via Media Among Thai Elderly in 2022

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Situation of Thai elderly's media exposure in 2022 – -

Humans use communication to ensure their survival and safety in their environment, as well as to seek happiness for themselves and society through the learning process that requires the reception of various media. Therefore, "media" is regarded as an important instrument for the human learning process, and the recipients must choose to receive appropriate information that does not harm themselves or others. Nowadays, "media" has evolved to have leapfrog potential in terms of accessibility, speed, information dissemination, emotional transmission, and self-creation of media. The media that floods the public, with information has become increasingly diverse. "Media exposure", or the use of media, is regarded as an entry point for information into the human cognitive process. Consequently, it influences the learning process, feelings, thoughts, and behaviors of human coexistence in society, as well as the health of humans, in a variety of positive and negative ways. As a result, "media exposure" is seen as a crucial behavior for understanding how to improve one's own happiness and the quality of life of others.

The elderly population of Thailand, which presently accounts for 18.3% of the country's total population, is considered one of the most vulnerable demographics and is expected to continue to grow. This is because the way of life in Thai society and culture has changed significantly, particularly the "media", which has evolved from the telegraph and telephone era to television, radio, and newspapers, and now to the online system that can create a nearly perfect virtual world. How will the elderly, who are accustomed to the previous mode of communication, adapt to media exposure in the new era? The current survey of media usage situation, therefore, serves to indicate the media exposure behavior of Thai senior citizens over the past year (2022) in terms of amount of consumption, the primary media that most elderly choose to receive, and the topics that the majority of seniors are interested in. In addition, it reveals the relationship between the characteristics of the Thai elderly and their media consumption preferences.

Our research team from the Intelligent Centre for Elderly Media Literacy (ICEM) at the Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia (RILCA), Mahidol University, has surveyed the situation of media use by the Thai elderly in 2022 with the objective of determining the behaviors of the Thai elderly in the past year. It employs questionnaire to collect data from more than 2,000 Thai older adults aged 60 years from 20 provinces across the country. The provinces include Chiang Rai, Nan, Phayao, Phitsanulok, Nakhon Sawan, Loei, Yasothon, Ubon Ratchathani, Mahasarakham, Buriram, Bangkok, Nonthaburi, Rayong, Chanthaburi, Phetchaburi, Nakhon Si Thammarat, Trang, Surat Thani, Phatthalung, and Krabi.

The key findings from the research are divided into three parts: the amount of media exposure per day, exposure time per day for each type of media, and media topics that Thai seniors are exposed to. Details are provided below.

Total media exposure per day _

This is a survey of the total time that the Thai elderly spent on media in a day. The questionnaire contains four options to choose from: less than one hour per day, one to two hours per day, three to four hours per day, and more than four hours per day.

Figure 1-1 Daily media exposure of the Thai elderly
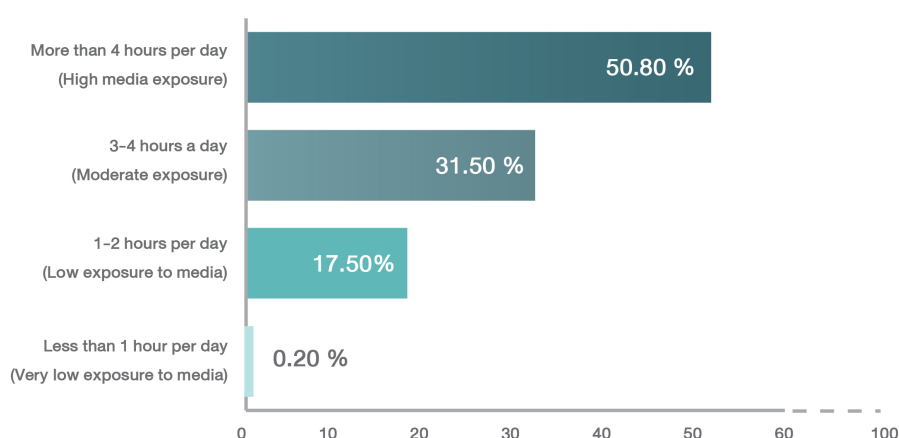
Note: 1: less than 1 hour per day (very low exposure to media)

2: 1-2 hours per day (low exposure to media)

3: 3-4 hours a day (moderate exposure)

4: more than 4 hours per day (high media exposure)

Most Thai elderly, 50.80%, were exposed to media for more than four hours per day, followed by 31.50% who were exposed for three to four hours per day and 17.50% who were less exposed to the media. Less than 1.00% were very little or not at all exposed to media. This indicates that the Thai senior consumed a significant amount of media each day. Assuming that the average time for rest per day is 6–8 hours, they have 16–18 hours per day for other activities, so this means that the elderly spent approximately one-fourth of their daily life using media.

The research team evaluated the comparative level of media exposure according to characteristics of the elderly: regions (North, Northeast, Central and East, South), gender

(male, female), age range (60–69 years, 70–79 years old, 80 years old or more), educational level (beginning level [uneducated to elementary school], middle level [secondary education to diploma], high level [bachelor's degree or higher]), and financial status (low financial status or insufficient income expenditures, medium financial status or income higher than expenditures, high financial status or income higher than expenditures, high financial status or income higher than expenditures with a surplus). The findings are as follows:

Figure 1-2 Daily media exposure of Thai elderly people by region
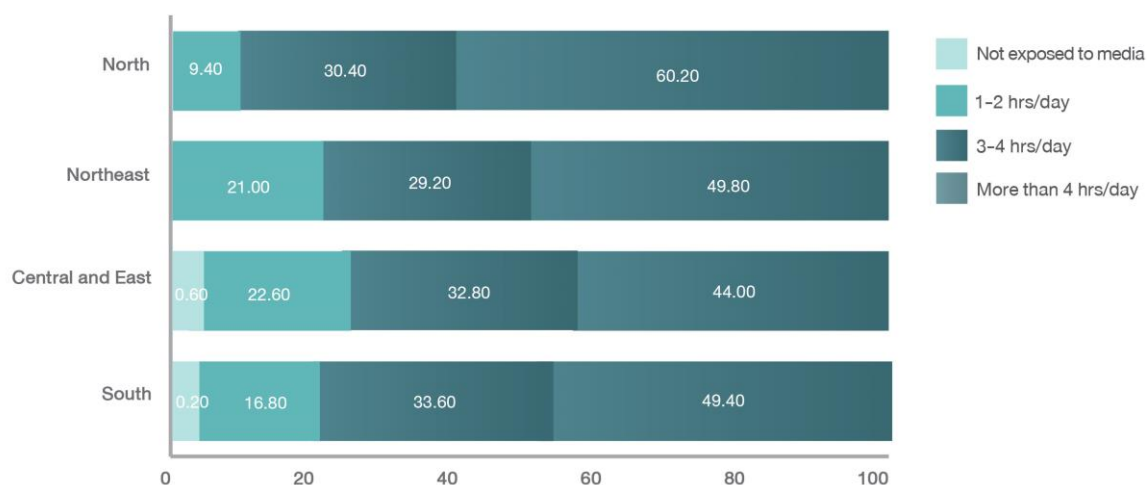
The elderly in the Northern region had the highest proportion of those who were most exposed to the media (60.20%). The second-highest proportion, 44%, was found in the Central and Eastern regions.

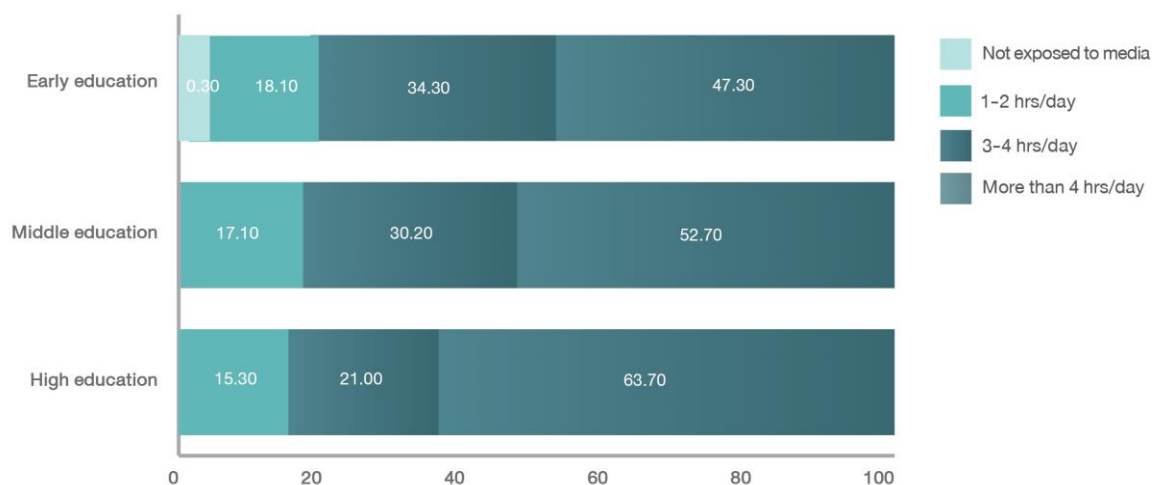**Figure 1-3** Daily media exposure of Thai elderly by gender
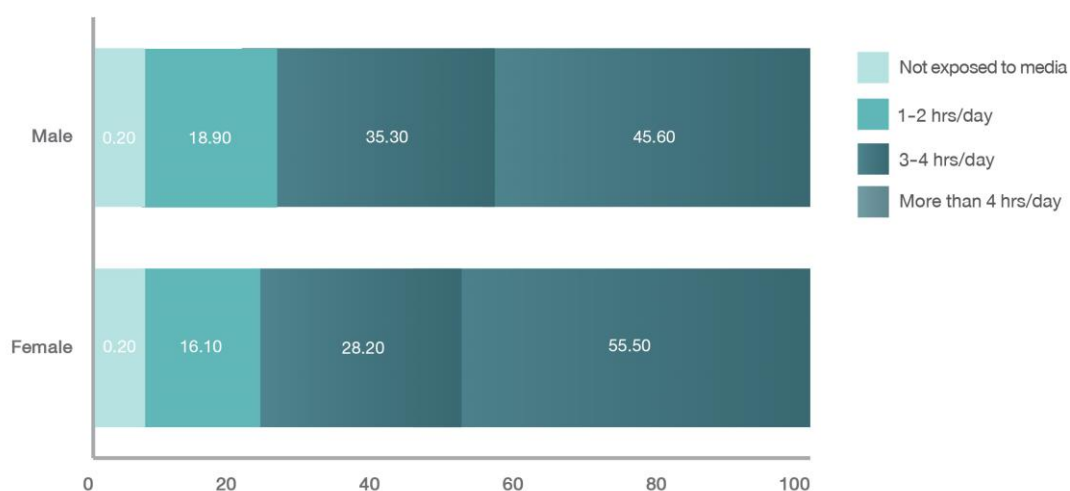
Female elderly had the highest proportion, 52.75%, of those who were exposed to the media, which is higher than male elderly (47.25%).

**Figure 1-4** Daily media exposure of Thai elderly people by age
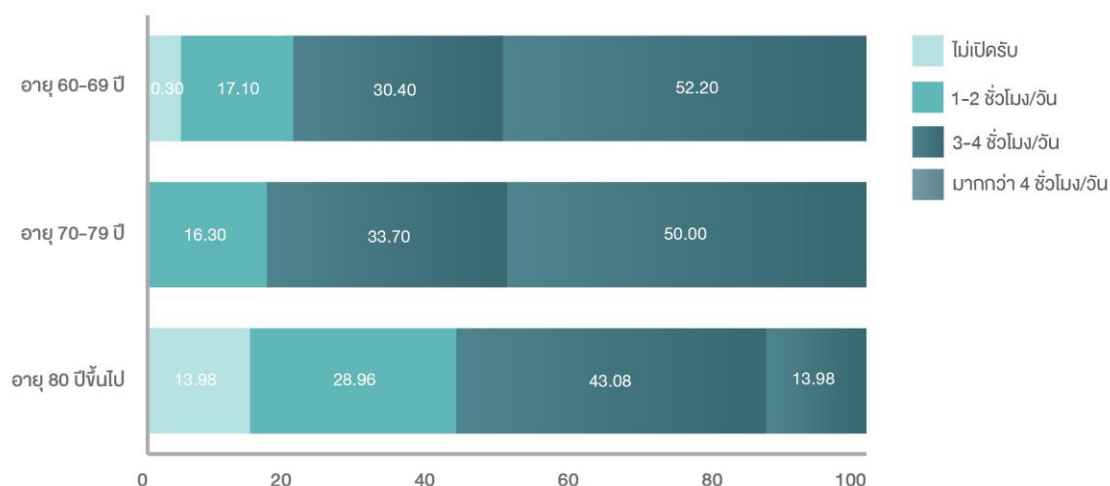
The elderly in the age range of 60–69 years had the highest proportion of media exposure (52.20%), followed by the age group of 70–79 years (50.00%). Eighty years and older had the least media exposure at only 13.98%.

Figure 1-5 Daily media exposure of Thai elderly people by education

Highly educated elderly had the highest proportion of media exposure (63.70%), followed by the elderly with middle education (52.70%), and the elderly with early education had a proportion of media exposure of 47.30%.

Figure 1-6 Daily media exposure of Thai elderly people by financial status
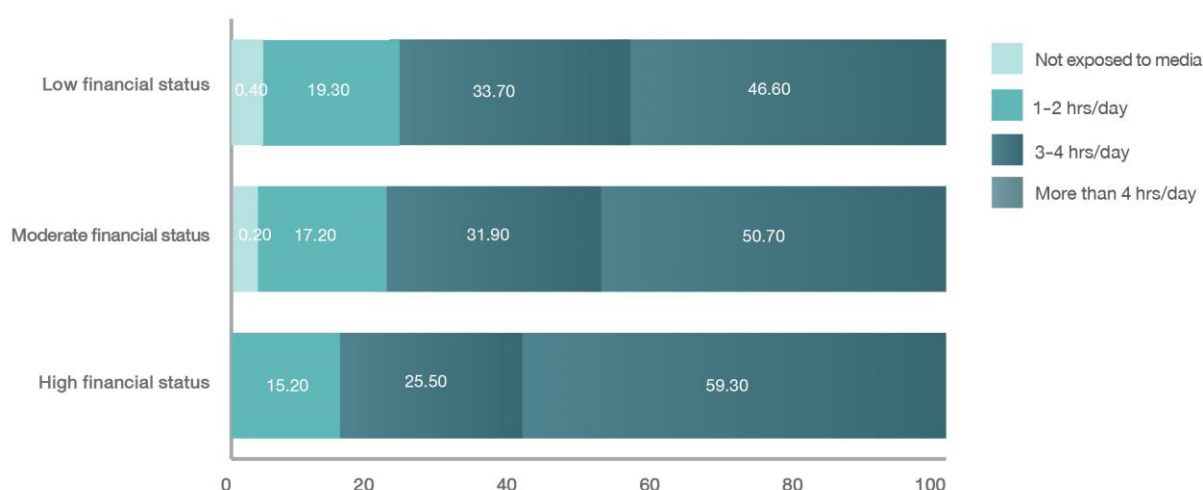
59.30% of elderly with high financial status had media exposure, followed by the elderly group with moderate financial status (50.70%), and lastly those with low financial status had media exposure at 46.60%.

Total media exposure per day was positively correlated with education level and financial status.

Spearman's correlation test between total media exposure per day and educational level of Thai elderly shows a weak positive relationship and was significant at the 0.01 level (r = 0.090**). This suggests that the elderly with a higher education level may also be exposed to more media.

Spearman's correlation test between total media exposure per day and the financial status of Thai elderly shows a week positive relationship and was significant at the 0.01 level (r = 0.071**). This suggests that the elderly with higher financial status may also be exposed to more media.

Part 2: Daily exposure time for each type of media among Thai elderly people

This part reports the results of a survey on the amount of time the Thai elderly were exposed to media per day, broken down into four types of media: (i) interpersonal media (person-to-person media that can interact with the elderly, such as meeting and talking with their grandchildren, neighbors, vendors, [or anyone one meets or talks on the phone, and so on]); (ii) television; (iii) radio; (vi) online media (interaction via information technology systems). There were four options for media exposure: less than one hour per day, one to two hours per day, three to four hours per day, and more than four hours per day.

Figure 1-7 A comparison of media exposure for each group of Thai elderly between 2021 and 2022
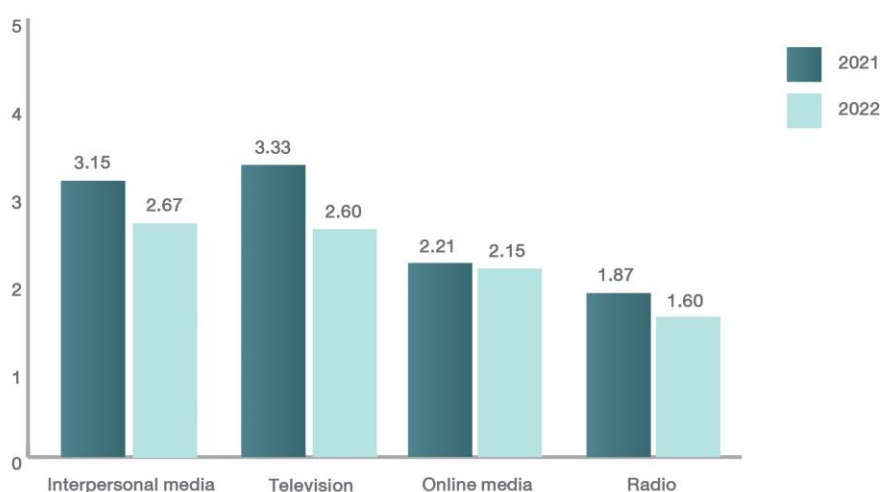
Note: A mean of 1.00 to 1.75 indicates very little media exposure (no use of media - less than 1 hour/day)
A mean of 1.76 to 2.50 indicates less media exposure (1-2 hours/day).
A mean of 2.51 to 3.25 indicates moderate media exposure (3-4 hours/day).
A mean of 3.26 to 4.00 indicates high media exposure (more than 4 hours/day).

In 2022, the Thai elderly were most exposed to interpersonal media (mean of 2.67 indicates moderate exposure to interpersonal media about three to four hours per day), followed by television (mean of 2.60 indicates moderate exposure to television about three to four hours per day), and online media (mean of 2.15 indicates less exposure to online media about one to two hours per day), with radio being lowest in the order (mean of 1.60 indicates very little exposure to radio about one hour per day).

Upon comparing the daily media exposure time to each type of media among the Thai elderly between 2021 and 2022, it was found that the Thai elderly had changed their media consumption behavior, i.e., they were exposed to fewer media of all types. In 2021, the most popular type of media was television; in 2022, it was interpersonal media.

Table 1-1 Relationship between length of exposure to each type of media and age range, education level, and financial status of the Thai elderly

Type of media exposure	Age range	Level of education	Economic status
Interpersonal	Older in age, low exposure	Low education level, high exposure / High education level, low exposure	High economic status, high exposure / Low economic status, low exposure
Television	Not statistically significant	Low education level, high exposure / High education level, low exposure	High economic status, high exposure / Low economic status, low exposure
Radio	Older in age, low exposure	High education level, high exposure / Low education level, low exposure	High economic status, high exposure / Low economic status, low exposure
Online	Not statistically significant	Primary education, high exposure / High level of education, low exposure	Low economic status, high exposure / High economic status, low exposure

Spearman's correlation test between daily media exposure and personal characteristics of the elderly shows a very weak negative relationship and was significant at the 0.05 level (r = -0.044*). This suggests that the elderly may be exposed to less interpersonal media. There was a weak negative relationship with the level of education at the 0.01 level of significance (r = -0.137**), which suggests the elderly with a high level of education may be exposed to less interpersonal media, but there was a very weak positive relationship with financial status at the 0.05 level of significance (r = -0.057*). This suggests that the higher the elderly's financial status, the higher their exposure to interpersonal media.

Spearman's correlation test between daily television exposure and personal characteristics of the elderly shows no significant statistical relationship with the age range but shows a very weak negative relationship with the level of education at the 0.01 level of significance (r = -0.067**). This suggests that the elderly with a high level of education may be less exposed to television. There was a very weak positive relationship with financial status at the 0.01 level of significance (r = -0.087**), which suggests that the higher the elderly's financial status, the more they are exposed to television.

Spearman's correlation test between daily online media exposure and personal characteristics of the elderly shows a weak negative relationship with the age range at the 0.01 level of significance (r = -0.135**). This suggests that the elderly may be less exposed to online media. There was a moderately positive relationship with the level of education at the 0.01 level of significance (r = -0.406**), which suggests that the elderly with a high level of education may be more exposed to online media. There was a very weak level of positive

relationship with financial status at the 0.01 level of significance (r = -0.097*), which suggests that the higher the elderly's financial status, the more they are exposed to online media.
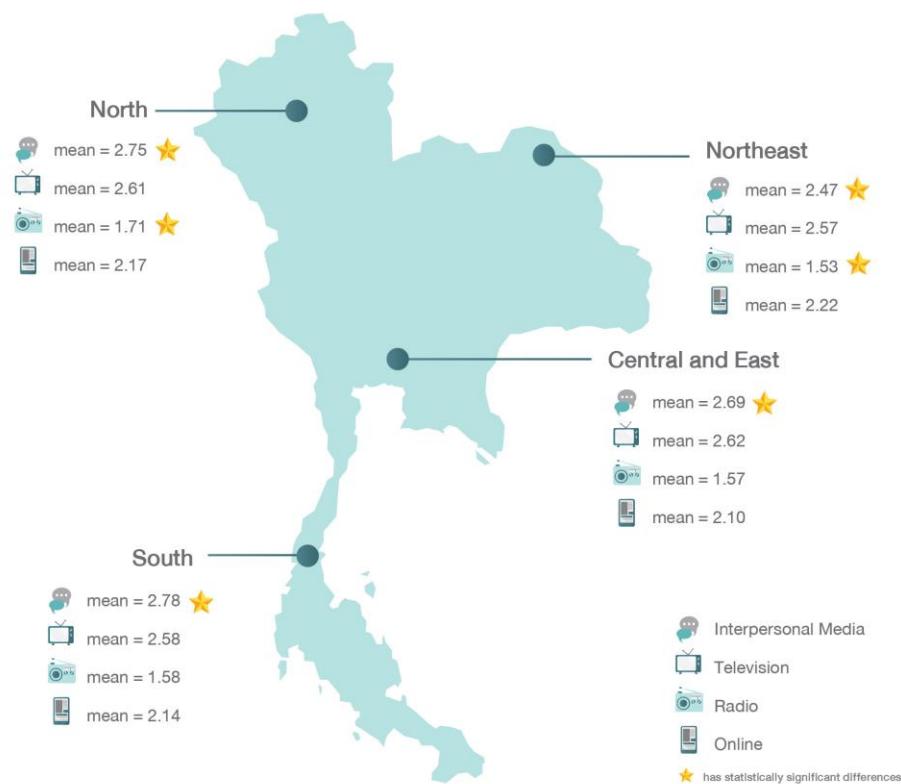
Spearman's correlation test between daily radio exposure and personal characteristics of the elderly shows no significant statistical correlation with the age range but shows a weak negative correlation with the level of education at the 0.01 level of significance (r = -0.120**), which suggests that the elderly with a high level of education may be less exposed to radio. There was a very weak positive relationship with financial status at the 0.05 level of significance (r = -0.054*), which suggests that the higher the elderly's financial status, the less they are exposed to radio.

Figure 1-8 A comparison of media exposure between female and male elderly by t-test
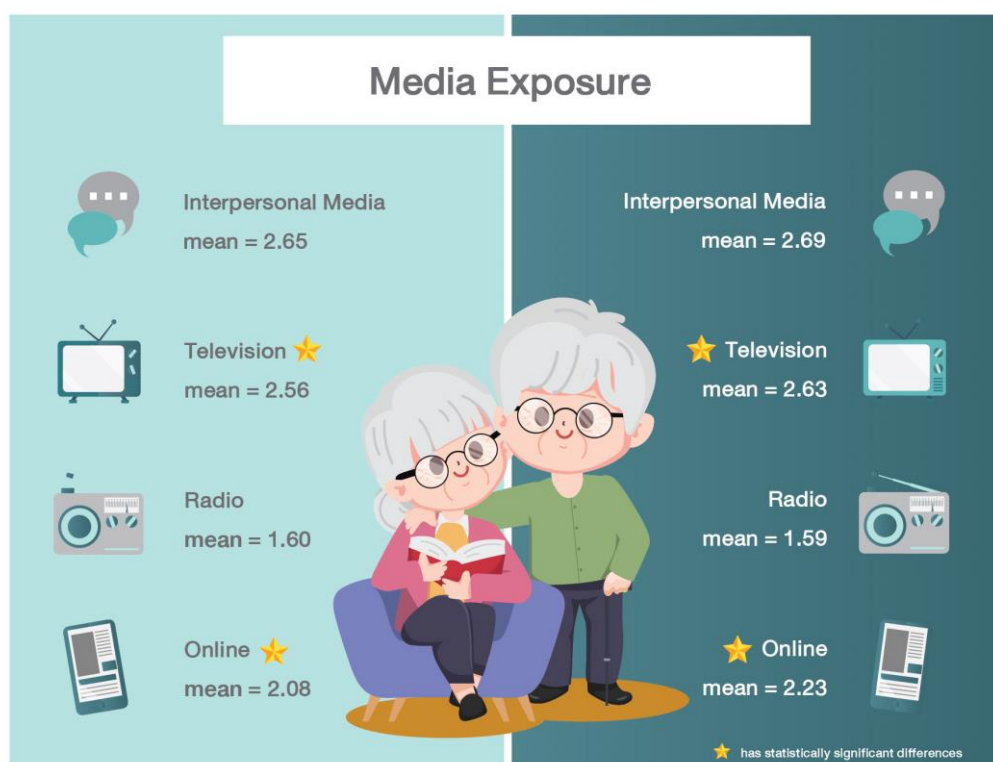
A comparison of media exposure between female and male elderly shows that females were more exposed to television and online media than males. The P-Values from the t-test were 0.044 and 0.001 with statistical significance, respectively. Exposure to television among females (mean = 2.63) was higher than exposure to television among males (mean = 2.56). Exposure to online media among females (mean = 2.23) was significantly higher than that among males (mean = 2.08).

Figure 1-9 A comparison of different types of media exposure by region
using the F-Test and One-Way Anova

North
- Interpersonal Media: mean = 2.75 ⭐
- Television: mean = 2.61
- Radio: mean = 1.71 ⭐
- Online: mean = 2.17

Northeast
- Interpersonal Media: mean = 2.47 ⭐
- Television: mean = 2.57
- Radio: mean = 1.53 ⭐
- Online: mean = 2.22

Central and East
- Interpersonal Media: mean = 2.69 ⭐
- Television: mean = 2.62
- Radio: mean = 1.57
- Online: mean = 2.10

South
- Interpersonal Media: mean = 2.78 ⭐
- Television: mean = 2.58
- Radio: mean = 1.58
- Online: mean = 2.14

Legend:
- Interpersonal Media
- Television
- Radio
- Online
- ⭐ has statistically significant differences

A comparison of exposure to various types of media by region using the F-Test and One-Way Anova at a 95% confidence interval shows that interpersonal media (P-Value = 0.000) and radio (P-Value = 0.040) had statistically significant differences in each region. Analysis with Scheffe statistics at the significance level of 0.05 to find differences in each pair shows that the elderly in the Northeast were less exposed to media than the elderly from other regions (mean of the elderly's interpersonal media exposure in the Northeast = 2.47, the North = 2.75, the Central and East = 2.69, and the South = 2.78). It was found that the elderly in the Northeast were less exposed to radio than the elderly in the North (mean of the elderly's radio exposure in the Northeast = 1.53, the North = 1.71).

Media topics exposed to by the Thai elderly

The results of the survey of daily media exposure among Thai elderly were broken down by 11 topics: health, religion, food, agriculture, work, general news, politics, investment, entertainment, sports, and beliefs. There were four options for media exposure: less than one hour per day, one to two hours per day, three to four hours per day, and more than four hours per day.

Figure 1-10 A comparison of topics that Thai elderly people are exposed to between 2021 and 2022.
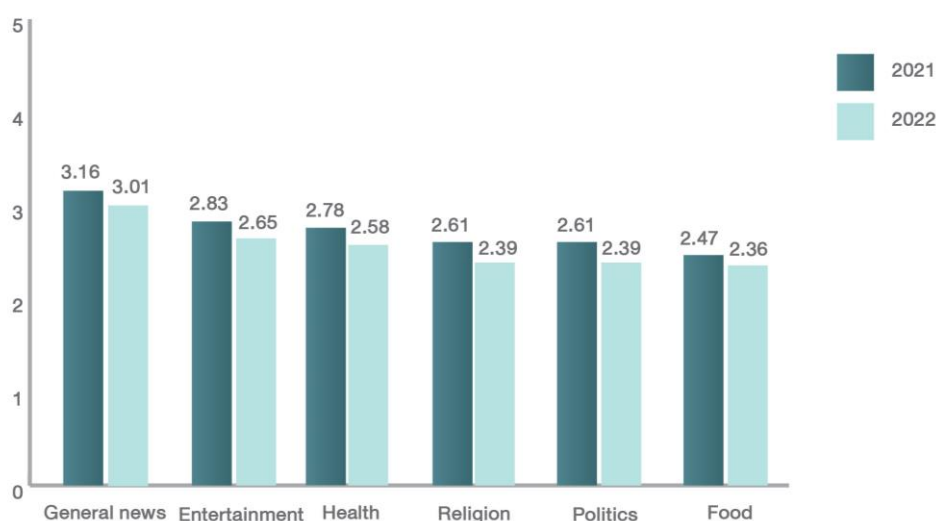
Note: A mean of 1.00 to 1.75 indicates very little media exposure (no use of media - once in a while/month)

A mean of 1.76 to 2.50 indicates less media exposure (1-2 times/week)

A mean of 2.51 to 3.25 indicates moderate media exposure (3-4 times/week)

A mean of 3.26 to 4.00 indicates high media exposure (more than 4 times/week)

The top five media topics that the Thai elderly were most interested in in 2022 were: (1) general news (mean of 3.03 = moderate exposure about three to four hours a day); (2) entertainment programs (mean of 2.65 = moderate exposure about three to four hours a day); and (3) health care programs (mean of 2.58 = moderate exposure about three to four hours a day). The topics that share the same mean (2.39) include religious programs and political programs. This suggests that in 2022, the Thai elderly were less exposed to religious and political programs—about one to two hours a day.

A comparison of media topics that Thai elderly were exposed to between 2021 and 2022 shows that Thai elderly were still most interested in general news, entertainment, health, religion, and politics, as in 2021. As can be seen, the order of topics of interest has not changed, but the amount of daily exposure has decreased in all respects as compared to the survey results in 2021.

Table 1-2 Relationship between each media topic and the elderly's characteristics
(age range, education level, and financial status)

Topics of media exposure	Age range	Level of education	Economic status
General news	Not statistically significant	High education level, high exposure / Low education level, low exposure	High economic status, high exposure / Low economic status, low exposure
Entertainment	Not statistically significant	Not statistically significant	Not statistically significant
Health	Older in age, low exposure	High education level, high exposure / Low education level, low exposure	High economic status, high exposure / Low economic status, low exposure
Religion	Not statistically significant	Low education level, high exposure / High education level, low exposure	High economic status, high exposure / Low economic status, low exposer
Politics	Not statistically significant	High education level, high exposure / Low education level, low exposure	High economic status, high exposure / Low economic status, low exposure

Spearman's correlation test between total media exposure to general news and personal characteristics of the elderly shows no statistically significant relationship between general news exposure and age. However, it was found that exposure to general news had a very weak positive relationship with the level of education at the 0.01 level of significance (r = 0.085**) and the financial status of the elderly (r = 0.082**). This suggests that the elderly with high education and the elderly with higher financial status are more exposed to general news.

Spearman's correlation test for the relationship between total media exposure to entertainment topics and personal characteristics of the elderly shows no statistically significant correlation between media exposure to entertainment topics and age range, education level, or financial status. This reflects the fact that the Thai elderly were exposed to media on entertainment topics regardless of age, education level, or financial status.

Spearman's correlation test for the relationship between total media exposure to health topics and personal characteristics of the elderly shows a very weak negative relationship between exposure to media on health issues and age range at the 0.01 level of significance (r = -0.068**), which suggests that the older the elderly, the less they were exposed to health topics on the media. There was a weak level of positive relationship with the level of education at the 0.01 level of significance (r = 0.178**), which suggests that the

higher the elderly's level of education, the more they were exposed to health topics. There was a very weak level of positive relationship with financial status at the 0.01 level of significance (r = 0.097**), which suggests the higher the elderly's financial status, the more they were exposed to health topics.

Spearman's correlation test for the relationship between total media exposure to religious topics and personal characteristics of the elderly shows no relationship between media exposure to religious topics and age range, but show that media exposure to religious topics was negatively correlated at a very weak level at the 0.01 level of significance (r = 0.063**), which suggests that the higher the elderly's level of education, the less they were exposed to religious topics. There was a weak level of positive relationship with financial status at the 0.01 level of significance (r = 0.180**), which suggests that the higher the elderly's financial status, the more they were exposed to religious topics.

Spearman's correlation test for the relationship between total media exposure to political topics and personal characteristics of the elderly shows no relationship between media exposure to political topics and age range. However, there was a weak positive relationship with the level of education at the 0.01 level of significance (r = 0.063**), which suggests that the higher the elderly's education level, the more they were exposed to political topics. There was a very weak level of positive relationship with financial status at the 0.05 level of significance, meaning that the higher the elderly's financial status, the more they were exposed to political topics.

Figure 1-11 A comparison of media topics between female and male elderly using t-test
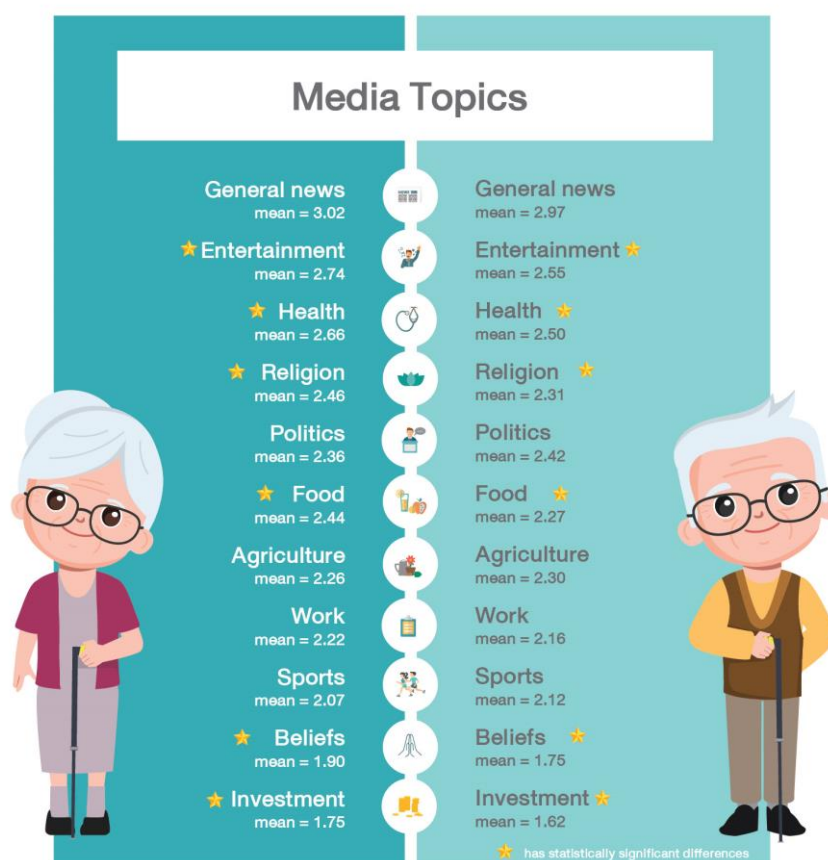
A comparison of the differences between female and male elderly in terms of media exposure by t-test found that females had more media exposure than males in almost all topics. Exposure to entertainment topics among females had a mean of 2.74; among males, it had a mean of 2.55 (P-Value = 0.000). Exposure to health topics among females had a mean of 2.66; among males, it had a mean of 2.50 (P-Value = 0.000). Exposure to religious topics among females recorded a mean of 2.46; among males, it was 2.31 (P-Value = 0.000). Exposure to investment topics among females had a mean of 1.75; among males, it had a mean of 1.62 (P-Value = 0.004). Finally, exposure to food topics had a mean of 2.44; among males, it had a mean of 2.27 (P-Value = 0.000). Males were more exposed to the media than females only with respect to two topics, but there was no statistical significance. Exposure to political topics among males had a mean of 2.42; among females, it had a mean of 2.36 (P-Value = 0.177), while exposure to sports topics among males had a mean of 2.12; among females, it had a mean of 2.07 (P-Value = 0.135).

Figure 1-12 A comparison of the Thai elderly's media exposure to each topic by region, using F-Test and One-Way Anova.
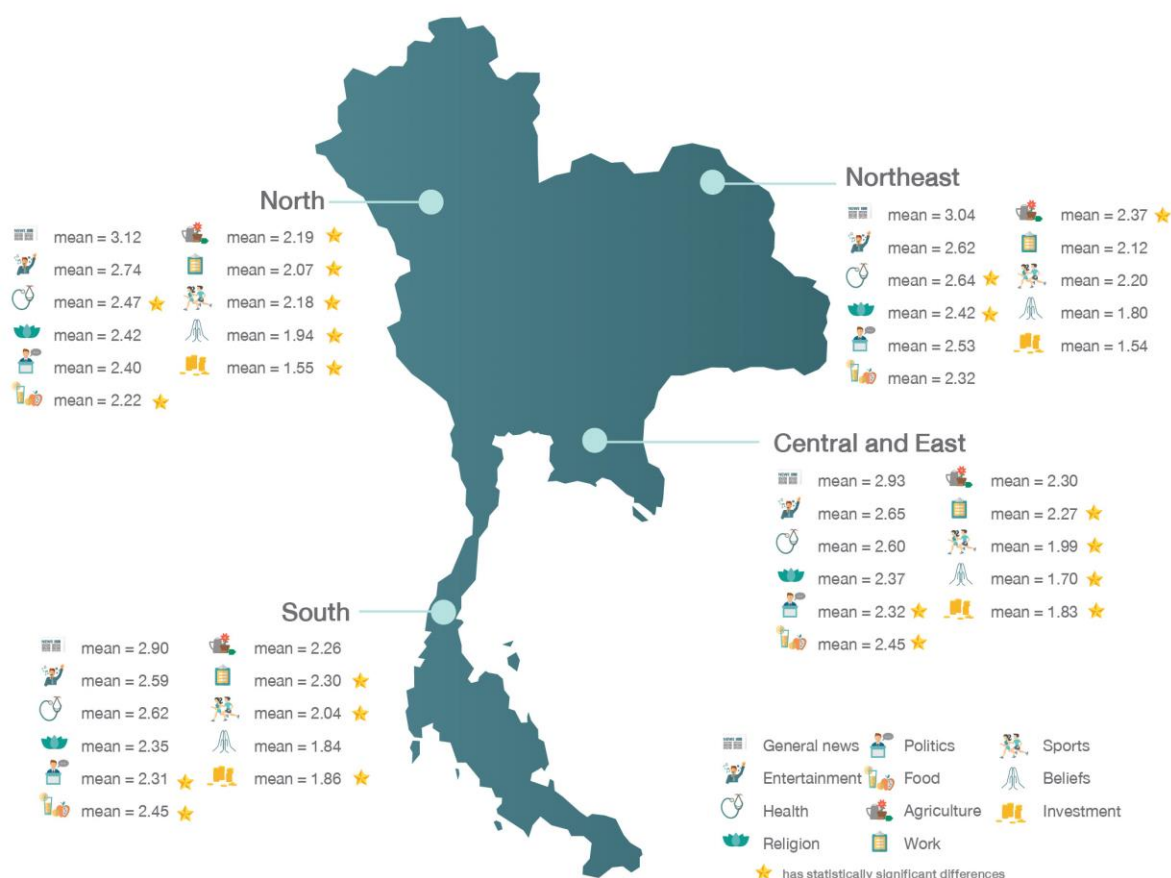
A comparison of the Thai elderly's media exposure to each topic by region using F-Test and One-Way Anova at a 95% confidence interval shows that only the topics related to entertainment (P-Value = 0.076) and religion (P-Value = 0.583) had no regional differences. There were statistically significant differences in exposure to other topics in each region.

Conclusion and recommendation ‒

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the Thai elderly continue to engage in substantial media consumption. Most of the subject of this study were exposed to media for more than four hours per day, primarily interpersonal, television, and online media. The COVID-19 pandemic, which is now under control, led to a decrease in media consumption compared to the previous year because more people are back to working outside the home than ever before; family members' lifestyles have returned to pre-COVID-19 norms. General news, entertainment, health, religion, and politics are among the topics that Thai elderly people have continued to pay attention to since 2021. Thai elderly with high media exposure are more likely to be women than men, aged 60–69 years old, with a high

level of education and high financial status, indicating that they are the group that still plays a role and has activities that involve interaction with people outside of other groups.

In addition, it was found that media exposure was correlated with some characteristics of the Thai elderly, including interpersonal media and online media. There was a negative relationship with the age of the elderly. Exposure to interpersonal media, television, and radio was negatively related to education level. This is in contrast to online media, which had a positive correlation with education levels. Exposure to personal media, television, and online media had a positive correlation with financial status. Radio exposure had a negative relationship with financial status. Media exposure to general news topics was positively correlated with education level and financial status. Media exposure to health topics was negatively correlated with age among the elderly but positively correlated with education level and financial status. Exposure to religious topics had a negative relationship with education level, while exposure to political topics had a positive correlation with education level and financial status.

The results of this study showed that the media is still vital to the lives of Thai elderly people, despite the fact that the global situation involving the COVID-19 pandemic has influenced their exposure behaviors. It is evident from personal characteristics such as age range, education level, and economic status that the impact of change in behavior was caused by exposure to various types of media and topics of interest to Thai elders. The key findings will be used as a starting point for planning and establishing policies for sustainable social development, such as creating a lifelong learning society for the Thai elderly and designing mechanisms to drive a creative and safe community through the use of media, immunizing or creating risk control mechanisms from media use, and improving the health of the Thai elderly through the creative and critical use of media.