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Good Fortune and Its Influence on B2B Relationships: The Case of the Mae Manee Money Solution Campaign in Thailand

Abstract

Drawing on advice response theory and superstitious beliefs, advertising and branding literature, we explore the Thai archetype of good fortune and how it affects business to business (B2B) relationships. With the use of the interpretive qualitative method of Multimodal Discourse-Mythological Approach (MDMA), we develop a holistic understanding of the exchanged meanings around the notions of good fortune within the B2B context. We chose the archetype of Mae Manee that represents good fortune, as it is being used in the money solution campaigns of a major Thai bank, in an effort to overcome business clients' resistance towards adopting a new payment system. Our findings identify the importance of the notion of good fortune in the successful development of B2B relationships in Thailand by showcasing how it is used to encourage behavioural change of business clients towards new product adoption, while building on established business relationships through co-branding initiatives. The study offers theoretical and practical implications on the impact of good fortune in B2B relationships in Thailand.

Keywords: good fortune, superstition, Thailand, advertising, advice response theory, B2B

Good Fortune and Its Influence on B2B Relationships: The Case of the Mae Manee Money Solution Campaign in Thailand

1. Introduction

Successful B2B relationships are built on trust, commitment, satisfaction and quality of communication (Hung, He, & Shen, 2020; Morgan, Hunt, Morgan, & Hunt, 1994). However, different culturally embedded notions can inspire those outcomes depending largely on which marketplaces we are looking at. Research to date is concentrated on examining these outcomes from a Western perspective, and only recently have we seen interest in understanding how B2B relationships are developed in emerging markets. Examinations of mainly Guanxi in China (Yen, Abosag, Huang, & Nguyen, 2017; Yen, Barnes, & Lu, 2011; Yen & Abosag, 2016), followed by scarce studies of other culturally specific concepts such as Et-Moone in the Middle East (Abosag & Lee, 2013) and Jugaad in India (Prabhu & Jain, 2015) conceptually and empirically put forward the significance of culturally fostered B2B relationships in emerging markets. Such studies reveal the implications of the culturally embedded notions in personalised networks, long-term relationship building, and innovative thinking, respectively. Understanding such notions and associated implications further is central to building strong and long-lasting B2B relationships in emerging markets, often resulting in becoming a unique competitive advantage in their own right (Abosag, 2015). Acknowledging, therefore, the importance of identifying and further studying Asian culture-specific notions and their influence on business relationships, our study draws attention to the Thai notion of good fortune.

We chose Thailand because business relationships are built on a number of largely under-explored concepts such as those of respect, harmony and superstition. Good fortune, a key aspect of superstition, is the focus of our study as Thai people are predominantly superstitious,

with the majority believing in good fortune. This is not only reflected in their deeply rooted traditional beliefs but, also, in the everyday practices of the modern populace and culture (Chinchanachokchai, Pusaksrikit, & Pongsakornrungsilp, 2017; Pusaksrikit, Pongsakornrungsilp, & Crosby, 2018), including B2B practices. A plethora of business decisions are based on such considerations. For example, owners of start-up businesses would most likely be consulting with a numerologist before setting up their business (Pusaksrikit et al., 2018), a salesperson engaging in superstitious behavior leads to a positive effect on performance (Mayo & Mallin, 2014), and reduces sales call anxiety (Verbeke & Bagozzi, 2000). In social media marketing, superstitious belief acts as a moderator which leads to more favorable brand evaluations (Karpinska-Krakowiak & Eisend, 2021), and price setting strategy (Simmons, Schindler, Simmons, & Schindler, 2003). In this study, we explore the role of good fortune in the launch and adoption of a new B2B product offering.

We next present our conceptualisation, informed by superstitious beliefs, advertising and branding literature, as seen through the lenses of advice response theory. Our chosen case study of the advertising campaign of a major Thai bank featuring the archetype of Mae Manee that represents good fortune is then presented, along with our adopted Multimodal Discourse-Mythological Approach (MDMA). Our findings follow, where the unique role played by the archetypal images of good fortune in marketing management is revealed, along with insights into the effects of superstitious beliefs on B2B relationship-building through co-branding initiatives. Lastly, our study shares theoretical and practical implications on the impact of good fortune in B2B relationships in Thailand and offers ideas for future research.

2. Theory and Background

2.1 Superstition Beliefs and the Notion of Good Fortune

Superstition, defined as an illogical, irrational and kind of peculiar belief that certain actions, items and circumstances can affect the outcomes of various important and everyday events (Carlson, Mowe, & Fang, 2009; Jahoda, 1969; Kramer & Block, 2011; Vyse, 1997), covers a wide range of beliefs and practices, some of which would result in good fortune. Superstition about good fortune have existed in many cultures for millennia (Jahoda, 1969) and is a common phenomenon deeply grounded in cultures, especially in Eastern as compared to Western cultures (Pratt & Kirillova, 2019; Sierra, Hyman, & Lee, 2015; Torgler, 2007). Previous literature has framed good fortune as a concept that is subsumed within superstitious beliefs (Darke & Freedman, 1997; Pratt & Kirillova, 2019; Prendergast & Thompson, 2008; Risen, 2016; Thompson & Prendergast, 2013; Wiseman & Watt, 2004; Yang, 2011) because superstitious belief is usually associated with the behaviours to control good or bad luck (Kramer & Block, 2008, 2011). Good fortune is, thus, understood as the effect or the outcome of superstitious belief and behaviour (Hanks, Zhang, Mcginley, & Hanks, 2016; Shum, Sun, & Ye, 2014).

There is evidence that the notion of good fortune exerts a large impact on consumers (Ariyabuddhiphongs & Chanchalermporn, 2007; Block & Kramer, 2009; Carlson et al., 2009; Hernandez, Wang, Minor, & Liu, 2008; Kramer & Block, 2011; Pratt & Kirillova, 2019; Pusaksrikit et al., 2018). Interpretation of brand related messages (Wang, Hernandez, & Minor, 2017) and purchase decisions (Wang, Oppewal, & Thomas, 2017) are often made based on superstitions about good fortune. The concept of good fortune has been used widely in marketing communications (Elliott, 2000), especially in the consumer context. Specifically, the exploitation of the notion of good fortune is seen frequently in corporate branding strategies (Li, Hsieh, & Li, 2016; Schmitt & Pan, 1994), sales promotion strategies (Mcneill, 2013; Prendergast & Thompson, 2008; Yeboah-asiamah, Quaye, & Nimako, 2016), retail pricing strategies (Simmons et al., 2003), political and event marketing (Hong & Yah-huei, 2015), as

it helps organisations produce brand loyalty and profit (Ladeira, Boeira, Santini, & Sampaio, 2018).

The use of superstitious numbers in retail prices (Yang, 2011), the association of good fortune as one of the product's attributes (Wang et al., 2017) and how numerological superstitions impact the hotel sector in terms of hotel guest decision-making (Pratt & Kirillova, 2019) are such common examples. Interestingly, previous research is mainly focused on misfortune or bad luck avoidance in the business to consumer (B2C) context (Damisch, Stoberock, & Mussweiler, 2010; Wang et al., 2017), leaving us with big knowledge gaps in the B2B context in areas of communication and relationship-building. How business organisations could utilise superstition about good fortune to foster relationships with business customers, is largely unknown and unexplored.

2.2 Good Fortune in Business

In a B2B context, the role of fortune is used to explain organisation performance (Denrell, 2005; Parnell & Dent, 2009) and can influence a firm's strategic decisions (Parnell, Dent, O'Regan, & Hughes, 2012). The top manager tends to recognise good fortune as a contributor to business performance and related outcomes (Denrell, Arvidsson, & Zander, 2004; Goll, Johnson, & Rasheed, 2007), especially in situations where there is a lot of risk involved (Broncano-Berrocal, 2015) and in states of economic uncertainty (Parnell et al., 2012). Recently, the role of good fortune has been noted within the B2B context to explain how marketing managers deal with uncertainty during the COVID-19 outbreak by utilising resilience skills to manage ignorance and control uncertainty (Oehmen, Locatelli, Wied, & Willumsen, 2020). The logic behind this, as explained in previous research, is that good fortune could play a role in business risk aversion (Pontes & Williams, 2021), and that feeling fortunate

is connected to reduced ambiguity aversion in the industrial marketplace, which would result in good fortune (Pulford & Gill, 2014).

Businesses often attribute unexpected gain to good fortune (Barney, 1986). For example, when a company circumstantially obtained or developed new resources, competencies and abilities, yet the manager cannot come up with logical and tangible reasons to explain such phenomena, they are likely to refer to being fortunate. That is to say, the notion of good fortune is utilized to rationalize the discrepancy between expected and unexpected actual outcomes. Diverging from the existing research, this current study is particularly interested in revealing how the notion of good fortune is implemented in business practice to achieve desirable relational outcomes, such as effective persuasion and resultant new product adoption.

2.3 The Archetype of Good Fortune in Advertising and Branding

In the minds of the superstitious, objects are imbued with supernatural qualities (Afhami & Danesh, 2019). Some people base their decision-making process on drawing on specific cultural dogma and myth (Zhao, Shen, & Rao, 2018). The findings of existing studies reveal that individuals subconsciously take in and process superstitious information (Jahoda, 1969; Jung, 1959) which can play an important role in decision-making and memories (Zaltman, 2003). The idea of good fortune is easily connected with concepts and images out of folklore in living socio-cultural memory, such as mythical creatures, magic and other fantastical phenomena or beliefs (Mowen & Carlson, 2003). Thus, practitioners usually employ cultural archetypes of good fortune to communicate with their target audiences. For example, the Thai Health Promotion Foundation, which is an autonomous government agency, introduced the Doctor Fortune Teller to communicate the benefits of a regular basic health check-up. By putting in place fortune tellers' booths and training fortune tellers by medical experts, Thai

people were read their health check up in a very similar way to reading their fortunes; that is, by reading hands, face and skin conditions (AdForum, 2017).

Bassil-Morozow (2018) and Holt (2004) define archetypes as the set of figures or icons that represent a specific narrative. Archetypes provide a particular way of representing and understanding the world and are often used to communicate and express being fortunate versus unfortunate (Kelsey, 2015). In an overall marketing context, archetypes are used to explain human behaviour and personality (Dominici, Tullio, Siino, & Tani, 2016; Morris & Schaimund, 2006; Woodside, 2010). In the advertising and branding context, archetypes are commonly used by marketers as a resource of commonly understood symbolisms that can be utilised strategically in brand story creation (Hirschman, 2010). For example, NIKE AIR JORDAN's brand archetype is the hero, which is a universal symbolism that individuals are able to identify with in one way or another. The power of brand archetypes in branding and advertising is well-established. Specifically, brand archetypes, serving to provide symbolic meaning that consumers may use to construct individual identity, can help to build and sustain consumer loyalty (Kang, Hong, & Hubbard, 2020; Woodside, 2010; Woodside, Sood, & Miller, 2008; Woodside, Sood, & Muniz, 2013).

2.4 The Archetype's Role through Advice Response Theory

The central premise of this study is that by presenting an archetype of good fortune, with whom recipients are acquainted throughout their everyday lives, the communicated message increases in persuasiveness and intention to act upon. This thesis is supported by the Advice Response Theory (ART) (Feng & MacGeorge, 2010) that predicts the response of the advice recipient (MacGeorge, Guntzviller, Hanasono, & Feng, 2016). ART asserts that individuals receiving advice assess its implications for their identity and evaluate the advice content, along with characteristics of the adviser and the problem (Feng & MacGeorge, 2010). These evaluative

results, in turn, influence relational outcomes such as perceived advice credibility, coping capacity, and intention to implement the advised action (MacGeorge et al., 2016). There is substantial evidence supporting ART regarding the influence of message features (e.g., feasible and polite) (Feng & Burleson, 2008; Goldsmith & MacGeorge, 2000) and adviser characteristics (e.g., expertise and likeability) (Bonaccio & Dalal, 2010; Van Swol, 2011). Empirical findings also provide evidence supporting ART's claim that adviser, message and situational factors operate collectively and interactively to influence advice outcomes. For example, MacGeorge et al. (2016) report that the influence of adviser characteristics is mediated by message features.

Recently, ART has been expanded to incorporate goal inference and how a preset goal affects how the characteristics of the adviser can be contextualised within perceptions of the individual, relationship or situation in question (Guntzviller, Ratcliff, & Pusateri, 2019). The characteristics of the adviser are central as, not only do they influence how the message is being evaluated, they also directly link to recipients' state of mind, coping mechanisms and, often, actions (MacGeorge, Guntzviller, Hanasono, & Feng, 2016).

ART, however, is mainly examined in a friend-to-friend or parent-to-children context over social, academic or romantic issues. To-date, ART literature has paid little attention to the B2B context, such as the advice communicated by businesses, the influence of advice on business relationships, and business recipients' responses. Researchers are calling for further studies of ART in different contexts, in order to expand the conceptualisation of the adviser and their characteristics (Guntzviller, MacGeorge, & Brinker, 2017). Our study answers this call by employing ART in the B2B context where archetypes of good fortune were successfully utilised in marketing communication to convey intended advice.

To achieve this end, our study investigates a live case, namely the successful money solution campaign of Siam Commercial Bank (SCB) where the notion of good fortune is portrayed through the cultural archetypal convention of “Mae Manee”. Mae Manee, an archetype of good fortune in Thailand, is adopted in the advertising campaign with an aim to convert clients’ awareness of a new payment system to relational outcomes (see Section 3.2 for more detailed information). More specifically, the Thai bank assigns to Mae Manee, the archetype of good fortune, the role of the adviser who conveys messages to the advice recipients, the SME owners in general and the younger SME generation, respectively. The advice, comprising intended messages which the bank wants to communicate, is designed in an effort to increase SMEs’ willingness to implement the advice and be supportive, by making them overcome uncertainty and related risk perceptions in adopting the new payment system. Equally important, the archetype of good fortune, representing an unchallengeable belief deeply rooted in the Thai culture, acts as a catalyst of advice implementation. Differing to the extant ART literature in that the advisors were real people, our study applies ART in the B2B context where the advice provider is an object, namely Mae Manee. Mae Manee, the Thai specific archetype of good fortune, however, is a personified figure imbued with characteristics of real people. ART, thus, is applicable in this context.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 The Multimodal Discourse-Mythological Approach (MDMA)

This study explores the Mae Manee archetype of good fortune, as it has been utilised in B2B advertising campaigns of a major Thai bank attempting to persuade SME owners to adopt a technologically advanced payment system. The MDMA, an interpretive qualitative method, is

used because this method enables researchers to understand the archetypal conventions of mythology within modern storytelling (Kelsey, 2015).

The MDMA is rooted in the critical discourse analysis approach (CDA). It draws from several classic linguistic-based approaches to CDA as the analytical toolkit (Fairclough, 1995, 2001, 2005; Richardson, 2007; Kelsey, 2017; Machin & Mayr, 2012; Reisigl & Wodak, 2017) to help analyse myth and archetypes that function within brand narratives. The MDMA treats discourses as “a culturally and socially organized way of speaking” (Kelsey, 2015, p.25). Discourse is identified as the linguistic and representational aspects of communication that construct meaning, whilst stories form myths that function as narrative vehicles for ideology. Myths are constructions of meaning that reflect social values (Barthes, 1972; Bottici, 2007; Flood, 2002; Kelsey, 2015a; Lule, 2001). In other words, the semiotic meanings of cultural storytelling resemble the social values and ideals of the society in which they are told. In this study, MDMA is performed to explore how discourses of good fortune are constituted in a Thai mythical-cultural archetype. The analysis in this regard is performed in order to acquire an explanation as to why the discourses are constituted in the ways they are as well as what meanings are expressed in discussions.

The MDMA enables us to analyse discursive constructions of mythology in the multimode of media, texts and advertising materials. It allows us to go beyond the text, and language level of the analysis to consider society, practices, and the consequences it can have on the marketplace and wider society. To create a deeper understanding of a certain cultural context, in this case Thailand, we can see what the written material says, assess what it tells us or infers about the society in which it was produced, as well as glean understanding from how it is received and the resulting impact it has on social relations (Kelsey, 2015) which eventually leads to the underlying assumption of marketplace practices.

As Bottici (2007, p.206) explains, “myth is a process that can take place in very different settings: speeches, icons, arts, both visual and otherwise, rituals, and almost all other kinds of social practices”. This is evident in the advertising campaign, as well, which is *multimodal* by nature, as it includes both textual and visual elements for its message delivery (Ellis & Hopkinson, 2010). To fully understand the meaning behind a certain cultural myth, and archetype, the MDMA allows us to simultaneously incorporate textual and visual semiotic resources throughout our analysis (e.g., video clips, and still-images).

Introducing, therefore, the MDMA in marketing and advertising storytelling, we are able to account for representational and non-representational forms of data through semiotic and psycho-discursive lenses. To effectively analyse the affective qualities of storytelling through archetypes and mythologies, the psychodiscursive approach enables us to delve into the human psyche and ascertain its ideological functions in Thai business relationships. Thus, the MDMA’s proposed analytical toolkit enables us to reveal insights into the influence of good fortune and its cultural characteristics on B2B relationships in Thailand.

3.2 Case Study of Mae Manee Money Solution Campaign

In early 2017, the Thai government, through the Bank of Thailand (BOT), encouraged banks to offer the PromptPay service, enabling compatibility of a single QR code with payments from any credit/debit card and bank saving accounts (Booasang, 2017; Global Finance Magazine, 2017). The introduction of this new service was not as successful as planned because most banks’ business clients were not technologically savvy and preferred to using conventional payment methods (e.g., cash and bank transfer), which resulted in very low initial adoption rates (Ng, Kauffman, Griffin, & Hedman, 2021).

Promoting the functional benefits of the new PromptPay system is simply not enough to break clients’ long-established habit of cash payments in business transactions. Being such a

revolutionary and different method of payment to what clients are used to, it is not a surprise that they have been extremely cautious and resisted the new payment system. So the challenge was to get people to accept and start using the new system. Thus, banks in Thailand were compelled by the BOT to identify effective ways to rectify the situation.

The notion of good fortune was identified as a possible solution and was featured in the Money Solution campaign of Siam Commercial Bank¹ (SCB). The campaign, designed to improve the adoption rate of the Promptpaysystem, was launched in 2017, followed by a 2019 revised version. To target both the younger generation of SMEs and current business clients, it introduces an archetype of good fortune personified as Mae Manee, who is a revised version of Nang Kwak, a sacred figure of Thai folklore inspired by Buddhist, and Hindu legends, which historically represents good fortune and prosperity (Joy, 2019; Textor, 1973; Wilson, 2008). Sacred figures are often deemed by Thai people to bring good fortune, prosperity and attract customers to their businesses (Museum Siam, 2017; SCB, 2018). Thus, following a number of failed attempts to persuade business clients to adopt the Promptpay system, Mae Manee is being utilized to improve the effectiveness of persuasion. In this campaign, the role played by Mae Manee, a sacred figure, is an adviser who offers advice towards a complex message for technology adoption to business clients.

3.3 Data Collection and Steps of Analysis

¹ Siam Commercial Bank (SCB) was established by Royal Charter as Thailand's first indigenous bank on January 30, 1906. It is considered to be one of the leading universal banking groups in Thailand. The total market capitalisation, as of September 30, 2020, was Baht 220,940 million. The Bank provides a full range of financial services. For corporate and SME customers, the bank offers business cash management services, lending products, trade finance, treasury products, bond and equity products, investment banking & corporate advisory and other related financial services (The Siam Commercial Bank Public Company Limited, 2019).

To fully understand the role of the Mae Manee archetype in the campaigns and how the archetype itself is decontextualised, commodified, and then recontextualised as a persuasive marketing communication to target the bank's business clients, three data sources are used in this study: i) in-depth interviews with purposely selected business executives from the Bank and advertising agency, who were directly involved in the creation of the campaign; ii) online materials such as YouTube video clips from the bank's official YouTube channel; and, iii) online marketing materials from the company's website. The data collection and analysis took place during the summer months of 2020.

Four in-depth interviews were conducted with SCB marketing executives, the development team, and the advertising agency who created the Mae Manee character, advertising campaigns and creative works. The interviews lasted between 60 to 90 minutes, were audio recorded, conducted in the Thai language and then transcribed and translated into English (Cox & Hassard, 2005; Woodside & Wilson, 2003). The interview guide used can be found in Appendix 1. Twenty-six YouTube video clips from two marketing campaigns being promoted under the archetype of Mae-Manee, namely Mae-Manee Easy Pay Money Solution (Campaign No.1) and Manee Fighto Free Solution (Campaign No.2), were drawn from the bank's official YouTube channel. The objective of the first campaign was to raise awareness, improve recognition and encourage adoption by projecting Mae Manee as an endorser who represents good fortune. Because of the huge success of the first one, the second campaign was a continuation of the first, which also used Mae Manee to promote the new financial products and services. Both campaigns had the same main target market (SCB, 2020).

Two researchers analysed the interviews. Both researchers have a good understanding of different research contexts and the Asian market. This corroboration helps ensure the accuracy of the interpretations by not relying on a single individual's understanding or views (Nuttavuthisit, 2019, p.248). Therefore, to ascertain the most accurate and insightful

interpretation of every detail from both researchers, a second round of discussion was conducted to discuss and resolve conflicts in the data interpretations between the two researchers. The working in interpretive team as guided by Thompson, Locander, & Pollio (1989) facilitates the integration of the most accurate elements of multiple interpretations of the data. Furthermore, this process lends itself to achieving triangulation amid the various perspectives offered, improving the credibility of the research (Belk, Fischer & Kozinets, 2013; Wallendorf & Belk, 1989).

Other related marketing materials used to promote this campaign, for example, online flyers and online company newsletters, were also elicited from the company's website. The multiple data sources provide very rich and detailed information about Mae-Manee characteristics in terms of textual and visual dimension, and explicitly reflect the messages of what the bank aims to convey to their business clients. For the purpose of ensuring quality and accuracy (Beverland & Lindgreen, 2010; Eisenhardt, 1989), triangulation is applied in terms of employing multiple data sources, variety of methods used in the study, e.g., interviews and documents, and multiple researchers involved in gathering, analysing and interpreting the data (Farquhar, Michels, & Robson, 2020).

We start by micro-analysing words and sentences before moving on to assessing meanings of whole texts (Fairclough, 1995; Richardson, 2007). Based on the MDMA approach, analysis needs to draw out the form and function of the text (the micro-level), the way that this text relates to the way it is produced and consumed (the discursive-practices level) and the relation of this to wider society (the social-practices level) (Richardson, 2007). By linking linguistic analysis (micro analysis) to social practices analysis (macro analysis), we can see how language and semiotic resources play a role in reproducing, supporting or resisting specific discourses and concepts which, finally, feed into the development of the archetypal convention of the Mae-Manee branding. Table 1 summarises the identified commercial-ritual-based practices, as

drawn from the interviews and associated visual materials analysed. Table 2 presents the semiotic analysis (Kucuk, 2015; Saussure, 1959) conducted in the two advertising campaigns. Throughout our analysis, we moved concurrently along the three previously mentioned levels, and were able to conclude on our proposed themes and sub-themes that are presented next, once saturation was reached.

4. Findings

This section outlines the key themes emerging from the data, based on a discursive analysis of MDMA: 1) The advisor role of Mae Manee as a symbolic representation of good fortune; 2) SCB-Mae Manee co-branding strategy; and, 3) the Mae-Manee archetype as ‘a living brand’.

4.1 The Advisor Role of Mae Manee as A Symbolic Representation of Good Fortune

With an aim to improve the adoption rate of the Promptpay System, the bank introduced a revised marketing campaign endorsed by Mae Manee, an archetype of good fortune that Thai people are acquainted with. The role Mae Manee played in this marketing campaign is the advisor, who signifies good fortune associated with the PromptPay System. The bank expected that the use of Mae Manee would bring desirable results because Thai people are superstitious about good fortune, which Mae Manee, a sacred figure in Thai culture, represents. In addition, the power of sacred figures is not to be questioned or challenged (Chinchanachokchai et al., 2017; Pusaksrikit et al., 2018) which warrants the success of the marketing campaign.

We chose Mae Manee because of its existing role and meaning held by Thai shop owners. So we took this symbol, which already has a prominent place in the Thai marketplace and Thai psyche, and modernised its design and added modern meaning and function of digital commerce (Marketing executive 1).

Our data also provide abundant evidence that superstitious practice is prevalent in Thai businesses. Additional to the superstitious practices already documented in the extant literature, such that preferences of certain dates and colours for conducting businesses based on superstitious beliefs (Jackson, 2016; Wilson, 2008), we find that practice of superstitions about good fortune is prevalent. For example, businesses perform ritual to Nang Kwak, the archetype of good fortune. Specifically, daily prayer is performed where Nang Kwak is treated as a living character and offered drinks and foods. In return, businesses expect good fortune would follow. This ritual practice is taking place daily and has become part of the daily routine of running a business (see Table 1 for details and Figures 1 and 2 for visual evidence).

Insert Table 1 here

Using Mae Manee, the marketing campaigns offer a whole pack of benefits, including symbolic, aesthetic as well as practical benefits, all of which are designed to lure business customers into a trail of the new system (Table 2, marketing campaign No. 1). For example, the practical benefits of the new payment system are clearly communicated. Mae Manne's traditional Thai Sabai dress was printed with a QR code and earrings with the SCB application patten, both of which indicate acceptance of the integration of traditions and modern digital technology. Besides, placing Mae Manee alongside the payment system's QR code helps to build association and rapport which could subsequently eliminate clients' feeling of unease with the PromptPay System in this study. The good fortune benefit is also repeatedly communicated. For example, Mae Manee's bracelets represent generous profits, and a gold bag beside her symbolizes wealth. Also, Mae Manee's ring portrays wealth, signifying affluence she will bring.

Insert Table 2 here

According to the ART theory, recipients who receive advices evaluate the advice content as a part of their evaluation process (MacGeorge, Guntzviller, Hanasono, & Feng, 2016). Based on our analysis, projecting the aforementioned benefits through the symbolic features of Mae Manee helps boost the credibility and persuasiveness of the advice. Adopting Mae Manee also increases the quality of the advice because good fortune and prosperity associated with Mae Manee directly addresses clients' risk concern in relation to the new product. Therefore, SCB has seen a significant increase in adoption of the new system following the launch of new marketing campaign endorsed by Mae Manee.

We chose Mae Manee because it is something that Thai people already love and believe in and are used to seeing and paying respects to. We simply added the QR code to this easily adopted image as a package. It is like a win-win strategy which is based on what they love and on the superstitious side of Nang Kwak archetype and then attached the QR code technology to this (Development staff and Art director).

The failure of the first launch of the Promptpay System without Mae Manee is well-recognized in both the interview data as well as in the report of the Bank of Thailand (2017). While the Finance Ministry encouraged businesses to use the system as a part of the national e-payment scheme, the number of adoptions was 140,000 at the end of 2017, which is far below the target of 560,000 (Chantanusornsiri, 2018). Despite apparent benefits associated to the Promptpay System were clearly communicated, business clients did not show much of interest in the system until the good fortune archetype was added.

'Before Mae Manee, flyers, individual consulting, onsite implementations, and installations and integration with clients' POS systems were all used to garner interest and buy-in to the system. However, only a few merchants decided to sign up, and even they did not frequently utilize the system after its installation.' (Marketing executive 1)

In contrast, SCB reported that after the launch of the SCB Mae Manee money solution campaign in early 2018, the system received a warm welcome nationwide, resulting in 1.5 million adoptions (SCB, 2018).

‘When the new system was first launched, various branches had to proactively promote or recommend the new system to existing and new clients. However, with the use of the popular Mae Manee archetype, the bank and its branches were able to elicit demand for the PromptPay service without the need for extensive push. New and existing clients came in asking to sign up for it of their own volition.’ (Marketing Executive 1)

Our findings provide evidence supporting ART that the adviser characteristics not only are central in influencing how the message is being evaluated (Guntzviller, MacGeorge, & Brinker, 2017), more important than that the message features, and advisor characteristics need to operate collectively to influence advice outcomes (Guntzviller, Wang, Martinez Gonzalez, & Ratcliff, 2020). The bundle of values within the message feature combine with the advisor’s characteristic lure clients to adopt and utilize the payment system.

The revised marketing campaigns substantially improved the adoption rate of the PromptPay System (see Figure 3 and 4 for detailed information). There are two main reasons for this success. First, business clients are acquainted with the projected advisor in the campaign, namely Mae Manee, the archetype of good fortune. According to the ART related literature, advisors whom the target recipients are already familiar with in their daily lives increase the persuasiveness and acceptance of the messages delivered (Feng & MacGeorge, 2010). Second, the core message conveyed by Mae Manee is good fortune associated with the Promptpay System, a notion deeply rooted in Thai culture which business customers can easily identify with. When the message communicated by the advisor is culturally acceptable and in line with

the recipient's belief, it maximises the influence of the message (MacGeorge, Guntzviller, Hanasono, & Feng, 2016; S. R. Wilson & Kunkel, 2000).

4.2 SCB-Mae Manee Co-branding Strategy

This study reveals a second critical strategy whereby the bank re-designed Mae Manee by adjustment of the advisor's appearance and characteristics to increase persuasiveness and ultimately better connect with Thai business clients. The transformation of the original Nang Kwak to the more modernized Mae Manee has been repeatedly mentioned in the in-depth interviews. Moreover, interviewees unveiled that the superstitious side of Nang Kwak (e.g., mysticism, magic, illogical) has been intentionally downplayed. In contrast, the projected good fortune is deliberately attributed to the core benefits of the new payment system, such as convenient and secure.

'To target SMEs, we did not want to promote the superstitious side of the Mae Manee symbol. Instead, we aim to promote the product as bringing good fortune due to the practical benefits of the QR code and payment system which can and does provide more and easier payment options, ultimately helping sales, and secure payment channel' (Marketing executive 3).

The transformation of the appearance of Nang Kwak Mae Manee is also reflected in the semiotic analysis of advertising Campaign No 1. A modern cartoon/doll-like design is adopted to represent Mae Manee, replacing the old-style of a realistic human-look figurine to fit intended target audience's tastes as seen in Figure 3, and 6. This representation is chosen to connote a sense of likeability (Callcott & Phillips, 1996; Hosany, Prayag, Martin, & Lee, 2013), and as a result, make the younger generation of business owners, as the main target group of the bank, more receptive to the campaign's message.

In addition to a revamp of her clothes and accessories, a total change in Mae Manee's facial expressions is made: a direct gaze, big cartoon-like sparkling eyes and sweet grin are used to

signify approachability, friendliness and playfulness. An informal language and youth speech styles are also adopted to attract the bank's target customer group, which are young generation SMEs and entrepreneurs. This redesigning of Nang Kwak -- from an aloof, unapproachable deity to an amiable fairy friend – so as to induce a sense of companionship in business clients is witnessed in a part of the verbal code in marketing campaign No.1:

'Mae Manee is like the closest and most trusted friend of any shopkeeper. With such close friends and great companions, mediocrity is not even a possibility. We will just have to wait and see how great we can be together.'

In marketing campaign No. 2, named SME Fighto: Mae Manee Chaiya (SCB, 2020), a complete overhaul of Nang Kwak is done, an example of which is the new outfit style that does not have any reference to that of the original Nang Kwak, as seen in Figure 4. Nang Kwak's hand posture of beckoning good fortune, which reflects a superstitious belief, is replaced by a raised fist at the shoulder level, which suggests cheering up and encouragement. This overhaul corresponds with the bank's brand personality, that is, through Mae Manee, aspiring to become target clients' partner or close companion who stays by their side throughout their business operation. The use of Mae Manee as a brand character gives the brand not only a friendly appearance (Chapman, Nicholas, Banovic, & Supramaniam, 2006; Hémar-Nicolas & Gollety, 2012) which leads to the creation of brand awareness (Hosany et al., 2013), but also fosters a closer relationship with the target clients because of the ability to build a close-emotional relationship with the target audience (Callcott & Phillips, 1996). The qualities of the friendship and partnership in Mae Manee as the advisor makes the brands more believable, familiar, and "very close to you". The distance between the bank and clients is eliminated, which led to the emergence of brand intimacy, and eventually led to acceptance.

What is added to the existing literature on brand character (e.g. Callcott & Phillips, 1996; Choi, Yoon, & Taylor, 2015; De Droog, Valkenburg, & Buijzen, 2011; Hémar-Nicolas & Gollety, 2012; Hosany et al., 2013) is that the modification of Mae Manee from the original Nang Kwak creates an appealing impact both at the perceptual level, by drawing a great attention to the product, and at the emotional level, by enabling business clients to easily form a relationship with the character through their familiarity with the concept of the old version. Our research has hence identified a strategy of using old ideas to create new ones, in this case a hybrid between familiarity with the traditional-cultural belief and modernity, that facilitates the bank to quickly build brand familiarity: as business clients are already familiar with the original Nang Kwak, it takes them little time to develop a relationship with the modernized/digitized Mae Manee character.

Mae Manee evolves from a holy-sacred goddess to a helpful partner for the SME owners. Perceived as a helpful and friendly advisor, Mae Manee is able to successfully communicate complicated messages (e.g., a combination of product information, emotional appeals and superstition of good fortune) and increase new product adoption. Indeed, Mae Manee persuaded SME owners to make that first step and commit to using something they were unfamiliar and uncomfortable with and convinced them that the practical benefits such as reduced waiting times and not having to make change, among others, would be quickly recognised and appreciated. A trustworthy character leads to more favourable brand evaluations (Garretson & Burton, 2005; Garretson & Niedrich, 2004). Advancing existing literature, this case study finds that Mae Manee, the trustworthy advisor of an established brand, facilitated new product adoption.

4.3 Mae Manee as “A Living Breathing Brand”

Our analysis reveals that Mae Manee has been presented as not only a symbolic image of visual appeal, but a character that has life of its own. Mae Manee is constantly evolving and/or growing with the Bank. The idea of Mae Manee as “*a living breathing brand*” is connoted in the first advertising campaign and highlighted in the interviews, as seen in the next extract.

She is an anthropomorphized embodiment of the financial tools and support shopkeepers rely on, allowing for a connection on an emotional level with clients and users as a kind of partner and friend. This partner (Mae Manee) is increasingly used to promote a diverse range of products offered by the bank... Who knows, we may even see a COVID themed Mae Manee offering of some type. (Marketing Executive 2).

The first advertising campaign, “Mae Manee Money Solution”², depicts a scene where the celebrity talks to Mae Manee when she is feeling discouraged by several business and financial problems as if Mae Manee is an advisor who would help her out. Mae Manee is, thus, seen as “*a character that has life of its own*”. The bank presents Mae Manee as not only a sacred image, but as a trustworthy individual who is always available, and whom one can talk to regarding financial and money solutions. The notion of good fortune is being interpreted, here, as an increase in sales and efficient and safe transactions.

Insert Figure 5 here

Additionally, the bank never stops the continuous development of Mae Manee to make it relevant to the fast changing market. New characteristics of Mae Manee are being added every time a new campaign is launched. Semiotics, as on websites and other marketing materials, simultaneously present these new characteristics; thus, the archetype evolves through campaigns and becomes enriched. Following its initial success, Mae Manee as “*a breathing living brand*” is also employed to promote other services offered by the bank, where Mae

² <https://youtu.be/yEhiYinrUUQ>

Manee is treated as a known brand. For example, our comparative analysis results of campaigns No. 1 versus 2 show that while campaign No. 1 puts an emphasis on generating the first dialog between the bank and its customers in order to foster relationships with target audiences, Mae Manee in campaign No.2 progresses to become a brand in her own right and is extensively utilised as the bank's presenter in new product and service offerings rather than acting as a mascot representing QR code payment, as done in the previous campaign.

'Because of the successful of the previous campaign, the bank does regard Mae Manee as a brand rather than a one-off endorser. As with any established brands, those who trust them will continue to buy new products released by that brand, as seen with Apple users who buy computers, phones, and other devices based on their experience and trust in the brand' (Marketing executive 1).

To sum up, the success of Mae Manee, as a “breathing living brand”, is attributed to four aspects: 1) Mae Manee demonstrates distinctive and identifiable personality traits (e.g., friendly, helpful, trustworthy, and sincere), which are appealing to clients; 2) Effort was endeavoured to ensure that Mae Manee remains relevant to the fast-moving market; 3) Mae Manee has gone through her initial stage of development and is continuously evolving; and 4) Mae Manee represents good fortune, a superstitious belief deeply rooted in culture, which is highly important to businesses. These four aspects, which are in line with the criteria for a successful brand as stated by Callcott & Phillips (1996), influence brand trust and attitude as well as behavioural responses of target markets (Folse, Netemeyer, & Burton, 2012; Garretson & Burton, 2005; Garretson & Niedrich, 2004; Hosany et al., 2013). This approach allows the archetype to re-create and continuously re-develop to serve their target clients without interrupting or conflicting with the main Thai cultural context.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Despite the prevalence of superstitious beliefs in human society, limited research attention, however, has been devoted to investigation of marketing practices corresponding to superstitious beliefs (Torgler, 2007). The purpose of our study is to narrow this knowledge gap through providing insights into how superstitious beliefs are utilised in marketing communications by businesses to improve new product adoption in a B2B context. Adopting a case study in Thailand, we address a specific overarching research question – when and how could good fortune, the culture-specific notion and also one of the core elements of superstitious beliefs in Thai culture, be applied to create a relational bond and desirable behaviour between a service provider and its clients? Our research addresses a timely and critically important research gap of both theoretical and practical implications. Equally important, our effort opens numerous avenues for future research, such as examination of the impact of good fortune as well as other superstition-related notions, particularly during the course of a global pandemic caused by COVID-19, when we are all facing unprecedented uncertainty.

Drawing upon ART, and with the use of the MDMA for the first time in marketing inquiry, our study finds the Thai archetype of good fortune plays an important role in effective marketing communication and development of trusty relationships which, subsequently, lead to desirable outcomes, such as substantially improved new product adoption (Kalish, 1985), in the Thai B2B marketplace. When adopting archetypes of good fortune, three main strategies which are deemed effective are identified: use of various refreshing versions of an archetype which synergise preferences of both modern and conventional cultures in marketing campaigns; implementation of co-branding through treating the archetype of good fortune as a living brand; and, placing particular emphasis on benefits and product features in marketing communication while downplaying the superstitious beliefs in relation to the archetype of good fortune. This

strategy creates a meaningful connection between the brand, the archetype and their target market. It allows the brand to form a strategic partnership with “like-minded” clients which eventually leads to a strong brand image and identification among their targeted business clients.

The contribution of our findings is three-fold. First, we offer much needed insights into the effects of superstitious beliefs on B2B marketing and development of relationships in a fast-emerging Asian market. Recognising the substantial impact that superstitious beliefs have on the marketplace, research efforts have been devoted to understanding their implications for judgment, decision-making and behaviour from an individual or consumer’s perspective (e.g., Kramer & Block, 2008; Wang, Hernandez, Minor, & Wei, 2012); we, however, know very little about their implication for marketing communication and relationship development in a B2B context. This knowledge gap is surprising given the common use of cultural superstitious beliefs in marketing practice, such as featuring a number that is perceived to be associated with good fortune in Asian cultures (e.g., Thailand, China and Japan) and omitting the number 13 for houses built by developers in Western cultures. Our study narrows the knowledge gap by not only documenting the robustness of the influence of good fortune, a main superstitious belief, on communication effectiveness, relationship-building, and new product adoption but also specifying underlying mechanisms, in particular decisions concerning messages to be communicated and identification of appropriate conveyers for the message. Our findings, thus, add to the growing debates in relation to the effects of superstitious beliefs by providing understanding from a B2B perspective.

Second, our study is one of the first which examines the unique role played by the archetype of good fortune in marketing management through the lens of ART. Archetype of good fortune represents a core aspect of superstitious beliefs which, to our knowledge, has been largely overlooked by the literature on superstition to date. Existing literature has mainly focused on

the superstitious associations that individuals hold concerning an object's attributes (e.g., He, Liu, Sing, Song, & Wang, 2020), such as colour, number, digits used in pricing. However, archetypal images of superstitious beliefs are rarely recognised or examined. Archetypal images, primordial types, that is, with universal images deeply rooted in cultures, have existed since the remotest times and exert substantial influences on information processing, elaboration and behaviour (Bewusstseins, 1934). Thus, it is crucial to understand their role in influencing decisions and behaviours from both the individual and business perspective. The findings of our study, although focusing upon the effect of archetypal images of good fortune (played as an adviser) on B2B marketing management only, undoubtedly enrich the literature on superstition.

Last but not least, the findings also contribute to co-branding literature in industrial marketing, an area which has received limited research attention (Lee & Decker, 2016; Helmig, Huber, & Leeflang, 2008). While our study focuses on dissecting how utilisation of archetypal images of good fortune can successfully change business clients' behavior, the findings reveal that marketing strategists in our case study successfully implemented a unique co-branding strategy, where one of the two host brands is a business brand and the other is an archetypal image of good fortune. This unique co-branding strategy, labelled as brand-cultural archetype marketing by this study, supplements long-established strategies, such as affinity programmes, cause-related marketing, ingredient branding and cooperative advertising (e.g., Cooke & Ryan, 2000; Swaminathan & Reddy, 2000). The notion is that when two brands co-endorse a product, marketers need to emphasise meanings of two host brands, because it is usually the brand strategists' intention that meanings from the two host brands should be transferred to the co-brand to generate a more favourable meaning constellation for the brand couple (Prince & Davies, 2002). Conversely, our study provides empirical evidence that meanings from the business brand (the content element of ART) need to be explicitly communicated to the target

market, whereas the meanings from the archetype of good fortune should be downplayed, or simply not even mentioned. Our findings, thus, provide new insights into co-branding in industrial markets.

Researchers have long recognised the importance of culture-specific notions (e.g., McDonald & Roberts, 1990). Our findings, although focused primarily on the effects of the culturally-rooted good fortune aspect of superstition, suggest that businesses should be mindful of culture-specific superstitious beliefs. The strategic considerations revealed in our study in relation to what worked and what did not work in designing marketing campaigns provide detailed guidance to marketing practitioners. Although the findings are resultant from one case study of a domestic service brand, and are yet to be validated in a wider context, the empirical evidence of our study supports the notion that marketers working for Western businesses should also be attentive to cultural sensitivity when planning marketing campaigns in the Asia-Pacific region. In so doing, businesses could avoid making cultural mistakes during the marketing communication process, thereby generating substantial positive outcomes.

Specifically, when integrating the culture-specific connotations, such as archetypes of good fortune, marketers could downplay the perceived superstitious power of the archetype and, in the meantime, emphasise the benefits and associated unique features of the product. For example, as evidenced in our study, the banks converted Mae Manee, an archetype of good fortune, into an icon representing the power of digital tools which clients could easily identify with and would willingly respond to. This desirable outcome is achieved through purposefully attributing the benefits of the payment system to technological advancement rather than emphasising the superstitious side of the archetype (e.g., magic and mysticism). Providing explanations for why this measure has worked is beyond the scope of this research; however, ART (MacGeorge et al., 2016) offers some theoretical foundation. According to ART,

recipients tend to evaluate and respond to novel messages they had not previously considered (Guntzviller, Ratcliff, & Pusateri, 2019).

Additionally, our findings suggest that an archetype of superstitious beliefs could be projected as an object that evolves and has a life of its own. In light of these findings, when adopting a brand-cultural archetype marketing strategy, marketers could continuously develop the archetype through injecting new characteristics which are in line with the overall communication strategies of the hosting brand. In so doing, the archetype will remain relevant to the ever changing market and will be able to convey the purposefully designed marketing communication messages of the hosting brand. Marketers, however, need to ensure that these various refreshing versions of an archetype would synergise preferences and values of both modern (e.g., convenience, efficiency, good fortune) and conventional cultures (e.g., good fortune) in marketing campaigns.

Although our study shows that utilisation of culture-specific archetypes of superstitious beliefs is effective in the development of relationship and effective marketing communication which is likely to result in new product adoption, we did not examine the specific process underlying this effect. For example, use of archetypes may have helped to lessen levels of anxiety for business customers of the bank. As we did not capture the level of customer anxiety, we cannot make claims as to whether this is the underlying psychological mechanism of our results. Thus, testing and revealing the underlying drivers (including anxiety) of our findings represents a direction for future research.

In addition, the findings of this research are based on one case study in the banking sector in Thailand. They aim to enrich our understanding of the role of good fortune in this particular context and acknowledge the limitations posed by our chosen methodological approach. It is, therefore, important to extend such examination in other contexts of different cultures and with

distinct archetypal images of superstitious beliefs. In our study, the use of iconic and well-known cultural characters proved as a good way to communicate with the Thai market. There are various archetypes which represent diverse superstitious beliefs of distinct levels of importance in a culture. Thus, more research is needed to shed light on the specific influences of unique archetypes in either the B2B or B2C context. Prioritising the examination of situations of uncertainty, change or crisis could be suggested. A replication of this research post-pandemic also represents a direction for future research because a small part of the data of this study were collected during COVID-19 lockdown period, there is a chance that part of the SBC's success can be attributed to COVID-19 pandemic. By introducing the archetype angle our study opens the door to many more promising avenues of future research in superstitious beliefs than it has filled.

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Appendix

Table 1 Superstitious practices in Thai businesses identified from interview excerpts

<p>Daily ritual practice</p>	<p><i>‘Based on the observation, the merchants will include paying ritual respects and offerings of food or drink to a figurine as part of their daily opening routine to bring good fortune to the business’. (Marketing executive 3)</i></p> <p><i>‘Based on insight which we got from these Thai SME owners, we found that every morning before they open their shop, they give offerings to these spirits (e.g. Nang Kwak or other figurines based on their beliefs). They perform this ritual as part of their routine’. (Marketing executive 2)</i></p> <p><i>‘Specific kinds of foods and drink such as red syrup drink or red Fanta fizzy drink, rice, sweets and fruit are offered as a sacrifice to Nang Kwaks’. (Marketing executive 1)</i></p>
<p>Superstitious beliefs and business practice</p>	<p><i>‘Superstitious of luck control a lot of how Thai merchants do business, even to the extent of being more or less receptive to sales pitches on certain days of the month or certain times of the day’. (Marketing executive 3)</i></p> <p><i>‘Merchants tend to choose an auspicious date and time to open a business or close a sale’. (Marketing executive 2)</i></p> <p><i>‘Salespersons usually wear the right birthstone, accessories, or lucky colours to enhance luck in a business setting’. (Marketing executive 1)</i></p>

Table 2

Advertising Campaign 1: SCB EASY PAY – Mae Manee Money Solution Launched in 2017 (SCB, 2017)³

Campaign Objective: To build service recognition and create awareness of the QR code payment service among Thai market

Table 2.1 Semiotic Analysis of SCB EASY PAY – Mae Manee Money Solution Advertisement

Visual Codes – Colour Codes	
<i>Signifiers</i>	<i>Signified</i>
Gold	Victory, glorification, success, positivity Emperor, monarchy, royal, authority Prosperity, opulence, wealth, treasure, fortune Morality, openness Wisdom, lightness
Purple	Expensive, luxury, nobility Charming, love Patience, foresight Intellect, spirituality Sympathy Transformation, innovative Imagination
Red	Love, passion, Happiness, lucky, fortune Intense, attraction Active, exciting, vitality, bravery
Symbolic Codes	
<i>Signifiers</i>	<i>Signified</i>
Gold bracelet with ruby gems	Attractiveness; wealth; richness. All accessories assure the shopkeeper of coming success. The bracelet she wears surely beckons and draws in profit for the shopkeeper. Her ring, a valuable treasure, assures the shopkeeper of the riches to come.
Gold crown with ruby gems	
Ruby gold ring	
SCB gold necklace with ruby	
Golden belt	
SCB significant star earring	Speed, safety, stability. She wears trendy earrings in the style of the SCB app. The sight of which makes one ready to pay in an instant.
Valentino fashion shoes	Stylish, fashionable, modernisation. Her shoes are of the newest fashion, giving her a beautiful and graceful walk, and never letting her stumble in all her endeavours.

³ <https://www.scb.co.th/th/personal-banking/payment/for-merchant/easy-pay.html>

Traditional Thai outfits (Sabai Thai) with QR code pattern	Modernisation, digital lifestyle, QR code patterns represents a prompt payment; anywhere she goes she is ready to make money.
Golden purse Gold Thai baht currency symbol	Wealth, fortune, affluence, abundance, richness, success. Sales and growth potentials Her golden purse always has room to hold more treasure, making the user richer and richer and richer.
SCB logo (a golden Pho leaf)	Serenity, happiness, prosperity, royalty, virtue, morality
Body language – Crouching position: sitting with legs folded back, to one side	Polite, respectful, appropriateness. Represents social and cultural customs in Thailand.
Right arm raised beckoning pose	Attraction, enchantment, allurement Encouraging/drawing customers into the shop.
Direct gaze –catchy cartoon-like eyes with a wink, smile	Personable, confident, attractiveness, allurement, charming, affection.
Verbal codes	
<i>Signifiers</i>	<i>Signified</i>
The attractiveness and allure of Mae Manee	Direct communication, 1 on 1 Creates awareness, recognition, and education. Sacred Manee Thai hand-written style symbolises protection, good luck, strength, and success.
Mae Manee is sitting beautifully in front of the shop holding a trendy handbag and wearing the latest fashion of clothing. She is like the closest and most trusted friend of any shopkeeper. With such close friends and great companions, mediocrity is not even a possibility. We will just have to wait see how great we can be together.	Business, commercial, trading Stylish, modern Helper, partnership, friendship through the sense of we-feeling and camaraderie.

Advertising Campaign 2: SME Fighto: Mae Manee Chaiya Launched in 2019 (SCB, 2019)⁴

Campaign Objective: To improve conversion rate. The Manee Free Solution offers three main benefits to their SME clients to help them trim down the costs of their banking transactions.

Table 2.2 Semiotic Analysis of SME Fighto: Mae Manee Chaiya Advertisement

Visual Codes – Colour Codes	
<i>Signifiers</i>	<i>Signified</i>
Black	Mystery, uncertainty, sophistication Powerful, strength, dominance Sadness, grief Fear, negativity, darkness
Gold	Victory, glorification, success, positivity Emperor, monarchy, royal, authority Prosperity, opulence, wealth, treasure, fortune Morality, openness Wisdom, lightness
Purple	Expensive, luxury, nobility Charming, love Patience, foresight Intellect, spirituality Sympathy Transformation, innovation Imagination
Symbolic Codes	
<i>Signifiers</i>	<i>Signified</i>
Sacred hemp rope Head band circlet (Mongkol) Arm bracelets (Phirot)	Ruthlessness, fearlessness, toughness, strong spirit, ferocity, perseverance An athletic spirit with a no-retreat attitude in the Thai style of fighting
Modern boxing shoes	Agile movement, fast mover, ready to push and defeat any obstacle
Honey skin	An athletic build in honey skin tone means readiness to stand up to obstacles
Traditional Thai cloth for upper (Ta-beng-marn), and lower body (chong-kra-ben) with SCB logo and star	Represents the bank as to become everything for the digital lifestyle in every dimension. A well-rounded support from the bank
SCB star earring SCB gold necklace with gems Golden belt	Speed, safety, stability, modern technologies.

⁴ <https://www.scb.co.th/en/about-us/news/sep-2019/nws-manee-free-solution.html>

Golden purse golden coins, and gold bars	All accessories assure the shopkeeper of the riches to come. Draws in profit for the shopkeeper Wealth, fortune, affluence, abundance, richness, success
SCB logo (a golden Pho leaf)	Sales and growth potentials Serenity, happiness, prosperity, royalty, virtue, morality
Body language – Crouching position: sitting with legs folded back, to one side	Polite, respectful, appropriateness. Represents social and cultural customs in Thailand
Front raised fist at the shoulder level	Supportive, encouragement (e.g., keep fighting, and perseverance)
Direct gaze –catchy cartoon-like eyes with smile	Personable, call to action, confident, attractiveness, friendliness
Verbal Codes	
<i>Signifiers</i>	<i>Signified</i>
Manee Free solution	Direct communication, 1 on 1 Manee means Money and Come here Sacred Manee Thai hand-written style symbolizes protection, good luck, strength, and success To build expansive campaign awareness and at the same time extend the support and encouragement for the SMEs to keep up their fighting spirit against any oppression and obstacle they may come across Build awareness of the all-inclusive free financial services provided by the bank under the “Manee Free Solution” Through the Mae Manee Kard Chuak, it allows greater sales and growth potentials and paves way for greater business success and wealth

Figures





Figure 3: SCB EASY PAY – Mae Manee Money Solution Campaign First launched in 2017
(source: Brand Inside, 2019)



Figure 4: Mae Manee version of 2019 under the SME Fighto Campaign (source: Brand Inside, 2019)



Figure 5: Miss “Mai” Davika Hoorne, a celebrity and entrepreneur as the first presenter of Mae Manee brand to represent Thai SMEs persona (source: SCB YouTube Channel)

แม่มนียุคนี้แค่ปังก็สวยๆ
ถือกระเป๋าเก๋ๆ แต่งตัวอินเทรนด์อัปเดตแฟชั่น เสมือนเป็นเพื่อนแม่ค่าที่รู้ใจสุดๆ
จะเป็นคู่หูกันทั้งทีให้มาแบบธรรมดาก็คงไม่ได้ แต่จะเซ็กซี่ไหนมาดูกัน

แรงดึงดูดของแม่มนี

เริ่มตั้งแต่

- ชุดแม่มนี** มาในสโมไทยลาย QR แม่มนีอยู่ที่ไหน พร้อมรับเงินที่นั่น
- กระเป๋าสีทอง** รับเงินรับทองเข้ามา ยิ่งทำให้รวยรวยรวย
- รองเท้าแฟชั่นรุ่นใหม่** ใจใส เดินสวยๆ ไม่มีสะดุด ทุกการก้าวขยับ
- ต่างหู คีบเก๋** ลายไอเอพี SCB เห็นแล้วพร้อมเปย์ทันที
- กำไล** แม่มนีใส่เรียกเพิ่มพูน กำไรให้แม่ค่าแน่นอน
- นาฬิกา** แก้วนาฬิกาเงินทอง กำขยับรวย รวย

Appendix 1: Interview Guide

- 1) Could you please tell me a little bit about Siam Commercial Bank (SCB), and your role in it?
- 2) Could you talk about the SCB Easy Pay App and how this came about? For whom was it meant (i.e. type of businesses, end consumers, etc.)? What were you (the bank) aiming to achieve with it?
- 3) How was the Easy pay App introduced to the SMEs? Was there a specific message or advertising campaign used for it? (e.g., what was included in the flyers/images ; Specific message, or technique that you used to target your SMEs)
- 4) How was this message and app received by SMEs before introducing SCB Easy Pay App – แม่แม่ Money Solution? (i.e. favourably or reluctantly)
- 5) Why do you think this was the case? Why do you think they liked or disliked it?
- 6) How did the idea for the Mae Manee (Thai: แม่แม่) advertising campaign come about? What made you choose this particular archetype symbol?
- 7) Were there any market segmentation considerations for the use of this symbol? For example, were there certain criteria that you used, in order to group/segment the small businesses you were targeting? If so, what were these?
- 8) What does this “Thai archetype of good fortune” symbolise in this instance?
- 9) Is there any change in the way you interpret the meaning of this archetype? For example, how are you using/communicating this archetype in this case, compared to the original meaning?

- 10) How was this message and app received by the Merchants /SMEs? Why do you think this was the case? Why do you think they liked or disliked it?
- 11) Do you consider its influence to have been strong or not? Did it have an influence? Why did you choose this symbolic figure not another Thai figure?
- 12) How did the general public – end consumers or customers of the SMEs – react to it?
- 13) What made it particularly persuasive/ successful, according to you? What is the role of the good fortune archetype in your “Mae Manee Sri Online” campaign? How is this good fortune symbol being used in other campaigns? Has the meaning and effectiveness in communication of this archetype changed with its use in various campaigns?
- 14) What does this archetype symbol represent in this particular campaign?
- 15) How similar or different is the meaning of this campaign’s symbol interpretation to previous campaigns?
- 16) What would you consider to be the role of this symbol of “Thai archetype of good fortune” in the way businesses are conducted in general in Thailand or how relationships are built, if any? Please share a few examples.
- 17) How good fortune affects your business? How the bank manager himself sees the role of this figure? (the way the bank does business); when they do business is the notion of good fortune being considered? Is it presence? Share some example...
- 18) Beyond the archetype of good fortune, are there other archetypes/symbols from Thai culture that were considered? Were there any other similar notions that had been considered for this advertising campaign?
- 19) Do you think there could be other notions that could have also been successful in such communication for SME targeted advertising?

20) Are there any other Thai archetype symbols of good fortune that Thai people respect/believe in? since Thai people they adopt various archetypes when it comes to selling.

21) Is there anything else you would like to add in terms of the potential influence of such “Thai archetype of good fortune” in your business, or business in general?