THE STUDY ON THE SUCCESSFUL SEXUALLY VIOLENT TELEVISION DRAMAS AND ITS IMPLICATION ON THAI TELEVISION DRAMAS INDUSTRY

BY

MISS LALIDA LAWCHAIYAKUL

AN INDEPENDENT STUDY SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

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(INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM)
FACULTY OF COMMERCE AND ACCOUNTANCY
THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY
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INDEPENDENT STUDY

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ENTITLED

THE STUDY ON THE SUCCESSFUL SEXUALLY VIOLENT TELEVISION
DRAMAS AND ITS IMPLICATION ON THAI TELEVISION
DRAMAS INDUSTRY

was approved as partial fulfillment of the requirements for

the degree of Master of Science Program in Marketing (International Program)

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Member and Advisor _____

(Professor Malcolm C. Smith, Ph.D.)

Dean _____

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Independent Study Title	THE STUDY ON THE SUCCESSFUL SEXUALLY VIOLENT TELEVISION DRAMAS AND ITS IMPLICATION ON THAI TELEVISION DRAMAS INDUSTRY
Author	Miss Lalida Lawchaiyakul
Degree	Master of Science Program in Marketing (International Program)
Major Field/Faculty/University	Faculty of Commerce and Accountancy Thammasat University
Independent Study Advisor	Prof. Malcolm C. Smith, Ph.D.
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ABSTRACT

The study of "The Study on the Successful Sexually Violent TV Dramas and Its Implication on Thai Television Dramas Industry" has been chosen to be an independent study topic that focuses on issue of society. This study is a contemporary topic in applied marketing. Objectives are to identify an audience of sexually violent Thai television dramas, to identify the distribution strategy for sexually violent Thai television dramas and, to identify key success factors that make sexual violence in Thai television dramas successful.

Secondary research was gathered through various credible sources such as journals, newspapers, Internet, etc. Furthermore, qualitative data was attained from in-depth interviews. In-depth interviews were conducted with 40 interviewees, both male and female, who were between 14-68 years old living in Bangkok and vicinity area and watching at least two episodes of TV dramas per week.

In conclusion, this study is of Thai audience behavior and preference to violence in Thai television dramas; therefore, knowledge gained is specific to a Thai audience and the Thai television drama industry. This knowledge will be beneficial for the Thai television drama industry in what is a highly competitive business environment.

Keywords: Thai Television drama, Thai melodrama, violent media, violent TV drama, violence in media, sexually violent TV drama, rape culture

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Miss Lalida Lawchaiyakul

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INTRODUCTION

1.1 Television and TV dramas in Thailand

In 2014, the Thai television system changed dramatically. The television broadcasting system was changed from an analog system, containing five free television channels, to a digital system that contains up to 48 television channels (Thai digital television, 2013). According to Dailynews newspaper, the value of the digital television broadcast industry this year is 72,587 million baht (Dailynews Online, 2016).

Due to the significant increase in the number of channels, competition for television ratings is higher than ever before. New channels want to gain audience and ratings, while the original five channels want to maintain their ratings. Therefore, television drama producers incorporate violent content into television dramas in order to attract an audience. As a result, they gain higher ratings over the existing top ranked channels (Bangkok Post Online Newspaper, 2014). Since 2011, it has been reported by Thairath newspaper that 80% of Thai television dramas incorporate violent content, and 36% incorporated sexually violent content (Thairath Online, 2011). This report finds that one of the major reasons for this is that many Thai audiences enjoy television dramas which contain violent content including verbal, physical, and sexual violence such as rape scenes. As a result, television producers incorporate more and more violent scenes into their television dramas in order to boost ratings (Manager Online, 2016).

However, there is a limit to how much audiences enjoy violence in television dramas. There is *"Club Friday To Be Continued: Puen Ruk Puen Rai,"* a television drama that is widely considered to have gone too far with scenes of sexual violence that create not only a negative buzz around the particular television drama within Thai society, but has also led to a petition on www.change.org, asking the government to press charges against the producers of this drama and the television company (Thanawat, 2016). This petition was successful, and the company must now pay a fine to The National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (Nation TV, 2016). (Sample pictures of TV drama "Club Friday to Be Continued: Puen Ruk Puen Rai" in Appendix A.)

In light of this decision, television producers must be more careful and more educated about how to incorporate violent scenes in television dramas successfully. The goal of this study is to provide new knowledge for television producers and the TV drama industry which can be applied to their TV drama productions.

The rest of this report consists of the objectives of the study, primary and secondary research from literature review, and the qualitative research approach. Then there will be the data analysis from collected data in order to concludes findings and results for each objective.

1.2 Area of the study

This study is a contemporary topic in the area of societal issues, specifically, the status of men and women in context of Thai society.

1.3 Research objectives

The objective of this study is to identify the key success factors of sexual violence in Thai television dramas, that will help television producers better understand the target audience in order to create sexual television dramas that meet the preferences of their target audience.

The specific research objectives are:

1. To identify a target audience of sexually violent Thai television dramas
   a. Demographic
      i. i.e. age, occupation, income, education, gender, etc.
   b. Psychographic
      i. i.e. motivation, lifestyle, attitude, interest, etc.
2. To identify distribution strategy for sexually violent Thai television dramas
   a. To identify appropriate platform for sexually violent Thai television dramas
      i. i.e. Application, Free television, Digital television, Cable television, website that requires subscription, etc.
   b. To identify an appropriate time slot for sexually violent Thai television dramas

3. To identify key success factors that make sexual violence in Thai television dramas successful
    a. To uncover the underlying reasons why audiences are attracted to sexual violence in Thai television dramas
    b. To identify what kind/style of sexual violence in Thai television drama attract the target audience
    c. To identify what level of violence in Thai television drama is acceptable and will not lead to a negative impact on target audience

CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This section of the report will present data regarding the definition of rape under Thai law, as well as examining rape culture in Thai television dramas from academic journals, existing research papers, and articles from the websites.

Study findings show that there is high competition between current analog and digital free TV channels. Therefore, each TV station must differentiate itself by creating and selecting TV dramas and TV shows with a new approach, to reach and capture more target audience; they also need to adopt innovative technologies and platforms to serve their audience, which also increase revenue to the station. TV production companies also need to create TV dramas that meet the changing needs of TV stations and audience. However, in order to start adopting new approaches for success, many factors must be considered to support the business, especially in building connections with media, TV stations, and commercial product companies that will help the business to operate smoothly. TV drama production companies also need to have good business management capability and a good strategy for each situation to ensure their business survives and grows in this highly competitive environment. (Bunbutr, 2009)

2.1 Structure of radio and TV channel market theory

As can be seen in Figure 2.1, the structure of the radio and TV station market comprises of many organizations, e.g. radio and TV station, media producers, advertising agencies, ratings agencies, product manufacturers and consumers. As shown in Figure 1, media producers produce contents for radio and TV stations (some stations will also produce content in-house), and get compensation or revenue sharing from advertisement. Advertising agencies connect stations and producers to product manufacturers. Ratings agencies are companies that help rate the popularity of media content, providing useful data for product manufacturers, producers and advertising agencies.

As the above relationships demonstrate, consumers do not directly choose and pay the stations for specific content (except for subscription television), but they do

indirectly support station costs by purchasing products in the market. Most media productions aim to produce content for consumers with purchasing power, who are the target group of product manufacturers that sponsor the channel. (Tangkitvanich, 2003)
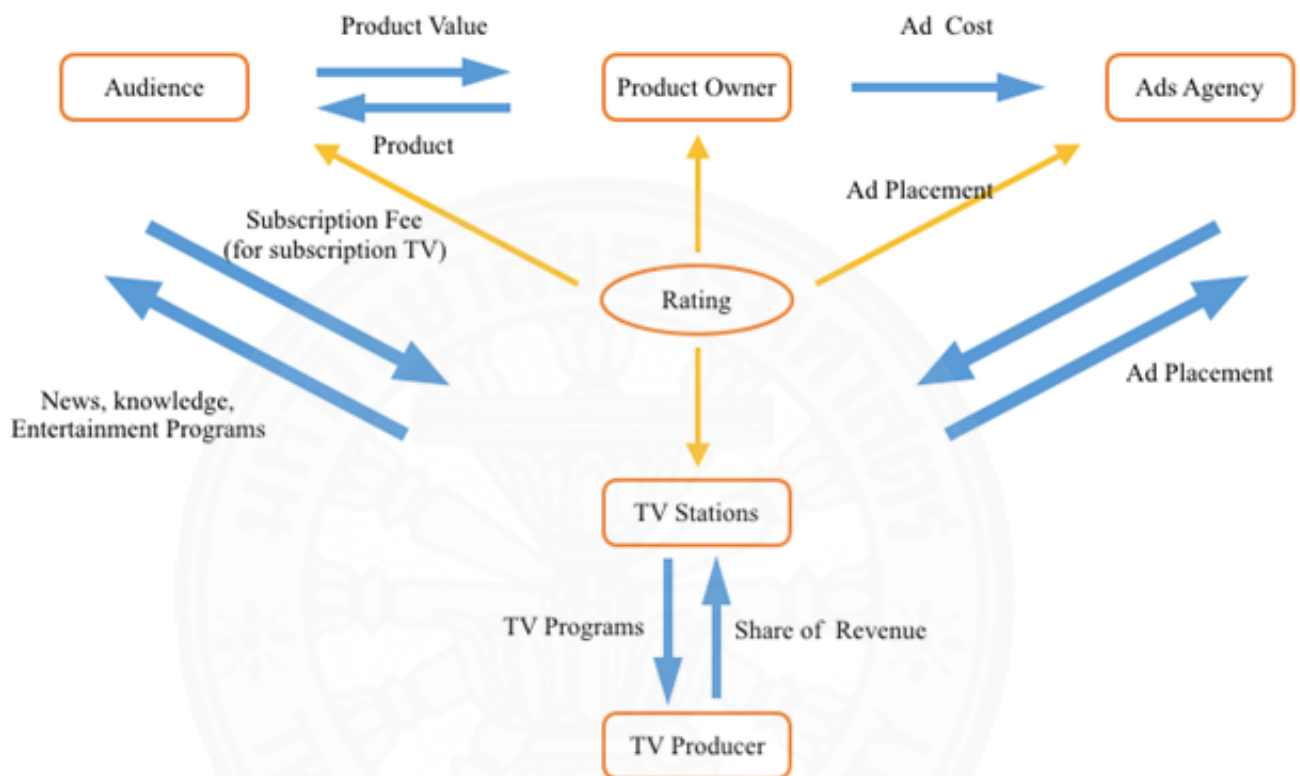
Figure 2.1: Structure of radio and TV channel market theory

2.2 TV drama production business concept

According to a study by Pamuk Supasarn (Supasarn, 1987), there are 4 ways of producing TV dramas:

1. TV dramas solely produced and made under supervision by TV stations.
2. TV dramas ordered by TV stations, hiring outsourced TV producer and production team to lead/take charge of the production process in the name of the TV station.
3. TV dramas produced by TV drama producing companies, and then bought and aired by TV stations, and the license of dramas are owned by TV station.
4. TV dramas produced by TV drama producing companies and leased to air by

TV drama producer companies to air on TV stations. The producers of such TV dramas will be responsible for, and take charge of all aspects of the production process.

2.3 Success factors of TV dramas

To be a successful TV drama production company, one study found that the image and reputation of TV drama producers represent the skills and knowledge needed to create quality work (Na Nakorn, 2013). Image and reputation have an impact on the credibility of a company in terms of communication, personnel, and as an organization. This also aligns with a study by Suphaporn Suthamgosol (Suthamgosol, 2004), who stated that a sender is considered to be the one that is capable to persuade. The information or story that a sender wants to convey is considered to be less important than the personality of the sender. On the other hand, if the receiver sees the sender as untrustworthy, the message that the sender wants to convey is also considered untrustworthy.

Regarding competition among TV drama producers, this research found that creativity is an important strategy for TV drama producers to have in order to differentiate themselves from others. A study by Anocha Silarattanakul (Silarattanakul, 2006) found that, apart from skillful producers and strategic policy from the management, TV dramas need other factors to be successful, such as creating TV dramas that respond to the needs of the audience, and that success is also derived from the quality of screen plays, scripts, actors' performances, as well as many other aspects.

2.4 Definition of Rape

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, Rape is defined as: *"The crime, typically committed by a man, of forcing another person to have sexual intercourse with the offender against their will."*
However, within the Thai context, rape has two different meanings (Under the Ropes, 2016):

1. *"Bplum"* (ปล้ำ) is defined as a sexual act that usually starts with the male forcing and using violence against a woman, but the result of the action could be the establishment of a relationship

2. *"Khomkheuun"* (ข่มขืน) is defined as a criminal act

2.5 Rape culture in Thai TV dramas

Rape in Thailand is officially illegal, however, rape scenes in many Thai television dramas are widely acceptable to the audience. While many television dramas have portrayed sexually violent scenes, only a few were censored, and charges pressed (Townsend, 2016). Although there is a television content rating system in Thailand, there are still sexually violent television dramas that are labeled as *"general content rating"*. For example, *"Club Friday To Be Continued: Puen Ruk Puen Rai,"* a television drama that was broadcast by GMM25. This television drama contained a rape scene and many other scenes of physical violence, but it was labeled as *"general content rating"* (Nation TV, 2016) (Sample pictures of television drama *"Club Friday To Be Continued: Puen Ruk Puen Rai"* can be found in Appendix A).

All Thai television dramas in Thailand must be monitored and rated by the Office of the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission, which is a government sector.

The system of rating content of all television shows (NBTC, 2013), called *"Television Content Rating,"* is divided into six levels as can be seen in Table 2.1.

Level of Rating	Meaning
	Preschool Content Rating – Television shows that contain content suitable for Preschool children, age of 3-5.
	Children Content Rating – Television shows that contain content suitable for children, age of 6-12.
	General Content Rating – Television shows that contain content suitable for all ages.
	PG13+ Content Rating – Television shows that contain content suitable for audience age above 13. For audience whose age below 13 will need parental guidance.
	PG18+ Content Rating – Television shows that contain content suitable for audience age above 18. For audience whose age below 18 will need parental guidance.
	Adults – Television shows that contain content suitable for adults only and not suitable for kids and youths.

Table 2.1: Table of television content rating system

Table 2.2 shows attributes used in evaluating each television shows (NBTC, 2013).

Level of Rating	Behaviors and Violence	Language	Sexual content
	0	0	0
	0	1	0

	1	1	1
	2	2	1
	2	2	2
	3	3	3

Table 2.2: Table of evaluation attribute in TV rating system

The study showed that five out of the ten most popular television dramas in Thailand contain sexually violent content (Townsend, 2016). In Thai television dramas, sexually violent scenes will be perceived negatively only when the male villain rapes the leading female character; this kind of scene increases the feeling of sympathy of the audience towards that female character, and this is what a Thai audience usually calls *"Khomkheuun."* Another scenario in television dramas that Thais call *"Khomkheuun"* is when a female villain character is raped by a male villain character. However, the audience would not have any sympathy towards a female villain character as if she somehow deserved to be raped.

On the other hand, if the leading male character rapes the leading female character, the sexually violent action will be considered as justified by female behavior such as putting on an outfit that shows too much skin, going out at night alone, and drinking alcohol, etc. Therefore, this kind of scene will be perceived by a Thai audience as *"Bplum"* (Under The Ropes, 2016).

The role of movies in society are the reflections of context of society. The study suggests that there is a strong relationship between story lines and characters in movies and context of society. Apart of imagination of screen writers in writing scripts, societal

context and attitudes are also other factors that influence screen writers. Context of Thai society leads to the result of the study which conclude that male characters in Thai TV dramas often have dominant characteristics, and exercise superior power over female characters. Bad male characters are often portrayed as seeing female characters as sexual objects. As for female characters, they are willing to let male characters exercise power and commit violent acts in order to gain the male characters' attention (Yimsuan, 2011).

A summary of the literature shows: (1) there are many existing studies regarding violence in media. However, studies specific to violent media in a Thai context are not widely available, (2) research on violent media in other countries often examines the effects of violent behavior on consumers but is never associated with commercial and marketing aspects, (3) there is no research examining the cause of popularity of violent TV dramas in a specific Thai context. Therefore, the proposed study will provide contributions.
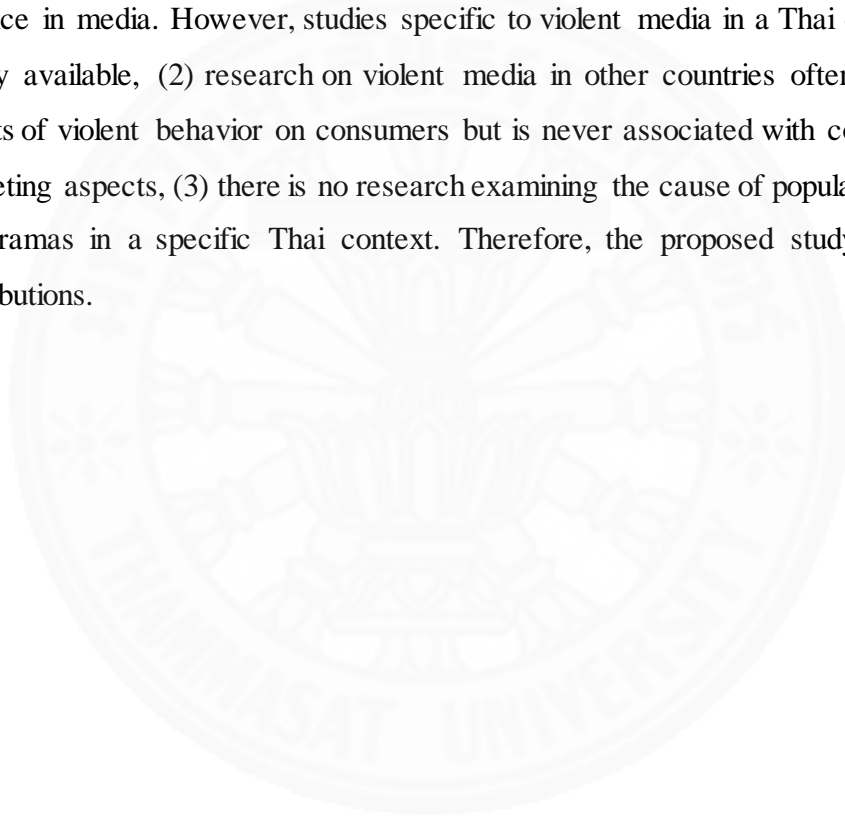
CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To achieve the objectives defined in this study, market research was used to collect and analyze the data to answer all objectives.

The nature of this research is programmatic; the key area of this study relates to target audience profile, segment, attitudes, and behaviors. An exploratory approach and qualitative methods were used in this study. The data collection method was composed of direct discussion (in-depth interview) and secondary research.

Exploratory research was used to gain insight into why the target audience enjoy sexual violence in television dramas. Exploratory research also helped address a variety of questions such as what, why, and how, to achieve other study objectives.

3.1 Research Methodology

3.1.1 Primary Research

In-depth interviews were the main way for the researcher to obtain insights and opinions from participants. The researcher chose face-to-face in-depth interviews because the researcher was able to observe participant facial expressions and body language, whether participants feel comfortable for further probing or not. Moreover, the interviewer tried to create a comfortable atmosphere for participants to ensure that participants feel relaxed, comfortable, and were encouraged to communicate. For participants who were not available for face-to-face in-depth interview, video conferencing was applied as an alternative. Despite some drawbacks to video conferencing, such as the fact that a researcher cannot observe participants' body language, video conferencing still has benefits that outweigh the drawbacks and can provide useful information for this study (Sullivan, 2012).

Question lists for the in-depth interview were semi-structured and open-ended questions, the purpose of this was to enable probing techniques to be used with participants during the interview. Probing techniques help researchers dig deeper into participants' personal attitudes and opinions.

In the interview, four short video clips of sexual scenes in Thai television dramas, ranging from least violent to most violent, were shown to each participant. Questions about these video clips were asked between each video clip, to gain insights into the participant's response to each level of violence. The purpose of doing this was to observe their reactions, as well as to learn more about their thoughts towards these sexually violent scenes (Sample of in-depth interview questions can be found in Appendix B).

3.1.2 Desk research

Secondary data was separated into two parts. The first part was at the beginning of the research where the researcher performed desk research to gain more understanding of the television drama industry and have enough background knowledge to create question lists for the in-depth interviews. For this, the researcher mainly looked at credible sources from Thai newspapers, as well as online articles from official government websites and published papers.

For the second part, the researcher dived deeper into related academic journals, existing research papers, newspapers, and government sector websites. Analyzing this detailed information helped the researcher create a good framework from existing research and allowed deeper study of new information and the addition of factors to extend existing data collected from secondary data.

3.2 Target population

This study consisted of a non-probability sample, due to the methods used in selecting interview participants. To select the target audience as in-depth interview participants, two methods were applied to this study. Firstly, the researcher recruited some of the participants through a convenience sampling method. Then, participants were asked to recommend their friends or colleagues who also enjoy watching sexually violent television dramas to become in-depth interview participants; this is an application of the snowball sampling method. Participants were very diverse in age, therefore, they were divided into four different segments which is the quota sampling method.

3.2.1 Segmentation

Thai television dramas remain consistently popular and are a big part of life for many Thai people (Townsend, 2016). The TV drama audience consists of a wide range of Thai population, in order to cover all the target audience. The researcher used *"generation"* to describe segments because each generation has different attitudes and opinions; therefore, it is incredibly important to study every group of audience to have accurate findings. Participants were divided into four segments by quota sampling method as can be seen in Table 3.1.

Sample Size – Participants were divided into four segments by quota sampling method.

Generation	Quantity
Baby Boomer Generation	10
Generation X	10
Generation Y	10
Generation Z	10
Total number of participants	**40**

Table 3.1: Table of interviewees' segmentation

The respondents were divided into four groups (Thairath Online, 2015):

1. Baby boomers
   a. Born: year 1946-1964
   b. Age in 2016: Age between 52-70
2. Generation X
   a. Born: year 1965-1979
   b. Age in 2016: Age between 37-51
3. Generation Y
   a. Born: year 1980-1997
   b. Age in 2016: Age between 19-36
4. Generation Z
   a. Born: after year 1997
   b. Age in 2016: below age of 19

3.3 Qualifications of respondents

The participants for this study were both male and female, who live in Bangkok and the vicinity. Participants who qualified for the in-depth interview must have watched at least two episodes of Thai TV dramas per week. It was not specified that participants must watch television dramas on television only; those who consume television dramas on other platforms such as tablets, smart phones, computers, laptops, applications, websites etc. were also qualified to be participants (Sample questions of pre-screening process can be found in Appendix C).

3.4 Data collection plan

In-depth interviews were conducted by both face-to-face and online conferencing; participants had to go through a pre-screening process. Once participants had passed the prescreening process, an appointment was made, subject to the convenience of the participants. For face-to-face interviews, participants were the ones who chose the place and time that they are available. For video conferencing, interviews were arranged subject to the convenience and available time of the participants, as well as the video conferencing software. All participants, both face-to-face interview and online conferencing, were informed before the interview that they will be videotaped for the purpose of educational study. All of the interviews were conducted in the Thai language, as it is the native language for Thai citizens. Moreover, English language could be a big barrier to gaining insights from participants, as well as leading to the possibility of misinterpretation of questions and responses. The in-depth interviews were conducted individually and the duration took approximately one hour.

3.5 Limitation of the study

- This study covers only one type of violence in television which is sexual violence. However, there are other types of violence in television dramas, such as physical, psychological, and emotional violence.
- This study used convenience sampling to collect interviewees which means that the results may not represent the general population. Therefore, there are factors that could lead to skewed data collection which can affect the result of the study.

CHAPTER 4
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Secondary Research Key Findings

4.1.1 TV industry in Thailand (Digital vs. Analog)

In 2017, the audience for digital television is continuously increasing. On the other hand, the audience for analog channels (channel 3, 5, 7, 9) are consecutively decreasing, from 33 million people per day down to 27 million people per day, while digital television audiences increased to 24 million people per day, which is close to the total audience of analog channels. The primary reason for this change in audience habits comes from the variety of content available on digital television. Some companies that formerly produced television shows and TV dramas for analog channels now have their own channels. In the past, these companies were required to ask for air time from analog channels. Digital channels also have unlimited on air time which makes a difference. Moreover, they can create TV dramas that contain content and quality equivalent to analog channels. (Positioning, 2017)

4.1.2 Advertising budget trends in Thailand's TV industry

According to Mindshare, a media agency, the proportion of advertising budgets spent within the television industry is changing drastically, and is having a negative impact on analog channels. The rate of access to digital television is rising among Thai people. The number one digital television channel, Workpoint Entertainment Ltd., is expected to increase its advertising rate from an average of 35,000THB per minute to 48,000THB per minute. While the advertising budget devoted to digital television increased by around 19% in year 2016 and expected to increase to 25% in year 2017, analog channels, such as Channel 3, are losing revenue quickly; their net profit in 2016 of 1.2 billion baht is lower than the previous year by 1.8 billion baht. (Thailand Rating Agency, 2015)

4.1.3 Trends in Thai consumer behavior towards Internet platforms

In the digital transformation era, people can access the Internet from anywhere and anytime, and with higher speeds every year. Now people can easily watch High

Definition TV shows from online websites, mobile applications or from social media platforms. This has been enabled by mobile devices such as smart phones and tablets, which are now common to every area and all ages, together with 3G/4G mobile internet rollout in Thailand. Video streaming platforms like YouTube are also popular. The YouTube user experience and perception is quite positive due to ease of use, fast download speeds, and it has become the main platform for on-demand TV series with users able to play or pause anytime. The platform is also easy to search, it filters video categories and offers suggested related videos which encourage users to continue watching videos. An added attraction for users is that advertisements shown on online platforms are less annoying, since users have the choice to skip ads. (Rattanamungmekha, 2016)

To confirm these changing trends among Thai people, Google Thailand and a market research and market information company, TNS, worked together to survey Thai consumer behavior towards online media platforms. The survey found that more than 61% of the Thai audience choose to use YouTube over television, and only 11% of the Thai audience prefers television to YouTube. Moreover, the study showed that on a weekly basis, Thai audiences consume 14 hours more content on YouTube than television. (Brand Inside, 2016)

4.2 In-depth interviews Results

4.2.1 Demographic Characteristics

The researcher found that Thai television dramas are widely popular in Thailand in all age groups from children to senior citizens. As can be seen in Figure 4.1, interviewees of the in-depth interview consisted of 30 females (75%) and 10 males (25%) ranging from 14 – 68 years old. Around 55% of the interviewees are single and 35% are married. The remaining 10% are divorced or widowed as shown in Figure 4.2.

Sex
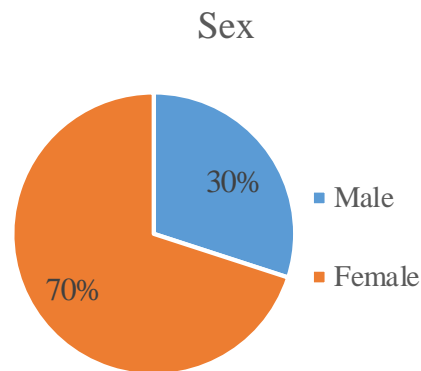
Figure 4.1: Demographic on sex
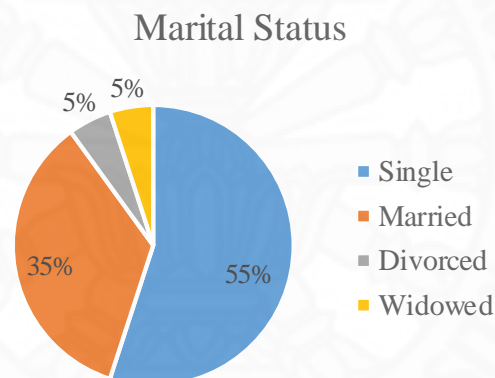
Marital Status

Figure 4.2: Demographic on marital status

Interviewees are from various ages and backgrounds; therefore, their education, occupation, and income levels are also scattered across a wide range. As can be seen in Figure 4.3, the highest level of education attained by interviewees are Master's degree (12.5%), followed by Bachelor degree (35%), vocational degree (35%), and secondary school level (12.5%). In addition, more than half of the interviewees are employees of private companies or work in government sectors, followed by students, business owners, and housewives as shown in Figure 4.4.

Education
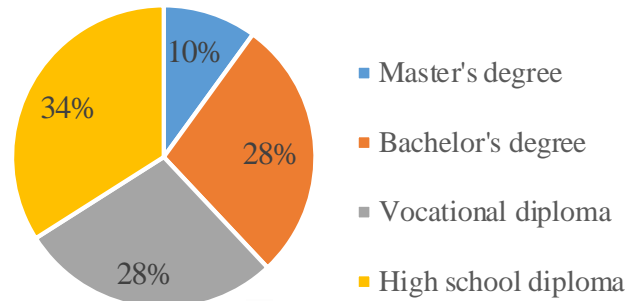
Figure 4.3: Demographic on education

Occupation
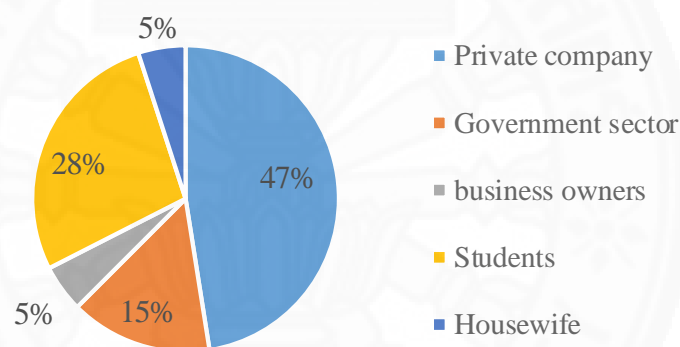
Figure 4.4: Demographic on occupation

4.2.2 Lifestyle

More than half of the interviewees (62.5%) are working male and females with strict office hours, though frequently working overtime. Therefore, on most working days, after finishing work, they go straight home and do hobbies such as surfing the Internet, watching movies and TV dramas, reading, or listening to music. On weekdays, when they have time after work, (as well as on weekends), they meet with friends to have lunch, dinner, or go shopping. Some of them are concerned about their health and prefer to go the gym.

4.2.3 Attractions of TV dramas

TV dramas are highly popular as their sole purpose is to entertain the audience and the story plots are generally easy to follow. Most TV dramas have story lines linked

with real life experiences, such as love stories and love conflicts, which create suspense and leave audiences wanting to watch the next episode.

- 90% of interviewees stated that they watch drama entertainment reasons.
- 85% of interviewees said that they watch TV dramas for relaxation.
- 67.5% of interviewees said that they like watching TV dramas because the plot of TV dramas usually come from real life stories, which make them more interesting to watch, for example Club Friday the Series.
- 42.5% of interviewees stated that because many of the TV dramas these days are remakes of old versions they watched before and feel attached too, they are interested in seeing the new version.
- 30% of interviewees said that they watch TV dramas to escape their own problems.

4.2.4 Perceptions towards violent TV dramas

The researcher found that Thai people are used to sexually violent TV dramas, as this kind of drama has been shown in Thai society for a long time. However, a few years ago, TV drama producers incorporated much more violence into TV dramas. With regards to their opinion of the level of violence in TV dramas, interviewees can be split into 2 main groups:

The first group (42.5%) is mainly people with higher education, which includes Bachelor's and Master's degree graduates. This group understands that violence in TV dramas is for entertainment purposes and does not apply to real life. They stated that they do not need to see violent content to enjoy TV dramas; however, nowadays, there are not many TV dramas without content such as physical violence, sexual violence, or verbal violence. 20% of these interviewees have children and are concerned about their children watching this type of TV drama as they do not want them to think that the violence shown in TV dramas is acceptable in real life.

"When I watch television and see the leading male character use sexual violence with the leading male character, I can understand that those TV producers just want their TV dramas to be more excited and fun for viewers. And I believe it was meant to be an entertainment and not for real life that a guy can treat a girl with sexual violence and a girl would still like him."

Ms. Chanikarn Y., 30

"I am very concerned having my kids growing and watching this kind of TV dramas. I do not want my daughter to think that it is a normal and acceptable for a man to treat a woman with sexual violence. Moreover, it is a bad example to show this kind of character and still be portrayed as a good guy."

Mrs. Rattanan T., 45

The second group (57.5%) consists of people with a lower level of education, which includes middle school, high school, and vocational degree graduates. They stated that violent scenes increase the feeling of excitement in the TV dramas, and that these scenes make TV dramas more fun and make them want to stay tuned-in. They also feel that Thai TV dramas have been like this since they can remember and they are used to them. They admit that there are more violent scenes these days, but they do not think it is a negative thing; they find is more fun and entertaining.

"I am not sure why other people think too much about this issue of violence in TV dramas. I mean, it's the way Thai TV drama been for years and it's only to increase the fun in TV dramas, who wouldn't want to watch that? Also, anybody who watch TV dramas with a good enough judgement would probably know that it's for an entertainment purpose. It is only fictional characters; it is not like it is real life."

Ms. Apichaya K., 18

> "I watched TV dramas because my wife always watches these shows. I find it them entertaining and relaxing after a long day of work. Also I think people who think this is negative is lying to themselves because I feel that these violent scenes are already in real life. It's not like violent scene is the cause of what happened in the society. In fact, I think violent TV dramas only reflect what's already happening in the society and people should be more acceptable about it.
>
> Mr. Thana L., 42

4.2.5 Relationship between TV drama characters and acceptance of violence

The researcher found that the type of TV characters portrayed makes a difference to the audience's perception of violent behavior.

Violence between the leading male character and leading female character

o Around 77.5% of the audience state that they are okay with a sexually violent scene if it is between the leading male character and leading female character. They found it exciting to watch this kind of scene between these two characters.

> "Well, everybody who watch TV dramas knows the leading male and female characters are going to end up together with a happy ending, even how badly the leading male character treat the female characters. And I know that the leading male character is always the good character so I guess it is okay with some violence. I'm sure the leading male has reasons behind for treating the female character that way."
>
> Ms. Sakow K., 16

- While the other 22.5% state that they do not like it anyway because it will create big misunderstanding that a guy can do this to a girl in real life and end up with a happy ending.

> "In my opinion, this type of TV dramas can confuse young kids and teenagers who may not have adults or parents to give them the right guidance. These young kids and teenagers may think that this is how the society supposed to be since how badly the leading male treat the leading female characters, the female always fall for this kind of guy. This kind of violent scenes send out the wrong message to both young boys and girls."
>
> Ms. Ruangtip R., 40

> "For a person who has a young teenaged girl as my daughter, I definitely think it is not acceptable. I would not want my daughter to think that this is a normal thing for a guy to do to make a girl fall in love with the guy. And I surely would not want my daughter to end up with this kind of guy. So I tried to talk to her to correct the understanding about this. But I don't think all of the parents out there will have time to talk to their kids so I think it is a big concern.
>
> Mr. Worawut K., 48

Between male villain character and leading female character

- 87.5% of the audience state that they are not satisfied with this kind of scene because it is not okay for a bad person/character to treat a good female badly. They do not prefer it even if it is only a low level of sexual violence such as trying to kiss and hug, but if the story line has enough weight to bring these characters into this situation, they find it acceptable. However, the audience finds it almost unacceptable if it is a rape scene.

> "I find it is very unpleasant to watch even though I know TV producers use this kind of scenes try to spice up the story line. I just think there are other creative ways to make the story interesting. In my opinion, if it's a scene where the villains only hold the leading female character hostage, it would still be acceptable but try to sexually assault the female character or to go as far as rape scenes is never acceptable.
>
> Ms. Vuthiporn S., 28

- 12.5% of the audience think scenes with low levels of sexual violence are acceptable, since a bad character always ends up in a bad place and the leading male character always comes to save the leading female character anyway; therefore, it should be ok. However, rape scenes are still also not preferred by this group.

> "I am not saying that it is a good thing to do in real life but this is TV dramas. I feel like this is how it's supposed to be so that the leading male character can act as a hero saving his female from the villains. Most of the time the leading male character always come in time to save the female characters and the villains always got beaten up. I think that is very normal Thai plot TV dramas.
>
> Ms. Umaporn P., 23

Between male villain character and villain female character

- 47.5% of interviewees said that a bad character somehow deserves to be treated badly for both male and female characters. Therefore, sexually violent scenes are a good way to show the audience and make them learn that they should not copy the villain character's actions, otherwise the audience are going to end up like this.

> "Maybe some scenes are a little harsh but I think that it is a great lesson for those girls who are willing to do bad things or those who treat others badly. It shows that they won't end up in a good place. Sometimes the best way for TV drama viewers to learn is to show them the worst case scenario which I think it is a good thing.
>
> Ms. Sasivimon T., 18

- 7.5% of interviewees feel that it is only a TV drama scene for entertainment; therefore, there is no need to be serious about it.

> "I do not see how TV dramas can cause such a big issue. Some bad characters got treated badly, it is only characters in TV. Why does it have to be a big deal? Some people need to understand that this is not real, those characters are actors and actresses, they are just acting. Therefore, it doesn't mean anything in real life."
>
> Ms. Natcha U., 48

- o 45% of interviewees stated that producers should not input ideas of rape and sexually violent scenes into TV dramas. They feel that, no matter how badly behaved the female character is, it is never okay for females to get revenge or be taught lessons from rape or sexual assault. Moreover, they are concerned adolescents, and even some adults, might misunderstand and think it is acceptable to do this to women in real life. They feel that there are other ways to show that a bad character would not end up happy, and that rape and sexual violence is not necessary.

4.2.6 Audience perception towards rape scenes in TV dramas and rape in

> "It is never acceptable to broadcast this kind of scene on television. There are surely many other ways to show that bad things happen to bad people. For example, sending them to jail or maybe the villain female character is left with no one in her life. Surely, those TV producers find the easy by putting these violent scenes to increase their rating and word-of-mouth so that their TV dramas can be the talk of the town.
>
> Ms. Thongsiri C., 39

Thai society

When asked about rape in real life, all of the interviewees, both male and female, said that it is unacceptable. On the other hand, opinions about rape in TV dramas can be split into two groups.

- 45% of interviewees said that there should not be rape scenes on TV. Girls or women, no matter how bad they are, do not deserve to be raped either in TV dramas or real life. They believe rape scenes shown on TV can create misunderstanding in society, and that TV producers need to be aware that not all audiences have good judgement about right and wrong.

- 55% said it is acceptable to have sexually violent scenes in dramas because they know it is only TV. Also, when the leading male character uses sexual violence against the leading female character, the audience knows they are going to up end in love together in the end anyway. Moreover, interviewees said that sometimes it is good to show rape or sexually violent scenes on TV to teach people about how bad people will end up in life, or the "what goes around, comes around" idea.

4.2.7 Consumer behavior towards watching TV dramas

- **Platforms**

Based on the in-depth interviews, it appears that 77.5% of interviewees are moving away from watching movies and TV dramas on television and moving towards computer, tablet, and mobile phones. The other 22.5% are mostly from the baby-boomer generation, and still use television as their main platform to watch TV dramas. Moreover, 57.5% of the interviewees stated that they mainly watch TV dramas live on websites, and if it is a rerun then 72.5% of them watch from YouTube.com, followed by Gmm25, and Line TV.

- **Factors and reasons for changing platforms**

Factors that cause the change in the way audiences consume media include time constraints and audience convenience. More than 77.5% of interviewees stated that it is more convenient for them to receive news media and watch TV dramas on their portable devices such as mobile phones, tablet, and laptops, because TV dramas usually have an on-air time start of 8.30 PM, and due to the heavy traffic in Bangkok, they cannot get home in time. Therefore, they either watch live TV dramas from the channel's official site or watch reruns on Youtube. Around 17.5% of interviewees said that they have already stopped watching TV dramas on television and wait to watch the rerun on online platforms instead.

Another factor that is causing the audience to shift from television to online platforms is advertisements during TV dramas. It is the nature of advertising in the TV industry that the more popular the TV drama, the more advertisements are shown,

which can easily irritate the audience. The difference between advertisements on television and on online platforms is that advertisements on television are not avoidable, compared to online platforms, where audiences can skip ads.

Among online platforms, YouTube is quite popular across all age groups, because it offers a wide variety of content. For GMM25 channels (on TV and online websites) that offer TV series such as Club Friday the Series, which contains highly violent scenes, are very popular among majority of interviewees. Applications and websites like Line TV are widely popular among the younger audience (mostly generation Z and some of generation Y) because they offer many TV series/dramas about teenager love.

- **Time slots**

Most interviewees said that if they want to catch live TV dramas they would prefer the time slot around 9 PM to midnight. The time that they usually watch the rerun of the show is also 9 PM to midnight.

Among younger people such as college and high school students, around 36.4% of them state that even though they finish classes no later than 5 PM, they still must deal with homework, group work, examination preparation etc. Around 63.6% spend time after class hanging out with their friends. The time that they are totally free is usually from around 8.30 PM onwards.

As for the working-age audience, the 27.5% who are married have many responsibilities to deal with before they can be at home, for example, picking up their children from school, working overtime, and grocery shopping for their families. As for the 45% who are still single, they usually work overtime, hangout with their friends and dine out before they get home. Therefore, the time that they will be able to relax and watch television dramas is from around 9PM onwards.

- **Consumer behavior while watching TV dramas (channel switching)**

The researcher found that of 55% interviewees tend to switch TV channels if they find TV dramas are boring, as digital television increases the alternatives to choose

from. Another 27.5% tends to have more loyalty to the channels and TV dramas; they do not change channel even when the advertisements are on air. This group mostly leans towards the baby-boomers and generation X. This exclude another 17.5% that stopped watching TV dramas on television.

4.2.8 Relationship between understanding of advertisements and education

The researcher found that segment with a higher level of education best understand the logic behind having advertisements during TV dramas. These group of interviewees, mainly those with a Bachelor's or Master's degree, understand that there is no free media, and that television drama production companies and platform owners need to earn income from advertisements; therefore, they feel that it is tolerable. However, they still prefer advertisements on online platforms that they can skip.

> "I understand that even though we watch TV dramas for free, someone has to pay for those actors, production, staff and so on. So it is understandable why they need advertising. And I want to continue watching these TV dramas, so if advertising makes them profitable enough to produce more TV dramas, I can absolutely live with it."
>
> Ms. Phoranee S., 27

The segment with lower levels of education, including vocational, middle school, and high school degrees, find advertisements very annoying on both television and online platforms. It is clear that they do not have much understanding of why advertisements are important to TV producers and TV stations. Moreover, they offer insights on how they can tolerate advertisements on online platforms that come right before the TV dramas, but they are ok with advertisements that keeps appearing many times during TV dramas.

"It is very annoying having to watch many advertisements during TV drama when what you want to watch is TV dramas. The advertisements keep appearing during the TV dramas; even though, I am able to skip the ad, I still find it irritating and does not make sense of why these TV dramas want to put so many advertisements to getting on the nerves of their audience."

Mrs. Ampha G., 62

Because of excessive advertisements, both segments have a similar reaction, which is to watch reruns on online channels such as YouTube because they enable audience to skip advertisements and avoid wasting time watching them.

CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study focused on the attitudes of audiences toward depictions of violent behavior on TV dramas. The study also addressed audience preferences in watching TV dramas and how lifestyle has an impact on this. This research utilized desk research and in-depth interviews (with a total of 40 respondents) as research tools. As this study focused on qualitative research, the study was planned to discover interviewees' feelings and opinions about violence in TV drama, and how these affect preferences and attitudes.

5.1 In-depth interview findings

Opinions towards violent TV dramas can be categorized into two main groups: the first group consists of people with a high level of education, such as Bachelor's or Master's degree graduates. They do not need TV dramas to be violent for enjoyment, and some of them have concerns about their children watching these kinds of TV dramas.

The second group consists of people with a lower level of education, such as middle school, high school and vocational degree graduates. They prefer TV dramas that have violent scenes and consider violent dramas more enjoyable and fun. They do not see violent scenes as a negative thing in TV dramas.

The main reasons both groups love to watch TV dramas are for entertainment, to relax after the working day and because plots come from real life scenarios which makes them more interesting.

Some other factors affect acceptance of violence on TV. For instance, the characters portrayed on TV dramas have an impact on audience perception. Most interviewees find sexually violent scenes between a leading male and a leading female character acceptable, but do not think it is okay between a male villain character and a leading female character. In the case of violence between a villain male and villain female character, some audience find it acceptable while others find it unacceptable.

Internet video platforms are increasing in popularity among Thai audience. The arrival of 3G/4G mobile internet has led to platforms being utilized more regularly. Most interviewees use internet platforms to watch TV dramas online, including live videos and re-runs. The most popular platform is YouTube, followed by GMM25 and Line TV. Although online platforms are very popular, these platforms still need effective marketing strategies, such as online advertisements. A big benefit of Internet platforms is that they have fewer advertisements, or allow audiences to skip the ads. Most interviewees with a high level of education understand why dramas require ads and are satisfied in being able to choose to skip them. Interviewees with a lower level of education are not as understanding, and have less tolerance toward ads that appear before TV dramas, but they are ok with ads that appear during the show.

5.2 Recommendations

Due to higher competition from a growing number of digital television channels, TV drama producers need to know how create TV dramas that meet audience needs and result in high ratings. Here are some suggestions from the study that TV drama producers can apply.

Recognize other success factors of TV dramas

- To be successful, TV drama producers need to consider factors other than putting violence into TV dramas, such as reputation and image of the TV drama producers, good quality portfolio, and credibility of the company. When TV stations and audiences see the name of a reputable TV drama producer, they are more open-minded towards watching than if the drama producer has a bad reputation.

Adapt and develop a strategy that fits with the change in consumer behavior

- The way Thai audiences consume media has changed dramatically. Audience regularly change viewing times, platforms, channels, and have less tolerance and loyalty towards channel that air uninteresting TV dramas. Therefore, TV drama producers need to adapt and create effective marketing strategies, using online media to both promote and air their TV dramas.

Create content that matches the needs of your target audience

- If the target audience is more educated, TV drama producers need to develop creative plots and ideas rather than trying to incorporate more violent scenes. This segment only sees violent scenes as acceptable when there is a strong supporting storyline.
- If the target audience is the lower education segment, TV drama producers do not have to be as concerned about the plot or story line. They can put their focus on how to make it as fun as possible by incorporating violent scenes. Even though this segment finds violent scenes entertaining, TV drama producers still need to be aware of the negative social buzz and word-of-mouth from others in society, because their reputation as TV drama producers might be negatively affected.

Minimize advertisements during TV dramas

TV drama producers and TV stations should balance the showing of advertisements during TV dramas air time. As the research indicated, excessive advertisement during TV dramas is the main factor causing audiences to switch from watching live television to watching reruns on online channels. A negative consequence of this behavior is that when audiences watch reruns instead of live TV, the rating result will be lower than expected because TV drama ratings are measured solely on the television platform. When ratings are low, advertisements will also decrease, which reduces the amount of revenue.

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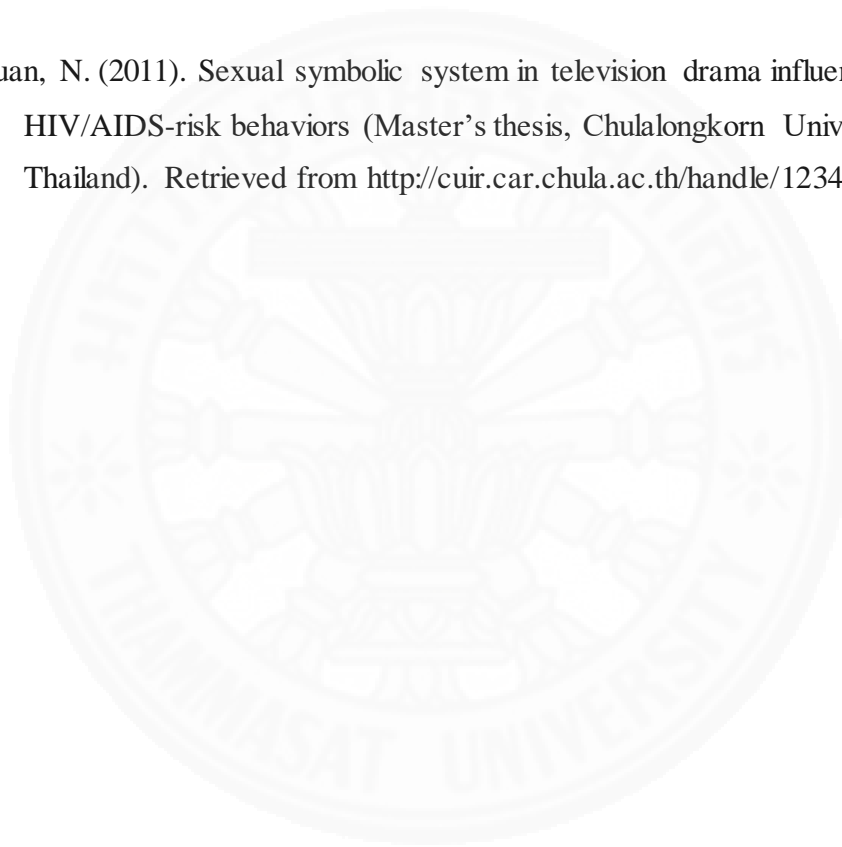
APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
SAMPLE PICTURES OF TV DRAMA "CLUB FRIDAY TO BE CONTINUED: PUEN RUK PUEN RAI"

APPENDIX B

SAMPLE OF IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Guided questions list (Using Probing method)

Demographic

- Gender

- Age

- Occupation

- Income

Lifestyle

- What do you do in your free time?

- What are your hobbies?

- Where do you often spend time?

- Who do you often spend time with?

Distribution Strategy

- How often do you watch Thai TV dramas?

- Which platform do you prefer? (Application, Free TV, Digital TV, Cable TV, or on website)

    o Why?

    o Specify the name of channels/applications/websites

- Which time do you often watch Thai TV dramas?

    o Why?

- What time do you often watch TV dramas?

    o Why?

    o Watch rerun / live?

- What do you think will be the appropriate time to on-air TV drama?

Preferences

- Please rank your favorites Thai TV dramas category

    o Comedy

    o Romantic

    o Slap and kiss (Thai styles)

- o Action

- o Drama

- o Fantasy

- o Documentary

- What is your current favorite Thai TV drama?

    - o Why?

- From your experiences of watching TV dramas, is there any scenes from some TV dramas that you think it is come across as too violent and not enjoyable?

- What is your opinion regards to sexual violence such as raping scenes in Thai TV dramas?

- Does the character involve raping effect your opinion?

    - o What is your opinion of the leading male character rapes the leading female character?

    - o What is your opinion of The male villain character rapes the leading female character?

    - o What is your opinion of The male villain character rapes the villain female character?

- Do you think having sexual scenes in TV drama will make it more enjoyable?

    - o Why?

- What else do you think that can make TV drama enjoyable other than sexual scene/violence?

    - o Story line, humor, etc. (only give example of answers to participants if they do not understand questions)

General opinion about Thai TV drama

- Do you think rapes in Thai TV drama are normal?

- Do you think Thai TV drama nowadays usually contain violence?

- Which actions about sexual/violence that you think it is wrong and unacceptable in real life while you enjoy it in TV drama?

    - o Why?

    - o Are there any actions in TV drama that you are not ok with?

Four video clips of violent drama scenes will be shown (ranged from the least violent to the most violence)

1. A scene from "Game Rai Game Ruk"

2. A scene from "Sawan Biang"

3. A scene from "Sanae Ha Sanya Kean"

4. A scene from "Club Friday: Puen Ruk Puen Rai"

Questions for each video clips will be the same set of questions:

1. Have you watched this TV drama before?

    a. If yes, did you watch every episode until the TV drama ends?

        i. What are the reasons that attract you to watch this TV drama?

        ii. Do you think this violent scene is more acceptable when you know the story line?

        iii. Do you think the story line can justify the male character who exercise violent against female another character in this TV drama?

        iv. Do you think in some way that the female character deserves to be treated with violence because of the story line?

    b. If no, according to the video clip that you just saw, do you think you would want to continue to watch this TV drama or not? Why is that?

        i. Do you think this violent scene is acceptable? Why?

        ii. What is your opinion of the male character who exercise violent against female another character in this video clip?

        iii. What's your opinion of how the female character was treated by the male character in the video clips?

2. What do think of the violence appeared in this TV drama?

    a. Do you think it is too violent?

        i. Why do you find it too violent?

        ii. Why don't you think so?

    b. Do you find it enjoyable?

        i. Why do you find it enjoyable?

        ii. Why don't you find it enjoyable?

APPENDIX C
SAMPLE QUESTIONS OF PRE-SCREENING PROCESS

1. Do you live in Bangkok or vicinity area?

2. How many times do you watch TV drama per week?

3. How old is he/she? (ask in order to keep counts for each of the four segments)

BIOGRAPHY

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Educational Attainment	2017-2015: Master's Degree Program in Marketing (MIM), Thammasat University
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	2013-2012: Lovebird Clothing Brand