

The Persistence Potential and Development of Digital Outdoor Cinema Business towards Special Events: A Case Study of Northern Regions, the Eight Provinces of Central and North Eastern Regions

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Abstract

The Persistence potential and development of Digital Outdoor cinema business: A case study of Northern regions, the eight provinces of Central and North Eastern regions was aimed to explore the elements of Thai style of film exhibition outdoor cinema that had undergone a period of technological transition from film to digital. The research was also aimed to study the elements of the structure of exhibition business in outdoor digital cinema. This study applied qualitative research approach, which used in-depth interview with the main key research informants consisting of outdoor digital cinema operators from Central region, Northern region, and Eastern region of Thailand.

With respect to the findings, there were 5 outdoor digital cinema elements that constructed the art of Thai outdoor cinema in film exhibition; which were comprised of 1) the outdoor cinema unit, 2) the host, 3) outdoor movie, 4) spectators, and 5) variety shops. The result shown that the 5 elements of Thai outdoor cinema in film exhibition had played the important role in transforming the exhibition units from past to present.

The findings also revealed that the structure of Thai outdoor cinema business unit in the digital age could be divided into 3 parts, which are 1) licensed movie distribution company for outdoor cinema, 2) outdoor cinema units, and 3) vendors. When considering from these 3 parts, there are three characteristics that can be developed into an event business model according to the concept of Goldbatt (2014, p. 12).

Keywords: 1) Thai's outdoor digital cinema 2) The Persistence potential 3) special event

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Introduction

Open-air theater (Nung Klang Plang), which in English is called outdoor cinema, is an entertainment culture in Thai society that had extremely prospered since the no-television era.

Having a film show that was not outdoor cinema (Nung Klang Plang) might have been since 1897 based on the advertisement pressed on the Bangkok Times newspaper, 9th June 1897 issue, which was about having a film show for 3 days, during 10th-12th June, at Mhom Jao Alangkarn theater, and the filmgoers were charged to see.

Since then, there had been a group of traveling theater companies from foreign countries, which came in to have a film show periodically, and most traveling theater companies utilized the internal sites such as theaters, hotels, and so on because at that time, there was no any theater specifically established for having a film show.

Later, T. Watanabe's traveling theater company came in to have a film show in December, 1934 at the free space beside Wat Tuek (nowadays it is called Werng Nakorn Kasem). The company set a tent for putting the projector in, and the screen was set outside. This feature was also called "Outdoor Cinema" because the projector was not kept inside; moreover, the company went to have a film show at Wat Benchamabophit's fair, which attracted attention extensively.

Due to the success in late 1905, the United States Information Service (USIS) brought the films relating to America to show in Thailand, and it was an advertising media to

propagandize Thai people to know the United States more. They relied on the free space beside Wat Tuek to have a film show for the filmgoers free of charge, and the shown films were comprised of news, and documentaries. For the entertainment films, there were the silent-comedy film of Charlie Chaplin, Lauren and Hardy or Fat and Thin comedians, The Three Stooges including Disney's cartoons such as Donald Duck, Mickey Mouse, and etc. (Sukwong, 2006, pp. 19-21).

With the film strategy, Osotspa (Tek Heng Yu) got the idea to utilize the film show as an advertising media and support its medicine sale. That was the reason why the upcountry people called outdoor cinema as "Nang Khai Ya."

In the book "Chivit Kern Roi," which was written to celebrate Osotspa 120th year anniversary, the writer portrayed about outdoor cinema as "in the generation of Sawasdi Osotsathanucroa or Big Boss Sawasdi, the generation 2 leader, there was a caravan of traveling theater cars (Rot Nang Khai Ya) to have a film show for entertainment at rural regions. Early, the cart was used to carry the film projector until the caravan adapted the jeep car as an advertising unit which brought medicines to give away and finally the local villagers dubbed it as "Nang Khai Ya."

In the Post-World War 2 (1945), outdoor cinema business considerably prospered because of the acceleration of rural development and the consumer goods sale. Therefore, the films were brought on ships or in cars to be shown at open-air fields in rural areas around the country, and this outdoor cinema business

was highly productive. By day, the caravan which the loud-speaker was attached to would announce that what films they would show to attract villagers both adults and children all wishing the dusk to come early to watch outdoor cinema. The charisma of outdoor cinema was that the voice actor could dub live and release jokes to entertain the filmgoers absolutely (Sukwong and Suwannapak, 2006, pp. 21-35).

Afterwards, when the law was enacted to ban medicine caravan, Nang Khai Ya must be changed to sell other products instead. Until the television era prevailed (Thai Television company broadcast on channel 4 for the first time in 1948), outdoor cinema was gradually decreased in popularity. However, in the present there are still some catering-service companies which offer to show outdoor cinema in the ambience of the old days, especially at temple fair and fun fair. Since 1994, it has been considered as a completely transforming era because there are a lot of VCDs, DVDs, the multiplex movie theaters, or even watching movies through online platforms as many people do today, so outdoor cinema has been hired decreasingly since then.

At the same time, the motion picture industry stays focused on digital system due to the DCI Compliance (following the agreement of DCI association) of Motion Picture Association in the United States, which determines the quality standard of movie files to be shown in digital system. In Thailand, outdoor cinema owners experienced the condition of “lack of new films.” To put it another word, the post motion picture era rarely produced

any films to be shown as outdoor cinema. Back to 2013, Paramount Picture, the first grand studio of Hollywood, announced that it transformed the movie distribution forms into only digital system as same as The Wolf of Wall Street’s system. Until now, the movies around the world change to completely use digital system, including shifting of outdoor cinema in Thailand to survive, which uses digital system instead of the ended films.

According to Titiya Pojanapitak (2016, p. 5), “The adaptation of the Thai outdoor cinema towards the digital cinema system,” she proposed that the government should have the data recorded systematically, and the social sectors should also conserve outdoor cinema by hiring to show in events. Another was as outdoor cinema was another Thai style theater and also linked to the motion picture industry which related to business pattern and copyright law, the government should provide entrepreneurs with law knowledge, and producers and distribution companies might participate to determine the policy to create the outdoor cinema standard which could be legally shown in digital system.

From the research finding, it could be considered as the indicator that outdoor cinema in Thailand past the transformation era of digital technology, specifically digital cinema system came in to substitute film cinema system.

In September 2019, Tourism of Thailand cooperating with Bioscope Magazine under Mono Group had the event “Doo Nang Teh Sanae Klang Plang Sam Miti” for the first time at Phitsanulok province. The 3D cinema



system was the technology development of digital cinema system equal to the leading movie theater at department stores (or called Multiplex). The event was set up to encourage tourism and movie business for those who were interested in movie production and students including other people who were interested in movie.

It was viewed as awakening Thailand outdoor cinema trend in the digital era by bringing the concept of new outdoor cinema: 3D cinema system together with tourism until the new trend of watching outdoor cinema or outdoor cinema in the new cinema system arose such as Kaomai outdoor cinema bringing the movies of famous directors that could not be shown in normal cinema to show in outdoor cinema at resorts. In the event, there would be food and beverage fair called art and craft beer, which many countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia all brought the concept of outdoor cinema together with tourism to set up the special event called "Open-Air Cinema Event" annually to attract both domestic and international tourists.

From basic introduction, it could be seen that Thailand outdoor cinema came across the era of adaptation from conventional cinema which was theater always seen in Thailand society to outdoor cinema that relied on digital technology to compete with watching movie in the higher-standard movie theater. However, outdoor cinema could be seen to be an event that linked the motion picture industry and the tourism industry into special event, but it still lacked the study of

Thailand outdoor cinema elements in digital system that was unique and was a kind of theater always seen in Thailand society more than 100 years in order to bring the knowledge to develop the standard of outdoor cinema in the digital era and link to special tourism events further.

Hence, the study of Thailand outdoor cinema elements in digital system was a starting point in the concrete development of outdoor cinema industry domestically and the study could be applied as a guideline for special event further. From the circumstance, there were questions and purposes in this research as the followings.

The questions of research

1. How are the features of the digital outdoor cinema elements in Thailand?
2. What elements does the digital outdoor cinema business contribute to the features relating to special events?

The purposes of research

1. To study the elements of digital outdoor cinema in Thailand
2. To study the elements of digital outdoor cinema business contributing to the features relating to special events

Definition of terms

Digital outdoor cinema referred to the outdoor cinema organized by host who totally chartered or hired the outdoor cinema business owner to have a film show in his or her event, which was a kind of family and social events. The cinema relied on digital

projector and digital files for having a film show with digital system. The common forms were Micromirror and LCD Projector, which this research emphasized on the digital outdoor cinema unit whose copyright was from Master Picture Company Limited.

Persistence potential referred to the ability of outdoor cinema management affecting the persistence of running business of the traveling theater unit.

Running business of digital outdoor cinema referred to company or traveling theater unit whose outdoor cinema organized by host who totally chartered or hired the outdoor cinema business owner to have a film show in his or her event, which was a kind of family and social events. The cinema relied on digital projector and digital files for having a film show with digital system, which this research studied in a group of digital traveling theater units whose copyright was from Master Picture Company Limited.

The scope of research

This research was aimed to study the elements of digital outdoor cinema in Thailand by studying from a group of digital outdoor cinema owners in each region, who were the business agents. The researcher analyzed to find the critical features of the contexts relating to outdoor cinema in digital system and element structure of business in order to link the motion picture industry to the tourism industry further. Hereby, this research focused on the traveling theater units of outdoor during 2020 and 2021 in the central region and the north eastern region of Thailand.

Theoretical Framework

Periods of outdoor cinema

From collecting data about outdoor cinema in Thailand including the relating documents and research, the researcher proposed to divide the data into 3 periods, which relied on the data of Dome Sukwong (2002), the research of Ngamnit Kemachadakorn (2017, pp. 8-10) titled “Outdoor Cinema Development and Administration and Management Case Study Kawhow Film and Ta Phra film in 1987-2016,” the research of Pat Korvknoppadol (2012, pp. 79-161) titled “The Local Media Management Development of Watcharapon Limpaphan or Add Tevada, and the research of Titiya Pojanapitak (2016, pp. 8-22) titled “The Adaptation of The Thai Outdoor Cinema Towards The Digital Cinema System” to be analyzed and conducted as the framework of outdoor cinema periods.

1. The initial period of outdoor cinema was relatively related with the arrival of having a film show from foreign countries, which was a kind of Nang Lom Pha, an outdoor cinema area with long cloth on the poles or trees to forbid people without payment, asking filmgoers for tickets to see, and in the initial period, the outdoor cinema would be organized by host. So, it could be said that the first host of Thai outdoor cinema was King Rama V, who had a film show to celebrate The Equestrian Statue of King Chulalongkorn, and in the late of initial period, the outdoor cinema was organized in a kind of Nang Khai Ya, which was related to Thai economy that was going into Consumerism.

2. For the golden age of outdoor cinema, the researcher divided it into 2 parts:



the first one was the screen build up (1972-1982) during 2515-2525 A.D. This period considerably prospered because of the factor that in 1977, the government advocated the policy supporting Thai motion picture industry by increasing import tax of foreign films many times more than usual, which affected the Hollywood film agents protested by refraining Hollywood films import. This was an opportunity for Thai film producers to produce films to be shown around the country. This factor influenced the outdoor cinema expansion, which was the destination of having a film show. The outdoor cinema in this period was so highly competed in the screen size that someone dubbed it the gigantic screen or Jor Yak Pha lok, the direct tremendous screen with more than 10 meters in height (Sukwong and Suwannapak, 2006, p.25), and the famous traveling theater unit in this period was Add Tevada (Watcharapon Limpaphan) called “Jor Super Lookthung.” Later, the second period was the time of light, sound, and music (1982-1995), whose the situation of big cinema was changed into Stand-alone (the movie theaters having only one big screen and located in communities or isolated areas, the researcher), was replaced by Multiplex-movie theaters (the movie theaters having more than 1 screen and located in shopping malls or communities or isolated areas, the researcher), which were built to accommodate the return of Hollywood movies that were exempted from the refrain and new Hollywood movies were sent to be shown again in Thailand. Besides, the multiplex-movie theater was built with the focus on the modern sound system; thereby, watching

a movie of Thai people was on the highlight of the sound system in the movie theater, and it influenced watching outdoor cinema afterwards. That was to say, the outdoor cinema event was ceased in the big screen competition and returned to focus on the exquisite sound of the films instead.

3. The period of transition to digital has been established since 1994. It was regarded as absolute transition because there were VCDs, DVDs, multiplex-movie theaters, or even watching movies online as many people do today; therefore, hiring the outdoor cinema was gradually decreasing, and at the same time, the motion picture industry emphasized on digital system due to DCI compliance (Following the agreement of DCI association) of the group of movie producers in the United States of America who determined the quality standard of movie files for showing in the digital cinema. For the outdoor cinema owners in Thailand, they were also affected by “lack of new films.” Namely, the movies in the latest period were rarely made in films for being shown in outdoor cinema anymore. Apart from the factor having outdoor cinema decreased due to the showing system transition of both the world and Thai motion picture industries, another factor that Nimit Satayakul from Mast Picture Company Limited said was in the conventional system of showing films, the system was comprised of producers, film agents, and traveling theater units, which film agents served as brokers who conquered monopoly of renting price and the price was set so high that the traveling theater units could not compete in renting price from the producers

(Matichon Weekend, October 2016). That was why the innovation of showing films in digital system of Master Picture Company Limited, the first leader of the development of showing films by using files in Thailand, occurred. Hence, this research threw the light on studying to find the data to be developed for the science of outdoor cinema in the digital era further.

The features of Thai motion picture industry

Thai motion picture industry filed was implemented in business based on the model of motion picture industry as the followings.

Production

In Thailand, the previous movie production was performed in a small family business. The business owner had to have passion or his or her own satisfactory, and passed on the business to next generations, from adult generation to descendant generation as a saying about Thai movie produced at the initial period that “husband directed, wife administered, and relatives played.” Another way of entering to the movie production field was to apply as an assistant in one section or another such as scene setting or light setting. Once practicing until being more skillful, he or she would be promoted to be the head of the section. With this, the light section head of the movie production might possibly make his or her way up from a worker who lifted the reflector. The way to convey this kind of knowledge was “Kru Pak Lak Jum.” It was learning from working experience in real situation instead of studying from the text books or educational

institutes that specialized at movie production. Presently, the situation of movie production extremely changed because many movie-production people all directly graduated from both international and domestically educational institutes. Someone was a descendant of movie producer’s family that was sent to study this field and then went back to do his or her own family business; while, many people might underwent the advertising media production work before, so it could make Thai entertainment more qualified in both techniques and contents. (Jaruvorn, 2007, pp. 227-230).

From the research survey of the strategy study project of Thai business development of Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council in 2008 found that there were a few movie production companies that possessed 80% of the market share of Thai motion picture industry, which were ranked based on the number of movies produced per year as the followings.

Leading companies

- GDH 599 (2015 – present)
- Phranakorn Film
- Five Stars Production
- Sahamongkonfilm International
- M 39

Distribution

Another business group that was noteworthy influencer in Thai motion picture industry was distributor group because when a movie was completely finished, the movie producer would contact the movie theaters through the brokers; that was, the distributors.



These people or groups were who run the business of buying, selling, or renting movies. It could be their personal business or company. In the center management (Bangkok), most of the Thai movie distribution companies tended to run movie business as well; for examples, Sahamongkonfilm International, GDH 599, R.S. Film, Five Stars Production, and Mono Film, which these companies would distribute movies in their companies and import the movies from foreign countries to be distributed in Thailand both in the movie theaters and in CD and DVD.

For the qualified movies from Europe and America, they would be distributed by the authorized agents to do this business as the followings.

1. Major Group would distribute the movies of Twenty Centuries Fox and Warner Brothers.

2. U.I.P. (United International Pictures) would mainly distribute the movies of Universal Studio and DreamWorks Pictures.

3. Columbia-Tristar-Buena Vista would distribute the movies of 3 group companies including Disney Studio.

In upcountry regions, Thai movie distribution would be implemented through “the movie agent,” who would take over from the central-region distributors (Bangkok) and distributed to the movie theaters in their own regions. The movie agent working areas were divided into 6 groups: North, Eastern-North, East, South, 8 provinces surrounding Bangkok, and Suburban areas. The final destination of movie distribution would end up with distributing the movies into traveling movie theaters,

outdoor cinemas, or being shown at religious ceremonies. In the past, the movie agents were the great influencers towards Thai movie production because they could determine the types of the movies and the actors or the actresses including the ending scene of the movies. Furthermore, the upcountry movie agents also had the power to bargain the movie program reservation to be shown in the movie theaters; anyway, in the present they gradually went out of business one after another because they could not resist the economic recession, and the multiplex movie expansion in upcountry regions accumulatively gained the popularity from people. That were the reasons why the movie agents’ and the traveling movie theater units’ prosperity eventually devalued.

The movie agent system

Pornsit Patthanurak (2015, pp. 22-27) explained the roles, the types, and the event conceptions of the movie agents that the movie agents were the influencers towards causing advantages for the movie business by making the movie market more expansive and widespread because the movie agents came in to exchange in both physical conduction and felicitation. The movie agents were divided into 2 types as the followings. When considering the responsibility in the rights of broadcast and distribution, it could be seen that the movie agents were the authorized to be responsible for distributing movies entirely. So, they could be called in another word as “the big agents.” Namely, they had to be responsible for supplying movies to be shown in the movie

theaters that they related in business; therefore, the big agents' purchasing movies was certainly more expensive than the small agents'.

1) The movie agents referred to ones who were authorized to be responsible for broadcast and distribution, which they purchased the movies from the movie owners, put into the movie program, and then submitted the movies to be shown in the movie theaters that were their own clients within their authorized working areas.

2) The traveling movie theater units referred to ones who were authorized to be responsible for broadcast and distribution, which they took the movies from the rights owner: the movie agents, and then brought the movies to be shown on behalf of the traveling theater units in the areas they dealt. Showing a movie of the traveling theater units was in festivals such as Songkran festival, New Year festival, Red Cross festival, and annual festivals etc. Moreover, this kind of movie business was implemented at many religious ceremonies such as the ceremony of tying the Phatthasima with gold and inlaying the Luk Nimit, the opening ceremony of sermon hall in a monastery, the temple fairs, the Buddhist ordination ceremony, the funeral ceremony, and etc., including the outdoor cinema's showing by setting the temporary movie theater in style of Rong Lom Pha or Kun Chueak, Galvanized-iron theaters, and so on. This kind of movie theaters were independently managed to earn fee to watch, and mostly they would show the movies in dry season or after harvest season. Quite a few traveling theater units had their

own units with a few workers to run showing the movies within their provinces they dealt. Showing the movies they purchased or rented completely was from the movies had been shown throughout the movie agents, or the movies were called "Kak Nang or the leftover movies" because they were cheaper than new movies. From this working, it could be called as "the small agents" and showing the movies was likely to have more than one movie to attract viewers to see. In addition, showing this kind of traveling-theater movies sometimes was shown at the same time with new movies or might be shown before the leading movie theaters depending on the contract between the big agents who owned the movies and the hosts who rented the traveling movie theaters. Mostly, it depended on the movie price at most.

Chayanin Thanasukthavorn (2011, pp. 27-29) summarized the definition of the movie agents that the movie agents were the representatives to purchase the movies from the movie owners and then bring the movies to be shown in the movie theaters or other places. Or, it could be said that the movie agents were the wholesale dealers or the middlemen between the movie producers and the movie theater owners, which the movie agents were different from the middlemen in industrial section in that general middlemen would purchase goods at the cost price and resell for the higher price for profits without any involving with the goods production. In contrast, in the movie industry, the movie agents took more actions from production, choosing play script, movie title, types of movies, movie



editing, and marketing strategies including finding the fund to produce movies. Nowadays, the general situation of running the business of movie agents decreased in number of both the business entrepreneurs and the conventional movie agents that lowered from 6 to 4 that still run the business. In other words, the North and the 8-province agents surrounding Bangkok were merged together by Thanarungroj, and the Suburban agents would remain only one outdoor cinema unit, which had to take the movies from Thanarungroj, but there would be no the movie-theater agents anymore in the conventional suburban areas (Pojanapitak, 2016, pp. 20-21).

Unaloam Chanrungrmaneeekul (2020) defined the meaning and form of the movie agent business that the movie agents were the middlemen who took the movies from the movie producers or the movie distributors in Thailand (In the past, it called as Film Nang, the film for showing a movie, which was recorded in digital file form) to distribute again to the movie theaters and run other businesses such as movie theaters, outdoor cinemas, Nang Rae, and Nang Lom Pha that highly gained popularity during 1987-1997. However, the movie agents in Thailand did not merely serve as “the middlemen” because the situation of running the business during 1977-1987 was not always the same role. The movie agents in Thailand had many kinds of running business: 1. the movie agents who were the middlemen taking the movies from Thai movie producers and from foreign movie distributors, including that they had their own local movie theaters such as the North eastern movie agents and

the South movie agents, 2. the movie agents who were the middlemen taking movies from Thai movie producers and from foreign movie distributors, including that they had their own the 2nd largest affiliated movie theaters of Thailand: the East movie agents possessing FFS movie theater business nationwide,

3) The movie agents who were the middlemen taking the movies from Thai movie producers and foreign movie distributors, including running the local movie theater business and producing their own movies: the North movie agents and the 8-central-province movie agents (Thanarungroj group) whose Phranakorn Film was the movie producer and Thana Cineplex was the movie theater businessman in North and Central regions (Chanrungrmaneeekul, 2020, pp. 154-155).

Exhibition

Exhibition was the last step of movie business, which the entrepreneur showing a movie was the movie theater owner. If any movie producers were the movie theater owners, it would be more guaranteed that the complete movies would have their showing program order right away without waiting to be queued and without any middlemen as distributors. In other words, the movie company owners distributed their own movies. As a result, the leading movie production companies were likely to wholly make a purchase of the movie theaters to be merged in their own affiliated movie theater group.

The way movie companies run the business by merging the production, the distribution, and the show arrangement was called

as vertical integration, which was considered as monopoly and taking an advantage of the retailers or the independent producers who had no their own movie theaters because their movies were likely to be deprived of rights in showing or to be waited for the queue for months or years. Nowadays, the independent movie producers found the way out by bringing their movies to be shown at foreign movie festivals before coming back at domestic movie theaters, which they aimed to break into the market. At the same time, it would be creating promotion drive in case the movies were successful in foreign countries such as the movies of Apichatpong Weerasethakul, who brought his own movies to be shown at foreign movie festivals until winning the reward such as the movie, Nang Mai.

For the showing program arrangement, it was comprised of the movie theater groups in both multiplex movie theaters, which were born after 1994 and alternative movie theaters, which were likely to arrange to show the indie movies. Eventually, the final destination of these movies, once out of the showing program of the leading movie theaters, was brought to be shown at the multiplex movie theaters at upcountry regions before ending up with outdoor cinema, which was the final destination of the movie industry.

Hence, this, research would take this chance to bring the concept of Thai motion picture industry, especially in distribution and showing arrangement, to be the guideline in application to study the persistence potential and the guideline of the business development of outdoor-cinema traveling units further.

The concept of Special Events

Bladen, et al. (2012, p. 16) gave the meaning of “Special Event” as special events that were planned in a duration and were aimed to make people meet each other, which were divided into 4 groups as the followings: 1) Leisure event (special event relating to sports and entertainment, 2) Personal event (individually special event), 3) Cultural event (culturally special event), and 4) Organizational event (special event for organization or institute)

Goldblatt (2014, p. 2) gave more specific meaning to “Special Event” as “the special time for celebration with ceremony and ritual for responding particular demand.”

Shone (2010, p. 120) viewed special events as all event forms either they were leisure events such as sports or they were cultural events such as arts celebration or they were organizational events such as political campaign events or they were personal events such as wedding ceremony, and so on.

Furthermore, Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau or TCEB mentioned the types of events that there were interviewing a group of event-industry experts in Thailand. The analytical finding was found that in Asia, the types of events were differently categorized from the explanation of Shone (2010, p. 133) as shown below.

1. Public event, which was open for people to participate, was planned for general people to join such as politics, religion, music, exhibition, culture, art, sports competition, festivals, and so on.



2. Personal event was set up for any individual by himself or herself or was for any individual by his or her family and friends. In some cases, this event might be serviced by the event organizers, and the event was relevant to lifestyle such as birthday party, housewarming ceremony, wedding ceremony, funeral ceremony, and etc.

3. Cooperate event relevant was planned for private organizations having business objectives such as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), image development, image development, and other marketing targets (Nadezda and Sungkatavat, 2021, p. 26).

From this viewpoint above, it could be summarized as the meaning of event based on Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau or TCEB. When considering more than 50% of the events in Asia, the researcher found more than half were planned within the 3 event types altogether.

Design and Stakeholders

The concept about event design was explained that event design was to plan, to develop, and to manage event, which Adema and Roehl (cited in Ferdinand & Kitchin, 2012, p.20) proposed the factor to drive design called as “two-fold concept” as the following details: 1) the concept giving focus on esthetics of look and feel of event, and 2) the good features in effective and most successful event organization, relevant to the concept of O’Toole as “the main objectives of event organization was to make the event participants and stakeholders most impressed by proposing the experiences in 5 senses alto-

gether (Multi-Sensory Experience) through Sight, Hearing, Tasted, Smell, and Touch.

The stakeholders of event referred to people or organizations who invested in the event or cause an effect to the event (Nadezda and Sungkatavat, 2021, p. 125). Due to the fact that they were great influencers to event, the organizers must realize who were the great influencers or important organizations relating to the event. In general, whether the event was complicated or how the structure it was, the event would have the 3 main groups of people or organizations as follows.

1. The event owner and organizer (or host)
2. The participants
3. The spectators

Without these 3 groups, any events would not happen, which the event owner and organizer might be the same person or different organization in case the organizer was employed by the event owner, and the event owner would be regarded as the client.

Related Literature

Titiya Pojanapitak (2016) conducted the research titled “The Adaptation of The Thai Outdoor Cinema towards The Digital Cinema System.” The finding was revealed that since 1994 onwards, it had been the absolute transition era of Thai outdoor cinema because there were VCDs, DVDs, the multiplex movie theaters, or even watching movies online as many people did today. So, it reduced the number of outdoor cinema.

At the same time, the motion picture

industry emphasized on digital system due to DCI Compliance (Following to the agreement of DCI association) of the group of movie producers in the United States of America who determined the quality standard of movie files for showing in the digital cinema. For the outdoor cinema owners in Thailand, they were also affected by “lack of new films.” Namely, the movies in the latest period were rarely made in films for being shown in outdoor cinema anymore.

However, in the research, there was the movie agents’ proposal wishing the government to supervise the copyright law, particularly when asking for advice, they wanted the office or the advisor more accessible; while, in this adaptation, there were still some people who did not change anything because this old-film group still offered the movie renting together with the conventional projector to be able to show a movie with film system.

The next proposal was as the outdoor cinema was another Thai entertainment event, and at the same time it linked to the motion picture industry, which was business form and relevant to the copyright law, the government should encourage the entrepreneurs to have more knowledge, and the movie producers and the movie distributors might determine policy to build the standard for outdoor cinema to be shown in digital system legally. The research of Pat Korawiknobpadon (2012, pp. 79-127) titled “The Local Media Management Development of Watcharapon Limpaphan or Add Tevada was conducted and shown that the Local Media Management Development

of Watcharapon Limpaphan was divided into 4 periods: the first one was during 1972-1979, the era of outdoor cinema (Jor Super Look-thung), the second one was during 1978-1981, the era of outdoor cinema (Jor Pha Lok), which these two eras were formal management, and the third one was during 1981-1990, the era of outdoor cinema (Radar curved screen) had semi-formal management. Lastly, the fourth one was during 1997-2010, this era put an end to outdoor cinema, and transited into the business of advertising media on radio broadcast with formal management, which the factor affecting the Local Media Management Development of Watcharapon Limpaphan was the internal factors such as family management, skills and characteristics of personnel, and network management including social, political, and other factors occurred in society such as economic and viewer factors.

In the research of Pat Korviknoppadol, the research noticed that Watcharapon Limpaphan’s management or Add Tevada was the pioneer or outdoor cinema in Thailand, which had unique skills in management as the research indicated. When Add Tevada’s management ended, it still influenced the persistence and running business of outdoor cinema as well.

In the research of Ngamnit Kemachadakorn (2017, p.10) titled “OUTDOOR CINEMA DEVELOPMENT AND ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT CASE STUDY KAWHOW FILM AND TA PHRA FILM IN 1987 – 2016 A.D.,” it focused on the study the outdoor cinema evolution and management chiefly along with the outdoor cinema’s value and impor-



tance influencing Thai society, including the persistence management and the proposal of the guideline for conserving the outdoor cinema sustainably for preventing the outdoor cinema from permanent deterioration and extinction. Because in these days the outdoor cinema business was a business that did not gain any support from both the government and private sectors, which was different from other businesses or occupations that were likely to gain facilitation and have conservation policy as cultural heritage.

In this research, the researcher noticed one thing about the outdoor cinema management that oriented towards the personal management skill of the outdoor cinema units. Similarly, the research of Pat Korawiknobpadon (2012) it revealed that the skill of the outdoor cinema unit owner quite affected the business persistence; nevertheless, the research of Ngamnit Kemachadakorn (2017) proposed the similarity as Titiya Pojanapitak (2016) in that the business persistence focusing on encouraging the outdoor cinema business to link to lifestyle and living of people in society, which could be implemented by coming back to arrange shows in special events.

Furthermore, there was another research of Unaloam Chanrungmaneeekul (2020, pp. 108-110) that studied the problematic conditions of Thai motion picture business, from the past to the present 120 years altogether, which was relevant to the outdoor cinema traveling units, and the monopoly of 2 main investor groups in 2017 were SF and Major who possessed nearly all of the Thai motion picture market. That was, Major still dominated

most proportions, 65%, while SF possessed the rest proportions, 32%, and the minor entrepreneurs and the upcountry movie theaters got merely 4%. So, it could be regarded as Thai critical phenomenon affecting many Thai businesses as follows.

1. This phenomenon exceedingly quaked the business of the movie agents, the independent movie theaters, and the upcountry movie theaters as when SF and Major expanded their modern movie theaters at any provinces, they certainly gained popularity from the local people, especially the more the movie theaters located in great shopping malls, the more they could meet the living demand of people in Thai society, which was commonly seen in almost every event in shopping malls, from business to recreational events such as dining, shopping, and consuming entertainment.

2. From the way of market conditions of the movie theater entrepreneurs in Thailand fast expanded, the two top-leading movie theater business groups not only were semi-monopoly and competitive and shooked the independent movie theaters nationwide, but also hugely hit Thai movie producers, in particular the minor independent movie producers and movie groups because these small groups had no bargaining power to make their movies to be shown long enough to be profitable. Apart from this, cases faced loss from importing indie movies to be shown because they could not compete with Hollywood's movies.

From the structure of Thai motion picture industry mentioned above, the business factors in movie distribution and showing

arrangement were directly inevitable for the outdoor cinema because the outdoor cinema was the chain relation between the movie distributors, the movie agents, and the final units: showing arrangement.

As a result, this research requirement was to study the elements of digital outdoor cinema and the business elements of digital outdoor cinema units that linked to special events for supporting the outdoor cinema persistence further.

Methods

1. Target groups of the research

The researcher divided the sample groups as follows:

1.1 The digital outdoor cinema service entrepreneur group was studied only from minor groups coming from the North and 8- province movie agent groups from Central region, the Northern east movie group, and the groups who run the outdoor cinema business under Master Picture's copyright. It mainly serviced for groups; for examples, group 1: the North and Northern east groups were Kun Pan Movie group and the interviewee was Nimit Sattayakul, the outdoor cinema unit owner (Kun Pan Movie), one of the board members of Master Picture company, the inventor and distributor of digital movie system in Thailand, and Chokchai Movie, the interviewee was Samart Kemartpho, the outdoor cinema unit owner, and group 2: the Northern east group was Nantawan Movie group, the interviewee was Sompong Prakobbua, the outdoor cinema unit owner.

All of 4 companies that run digital outdoor cinema business were the pioneers who transited film system showing into digital system showing, and showing arrangement was authorized with copyright under Master Picture, which was the first copyright company for outdoor cinema in Thailand.

2. Research instrument

The research instrument was detailed as the explanation below.

2.1 In-depth interview was utilized to meet the objectives of the research and used with semi-structured interview by giving the question outline into 2 parts:

The first part

- Names of companies (the outdoor cinema units or companies)
- Name – Surname of the interviewees (their positions)
- Date of interview

The second part was comprised of open-opened questions about the important elements of digital outdoor cinema and running business.

The questions for the sample groups of digital outdoor cinema entrepreneurs were as the followings.

**Table No. 1** The order of research questions

Order	The questions for the sample groups of digital outdoor cinema entrepreneurs in Thailand
1	When did the running business of outdoor cinema units start?
2	Where were the movies taken from and how was the lease agreement?
3	What were the categories and features of the popular movies in digital system?
4	What were the types of festivals bringing the outdoor cinema to be shown in each region?
5	What were the showing arrangement elements of digital outdoor cinema?
6	What were the problems or obstacles towards showing digital outdoor cinema?
7	How were the elements of running the business or digital outdoor cinema?
8	What were any suggestions for running the business of digital outdoor cinema in the future?

Data analysis and research presentation

The researcher conducted depth-interview by using the question set to interview the sample groups with semi-structured interview. Namely, it was interaction direct to the main point of questions by facilitating the friendly ambience between the interviewer and the interviewees while recording their voices through online system. Then, the voice data were transcribed and the data were kept systematically as the reply table of interview (detailed as appendix). Lastly, the main points or the relevant points gained from the reply were summarized into the table as the topics that would be analyzed in accordance with the research objectives.

1. To analyze the element of digital outdoor cinema in Thailand

2. To analyze the elements of digital outdoor cinema business that had unique features linking to special events

Conclusions

1. There were 5 critical elements of digital outdoor cinema in Thailand as the explanation below.

1.1 The outdoor cinema service unit (projector and sound systems), from interviewing the digital outdoor cinema units, 4 units altogether, was found that the arrival of digital projector transited the outdoor cinema units more digital, and the showing process was not complicated as the film movie system. Another thing that made the outdoor cinema units still remained today was the digital sound system making the outdoor cinema system superior to the obsolete system.

1.2 The host, next element of the digital outdoor cinema, still remained, although the technology of projector was more convenient. However, one thing that all of the 4 digital outdoor cinema units gave information in the same way was going out to have a movie show in digital system still always had the hosts as the employers.

1.3 The movie, “Tua Nang,” a critical element was found in the data. Namely, the outdoor cinema movie or the shown movie had a big role in relating the hosts, the viewers, and the outdoor cinema units together, which gained from the interview, the 4 outdoor cinema units gave the data in terms of “Nang”, the movies shown in the digital outdoor cinema units. Even though the movie projector system would transit into digital system, one important thing of showing a movie that was still before was the shown movies or motion pictures because it could make the hosts certain and sure in the employment, and the viewers still followed the digital outdoor cinema units.

1.4 The viewers were next element of the digital outdoor cinema, which affected the showing arrangement. From the interview, it was found that the outdoor cinema units ran the business in the digital system as an occupation. Presently, it was important in that the viewers or the big fans of the outdoor cinema units would always follow the showing arrangement of the move units.

1.5 The miscellaneous shops were the last element relevant to the digital outdoor cinema that had still remained since the era of film-showing system outdoor cinema, which there was the number of miscellaneous shops always inseparably attached to the showing arrangement of the digital outdoor cinema. Providing that the movie service units were quite renowned, it would be said that the more viewers, the more shops in the event.

2. The business element of the digital outdoor cinema had the unique features linking to special events as 3 parts below.

2.1 The movie distribution company that distributed the copyright movies was the business structure newly arising from showing arrangement of the digital outdoor cinema, which previously had to be passed on by the movie agents in each region.

2.2 The outdoor cinema units in digital system were the business conducted in a kind of family of movie producers or had been shown as the outdoor cinema since the film-movie era.

2.3 The miscellaneous shops were the business element that Kun Pan Movie, Nantawan Movie, Chokchai Movie, and Sahamongkonfilm had an agreement in running the business of digital outdoor cinema. For miscellaneous shops, they would be attached to the familiar outdoor cinema units such as shops, ferris wheels, and merry-go-rounds, which these miscellaneous businesses would go out to display together with the outdoor cinema units. The digital outdoor cinema units themselves proposed that having miscellaneous shops was one of the important features in setting up events because the viewers would expose to the ambience of shopping for food, snacks, or enjoying hanging around other recreational or entertainment shops, which could be further developed to earn a living for the business and the local people in the regions that the digital cinema units had the movie showing arrangement.



Discussion

1. To know “Nang” (movies), the viewers, and the movie hosts (as the objective 1)

From the element summary of the digital outdoor cinema, the researcher synthesized that the five elements each encouraging the persistence potential of the outdoor cinema descended since the era of showing film-movies until showing digital movies, which resulted in the business of outdoor cinema still remained today. The essential theme of the outdoor cinema both film and digital systems was that the outdoor cinema unit owners ran the business with love and cordiality in having shown the outdoor cinema since the era of film-movies; even though, it was replaced by the digital technology transiting showing system of the motion picture industry in both global and domestic levels. Namely, the agreement was called DCI compliance. It was to determine the quality standard of movie files that would be shown in the movie theaters according to the itinerary (in August 2013). This standard caused the enormous transformation in the movie field towards the digital system definitely and concretely. The data collected from interviewing the 4 digital outdoor cinema units demonstrated that although the digital technology came in to transform the pattern of showing a movie, the outdoor cinema units in Thailand could be able to walk across many problems and obstacles. According to the research of Titiya Pojanapitak (2016, pp. 126-127) titled “The adaptation of the Thai outdoor cinema towards the digital cinema system,” summa-

rized the worry-feeling aspects relevant to the effects of the movie showing transformation towards the entrepreneur groups giving the outdoor cinema unit service into 3 aspects as follows: 1) no more films to be shown, 2) the inconvenience in changing the movie projector system, and 3) feelings towards the different patterns of showing a movie.

Based on the summary, the researcher could discover that there was feeling worry of the entrepreneurs of outdoor cinema business as the research finding of Titiya Pojanapitak (2016, pp. 113-130) that in the era of transforming film system to digital system, it did not affect the persistence of the outdoor cinema in the present, but the essential theme of stepping into digital outdoor cinema was rather relied on the elements of outdoor cinema units. From the data analysis, it was revealed that the worries about film were corrected by the digital outdoor cinema units led by Kun Pan Movie, who initiated gathering member groups of former outdoor cinema units to return to join showing the outdoor cinema with copyright in the form of movie files instead of leasing films, and developed the outdoor cinema projector together with the copyright movies to provide the outdoor cinema units in each region with the qualified movies. And the last worry was the feeling of showing a movie with film and with file. From the research finding, it could be seen that the viewers could not feel any difference in the transforming technology; in contrast, it was just worry feeling of the outdoor cinema unit owners.

However, one important thing of the digital outdoor cinema was dependent on the outdoor cinema unit owners, who made the outdoor cinema in Thailand walk across the technology transformation. The gist of most of the digital outdoor cinemas came from the outdoor cinema units clinging to the outdoor cinema as an occupation by passing on in the families. Because the owners were familiar with the viewers in each service area, cordially knowing the community, rural, or urban area that what kind of the movie the hosts or the people love to watch. As a result, the digital outdoor cinema units were always employed, and his referred to the reliability from the hosts and the viewers. That the outdoor cinema unit owners could manage to arrange showing a movie to meet the demand of the hosts and could attract a lot of viewers to watch the outdoor cinema was like science of arts or knowledge requiring experiences and observations, which was a science that could identify the novice outdoor cinema units who merely had the projector and the space to have a movie show in digital system.

The showing arrangement of digital outdoor cinema was passed on and accumulated as the experience from the era of film-movie. The outdoor cinema unit owners must realize which movies to be shown well because the movies or motion pictures that were going to be shown all were different from the movies shown in the movie theaters. Although it might gain success from the viewers in the movie theaters, the outdoor cinema viewers had unique features and affection different from the viewers in the movie theaters in both

appearance and region. For appearance, the content features of the movies shown in the outdoor cinema units were likely to be easy-watching and enjoyable such as action and comedy movies. On the other hand, horror and thriller movies were quite not popular because the conditions and areas around the outdoor cinema sites were clear spaces, and the horror and thriller movies had to be shown at night, so it causes the movies blur for the viewers. For region, there were differences in terms of the viewers and the hosts whose demands in watching a movie and in employing the outdoor cinema units differently depending on cultures and traditions.

As these factors, it could be concluded that the potential of outdoor cinema in digital era was to learn through real experience and skills in running the outdoor cinema business since the parents' generation, which had been families' occupation similar to the research of Pat Korawiknobpadon (2012). It was the study of the personnel management skills of Add Tevada in terms of the management depending on experience and individual competence that made the business of outdoor cinema units gained popularity throughout many periods, which was received from the reliability of the viewers, the hosts, and the patterns of showing arrangement such as the biggest curved screen of the past era.

All of the viewer, host, and movie elements were the features affecting the persistence of the outdoor cinema units, which linked stories of people, community, society, and culture. The technology gained from the



outdoor cinema unit owners was like an artist who had big fans following his or her work but in a kind of always following the outdoor cinema units and having the hosts reliable to employ artists or the outdoor cinema owners to arrange outdoor entertainment showing as well as hiring Likae, Mor Lam, or Lam Tad that had their followers everywhere. This made the outdoor cinema units still remain despite the technology of digital system replacing film system.

2. Entertainment into the business of special events (as the objective 2)

When the digital system replaced the film system in showing a movie, which influenced the business structure of the outdoor cinema units different from the former structure relying on the movie agents. From the interview data, it was found that the business structure of digital outdoor cinema had the circle of distribution pattern different from the business structure of film cinema, which made the outdoor cinema unit owners able to purchase the movies directly from the movie producers without buying through the conventional movie agents in the film-movie system. Due to the fact that dealing of the movies in the past, when the movie producers authorized the movie agents to distribute movies into the movie theaters in their areas, the movie agents also had the authority to bright the movies to be leased further with the travelling movie units and the outdoor cinema under the agreements between the movie production companies and the movie agents.

According to Unaloam Chanrungru-maneeekul (2020) the research was conducted

to study the system of movie agents in Thailand titled “Film exhibition business and Thai society, 1897-2018,” and explained that the movie agents were not only the “middlemen” in the motion picture industry in Thailand but also were comprised of various business patterns: the distributor and the movie showing manager. In other words, they had their own local movie theaters; for examples, the Northern east and South movie agents, or the movie agents running the business as the middlemen taking the movies from the production companies and had the second biggest movie theater group of the country such as the East movie agents whose the business of SF movie theaters nationwide. And for the last one, they conducted the business at the upstream, which they were the producers, distributed the movies, and had their own movie theaters such as the North movie agents and the 8-province movie agents of Thanarungroj group.

In the research data, it was received from interviewing the entrepreneurs that the business structure of the digital outdoor cinema in terms of copyright of the movies shown in the digital outdoor cinema service units was the business structure that was critical and different from the features of running business in the film system, especially in part of “the movie agents.” In other words, it cut out the middlemen and created the new circle of distribution by making the outdoor cinema unit owners able to make a purchase the movies directly from the production companies without dealing through the conventional movie agents in the film system

because the movie copyright in the digital system was different from the film system's. Moreover, in the future, eliminating the circle of middlemen would make the digital outdoor cinema unit owners able to contact the production companies directly without dealing through the monopoly investor groups in both the movie agents and the movie theaters. Therefore, it resulted in the advantages for the independent movie producers who could develop their work to be directly shown in the outdoor cinema, and it would be the element identifying between the professional and amateur movie showing business, particularly in the present, there were smugglers who legally show the outdoor cinema movies without copyright, which arose from changing the obsolete film projector into the novel digital projector.

In addition, with the arrival of digital projector, it caused the benefits to the outdoor cinema sound system of digital traveling units such as playing music as DJ to make people amused before watching outdoor cinema, which was followed by miscellaneous shops. When all merged, it could raise onto special event, and when considering the business structure of service units and digital outdoor cinema elements, it was found that there were 3 types of the features that could be developed into special event, which were comprised of 3 relevant groups based on Goldbatt (2014) as follows.

1. Owners and Organizers (or Hosts) were the entrepreneurs of digital outdoor cinema, who were employed from the hosts or organizers in the meaning of setting up event.

The features of event would be either Public event or Personal event or Corporate event, but in Thailand, the business development of digital outdoor cinema units into an entertainment that was common in Thai society should emphasize on selecting the hosts from government sectors by designing the event as arts and culture event as Likae, or setting up the event in style of foreign movie festival (Public event), which in this topic, the digital outdoor cinema units proposed some additional ideas about developing the digital outdoor cinema into the even organization business by the government agency. For examples, Ministry of Culture whose responsibility for movies directly should encourage and make the event into annual event that contained outdoor cinema as same as Thai entertainment such as Likae and Morlam, and the host was the government agency or private sectors, which in the future the digital outdoor cinema units would gather to establish the outdoor cinema association of Thailand for making the outdoor cinema business remain further.

2. Participants were shops that followed outdoor cinema units, which were comprised of cooked to order restaurants, miscellaneous shops, and amusement park rides.

3. and Spectators were the outdoor cinema viewers.

The summary of Thailand outdoor cinema in digital era, in this research, was revealed that although watching a movie of people would be changed as the periods, from watching in the top-leading movie theater to watching a movie onto the mobile platforms



or other screens such as personal computers, iPad, or smart TV. However, because human beings are social animals that have to gather for some events, raising the outdoor cinema business level in digital system onto special event was like as light at the end of the tunnel of Thailand that would remain persistence similar to cultural entertainment such as Likae (Thai traditional dramatic performance) or Lamtud (Thai-style antiphon) that gradually disappeared as days went by among the dominant technologies, including monopoly system that was occurred in the structure of distribution and movie showing arrangement business in the industrial system of Thai movie.

Research Suggestions

1. The study of the business structure contexts of digital outdoor cinema towards the motion picture industry in Thailand as the producer and the movie distributor legally with copyright in the future

2. The study of digital outdoor cinema development into special events based on the meaning of Shone (2001), which could study in a kind of the experiment about setting up digital outdoor cinema festival based on the elements of setting up the event.

3. The study of supporting the outdoor cinema business by the government or the private sectors such as law, budget, technology knowledge, or other suggestions to highly make benefits for the entrepreneurs.

Research Limitation

This research conducted the data collection in the period of COVID-19 situation during 2020-2021, so the researcher could not collect all of the fieldwork data. As a result, the researcher adapted the data collection through online system, which made some of the data collection problematic from communication technology including the method of participant-observation could not be utilized due to the fact that the outbreak situation of COVID-19 occurred as the same time as the data collection. Then, the employment of digital outdoor cinema units was so extremely reduced that in some duration, there was no any employment from the hosts, and the disease control measure of government forbade setting up any events that had people gathering in public as well.

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