

## Current Status of Consumer Research in Thai Film Industry

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### Abstract

*“Current Status of Consumer Research in Thai Film Industry” is a qualitative research that aims (1) to study how stakeholders in Thai film industry conduct consumer research, and (2) to analyze the methodology of previous consumer about the audience of Thai film. The data was gathered through in-depth interview with different stakeholders in Thai film industry, and through content analysis of 14 studies done by researchers in higher education and post-graduate students regarding Thai film industry. The research found that:*

*Stakeholders in Thai Film Industry are still lacking a clear understanding about consumer research, in terms of its value and methodology. Each stakeholder does not see consumer research as a part of their responsibility, and largely rely on the assumption derived from their previous experience in the industry. There is also an obvious lack of collaboration between stakeholders and companies within the industry. The data is still restricted for a usage within each stakeholder and within individual film companies. This has resulted in fragmented knowledge about Thai film consumer.*

*In terms of an analysis of existing research conducted within Thai higher education institutions, the research found a significant lack of diversity in research methodology in terms of research approach, data-gathering methods, focuses of the study and research variables. All research focuses on similar sample groups, demographic profiling and audience categorization patterns. As a result, the knowledge about consumer in Thai film industry is limited to an understanding about a particular group of film consumers, namely 18-35 years old living in Bangkok Metropolitan area. This leads to a lack of understanding about a wider range of consumer.*

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This article is an adaptation of the master degree thesis: “Current Status of Consumer Research in Thai Film Industry” by Supakit Boonanegpat in which Dr. Jirayudh Sinthuphan was the thesis advisor.

*In comparison with consumer research in US film industry; this research concludes that consumer research in Thai film industry is still in its infancy. Consumer research in Thai film industry should explore new focus of study such as consumer psychology or examine other sample groups with different demographic profiling or a specific segment of film consumer.*

**Keywords:** Consumer research, Thai film industry, research methodology, higher educational research, film consumer.

## Introduction

Film is a communication medium which has been lasting for more than ten decades; some of its functions are to entertain, educate, or amuse. Nevertheless, film influences human culture and shapes human thoughts. Film serves its functions because its ability to attract people; and most of the time it is a group activity (Laovunysiri, 1983).

Film industry is producing films as their products in order to gain financial profit (Kellner, 2004). For instance, a big Hollywood film would need at least 200 million dollars of investment (Toptenthailand, 2012: online). For Thai film industry, from production to exhibition, the entire process would cost at least 10 to 20 million Baht (Okmd, 2006: online). Relatively, investors would expect their solid profit after their film is exhibited. However, a ticket price is an alternative factor toward film consumption (Wisegeek, 2013: online). On the other hand, Oxford Economics (2011) reported the overall picture of Thai film industry through gross domestic product (GDP) of Thai Film industry. This report separated the GDP contribution into two parts which are Thai film production and distribution, and Thai film exhibition. Relatively, in 2011, the GDP of Thai film production and distribution industry contributed approximately thirteen billion

baht (p.6), while exhibition accounted for more than seven billion baht in economic contribution (p.7). Apply these numbers into the overall economic contribution of Thai entertainment media industry, it shows that Thai film industry is responsible for ten percent of Thai entertainment media industry; in other words, Thai film industry economically contributes at 20.8 billion baht (OxfordEconomics, 2011)

Given so, in Thailand, film can be considered as another product category just like any others businesses. However, personally, the researcher is rarely exposed to any forms of consumer research within the Thai film industry. Therefore, this research aims to study different aspects and variables of consumer research within the Thai film industry.

## OVERVIEW OF LITERATURE

To approach this research correctly with the significant framework, three literature concepts are reviewed, which are film consumer research methodology, audience categorization, and consumer research data-restriction.

## FILM CONSUMER RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The first generation of audience research started off by a luxury theatre owner in New York, Adolph Zukor. Zukor and Kramer (1953) studied audience behavior in Zukor's theatre by using a simple observation. He would take a seat in his own theatre on the sixth row from the front and turn around to observe the audience reactions (Zukor & Kramer, 1953). Relatively, audience research was simply about knowing what the audience wants. Zukor and Kramer's (1953) method can be considered as the first qualitative research on film audience. The research objective was to capture audience emotions and feelings in order to develop a bet-



ter approach toward film selection; moreover, the better approach could be used to develop a better film experience, a higher theatre popularity or more profitable theatre business (Ohmer, 1999).

While Zukor and Kramer (1953) focused on audience impression, more contemporary researchers are relying toward more efficient data by cross analyzing audience impression and with audience status. By doing so, researchers could categorize audiences into socio-economic status groups (Ohmer, 1999). For instance, in 1940, Audience Research Institute (ARI) did thousands of research surveys for 10 film studios. At this point, ARI recorded the first empirical research in Hollywood. The founder of ARI; George Gallop, allowed the film industry to observe the public's interest in such a manner that every research was being supported by science which can guarantee the truth (Ohmer, 1999). Relatively, throughout 1940s, Hollywood film studios under the integrated studio system were fighting over film producing allowance. ARI settled the situation with a solid scientific measurement of each studio audience impression; it gave film studios reasons why they should have control in which films and why not (Ohmer, 1999).

Regardless of how audience research can be objective, Ohmer (1999) claimed that in order to understand deeply into spectatorship of film consumer as an audience, it is important to understand how ARI constructed, interpreted and deployed their studies.

Audience Research Institute was founded in March 1940, by George Gallop who once based his profession in political polls and studies. He started off ARI by signing a contact with RKO Radio pictures; it was one-year agreement stated that ARI would be doing market research for RKO. The period was right after RKO suffered with bankruptcy in January 1940. Relatively, the contract led to further business relationship and connection for another decade. Anyways, ARI

conducted over 1000 studies and reports throughout the year which included almost every film that RKO produced in that period. ARI often found out that some films of RKO would be a total loss according to their studies. Therefore, many planned films were not produced. Nevertheless, Gallop also was hired directly from RKO president George Schaefer to scientifically study public tastes, and interests (Ohmer, 1999).

Handel (1950) mentioned in her literature that to understand what public wants, it is essential to first understand where the consumers are. Before 1940, producers are looking for audience information through unreliable sources, for example, exhibitors' reports, fan letter, and articles in business newspapers. These sources often determined producer decision toward allowance of film production process (Handel, 1950). Nevertheless, as Roste (1941) referred, in 1940, Gallup explained about such procedures to be inaccurate and unreliable because this information do not reflex the consumer who could be considered as major film-goers; in difference, it only reflexed from those who would like to complement. For instance, almost 90 percent of letters that were sent to film studios often came from females who were younger than 21 years of age. Nevertheless, exhibitor's reports mostly came from the impression of theatre owner and not the consumers who visited the theatre (Roste, 1941). To keep in mind, Gallup's comment happened nine years before Handel did her literature in 1950.

To support the previous paragraph about contradiction between Gallup (1940) and Handel (1950) on public taste; the researcher looks into how Gallup studied the American public taste in his time.

When Gallup was doing political polls and studies, he had a government office and documents as his sources. However, when he started doing film research, there was no audience profile source that would be as valuable as what he had in political polls. Hollywood kept the record as-financial reports; for example, ticket

prices, net profits, and theatre grosses. Technically, this information was useless toward audience study. Therefore, before Gallup joined with RKO during the beginning of 1936, Gallup and his national staff literally embedded a film research into political polls (Ohmer, 1999). With David Ogilvy's help on research construction, Gallup was able to provide ARI with demographic information on the film-goers or who went to theatre regularly. In 1940, the data was completely collected and it became the general basis of American public taste (Ohmer, 1999).

Later in 1941, ARI found the first evidence that the majority of box office consumer or audience is the teenager. According to ARI surveys, one-third of all tickets were bought by consumers who were younger than twenty years old. This led RKO to realization that they had been focusing on the wrong group of audience. Later on, RKO was putting an essential concern on films that would appeal teenagers. For instance, in 1942, result from a research recommended RKO, *Syncopation* were launched with a plot that aims to entertain and reduced historical aspect. Nevertheless, RKO shifted their attention to develop more actors and actresses who were younger than 25 years old in order to attract the fan base (Ohmer, 1999).

In addition to the development of adolescent prospect, RKO also looked deeper into gender to support the common belief that women liked romantic films and men liked action films. However, ARI did not consult RKO to produce different films for different gender, but ARI and Ogilvy suggested that data need to be represented; concluding by gender as a single variable would not be significant (Ohmer, 1999).

Another demographic variable that were introduced by ARI was income. ARI found that those people who were earning less than 15 dollars a week were responsible for 25 percent of all box office earnings. Hence, those people who earn 25 to

35 dollars a week consisted about 22 percent of all box office earnings while middle-income groups and high-income groups were accounted for 38 and 15 percent, respectively. Therefore, it could be concluded that the major purchase of movie tickets came from those who earned less than 50 dollars per week (Ohmer, 1999). Based on ARI assumption, film studios wanted to reach possible maximum amount of people. If studios relied directly from the data then they could target the majority classes by optimizing their films to match the major preference. However, according to Ohmer (1999), Ogilvy argued that by refreshing studio production line would lead to slight improvement; ARI demographic data is suggesting the current film-goers, however, there was no room for the minority in any visible data. In difference, Ogilvy was suggesting that an enlargement could not be done without available space or channel. Hence, film studios should first enlarge their distributing channels then target the minority not the majority (Ohmer, 1999).

The next question is how the targeted audiences would know that the films were made to appeal them before buying the tickets. Once mentioned in Ohmer's *The Science of Pleasure* (1999), Gallup factor analyzed film into components; he broke down every elements which were consisted into a film then he cross analyze the components with the demographic categories. Later on, Gallup was able to pick out dominant factors that determine why audiences decided to bought the tickets which are titles, stories and casts (Ohmer, 1999).

Early research that ARI had done for RKO showed that one-fourth of the audiences bought their tickets based on film's title. Therefore, ARI begun title's test for RKO; for instance, in 1943, RKO changed the title of their film, *Mr. Lucky*, six times before premiered. With this information in hand, film studios could adjust their title to match the segment



of audience that they targeted while advertising department developing the proper strategies.

Moreover, ARI often recommended RKO to use certified title such as best-selling novels by using the existing novels and made them into film, studios would receive free built-in audience (Ohmer, 1999). However, using certified titles came with responsibility of the storyline also; for example, RKO's *Little Men* shifted its story a little too far. According to Ohmer (1999), Ogilvy commented on the film that by shifting the story of *Little Men* affected their consumer's loyalty to both the original novel and the studio. Technically, film studios should not trick their audience in order to acquire their wants (Ohmer, 1999).

In terms of cast, RKO developed their own stars and borrowed some from other studios. Through 15 research that ARI conducted for RKO within the first three month after the contact was signed. RKO was expecting ARI to carry out studies that would designate what should be a particular role for a particular actor. As a result, in many studies, ARI concluded that public want was changing constantly in terms of cast due to couple factors; these factors include: role of performance and casts matching (Jewell, 1978). For example, in 1940, RKO's contract with Ginger Rogers were about to expire and she also wanted to move away from dramatic role at RKO to musical at other studios. The research on Ginger Rogers gave RKO tough decision; ARI reported that the public liked her dramatic performance; however, they would like to see Ginger Rogers on musical. Another significant example that was carried out by ARI on how matching up two or more celebrities would influence audience decision. Two months after ARI conducted research on Ginger Rogers, ARI wanted to study why *Broadway Melody* was a failure. Fred Astaire was matching up with Eleanor Powell in the film. ARI conducted two survey on the match-up and found out that the major factor

were neither the story nor Fred Astaire himself, but the audiences wanted to see Ginger Rogers together with Fred Astaire in the dancing film (Ohmer, 1999). Relatively, RKO signed another contact with Fred Astaire and publicly announced that he would be back with Ginger Rogers in 1941. Ohmer (1999) called these studies and action "a conservative effect" (Ohmer, 1999). Even the big named director such as Orson Welles adopted the conservative effect. During the summer of 1940, Orson Welles proposed three films that he would like to produce which are *Smiler with a Knife*, *Heart of Darkness*, and *Invasion from Mars*. ARI did the research and suggested that his name contained a built-in audience and he should stick with that. Hence, Orson Welles was widely known for his radio broadcast; therefore, he should produce *Invasion from Mars* to maintain his built-in audience (Ohmer, 1999).

## AUDIENCE CATEGORIZATION

Audience information was being served to outreach different sectors of audience and most importantly to determine the studio's next move in production. In term of commercial purposes, each theatrical exhibition were expected to serve exceeded amount of audiences. Moreover, audience information were part of the system in the early age. Arguably, in early age of cinema, audiences information focuses on how to capture audiences despite audience preference and demographic. The result of such action leads to audience and theatre categorization.

According to Maltby (1999), from 1929 to 1933, Hollywood studios were categorizing audience into three major compared categories which are:

1. Class and mass.
2. Sophisticated and unsophisticated
3. Broadway and main-street.

The process of classifying audience led to the

process of classifying theatre. Studios concluded that films should be served accurately and consistently. Different audiences required different product category. In 1932, the coverage of audience classification and relationship were summarized in the article of *Variety* which reviewed the film called *The Greeks Had a Word for Them*, Rush (1932) mentioned:

Likewise it's one of those peculiar stories, nearly always by a woman, in which the not-too-good heroine eats her cake and has it too, and for the femme trade that formula is generally and almost fool proof. Exploitation is emphasizing the Chanel clothes. With of the dialog may be a bit polish for the proletariat, but the basic human humor of the situations of these three lilies of the field in rivalry, in battle and in comradeship will register universally. The men won't care for it much but flap and matron will adore its flashy sophistication certainly in the key towns, even if the whole thing may prove a bit high for the neighborhoods and rural spots (p.15).

Nevertheless, there was a clear boundary between each category of audience. The undifferentiated and unified audience was found when the audience classification method were adopted by developing production industry. The method became inaccurate and somewhat lacked ability to serve the public tastes or audience preferences. The apparent proof of the situation was the film: *It Happened One Night*, which was unexpectedly successful in 1934 when there were both economic and industrial crisis. The studio captured the undifferentiated audience which was not part of the plan. Relatively, the studio was looking to claim a higher social status audience through this film. American studios were going down the hill; many studios and exhibitors were choosing their audience or somewhat called 'block booking'. Throughout 1930s, the Motion Picture Association of America or MPPDA were regulating to demolish block booking. The

MPPDA called in producers and distributors upon defend. Therefore, producer, distributor, and exhibitor were enforced to show their film without any specific selection or audience classification. Anyhow, later in the year of 1934, a film called *Crime without Passion* were launched and one of the distributing producer suggested that the film should not be shown in small society, as in less than 4,000 people. The producer could not effort to lose their expected revenue just because they need to please everyone which they obviously could not (Maltby, 1999).

## CONSUMER RESEARCH DATA-RESTRICTION

During the mid-1940s, audience research hit its peak; it became a function for managerial levels of film studios. For instance, the producers were limiting their survey data to certain people. These data were so valuable that sometime only executive levels of film studios were allowed to acquire; different studios maintained different policies for such authority, the trend was implanted into the Hollywood studio system (Ohmer, 1999).

Relatively, audience research turned into a battleground for those who could not get their hands on the data. For example, actors wanted to know what the audiences think about their performance, and writers desired to understand audience impression of their written stories. In July 1947, Bornemann (1947) attacked the authority system and commented that audience research was restricting the film industry and eliminating the possible development. Gallup's empirical research influenced producers to avoid any form of risk and stick to what their studies had shown. Moreover, the fact that producers only made films that would sell and restrain the variety of art was the result of surveys. Film supposed to be an art and 'not industrial products (Bornemann, 1947). Nevertheless,



according to Ohmer (1999), scriptwriters became puppets; writers in many studios were restricted to write upon the wants of their producers. Writers were required to write and develop a script to match the public wants or the survey results.

Nevertheless, actors were scared of walking into the producer office because producers were choosing actors based on the selling types that surveys concluded for them. Actors were not judged by their performances, but styles that would match the audience preferences (Ohmer, 1999).

Under the pressure of mentioned descending components, ARI came to its end of being one research institute that would work for many film studios. For instance, during 1940s, RKO and Disney were negotiating contract renewal with ARI before they renewed another contract with fewer conducted studies. However, nowadays, present film studios adopted Gallup's measurement and created their own research departments for their films. However, the most important thing that current film industry should note down is the fact that ARI somewhat was adapting their methodology throughout the age; it indicated that scientific research could not provide a final theory about audience preference (Simonet, 1980).

## METHODOLOGY

"Current status of Consumer Research in Thai Film Industry" is a qualitative research that aims to study how stakeholders in Thai film industry conduct consumer research, and to analyze the research methodology as well as the body of knowledge about film consumer in the research conducted within Thai higher education institutions. In order to obtain the data, this research employs two research methods which are in-depth interview with stakeholders and document analysis of previous research.

## 1. IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW WITH STAKEHOLDERS

To answer the first research question "How do different stakeholders in Thai film industry conduct consumer research?" the researcher conducted in-depth interview with personnel from different parties of the stakeholders in Thai film industry. Unstructured interview questions were used as a research tool to capture three aspects which are research methodology, audience categorization, research data-restriction.

## SAMPLING METHOD

Firstly, the researcher identifies stakeholder characteristics by referring to Donald & Preston's (1995) normative aspect of stakeholder theory, which mainly explains that a person who has benefit toward the organization is a stakeholder. On the other hand, an organization's interest in a person does not make the person becomes a stakeholder. Moreover, Donaldson & Preston's (1995) normative justifications aspect also concerns about the characteristics of stakeholders. For instance, stakeholders are picked by their affairs with the corporation. These affairs are considered as intrinsic value and it is axiomatic (Donaldson & Preston, 1995). In a way, it is a purposive sampling method. Therefore, the researcher first identifies stakeholder organizations and categorizes them into four different parties as following:

1. Stakeholder companies from the production side.
2. Stakeholder companies from the investor side.
3. Stakeholder companies from the distributor side.
4. Stakeholder companies from the exhibitor side.

The researcher then called all the companies which were listed purposively. However, many of them declined to participate with particular reasons.

Some could not be reached. Moreover, through the calls, the researcher found that GMM Thai Hub and Kantana contribute to both roles: producer and investor. Relatively, owner and executive producer of Local Color, even though the company is mainly a production company has direct experience with distribution system as an executive producer.

#### 1. Producer

1.1 Preyavun Sirisuptawee – GMM Thai Hub Promotion Director

1.2 Peerada Tupsaifar – Kantana Educational Practitioner

#### 2. Investor

2.1 Preyavun Sirisuptawee – GMM Thai Hub Promotion Director

2.2 Peerada Tupsaifar – Kantana Educational practitioner

#### 3. Distributor

3.1 Pawas Sawatchaiyamet – owner and executive producer of Local Color Film

#### 4. Exhibitor

4.1 Thongchai Piriyoonyanon – Public Relation and Marketing Manager of Major Hollywood

4.2 Ithikorn Thepsiri – Programming Manager of Major Hollywood

4.3 Chalisa Poolvorarluck – Cinema Manager

### RESEARCH TOOL

Unstructured interview guideline constructs with three dimensions of questions to measure or capture three variables of this research. Three dimensions are research methodology, research data-restriction, and audience categorization.

#### First dimension – research methodology

Questions within this dimension aims to capture stakeholders' perspectives and knowledge about consumer research methodology which conducted in their field of Thai film industry. These methodology concerns research question, research scope, research sample, and research tools.

#### Second dimension – research data restriction

For this dimension, this research follows Ohmer's (1999) suggestion that consumer research data are restricted to certain organizational personnel. For instance, executives and producers have full access to research data, while actors and writers could not acquire to these data. Therefore, this research focuses to capture the similar aspect as Ohmer (1999) did. In other words, to understand which department or personnel of Thai film industry has access to their consumer research data.

#### Third dimension – audience categorization

Within this part, the major consideration lays toward how audiences are being grouped and named by the Thai film industry according to research data. For example, Maltby (1999) explained that Hollywood categorized their audiences into three group which are class and mass, sophisticated and unsophisticated, and Broadway and main-street.

### 2. CONTENT ANALYSIS OF PREVIOUS RESEARCH

To answer the second research question "What is the body of knowledge in consumer research done by stakeholders and higher educational institutions?" the researcher decided to searches for past consumer researches that were done in Thai universities by post-graduate students, or researchers.

### SAMPLING METHOD

Chosen universities must have communication-related department inside; for example, Srinakharinwirot University, Mahidol University, Thammasat University, and Chulalongkorn University. The following are keywords used for searching through the university library's search engine: film, consumer, research, audience research, film consumer, film audience. The researcher managed to pick out fourteen research following the mentioned process.



## ANALYSIS METHOD

After the fourteen researches were gathered; firstly, the researcher summarized all the research and listed them into table format (see Table 1). Secondly, the researcher looks for the similar components of all the researches which are:

1. Research approach discusses how past research were conducted with different research approaches, research methods, and research tools.

2. Research sample discusses how past research were conducted with different ways of picking their samples; for example, sampling method, sample size, and specification of samples.

3. Focuses of the studies discusses how past research share similarities and differences through different aspects which are research variables, focuses of research, and its relationship.

4. Demographic profiling discusses how past research either report their research data through demographic variables, or group their samples according to samples' attitudes.

Lastly, the researcher looked for relevant points of the researches' components to discuss and seek for patterns in the divided components.

## RESEARCH FINDINGS

### 1. STAKEHOLDER INSIGHTS

#### A LACK OF UNDERSTANDING ABOUT CONSUMER RESEARCH WITHIN THAI FILM INDUSTRY

Thai film industry stakeholders have a misconception in consumer research. This is captured from personal observation through the interview, for example, opinions of the interviewee on such topic. At one point of the interviews, all interviewed stakeholders had claimed about the nonexistence of consumer research in their positions. For instance, Sawatchaiyamet (personal communication, October 17, 2014) quickly stated that producers had low attention or toward consumer

research data, while Sirisuptawee (personal communication, October 31, 2014) mentioned since the beginning of the interview that there is no consumer research in the company. However, after such information was recorded, the researcher directed the interview toward asking about any form of research; some stakeholders shared information about their 'research'. GMM Thai Hub's promotional director first emphasized research that the company studied toward understandings in film characters then Sirisuptawee (personal communication, October 31, 2014) explained that sometimes the company conducted a focus group inside the company by letting the employees scored two versions of film trailers. Moreover, the same stakeholder explained that once in a while, she would employed the same research method, but the samples were real consumers who they found at movie theatres. From the context from the interview, assumingly, Sirisuptawee (personal communication, October 31, 2014) did not take it for granted that the conducted focus group is methodology-sounded consumer research. It possibly showed a lack of understanding in consumer research, whether or not the conducted research is consumer research.

#### A LACK OF METHODOLOGY-SOUNDED CONSUMER RESEARCH

There is evidence showing that Thai film industrial stakeholders have inaccurate knowledge about the definition and implementation of consumer research. Sirisuptawee (personal communication, October 31, 2014) firstly claimed that there was no consumer research in her company; however, later, she explained about the conducted focus group. This explains that there is a misconception on whether which studies could be described as consumer research, and which studies could be described as informal research.

Relatively, when Piriya-boonyanon (personal

communication, October 29, 2014) was asked about the research methodology and research sample, the interviewee claimed that Major Hollywood's IT department would process the member cards system every month to provide the company with top-consuming demographics. Assumingly, Piriaboonyanon (personal communication, October 29, 2014) considered that as consumer research. Yet, he did not mention any methodology-sounded research method.

Moreover, Poolvorarluck (personal communication, October 29, 2014), cinema manager of Major Hollywood mentioned that in a practical manner of Major Hollywood's business operation, the company relied heavily on personal experience. Relatively, Sirisuptawee (personal communication, October 31, 2014) and Piriaboonyanon (personal communication, October 31, 2014) stated from their experience that the major group of audience is teenagers.

## **A LACK OF RESPONSIBLE UNIT AND COLLABORATION WITHIN THE INDUSTRY**

Poolvorarluck (personal communication, October 29, 2014) stated that outsourcing for consumer research is out of hand and believed that consumer research is expensive. In different, the gathered research showed that some consumer research done by post-graduate students contained small group of samples. On the other hand, Tupsaifar (personal communication, October 11, 2014) explained the difference as when she claimed that Kantana's consumer research was conducting by outsources.

The two different statements from two stakeholders showed that consumer research in Thai film industry might not have a proper arrangement, unlike in Hollywood where all research were conducted in one place, the Audience Research Institute (Ohmer, 1999). Therefore, since the research data was coming from different sources, the stakeholders believed that consumer research is technically not their responsibility and it should be conducted in the different sector. This view can be seen from Sawatchaiyamet (2014)'s statement regarding the jobs of producers and distributors. Hence, Poolvorarluck (2014) stated that, for small Thai companies, consumer research seems to be quite out of hands due to availability of the data. As Poolvorarluck (2014) further claimed that Thai people has been working based on their experience, and it obviously got them to certain points. She concluded that it could be the working ethic of some Thai industry.

## **2. ANALYSIS OF PREVIOUS RESEARCH**

The researcher managed to gather different consumer research that was conducted by researchers in higher education or post graduate students. First, these research were summarized and analyzed using an analysis form. Then, the researcher looked for the components that all research shares, such as research approach, research sample, focuses of the study, demographic profiling. These components were used for further discussion by looking for patterns of exiting consumer research about Thai film Industry (see Table 1).



**Table 1** Existing consumer research about Thai film Industry

Research topic	Quan.	Qual.	Research Method	Consumer Attitude	Info. Search	Media Habit	Satisf action	Audience Categorization	Source
Research 1: "Consumer Behavior on 2-D and 3D Movies"	X		Survey	X				X	Chulalongkorn University
Research 2: "Perception, Attitude and Awareness of Movie-Goers about social problems in Pro-social films"		X	Focus Group	X				X	Chulalongkorn University
Research 3: "Factor Influencing The Independent Film Viewing"		X	In-depth int.	X				X	Chulalongkorn University
Research 4: "Marketing Communication Strategy and Consumer Behavior on GTH Movies"	X	X	In-depth int., Survey	X	X				Chulalongkorn University
Research 5: "Marketing Communication Factors Influencing Thai Movie Viewing Behavior"	X	X	In-depth int., Survey	X			X		Chulalongkorn University
Research 6: "Narration of Attitudes Regarding Violence in Thai and Hollywood Films"		X	Interview textual analysis, in-depth int., focus group	X					Chulalongkorn University
Research 7: "The Impact of Multiplex Theater Expansion on Provincial Film Distribution System in Thailand"		X	Document analysis, in-depth int.	X			X		Chulalongkorn University
Research 8: "Bangkok Movie Goers Attitude toward Domestic Film Production"	X		Survey	X			X		Chulalongkorn University
Research 9: "Customer Response Toward Customer Experience Management of SF Cinema City"	X		Survey				X		Chulalongkorn University
Research 10: "Media Habit, Information Need and Film Viewer's Behaviors of Independent Films"		X	In-depth int.		X	X			Chulalongkorn University
Research 11: "Factors Related To The Decision to View Thai Animated Film Khankluay 2"	X		Survey				X		Chulalongkorn University
Research 12: "The Comparison of Factors Influencing the Audience's in Film Choosing at Major Cineplex and Entertainment Golden Village(EGV), Bangkok"	X		Survey				X		Srinakharinwirot University
Research 13: "Factors Influencing Consumers Behavior in Viewing Thai and Hollywood Movie in Bangkok Metropolitan Area"	X		Survey	X	X		X		Srinakharinwirot University
Research 14: "Marketing Factors Affecting Movie-Watching Behavior of Consumers At Major Hollywood Theatres In Bangkok Metropolitan and Perimeter Areas"	X		Survey				X		Srinakharinwirot University

## RESEARCH APPROACH AND DATA-GATHERING METHOD

In term of research approach, previous research about Thai film consumer usually employ quantitative research approach, qualitative research approach, and mixed-method research approach respectively.

In term of data-gathering method, the research in quantitative approach usually employed questionnaire survey, while the research in qualitative approach employed methods such as focus group, in-depth interview, interview textual analysis and document analysis. For the mixed research approach research, both in-depth interview and questionnaire survey are used.

In terms of data-gathering tools, the quantitative research used only questionnaire. However, the qualitative research used diverse research tools such as open-ended questions, interview sheet, record sheet, and structured interview questions.

Relatively, the mix approach research both employed guideline questions in combination with questionnaire (see Table 2). There is a pattern that can be seen here. The research that employed two or more research tools or more, their research contain two sides under their topic which are consumer side, and film industry side.

Research 4 and Research 5 both studied communication strategy of the film industry side first before related it onto consumer. They both used in-depth interview to study the industry side then used survey to study the consumer side. In addition, Research 6 studied violence in Thai and Hollywood film by using interview textual analysis, then followed with in-depth interview and focus group to study the consumer toward the mentioned topic. Moreover, Research 7 employed document analysis to study the pattern of multiplex expansion in Thailand, then used in-depth interview to interview consumer regarding the topic.

**Table 2** Research approach and data-gathering of gathered research

Research topic	Research Approach	Research Method	Research Tool
Research 1: "Consumer Behavior on 2-D and 3D Movies"	Quantitative	Survey	Questionnaire
Research 2: "Perception, Attitude and Awareness of Movie-Goers about social problems in Pro-social films"	Qualitative	Focus Group	Open-ended questions
Research 3: "Factor Influencing The Independent Film Viewing"	Qualitative	In-depth Int.	Open-ended questions
Research 4: "Marketing Communication Strategy and Consumer Behavior on GTH Movies"	Mixed	In-depth int., Survey	Guideline questions, Questionnaire
Research 5: "Marketing Communication Factors Influencing Thai Movie Viewing Behavior"	Mixed	In-depth int., Survey	Guideline questions, Questionnaire
Research 6: "Narration of Attitudes Regarding Violence in Thai and Hollywood Films"	Qualitative	Interview textual analysis, in-depth int., focus group	Open-ended questions
Research 7: "The Impact of Multiplex Theater Expansion on Provincial Film Distribution System in Thailand"	Qualitative	Document analysis, in-depth int.	Interview sheet, record sheet
Research 8: "Bangkok Movie Goers Attitude toward Domestic Film Production"	Quantitative	Survey	Questionnaire
Research 9: "Customer Response Toward Customer Experience Management of SF Cinema City"	Quantitative	Survey	Questionnaire
Research 10: "Media Habit, Information Need and Film Viewer's Behaviors of Independent Films"	Qualitative	In-depth int.	Structured interview questions
Research 11: "Factors Related to The Decision to View Thai Animated Film Khankluay 2"	Quantitative	Survey	Questionnaire
Research 12: "The Comparison of Factors Influencing the Audience's in Film Choosing at Major Cineplex and Entertainment Golden Village(EGV), Bangkok"	Quantitative	Survey	Questionnaire
Research 13: "Factors Influencing Consumers Behavior in Viewing Thai and Hollywood Movie in Bangkok Metropolitan Area"	Quantitative	Survey	Questionnaire
Research 14: "Marketing Factors Affecting Movie-Watching Behavior of Consumers At Major Hollywood Theatres In Bangkok Metropolitan and Perimeter Areas"	Quantitative	Survey	Questionnaire

## FOCUS OF THE STUDY AND RESEARCH VARIABLES

Regarding, focus of the study, this research found these research have various focus of Thai film industry based on the topic. For instance, film technology, film content, film category, film as products from particular companies, film company's marketing communication strategy, film industrial service, aspects related to film production, film exhibitor services, or single film (see Table 3).

It can be summarized that there are three major types of focus of the research: focus on film content, focus on film industrial service, and focus on marketing communication of the film industry.

In terms of research variable, the studied variables consisted of consumer attitude, media habit, level of satisfaction, and information search.

The common research variables are consumer

attitude and level of satisfaction; it explains that consumer research regarding Thai film industry contributes toward predicting consumer behavior by understanding their current attitude then measure consumer satisfaction upon the past experience of the same topic. It seems to be a proper operation in terms of consumer research to understand the past experience which will lead to present perception and behavior.

Moreover, in terms of focus of the research, it could be summarized that there are two main focusing areas which are film as a product, and service given from the Thai film industry. However, the gathered research ranged from the year of 2002 to 2013, the Thai film industry seemingly developed through the time, and gathered research did not show evidence of extreme change in terms of research variables that studied in two focusing areas of Thai film industry.



**Table 3** Focus of the study and research focuses of gathered research

Research topic	Research Variables	Focus of the research	Discussion & Relationship
Research 1: "Consumer Behavior on 2-D and 3D Movies"	Consumer Attitude	Film technology	Consumer attitude toward 3D screening technology.
Research 2: "Perception, Attitude and Awareness of Movie-Goers about social problems in Pro-social films"	Consumer Attitude, Media Habit	Film content	Consumer attitude toward film with pro-social film content
Research 3: "Factor Influencing The Independent Film Viewing"	Consumer Attitude	Film Category/ scale	Consumer attitude toward independent film viewing.
Research 4: "Marketing Communication Strategy and Consumer Behavior on GTH Movies"	Consumer Attitude, Information Search	Films as products from particular companies	Consumer attitude and information search behavior toward GTH films.
Research 5: "Marketing Communication Factors Influencing Thai Movie Viewing Behavior"	Consumer Attitude, Level of Satisfaction	Film companies' marketing communication strategy	Consumer attitude and satisfaction toward advertisement/ communication of Thai film industry.
Research 6: "Narration of Attitudes Regarding Violence in Thai and Hollywood Films"	Consumer Attitude	Film content	Consumer attitude toward violence film content in Thai film industry
Research 7: "The Impact of Multiplex Theater Expansion on Provincial Film Distribution System in Thailand"	Consumer Attitude, Level of Satisfaction, Information search	Film industrial service	Consumer attitude and consumer satisfaction toward film service providers in Thailand.
Research 8: "Bangkok Movie Goers Attitude toward Domestic Film Production"	Consumer Attitude, Level of Satisfaction	Aspects related to film production	Consumer attitude and consumer satisfaction toward film production aspects/technical values.
Research 9: "Customer Response Toward Customer Experience Management of SF Cinema City"	Level of Satisfaction	Film exhibitor services	Consumer satisfaction toward SF Cinema City's service.
Research 10: "Media Habit, Information Need and Film Viewer's Behaviors of Independent Films"	Information search, media habit	Film category/ scale	Independent film viewers' information searching behavior, and media consumption habit.
Research 11: "Factors Related to The Decision to View Thai Animated Film Khankluay 2"	Level of satisfaction	Single film	Consumer's satisfaction after watching "Khankluay 2"
Research 12: "The Comparison of Factors Influencing the Audience's in Film Choosing at Major Cineplex and Entertainment Golden Village(EGV), Bangkok"	Level of Satisfaction	Film industrial service	Consumer satisfaction toward watching films at Major Cineplex and EGV
Research 13: "Factors Influencing Consumers Behavior in Viewing Thai and Hollywood Movie in Bangkok Metropolitan Area"	Consumer Attitude, Information Search, Level of Satisfaction	Film region	Consumer attitude, information search and level of satisfaction toward Thai film.
Research 14: "Marketing Factors Affecting Movie-Watching Behavior of Consumers At Major Hollywood Theatres In Bangkok Metropolitan and Perimeter Areas"	Level of Satisfaction	Film industrial service	Consumer satisfaction toward watching film at Major Hollywood.

## SAMPLE SIZE, SAMPLE GROUP, AND SAMPLING METHOD

In term of sample size, quantitative research is ranging from 200 samples to 420 samples. For quantitative research, the research covered the sampling area as the first step of sampling method by various sampling methods which are purposive sampling method, stratified sampling method, cluster sampling method. In addition, to specifically narrow the samples down, these sampling methods were employed: simple random sampling method, quota sampling method, convenience sampling method, and accidental sampling method.

On the other hand, qualitative research's sample size ranges from 18 samples to 32 samples. In contrast, for qualitative research, the research chose the sampling area as the first step of sampling method by only purposive sampling method. Relatively, then several methods were used to specify the samples; namely, snowball sampling method, and volunteer sampling method. However, there is a difference purpose of

using snowball sampling method and volunteer sampling method. Volunteer sampling method allows a qualitative research to acquire fixed amount of samples, but snowball sampling is being used increase the amount of samples after the first sampling method. Nevertheless, in terms of specification of the samples, there are two major types which are research in Bangkok area and research in Thailand (see Table 4).

In terms of research sampling method, gathered quantitative research theoretically picked out their samples as it can be seen that the gathered research's sampling methods and steps are similar. These researches possibly followed the past researches' sampling method to maintain a proper research manner. Therefore, it also led to similar sample size.

Relatively, most of the gathered research picked samples which only was living or consuming Thai films in Bangkok area. Meanwhile, suburban area was left out because it was not the designated

area of research, and suburban possibly contributes minor role of the entire population.

As mentioned about characteristics in sampling method of gathered research, and research sampling area, it led to similar patterns of sample. For

instance, 18-35 years old consumers who was living in Bangkok. In a way, it is a confirmation that the researcher targeted the right group of audience, however, it could emphasize that the minor consumers were left out.

**Table 4** Research sample of gathered research

Research topic	Sample size	Sampling method	Specification
Research 1: "Consumer Behavior on 2-D and 3D Movies"	200 samples	Purposive, Stratified, Simple random	Random movie theatres from four exhibitor companies
Research 2: "Perception, Attitude and Awareness of Movie-Goers about social problems in Pro-social films"	3 focus groups, 10 samples each	Purposive sampling, Snowball sampling	Those who interest in films and pro-social films.
Research 3: "Factor Influencing The Independent Film Viewing"	32 samples, divided into 5 groups	Purposive sampling, Snowball sampling	Consuming/ Purchasing behavior
Research 4: "Marketing Communication Strategy and Consumer Behavior on GTH Movies"	200 samples	Purposive sampling, Quota sampling	15-35 years old consumers who were currently living in Bangkok
Research 5: "Marketing Communication Factors Influencing Thai Movie Viewing Behavior"	420 samples	Stratified, purposive, quota, convenience	15-35 years old consumers who were currently living in Bangkok
Research 6: "Narration of Attitudes Regarding Violence in Thai and Hollywood Films"	3 groups, 6 samples each	Volunteer sampling method	Those who were currently living in Bangkok and watch at least 1 Hollywood film
Research 7: "The Impact of Multiplex Theater Expansion on Provincial Film Distribution System in Thailand"	400 samples	Cluster sampling, quota sampling	Customers of multiplex theatres in 8 cities around Thailand
Research 8: "Bangkok Movie Goers Attitude toward Domestic Film Production"	400 samples	Purposive sampling, accidental sampling	Consumers from 220 movie theatres in 18 different Bangkok districts
Research 9: "Customer Response Toward Customer Experience Management of SF Cinema City"	200 samples	Simple random sampling, quota sampling, accidental sampling	Consumers from 14 branches of SF Cinema City in Bangkok
Research 10: "Media Habit, Information Need and Film Viewer's Behaviors of Independent Films"	20 samples	Purposive sampling, Snowball sampling	Independent film consumers who went to independent film festival
Research 11: "Factors Related to The Decision to View Thai Animated Film Khankluay 2"	400 samples	Cluster sampling, Accidental sampling	303 movie theatres in 18 Bangkok districts
Research 12: "The Comparison of Factors Influencing the Audience's in Film Choosing at Major Cineplex and Entertainment Golden Village(EGV), Bangkok"	400 samples	Simple random sampling, quota sampling, purposive sampling, convenience sampling	15-45 years old consumers who were currently living in Bangkok
Research 13: "Factors Influencing Consumers Behavior in Viewing Thai and Hollywood Movie in Bangkok Metropolitan Area"	400 samples	Simple random sampling, quota sampling, purposive sampling, convenience sampling	Thai Hollywood film consumers in Bangkok.
Research 14: "Marketing Factors Affecting Movie-Watching Behavior of Consumers At Major Hollywood Theatres In Bangkok Metropolitan and Perimeter Areas"	385 samples	Quota sampling, convenience sampling	Customers of Major Hollywood in Bangkok

## DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILING AND AUDIENCE CATEGORIZATION

There are two ways of profiling samples' demographic as it showed through the gathered research. Firstly, report through the demographic of the research samples. There are various demographic variables which were used to report as dependent variable: gender, age, educational level, career, and personal income. In terms of dependent variable which concerned with number input, these were often asked through choices of range. For example, under 18 years old, 19-25 years old, 26-30 years old, and above 30 years old. Educational level and gender required samples to choose from

choices also.

Secondly, there are research which grouped and reported their samples based on their attitude regarding the research topic (see Table 5). For example, Research 1 mentioned their samples as consumers who prefer 3D movies when both 2D and 3D movies are available, and consumers who prefer 3D movies more than 2D. Research 2 grouped the samples into three group based on level of interest toward social film; high interest, medium interest, and low interest. Nevertheless, Research 3 categorized their samples based on their level of relationship toward the preferred media.

As mentioned before in the research sample, profiling the samples by their demographic gave



to a confirmation of correct target group. Hence, as gathered research were following past research sampling manners, the demographic profile of gathered research is overlapping each other. On the other hand, with the same demographic profiling styles, some researchers managed to categorize the samples by their attitude, this action gave the research with new function in terms of reporting the research data. Audience categorization

allowed the research to report the findings by sample category, and not only by sample's demographic. For example, Research 2 reported that 'university student who studied in film-related department' had a medium interest in pro-social film. Meanwhile, Research 4 reported that 'samples aged from 18-35 years old' paid most attention in film trailers as they searched for information.

**Table 5** Demographic profiling and audience categorization of gathered research

Research topic	Demographic Report	Audience Categorization
Research 1: "Consumer Behavior on 2-D and 3D Movies"	Gender, age, educational level, career, personal income	1. Consumers who prefer 3D movies when both 2D and 3D movies are available 2. Consumer who prefer 3D movies more than 2D
Research 2: "Perception, Attitude and Awareness of Movie-Goers about social problems in Pro-social films"		Categorized samples by Level of interest in pro-social films: high interest, medium interest, and low interest.
Research 3: "Factor Influencing The Independent Film Viewing"		Categorized samples by consumer media preferences and their relationship with the media
Research 4: "Marketing Communication Strategy and Consumer Behavior on GTH Movies"	Age: 15-35 years old/ teenagers	
Research 5: "Marketing Communication Factors Influencing Thai Movie Viewing Behavior"	Gender, age, educational level, career, personal income	
Research 6: "Narration of Attitudes Regarding Violence in Thai and Hollywood Films"	Gender	
Research 7: "The Impact of Multiplex Theater Expansion on Provincial Film Distribution System in Thailand"	Gender, age, educational level, career, personal income	
Research 8: "Bangkok Movie Goers Attitude toward Domestic Film Production"	Gender, age, educational level, career, personal income	
Research 9: "Customer Response Toward Customer Experience Management of SF Cinema City"	Gender, age, educational level, career, personal income	
Research 10: "Media Habit, Information Need and Film Viewer's Behaviors of Independent Films"	Gender, age, educational level, career	
Research 11: "Factors Related to The Decision to View Thai Animated Film Khankluay 2"	Gender, age, educational level, career, personal income	
Research 12: "The Comparison of Factors Influencing the Audience's in Film Choosing at Major Cineplex and Entertainment Golden Village(EGV), Bangkok"	Gender, age, educational level, career, personal income, marital status, movie theatres that consumer went to.	
Research 13: "Factors Influencing Consumers Behavior in Viewing Thai and Hollywood Movie in Bangkok Metropolitan Area"	Gender, age, educational level, career, personal income, marital status.	
Research 14: "Marketing Factors Affecting Movie-Watching Behavior of Consumers At Major Hollywood Theatres In Bangkok Metropolitan and Perimeter Areas"	Gender, age, educational level, career, personal income, marital status.	

## CONCLUSION

"Current Status of Consumer Research in Thai Film Industry" is a qualitative research which employed two research methods: in-depth interview with Thai film industry stakeholders, and analysis of past research conducted by researchers from higher education institutes or post-graduate students. The data allows this research to answer two designated research questions, which are:

1. How do different stakeholders in Thai film industry conduct consumer research?
2. What is the methodology employed in consumer research done by stakeholders in Thai film industry and researchers in Thai higher educational institutions?

Firstly, to answer the first research question, the researcher interviewed six different stakeholders in Thai film industry by using in-depth interview

method. The goal was to capture three different variables which are research methodology, audience categorization, and research-data restriction. Apart from reporting through these variables, the researcher also discussed four relevant points as the result of analysis, which are stakeholders' knowledge in consumer research, informal research, outsourcing for consumer research, and Thai working ethic and personal experience. The result has shown that in terms of research methodology, stakeholders upheld different positions. For instance, Kantana hired outsource and had no evidence of research methodology in hand, while GTH from time to time conducted a focus group with employees inside the company and with the audiences. In terms of audience categorization, stakeholders mentioned that teenager is their target group, and it is the major target audience for the Thai film industry. In terms of research-data restriction, some of the stakeholders who participated in the interviews explained that research-data is only being used by the executives.

Secondly, to answer the second research question, the researcher gathered 14 different research which conducted by researchers in higher education, or post-graduate students. The analysis of gather research followed the three steps:

1. The researcher summarized all the research and listed them into table format (see Table 1 above).

2. The researcher looked for the similar components of all the researches which are research approach, research sample, focus of the study and research variable, and demographic profiling.

3. The researcher looked for relevant points for reporting the components.

Thirdly, in terms of the focus of the study and research variables, the similarity of the gathered research has shown that consumer attitude, level of satisfaction, information search, and media habit are respectively the similar research variables. The focus of the study directs toward many elements of film industry, for example, film industrial service and film content. If the focus of the study could be broader, it could be summarized as focus on film content, focus on film industrial service, and focus on marketing communication of film industry.

Lastly, in terms of demographic profiling, there are two styles of profiling samples' demographic shown in gathered research which are report by the demographic of research samples, and report by samples' attitude regarding certain topics. In terms of demographic data-collection, for the quantitative research, it could be implanted with the research tool. However, for the qualitative research, the research usually specified the samples and mostly obtained demographic information before the interviews or focus group happened.



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