# Impact of Personal Characteristics and Storytelling Techniques of Thai Series Y on Young Audiences' Acceptance of LGBTQ: A Case Study of "I Told Sunset About You"

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## Abstract

This survey research aimed to examine the influence of personal characteristics of respondents on their perception of the storytelling techniques and attitude toward LGBTQ among Chinese audiences. One hundred and eighty-six Chinese audience were selected using purposive sampling and snowball sampling. The samples were Chinese young people aged from 18 to over 26 years old who have seen the series *"I Told Sunset About You"*. The data was tabulated using One-way ANOVA and Regression analysis to test the hypotheses. The findings revealed that the numbers of LGBTQ friends have significantly influence of Chinese young audiences' attitude toward to LGBTQ. However, storytelling techniques portrayed in the Thai TV series "I Told Sunset About You" did not significantly influence Chinese young audiences' attitude toward to LGBTQ.

**Keywords:** Chinese Young Audiences, Thai Series, Film Storytelling Techniques, Demographic Factor, Attitude Toward LGBTQ

## Introduction

This survey research focuses on how the personal characteristics and storytelling techniques influence audiences' acceptance of Thai series Y and attitude toward LGBTQ among Chinese audiences.

Storytelling techniques in television series include characters, plot, conflict, resolution, structure, scenes, dialogue and visual elements. The viewers can feel the feelings, ideas and values that the TV series author and director want to express and perceive the authenticity of the TV series through these aspects. This study will examine how Chinese viewers influence their attitudes toward to LGBTQ through their perceptions of series Y (Li, 2020).

In the research of Wang (2018) showed that storytelling techniques in films or series can enhance the understanding of viewers and have deep impression of the films and series (Wang, 2018). As the finding from Li (2020). storytelling techniques cannot influence

the culture values of viewers directly, but viewers can feel the culture values through the storytelling techniques of films and series, and combine with viewers their own cultures and then have an impact on culture values of them (Li, 2020).

**Research Objectives**

1. To examine the storytelling techniques portrayed sexuality of LGBTQ in Thai Series "I Told Sunset About You".

2. To examine the attitude toward the sexuality of LGBTQ among Chinese viewer after they have watched the Thai Series "I Told Sunset About You".

3. To examine the influence of personal characteristics of respondents on attitude toward the sexuality of LGBTQ among Chinese viewers.

4. To examine the influence of storytelling techniques portrayed in Thai Series Y on the attitude toward the sexuality of LGBTQ among Chinese viewers.

**Literature Review**

**Impact of Storytelling Techniques in Film in changing audiences' Attitudes**

According to Kubrak (2020) that films can have a big impact on gender and change attitude of audiences toward of some certain groups of people and cause some new opinions on various issues. Such as if a film has transgender characters will have positive impact of attitude to transgender people. And, if a film gives positive depiction of gay men will reduce homophobia (Kubrak,2020).

**Related Theories**

**Cultivation Theory**

Developed by Hungarian-born American professor George Gerbner in the 1960s.This theory refers to the fact that people exposed to the media interpret reality based on the media's portrayal of social reality. The Cultivation Theory hypothesis suggests that the more television people watch, the more likely they are to have a view of cognitive reality that is closer to the reality depicted on television (Perera, 2021).

**Reception Theory**

Stuart Hall's Reception Theory holds that media film and series texts are encoded and decoded. Producers encode messages and values into the media film and series, and then are decoded by audiences. However, different audiences decoded media film and series in different ways, and the resulting code may not be the one intended by the creator themselves.
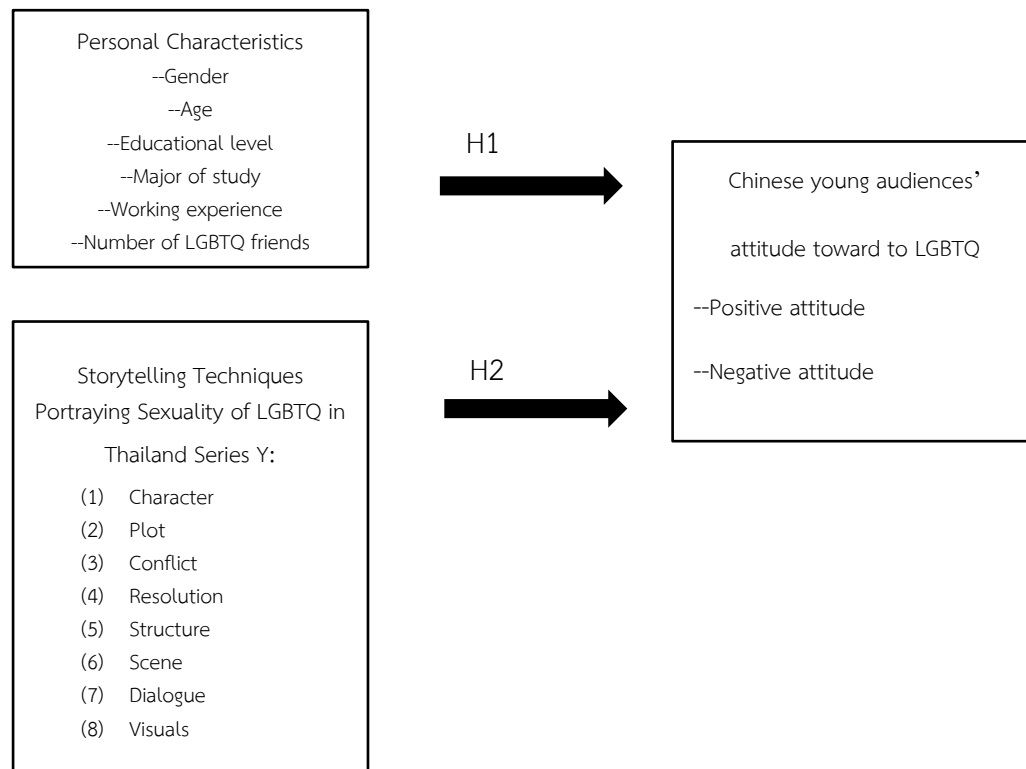
**Social Cognitive Theory**

Social Cognitive Theory holds that people develop similar behavior by observing the behavior of others. Especially if their observation experiences are positive or include

rewards associated with the act of observing (Niwlikar, 2022). This theory was developed by Albert Bandura, who said that when people look at a model of an action and the consequences of that action, they remember the order of events and use that information to guide subsequent actions. The media provide models for large groups of people in different environmental settings. Attitude towards LGBTQ are not inborn, they are socialized (Gonta et al.,2017).

## Research Framework

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┌─────────────────────────────┐
│   Personal Characteristics  │
│        --Gender             │
│        --Age                │              Chinese young audiences'
│   --Educational level       │   H1
│   --Major of study          │ ────────▶    attitude toward to LGBTQ
│   --Working experience      │
│   --Number of LGBTQ friends │           --Positive attitude
└─────────────────────────────┘
                                           --Negative attitude
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│   Storytelling Techniques   │   H2
│ Portraying Sexuality of     │ ────────▶
│ LGBTQ in Thailand Series Y: │
│   (1)  Character            │
│   (2)  Plot                 │
│   (3)  Conflict             │
│   (4)  Resolution           │
│   (5)  Structure            │
│   (6)  Scene                │
│   (7)  Dialogue             │
│   (8)  Visuals              │
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## Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Difference in demographic characteristics (including gender, age, educational level, major of study, working experiences, numbers of LGBTQ friends) significantly affect attitude toward LGBTQ among Chinese viewers after watching Thai TV series "I Told Sunset About You".

Hypothesis 2: Perception of the storytelling techniques (including character, plot, conflict, resolution, structure, scene, dialogue and visuals) portraying sexuality of LGBTQ in Thai TV series significantly influence of Chinese young audiences' attitudes toward of LGBTQ.

## Research Methodology

### Research Design

This study used a quantitative method to examine the acceptance of the LGBT part of series Y in Thailand by the youth audience after watching the Thai series Y "I Told Sunset About You", so this method is the one that can illustrate the relationship between the two existent variables.

### Population and sampling method

The population for this study included Chinese viewers who had been exposed to the LGBT portion of series Y of Thailand. They are male and female Chinese audiences. Because of the uncertainty of the population number, the calculation of Taro Yamane (1973)'s formula was used and the sample was 186 Thai series Y viewers.

The sample were selected the purposive sampling and snowball sampling, which is non-probability method that it is fast execution, low cost, low time commitment and not subject to low response rates, the easier to carry out in the network (What is non-probability sampling? Everything you need to know, 2022)

### Research Instrument

The purpose of this questionnaire is to examine that Chinese young viewer exposure the storytelling elements of the Thai series Y "I Told Sunset About You" and the attitude towards to LGBTQ of young Chinese reviewers after watching the Thai series Y "I Told Sunset About You".

The questionnaire composes of three parts. Part I inquired about the personal characteristics of the respondents. Part II inquired about the perception of respondents toward the storytelling techniques portrayed in Thai Series Y *"I Told Sunset About You"* using 5 point-likert scale, arranging from (5) highest perception, (4) high perception ,(3) medium perception, (2)low perception and (1)lowest perception, respectively. Part III inquired about the attitude towards to LGBTQ of young Chinese reviewers after watching the Thai series Y *"I Told Sunset About You"*. The scale of attitude towards to LGBTQ was adopted from Kate & Deaux (1986) to examine the 2 dimensions, including (1) positive attitude towards homosexuality and (2) negative attitude towards homosexuality. The items in this section used the 5 point-likert scale, arranging from (1) strongly agree (2) agree (3) neither agree nor disagree (4)disagree and (5)strongly disagree, respectively.

Two academic experts have checked the content validity of both scales in the questionnaire and the questionnaire was considered to reliable, having an overall cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.928. The cronbach alpha for perception of storytelling techniques of the Thai series Y *"I Told Sunset About You"* was 0.983, having cronbach alpha of 0.919 for positive attitude was 0.919, and cronbach alpha of 0.949 for negative attitude toward LGBTQ.

### Data Collection

The data was collected from March to April,2020, on social media including Wechat, Weibo and Douban, these are popular social media among Chinese young people. Online surveys can attract more respondents to facilitate data collection. Everyone will pay attention to "Weibo" every day and share interesting things through Weibo, therefore it has high probability to find the target population who are suitable for this survey and for quickly and more accurate data collection.

### Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using the statistical package. The descriptive statistics included frequency and percentage to explain the demographic information and the attitude toward LGBTQ from them. One-way ANOVA was used to test Hypothesis 1 and Multiple Regression was used to test Hypothesis 2.

## Research Findings

### Descriptive Findings

The descriptive findings revealed that most of them are female (91.4%, n=170), LGBTQ (7.5%, n=14). Male just only (1.1%, n=2). Most of the participants are in the 18-20 years old (33.3%, n=62), 21-23 (30.1%, n=56), over 26 (21%, n=39) of them while the last is 24-26 years old (15.6%, n=29).

For major of study, the most subjects (50%, n=93) have been put into the option of "others", while learning or working of business and marketing (17.7%, n=33), media is (12.4%, n=23) and humanities and tourism is (10.8%, n=20), engineering is (5.4%, n=10) and field of law only (3.8%, n=7).

For education level, Bachelor's Degree (67.2%, n=125) while below the Bachelor's Degree (18.8%, n=35) and higher than Bachelor's Degree (14%, n=26).

Among 186 participants, 92 participants are people who have not currently working with (49.5%, n=92), (25.3%, n=47) are answered the option "others". While working in education and training field (15.1%, n=28) and following is art or entertainment is (7.5%, n=14). For hotel management is (1.6%, n=3) and only (1.1%, n=2) of the field from healthcare.

For numbers of LGBTQ friends, the most participants have 1-5 people is (48.4%, n=90) and following is no any LGBTQ friends (39.2%, n=73), 6-10 people (9.1%, n=17), while 11-15 people and 16-20 people and over 20 people are showed the same result is (1.1%, n=2).

The questionnaire of storytelling techniques showed that the respondents were exposed to eight elements of storytelling portrayed in the series "*I Told Sunset About You*" at the high level (mean = 3.85, SD = 1.3). When examining each storytelling element,

descriptive findings revealed that respondents perceived visual at high level (mean = 3.96, SD = 1.56), scene at high level (mean = 3.94, SD = 1.56), plot at high level (mean = 3.91, SD = 1.5), character at high level (mean = 3.86, SD = 1.32), resolution at high level (mean = 3.83, SD = 1.42), conflict at high level (mean = 3.81, SD = 1.2), , structure at high level (mean = 3.78, SD = 1.38), and dialogue at high level (mean = 3.72, SD = 1.2), respectively. The findings suggested that Chinese viewers perceived the exposure to visual with the highest mean, following are scene, plot, character, resolution, conflict, structure and dialogue, respectively.

The questionnaire of attitude showed that the respondents had neutral attitude towards to LGBTQ statements (mean = 2.96, SD = 0.29). Descriptive findings revealed that they agree with the statements expressing positive attitude towards to LGBTQ statements (mean = 1.78, SD = 0.96), and strongly disagree with the statements expressing negative attitude statements (mean = 4.14, SD = 1.06). The finding suggested that respondents agreed the positive attitude and disagree the negative attitude. Further indicated that they were more support LGBTQ community and resisted thoughts and behaviors that opposed LGBTQ community.

### Hypotheses Findings

**Hypothesis 1: Difference in personal characteristics (including gender, age, educational level, major of study, working experiences, numbers of LGBTQ friends) significantly influence attitude toward LGBTQ among Chinese viewers after watching Thai TV series "I Told Sunset About You".**

As shown in Table 1, One-Way ANOVA analysis examined how gender, age, education level, majors of study, working experience and number of LGBTQ friends influence the attitude toward LGBTQ after Chinese viewers watching this series. According Table 1, gender, age, education level, majors of study, working experience are all not significant factors($P$>0.05) influencing Chinese viewers' attitude toward LGBTQ.

But based on Table 1, in the set of "numbers LGBTQ friends", there was a statistically significant difference in exam score between at least two groups (F (5,180) = 3.380, $p$ = 0.006<0.05).

**Table 1:** One-way ANOVA on the impact of demographic factors on attitude toward LGBTQ

ANOVA

|  |  | Sum of square | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gender |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Attitude toward LBTQ | Between group | 0.16 | 2 | .008 | .903 | .911 |

| | | Sum of square | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Positive attitude | Between group | .847 | 2 | .423 | .451 | .637 |
| Negative attitude | Between group | 1.376 | 2 | .688 | .601 | .549 |
| Age | | | | | | |
| Attitude toward LBTQ | Between group | .145 | 3 | .048 | .565 | .639 |
| Positive attitude | Between group | 2.769 | 3 | .923 | .990 | .399 |
| Negative attitude | Between group | 4.835 | 3 | 1.612 | 1.425 | .237 |
| Educational level | | | | | | |
| Attitude toward LBTQ | Between group | .107 | 2 | .054 | .626 | .536 |
| Positive attitude | Between group | 3.661 | 2 | 1.831 | 1.985 | .140 |
| Negative attitude | Between group | 5.213 | 2 | 2.606 | 2.321 | .101 |
| Majors of study | | | | | | |
| Attitude toward LBTQ | Between group | .407 | 5 | .081 | .954 | .448 |
| Positive attitude | Between group | 9.856 | 5 | 1.971 | 2.182 | .058 |
| Negative attitude | Between group | 7.094 | 5 | 1.419 | 1.254 | .286 |
| Working experience | | | | | | |
| Attitude toward LBTQ | Between group | .277 | 5 | .055 | .643 | .667 |
| Positive attitude | Between group | 5.693 | 5 | 1.139 | 1.229 | .297 |
| Negative attitude | Between group | 9.514 | 5 | 1.903 | 1.702 | .136 |
| Number of LGBTQ friends | | | | | | |
| Attitude toward | Between | 1.353 | 5 | .271 | 3.380 | .006 |

|  |  | Sum of square | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| LBTQ | group |  |  |  |  |  |
| Positive attitude | Between group | 6.747 | 5 | 1.349 | 1.466 | .203 |
| Negative attitude | Between group | 7.408 | 5 | 1.482 | 1.312 | .261 |

As shown in Table 2, LSD test for Multiple Comparisons found that the mean value of exam scores were significantly different between respondents who have no LGBTQ friends and who have 11-15 friends (I-J =.79, p = .000<0.05) for the "Attitude toward LGBTQ", between who have no LGBTQ friends and who have 1-5 friends (I-J = .33, p = .028<0.05) for the "Positive attitude".

**Table 2:** LSD test analyzing the influence of numbers of LGBTQ on attitude toward LGBTQ

| Multiple Comparison | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Dependent variable |  |  | Mean difference | Std. Error | Sig. |
| Attitude toward LGBTQ | 0 people | 1-5 people | .03022 | .04457 | .499 |
|  |  | 6-10 people | .10384 | .07620 | .175 |
|  |  | 11-15 people | .79234 | .20280 | .000 |
|  |  | 16-20 people | -.09402 | .20280 | .643 |
|  |  | Over 20 people | .06507 | .20280 | .749 |
| Positive attitude | 0 people | 1-5 people | .33421 | .15113 | .028 |
|  |  | 6-10 people | .46451 | .25838 | .074 |
|  |  | 11-15 people | .50996 | .68768 | .459 |

| Multiple Comparison | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Dependent variable | | | Mean difference | Std. Error | Sig. |
| | | 16-20 people | .55542 | .68768 | .420 |
| | | Over 20 people | .78260 | .68768 | .257 |
| Negative attitude | 0 people | 1-5 people | -.27377 | .16739 | .104 |
| | | 6-10 people | -.25683 | .28619 | .371 |
| | | 11-15 people | 1.07472 | .76167 | .160 |
| | | 16-20 people | -.76346 | .76167 | .330 |
| | | Over 20 people | -.65255 | .76167 | .393 |

**Hypothesis 2**: Perception of the storytelling techniques (including character, plot, conflict, resolution, structure, scene, dialogue and visuals) portraying sexuality of LGBTQ in Thai TV series significantly influence of Chinese young audiences' attitudes toward of LGBTQ.

As shown in Table 3, Multiple Regression analysis revealed that storytelling elements had no significant effect on Chinese young audiences' attitudes toward of LGBTQ. ($R^2$ = .028, p > 0.05). For each storytelling techniques, the results showed that character (Beta= .041, p > 0.05), the plot (Beta= .149, p > 0.05), the conflict (Beta= .132, p > 0.05), the resolution (Beta= .043, p > 0.05), the structure (Beta= .005, p > 0.05), the scene (Beta= .272, p > 0.05), the dialogue (Beta= -.233, p >0.05) and the visual (Beta= -.436, p > 0.05) were not significant predictors of their attitude toward LGBTQ. The findings suggested that eight storytelling elements cannot predict their attitudes toward of LGBTQ at the rate of 2.8%. Respondents perceived eight elements were not significant predictors. That means, these predictors were not associated with their attitude towards of LGBTQ of Chinese young audience.

**Table 3:** Chinese young audiences' attitudes toward of LGBTQ and perception of the storytelling techniques of the series "I Told Sunset About You."

| | | | | | Change Statistics | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std.Error of the Estimate | R Square Change | F Change | df1 | df2 | Sig. F Change | Durbin-Watson |
| 1 | .167 [a] | .028 | -.016 | .294 | .028 | .636 | 8 | 177 | .746 | 2.055 |

**Model Summary [b]**

Predictors:(Constant), Visual, Dialogue, Conflict, Structure, Resolution, Character, Plot, Scene

Dependent Variable: Attitude LGBTQ

**Coefficients [a]**

| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t. | Sig. | 95.0% Confidence Interval for B | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | B | Std.Error | Beta | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound |
| 1 | (Constant) | 2.989 | .082 | | 36.346 | .000 | 2.827 | 3.151 |
| | Character | .009 | .054 | .041 | .171 | .865 | -.096 | .115 |
| | Plot | .029 | .053 | .149 | .546 | .586 | -.076 | .134 |
| | Conflict | .032 | .037 | .132 | .859 | .391 | -.042 | .106 |
| | Resolution | .009 | .037 | .043 | .237 | .813 | -.064 | .081 |
| | Structure | .001 | .036 | .005 | .029 | .977 | -.071 | .073 |
| | Scene | .051 | .054 | .272 | .948 | .345 | -.055 | .156 |
| | Dialogue | -.057 | .031 | -.233 | -1.845 | .067 | -117 | .004 |
| | Visual | -.081 | .060 | -.436 | -1.348 | .179 | -.201 | .038 |

Dependent Variable: Attitude toward LGBTQ

## Conclusion of the study

The findings of the two hypotheses showed that the relationship between the gender, age, educational level and working experience and the eight elements in storytelling techniques of the series were all not significant predictors of Chinese viewers attitude toward to LGBTQ. But the number of LGBTQ friends is the significant predictors of their attitude of LGBTQ. These results support the Social Cognition Theory, Social Cognitive Theory holds that people develop similar behavior by observing the behavior of others, and will assimilate and imitate that behavior after observing the behavior of others. Especially if their observation experiences are positive or include rewards associated with the act of observing (Niwlikar, 2022). The number of LGBTQ friends has influenced the attitude, because LGBTQ friends can help build attitude to this community and people

can observe or imitate from their LGBTQ friends, these behaviors can influence their attitude very directly. And also support the Cultivation Theory hypothesis suggested that the more television people watch, the more likely they are to have a view of cognitive reality that is closer to the reality depicted on television (Perera, 2021). The respondents who have more LGBTQ friends they may contact more films or series led by LGBTQ friends and thus influence their attitude more and more.

However, the results found that eight elements in storytelling techniques of the series were all not significant predictor of Chinese viewers' attitude toward to LGBTQ. The results supported the Reception Theory, which posited that filmmakers encode information and value into movies and series through method such as the storytelling techniques, and then viewers to decode. Viewers will go through decoding process based on their previous experience and socialization. Different viewers will decode differently, which might not always always be consistent with what filmmakers' aim or desire, because audience has their own socialization process which shaped their previous attitude toward LGBTQ such as family background and peer group. Since all the antecedent factors came before watching the Series Y, the socialization process with peer group will shape their attitude toward LGBTQ. The socialization process with their peer group is a significant antecedent that influences their attitude toward LGBTQ. These findings are in an opposite way with previous studies, such as Kubrak (2020) said that films can have a big impact on gender and change attitude of audiences toward of some certain groups of people and cause some new opinions on various issues and if a film has transgender characters will have positive impact of attitude to transgender people (Kubrak, 2020).

This study highlights the impact of storytelling techniques to Chinese viewers attitude of LGBTQ. However, the hypothesis 2 found that the eight elements did not significantly the attitude. The finding results of this research different with other period study the biggest reason maybe just because the survey respondents were Chinese viewers. Though China and Thailand are both Asian countries, and some culture backgrounds are similar, but on the issue of LGBTQ is really has a very complicated and serious differences. Thus, Chinese viewers may not very understand or accept the expression style of Thai storytelling elements. And also, maybe there are more and more different subjects and different types Series Y come out continually, viewers may have higher application requirements. Or indeed, this series was more than one year old, there were maybe just still leave less memories in viewers minds. This result revealed that the culture of LGBTQ indeed exist gap between China and Thailand, and LGBTQ friends and environment indeed influence attitude of people. This research has a significance to help the future study about LGBTQ culture between China and Thailand or other countries.

## Recommendations for Future Application

Findings from Hypothesis 1 suggested that gender, age, educational level, major of study, working experiences all not have significantly impact of Chinese audiences' attitude toward LGBTQ, but different numbers of LGBTQ friends have significantly. So, if media companies want to increase attention, they need to learn situation of audience and need to explore real life of LGBTQ, because audiences who have LGBTQ friends still know the real life of this community.

Findings from Hypothesis 2 suggested that eight storytelling elements including character, plot, conflict, resolution, structure, scene, dialogue and visuals all not have significantly of Chinese audiences' attitude toward LGBTQ. So, media companies need to know what audiences really want to see and do some appropriate survey of them to find out more suitable method to show their series.

Although, the situation getting more and more serious of LGBTQ issue in China, but there are more and more Chinese young people need series Y and want to learn more about LGBTQ community and give their support positively. According to this situation, media companies have to consider more needs from Chinese audiences and using methods more suitable Chinese young people, but it not means be inclined to Chinese too much, Thai and Chinese mixed style will be easier to accepted and also is which Chinese young people love, because Thai culture is also the very important part to learn for them.

## Limitations of the Study

This study has many limitations, such as storytelling elements just a part of a series and most respondents just watched once, in addition this series viewing time more than one year away from the survey time and maybe some respondents' memories were not very clearly.

There were 46 questions in this questionnaire, some respondents maybe lose patience and not red the questions very carefully and not gave the most accurate answers. And this questionnaire was managed in English at the beginning, and then translated into Chinese and then got back to English, there may be a slight difference in expression.

In the end, totally 186 valid questionnaires were collected, the results will be more accurate if there are more respondents and it was limited just by researching only a series to improve the impact the attitude toward LGBTQ of Chinese young people. If there will be similar research in the future, maybe can research multiple series or different types in one series.

## Recommendations of the Future Research

There are more and more LGBTQ people show up in series and other media in Thailand and more and more Chinese young audiences interested in BL (Boys' Love) series, researcher will consider to research further about the impact of positive and negative description. And researcher should research from different direction like reality show and talk show not only research series. And according to this research results, study of culture gap of LGBTQ between China and other countries or study of how does LGBTQ environment impact people are very important.

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