



## Understanding the attitudes of loyal fans towards performers of “Boy’s Love” Sample Early Working Age

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### Abstract

Currently, Y drama series has become more famous more than ever and the purpose of this research is to focus on the perspective towards homosexuality of the loyal fan on Y drama series performers in the early working age range. It is widely known that homosexuality was not accepted in the society, it is inevitable that boys’ love series are not common because the entertainment industry mostly created the film that depicted only female and male characters. Belief and norms are the main factor that influence different perspectives towards homosexuality, attitudes also will be shifted after become the loyal fan of Y drama series. This qualitative research is analyzed from an interview of 15 participants which are the loyal fans in the range of early working age. The objectives of this research is to understand and study the attitudes and perspectives of loyal fans towards performers of Y drama series including their personal experiences, interests, and careers. The researcher has determined that boys’ love series help understanding the homosexuality and homosexual relationship better. Thus, the entertainment industry should be aware in terms of portraying characteristics of the LGBT and homosexuality, in a positive way which is crucial to the audiences’ perspective and attitude when watching boys’ love series.

**Keywords:** YAOI, Y drama series, Attitude of royal fans, Media consumption, Early working age

### 1. Introduction

According to Amornsriwong & Sawunyavisuth (2018), Yaoi means a romantic love story between male and male in Japanese languages. It means that “Y” stands for Yaoi in Japanese, Yaoi or Y drama series is one of the most famous drama series in Thai society since the series called “Love Sick The Series” has broadcasted on TV in 2014, it gained popularity among fans until the season 2 was created, this encourages many producers to start producing Y series (Somyat, 2018). Therefore, Y drama series is the series that represents the interpersonal relationship of homosexuality, it emphasises the unusual relationship between male and male. Back to the past, homosexuality was unacceptable to society because of the gender segregation, cultures, norms, and values that cultivate from parents as Wongmuang & Srikulwong (2016) says that “In the past, Thai television drama portrayed only male and female characters. This contradicts reality which in fact there are sexual diversity, e.g. bisexual, gay and lesbian.” The mass media such as televisions, newspapers, radio, internet, including movies, dramas, and series are the important sources that represent different perspectives of homosexuality in terms of gender identity and gender expression. It has an ability to influence and control the audience’s mentality. Also, they can be the mediator of freedom, image, and acceptance of homosexuality.

Nowadays, there are a lot of Y drama series in Thailand and most of them are renowned since it has become more acceptable since it has become more common in today’s. Y drama series is different from male-female drama series, Y drama series is presenting about male-male love and it is created to show a good perspective of homosexuality or male-male love that is as the same as to normal male-female love according to social norms. Furthermore, many people become loyal fans towards performers of Y drama series. Loyal fans are very important to public figures even artist, musician, or performers, for the reason that they are supporting media products, for instance, CD, concert, movies, series, etc. Thus, there are many age ranges of loyal fans and the differences of characteristics and attitudes which related to factors that influence on cultivating ideas and beliefs. Attitudes, daily routine, and perspective between the loyal fan



and the person who is not the loyal fan of Y drama series performers could show the major characteristics of the loyal fan.

There are many qualitative types of research about homosexuality and Y drama series, mostly published in Thai version, most of the researchers discuss about the perspective on homosexuality's acceptance, at the same time, boys' love novel and drama series, interpersonal relationship of homosexual, and attitudes and behaviors of Y drama series fans in terms of their media consumption. Nevertheless, Vichayawannakul (2017) mentioned that a better understanding of gender diversity leads to a new mindset that homosexual is normal, it has to do with biological aspect, and it is human's rights to express their true gender and identities. According to the data from UNDP (2019), the recent study shows that about 69 percent of Thai people find homosexuality acceptable more than ever. The study mentions that Thais are now see the same-sex couple as a normal couple. The openness to the gender diversity especially among the new generations who are acquainted with LGBT movements has a correlation with the increase of popularity towards the homosexuality group. Supported by Expique (2016), Thailand is becoming the gay-friendly country where people are giving warm welcome to those who are homosexual by the fact that Thailand has promoted and supported the gender equality movements. These data prove that, back then, most people have accept homosexuality and this makes the gender segregation happen in the society. Gender segregation means to separate people who have a sexual orientation that differ from the norms, which is socially constructed. This prove that when this topic are now widely discussed, the minority group as a homosexual is treated by the whole new light.

Thus, media is an important factor that can influence people's attitudes like Sukmoung (2018) says that media plays an important role to reflect the homosexuality because it has a structure of storytelling which allow audiences to follow the story systematically. Also, it has an ability to guide people's mind and thoughts to become more open and accept homosexuality. However, how it is portrayed in the media matters, for example; enhancing a good side of homosexual would benefit them as a whole, however, misrepresentation might lead to even more complicated issues. Amornsriwong & Sawunyavisuth (2018) have interviewed fans of boys' love novels and Y drama series and found that the most influential thing which make they become a loyal fans is the willingness to try watching unfamiliar media, they began with reading boys' love novels and watching drama series, it is a taste breaker which full of surprises and enjoyment, so they become a loyal fan and consume more media about Y drama series. From this interview, it means that boys' love novel and Y drama series can be a mediator and reflect about homosexual in other perspectives that do not come from social and cultural norms from the past but from the media. Furthermore, Heng (2018) mentioned about the Book Expo Thailand 2018, which boys' love novels gained more of public's attention than ever. Young adults were queuing to buy and ask for an autograph in various booths of boys' love novels. This means that boys' love novels's popularity are increased rapidly in the current days.

Meanwhile, Nitade at NIDA (2018) stated that Y drama series is another business that can generate a lot of profits for the Thai entertainment industry because once the Y drama series has become famous, we could broadcast and promote Y drama series by creating an events for fan meetings both in Thailand and abroad. Loyal fans can be categorised as fans that are fond of the actors in that particular Y series, they are ready to follow and support to any events that held for fans meetings or series promoting and they also have a high purchasing power to support all of the actor's works financially. At this time, Y drama series has stepped into a mass media that is not just for the specific group but there it becomes more diverse contents and many people have the courage to watch and enjoy it.

It is a universal concept that different people have a different perspective, thus, some people would accept homosexuality but some people would not. Therefore, there are many external factors that could affect homosexuality. Firstly, Thai parents will cultivate their child since young that homosexuality is wrong and bad, for example, a boy's tears are unacceptable in any conditions, putting these mindsets of gender segregation on children can cause them to refuse to be anything unless their parents have told them to be or do so. Thirdly, friends or colleagues could influence attitudes or change perspectives on gender diversity that it is possible and common to have a different sexual preferences. Fourthly, society and



cultural norms are one of a key factors that influence people's attitudes. Back then, homosexuality means sin and unnatural. This fact is nurtured and socially constructed along from one generation to another. Meanwhile, the mass media could influence and promote social movements by broadcasting news and shape people's mentality, for these facts, mass media also has an impact on attitudes, ideas, and beliefs of people.

## 2. Objectives

There are many factors that influence people's attitudes, ideas and beliefs including society and culture, so the objectives for this research will be illustrated below;

1. To find the career of loyal fans in the range of early working age. Most people of early working age range are fresh graduates, so it is interesting to know what is their job and how can they manage their time in terms of their daily routine such as their work-life balance, including being a loyal fan of Y drama series performers at the same time.
2. To study what factors contribute them to become a loyal fan of Y drama series nowadays such as personal experience, specific interests in something that they have got from watching the series, etc.
3. To understand the perspective of loyal fans towards homosexuality because homosexuality was unacceptable in society in the past due to many factors and it is possible that some people have a new perspective about homosexuality presently, so the perspective of homosexuality in current days is significant for this research.
4. To understand their attitudes towards homosexuality and Y drama series, as well as the comparison between before and after becoming a loyal fan of Y drama series performers.

## 3. Materials and Methods

This study is qualitative research which includes in-depth interviews were conducted and got 15 participants who are loyal fans aged between 22-30 to participate. Some of the participants are selected from social media who have a clear expression of being a loyal fans and some of the participants are the researcher's friends since the researcher was also a loyal fans of boy's love and K-Pop artists. There are 4 parts of interview questions which include demographic characteristics, boys' love series watching experiences, the attitude of boys' love series casts, and the perspective of the romance relationship between boy and boy.

To understand attitudes and perspectives of loyal fans towards performers of Y drama series in the sample early working age, the question is related to the elementary information of the loyal fans and including their homosexuality point of view. There are focusing on these questions:

- What is the career of the loyal fans of performers of Y drama series, in which range of early working age and how they became a loyal fan?
- What are their perspectives towards homosexuality, comparison between before and after becoming a loyal fan of Y drama series performers?

Hence, from these questions and objectives of this research, the information are gathered through the data of interviews and observations towards loyal fans of Y drama series performers in the sample early working age. Some data is collected and analyzed from social media and all the data collected is considered and concluded in the form of qualitative research.

**Table 1** Interviewing questions

Section	Questions
<b>1. Demographics</b>	1. What's your nickname? 2. Do you mind telling me your age please? 3. Do you mind telling me your occupation?
<b>2. Boy's love series watching experiences</b>	1. Have you ever watched boy's love series? 2. If yes, which boy's love series you have watched? 3. Which boy's love series you like the most? 4. When did you watch the series mostly? 5. What is your motivation to watch the series?
<b>3. Attitudes of boy's love series</b>	1. What made you become a fan of boys' love series casts? 2. What is your expectation in becoming a fan? 3. Can you explain what characteristics of the cast do you like? 4. What is the most important thing for the cast to become a boys' love series performer? 5. Please give some personal reasons, why do you love the Y performers.
<b>4. The perspectives of the relationship between boy and boy</b>	1. What do you think about the relationship between boy and boy? 2. Do boys' love series change your perspective about love boy between boy and boy comparing before and after you become a fan? 3. Do you think how the boys' love series affect the society?

#### 4. Results and Discussion

As this study aims to investigate the careers and the way the loyal fans in the range of early working age manage their time to watch Y drama series, they are required to share their current jobs and the time that they spend on watching the series. The career could be relevant and associated with the daily routine as well as their time management for watching Y drama series of the loyal fans in the range of early working age because each career might have some differences in working time and work schedule which results in different free time. Based on the results of the interviewees, it is found that there are several careers of the loyal fans in the range of early working age such as the business owners, bankers, cabin crews, hotel staff, consultant, translator, and so on. Also, it is found that a few interviewees are fresh graduate who is currently a job hunting. This shows that the careers of the loyal fans of Y drama series could be diverse. And hence, it means that Y drama series can grab the attention from a wide range of their loyal fans at the early age, regardless of their careers. In terms of their time management for watching Y drama series, the research examines the time when the interviewees spend on watching Y drama series to analyze its linkage. The result based on the interviews revealed that a great number of the interviewees answered in the same way, showing that people who have different careers are giving more positive attitude towards the homosexuality, according to the source from UNDP (2019) that explains about the growing



trend of homosexuality in Thailand. They spend time after work and in the evening or before going to bed to watch Y drama series. They would watch Y drama series when they finish work and go back to their home. In accordance, the time when they spend for watching the series is normally in the evening and/or before they go to bed. It can be explained that in the evening and before going to bed are the time which they are free from work, and after working long hours in a day, they want to find something to free themselves from a stressful day. This can be concluded that the Y series shows have an interesting plot and captivating storyline that involve the romance between male and male. The time that they specifically choose to watch has to be their free time after work because they already clear their heads away from work and can focus on the storyline without worry about work.

The research also raises the questions about the reasons for the interviewees who are asked to clarify their reasons to become the loyal fans of Y drama series nowadays, and hence explores the motivation of them to watch Y drama series which found some notable motivation behind their decisions to watch the series. For instance, an interviewee stated that it was exciting and new to Thai society as previously there was nothing involving male and male relationship on the media. Another interviewee discussed that he became the loyal fan of Y drama series because he was motivated by his friends and trend in Twitter which have influenced watch the series and then became the loyal fans. Also, another interviewee said that the male characters in the Y drama series have the good characteristics such as calm and warm-hearted which could be good if these are used in their daily lives. Meanwhile, the novels can become the motivation for people to become the loyal fan of Y drama series as well. As explained by an interviewee, she had been a die-hard fan of Y drama novel before and had not been interested in watching the series at the time. Nonetheless, as her favorite Y drama novel was produced as the television drama series, she then turned to her interests to Y drama series more and more. This supports the statement of Amornsriwong and Sawunyavisuth (2018) which relates the interests in watching Y drama series to the Y novels. It can be concluded that each individual could have their own reason for them to become a loyal fan of Y drama series. In this way, the reasons for each of them can be driven by different factors such as the surrounding environment, their friends, social media trends and personal interests. It can be concluded that the reasons for the individuals can be different based on their personal interests and background. The ones who have interests in something related to relationship between male and male can easily become a loyal fan of Y drama series because the series often narrates the story about homosexual love and couple which reflects their personal interests directly. The study further explores that there are external factors such as friends that could influence the individuals to watch the Y drama series which finally makes them become the loyal fans of Y drama series as well. The individuals who are watching the Y drama series can recommend and persuade their friends to watch the series. Social media trends could be another example of external factor that greatly influence the individuals to be a loyal fan of Y drama series, especially when today social media is prevalently used among people to access news, updates and information. Trends therefore help broadcasting about the Y drama series and lead the people to watch the series.

The perspective of the loyal fans towards homosexuality are also the significant area of this research study. There could be a new perspective towards homosexuality expressed by the interviewees who live in the society in which are more open to homosexuality than in the past. The results of the interview show that most of the interviewees believed that homosexuality was quite normal in the modern society. Also, none of them have a negative perspective towards the homosexuality. There are a lot of homosexual couples in Thai society at the moment as it is widely accepted by public regarding relationship between people with the same sex. The homosexuality is also supported by the modern society, of which people living in such society no longer have a negative attitude towards them anymore as discussed by various opinions from the interviewees participating in this research. For example, a female interviewee stated that the relationship between the same sex people was nothing different from the relationship between male and female. Additionally, a male interviewee said that today's world was changing a lot from what it was in the past, and people become more open to the homosexuality at the moment. The result corresponds the study of Wongmuang and Srikulwong (2016) that modern society shapes the positive attitude towards the same-sex characters. Thus, it is concluded that the loyal fans of Y drama series have the positive perspective towards





the homosexuality which could be supported by the increasing acceptance of the homosexuality by the members in modern society. Modern society plays an important role in shaping and constructing the perspective of its member in terms of homosexuality. In the past, homosexuality might be seen that homosexuality as unnatural. Many people expressed their hatred or negative feeling when they thought of the relationship between people with the same sex, contributed by the traditional and as well as biological notion about being a partner that it is limited for only a man and a woman (Wongmuang & Srikulwong, 2016). Particularly, in Thai society, several people were opposing against homosexuality. Thai parents would feel frustrated and could refuse to understand if their offspring showed their love to the same sex partner. However, as time goes by, there is a massive change in the modern Thai society that people are more open to the new cultures, practices, and values such as the homosexuality. Television series also openly promote the homosexual relationship to the public more, reflecting that homosexuality is viewed as something more traditional for most people today. The loyal fans of Y drama series therefore derive the value of homosexuality and hold it tightly in the modern society. As a result, they find it simply normal for a man to get in a relationship with another man as similarly to what they have seen in the series.

In addition to this, the research is conducted to study the attitudes of the loyal fans towards homosexuality and Y drama series. The research hence explores what makes them become a loyal fans of boys' love cast. The results of the study show that all interviewees have positive attitudes towards the homosexual men in the boys' love cast. For example, a male interviewee told that the actors starring in the boys' love cast took a good care of themselves similar to him which made him become fond of the actors and viewed them as an inspiration. Many interviewees further stated that the good chemistry between the actors was pleasing and made them become the loyal fans of boy love cast. A female interview said that she was really a fan of boys' love cast after watching Y drama series and since then she followed them in social media and their works. Another female interviewee said that she preferred the characteristics and looks of the actors starring in the boys. Additionally, to clarify their attitudes towards homosexuality more extensively, the interviewees are asked about their expectations on the casts in boys love series. The results turn out that some of them did not expect anything from the casts. An interviewee stated that he did not expect the casts to be the real homosexual couple because playing the Y drama series is just for their careers which is separate from themselves in real life. Similarly, another interviewee said that she did not expect the casts to be a homosexual couple in real life, only their personalities in the series and in real life were not too different. Nonetheless, some interviewees are found to have some expectations about the boys' love cast. For instance, a female interviewee said that she wanted the boys love cast to be a real-life couple. In addition, most of them also said that it was not wrong. An interviewee said that it was the individual's rights and preferences for getting in male-male relationship. Another interviewee added that love was not indicated that it was only made by a male and a female but it was all about the feeling. Based on these results, it is concluded that the attitudes of the fans towards homosexuality and Y drama series are mostly positive. There are several reasons why they are fond of the boys' love cast. The boys love cast can be viewed as their inspiration. Meanwhile, the chemistry between the boys' love cast is considered something agreeable for them. This shows that they express the good attitude towards homosexuality. In terms of expectation, in regard with the boys' love cast, some of them want their favorite boys' love cast to be the homosexual couple in real life. This might support the ideas that the loyal fans highly accept the homosexual couples in real life and homosexuality is deemed to be a normal thing in today's society.

Last but not least, the research makes the comparison between before and after becoming a loyal fan of Y drama series performers, questioning about the changes in perspective of the loyal fans of Y drama series about love between boy and boy. The results found that there were some changes in perspective of the interviewees after they became the loyal fans of the series. Some of them said that they understood the homosexuality and homosexual relationship more after watching Y drama series. For instance, an interviewee said that he actually did not feel homosexuality as something bad at first place, but watching the series made him become more familiar about love between boy and boy. Another interviewee stated that she had not known or interest in LGBT much, however after she started watching the series, she knew more about the LGBT and viewed their relationship as normal as male-female couples in society. Meanwhile,



some interviewees said that their perspectives did not change much after watching the series as they don't view the relationship between boy and boy as something unusual. The interviewees also gave their opinions about the impact of the series on Thai society. Many interviewees said that it would bring about the positive effects as the society might understand the homosexuality better. However, a few drawbacks are discussed by some interviewees as well. For example, an interviewee said that though the relationship between boy and boy might be acceptable for the new generations, the series could lead to the imitative behaviors by children, which is how people from the older generation view homosexual people. Another interviewee also stated that the series which focused too much on the sexual aspects between boy and boy could also defame and create the misunderstanding about the homosexuality. Based on the results, this shows that the Y drama series can have an impact on the perspective of the loyal fans' perspective regarding the romance relationship between homosexual couple. Some fans of the series might not be much aware of the LGBT movements even though they do not have negative feelings about LGBT. As they watch Y drama series, their understanding towards LGBT people are being shaped because the series include the representations of various aspects about the homosexual characters throughout the series. The fans can learn and see the progress of the characters including their feelings, motivations to express their true sexual orientation or even reasons to be in love with the same gender in order to understand about the love between boy and boy more. In addition, the result from this study could be an opportunity for film production companies and entertainment industries to comprehend their customer's perspectives towards Y drama series. They can expand more target group of audience and they can be a mediator to convey the positive representation of homosexuality, and encourage gender diversity in Thailand. In the same way, Y drama series and boys' love casts can help to encourage homosexual people who have the fear of expressing their sexual orientation due to social pressure and norms. Y series can help people boost their self-esteem and accept themselves for who they are. Consequently, it can make people understand the attitudes and perspectives of loyal fans of Y drama series and transform other people's perspective towards homosexuality positively.

## 5. Conclusion

In conclusion, this research illustrate the attitudes of loyal fans towards performers of Y drama series, their motivation to watch the Y drama series and the perspective towards the homosexuality. It is important to note that nowadays, there are growing number of Y drama series for the audiences in Thailand to watch. The popularity has increased compared to in the past when Y drama series was seen as uncommon in Thai's media market. (Wongmuang & Srikulwong, 2016). The growth of Y drama series today is contributed by the more acceptance and openness to LGBT which has various movements over the past few years. Thai people especially in the early working age, growing up in the modern society become more familiar with the presence of love between the homosexual people as it can be found in various media such as television and social media. Therefore, it suggests that Y drama series can be a tool for developing a better understanding for audiences about the homosexuality in Thailand. The producers of Y series need to research and try to portray the story in accordance to the reality. Focusing on the entertainment aspect and try every possible way to grab audiences' attention might lead to a negative issue. when the contents excessively emphasize the sexual aspects rather than giving the understanding to people about the homosexuality. Therefore, the producers of Y drama series should consider this carefully and try to promote the characteristics and give core knowledge to the audiences about the LGBT instead of focusing on nudity or sexual expression which is meaningless and do not give anything necessary to the audiences' perspective and attitude towards the homosexuality.

As for the future study, this research mainly aims to study the attitudes of loyal fans towards performers of "Y drama series" Sample Early Working Age. The research is conducted by using only qualitative research method while the quantitative research method is omitted. The future researchers might consider using the quantitative research method in order to figure out the results that are underpinned by statistical data. In addition, this research only targets the early working age as the research participants. The future researchers should consider to conduct the study with the different groups to see the similarity and difference between the results of study.



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