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Creative Content Strategy of Streaming Movie on SVOD by Thailand Content Providers

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Abstract

The phenomenon of Video Streaming in Thailand in 2015 created online-movie providers or Video on-demand providers through Streaming with legal copyrights no less than ten providers, including a lot of the providers who infringed the copyrights. It was consistent with the consumers' behaviors in the present time who needed convenience in hands and could not tolerate with any long waiting for anything anymore. With watching movies through Video Streaming, the viewers could be able to watch the movies through electronic gadgets connecting to the Internet conveniently, easily, and promptly. (NBTC, 2020) Nowadays, in Thailand the online-movie providers or Streaming were increasing, and the competition marketing in Thailand was seriously taken. Hollywood HDTV was the first online-movie provider in Thailand, which pioneered the market by providing Streaming focusing on the service of movie variety that included from the classic movies to the international movies. After that, Primetime was the second online-movie provider, which came to open the market in Thailand by highlighting the new movies and the swiftness of bringing the new movies into the online service. Next, it was Iflix, the famous movie provider from Indonesia, which concentrated the buffet online-movies, and another remarkable feature of Iflix was gathering the popular Western series to the utmost. For the main video streaming service provider with SVOD (Subscription Video on Demand), It was to provide watching online-TV by collecting monthly service fee, which the viewers could select to the movies to watch backwards. In Thailand, Netflix was the major provider as in many countries, which came to open the market by merging with many famous content creators of Thailand to produce and broadcast Thai series in some platforms such as Netflix, including Disney Plus, Mono Max, and Prime Video as well (NBTC, 2020). Providing the viewing movies through the Internet whether downloading or Streaming quite affected both the viewers and the service providers, together with the advance of the Internet technology, which was the key factor influencing the viewers to be able to access the movie sources easier because in the past, watching movies could be accessible in the movie theater platform only. Therefore, it caused the competition, and the movie industry businesspeople must adjust themselves in terms of the content to be watched. Hence, with all the factors mentioned, the researcher was interested in studying the strategy of creating the movie contents, which were different from the conventional watching movies in the movie theater. When digital technology came to redesign the watching movie platform of the viewers, it was prone to have other factors affecting the movie contents, which formerly were created to show in the movie theater only; however, presently it was the era of "Content is the King," and based on Streaming, it was the opportunity and the extreme challenge for the content providers to create the attractive contents and make the profits for the movie businesspeople on the digital media.

Keywords: Streaming media, digital media, screenplay, Creative content strategy.

Introduction

The advancement of communication technology in the present time was influenced by the growth of the Internet, and it made watching the media both television and online-movies gain popularity continuously. According to the report of Ovem, a company collecting and analyzing telecommunication and technology data, it was indicated that the market of online audiovisual

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service OTT (Over-The-Top) was on the growing trend globally from 657 million users in 2019, which would be expected to reach 968 million users within 2023. In Thailand, the statistic data from 2019 shown that there were 1.3 million users and it rose to 1.52 million users in 2020, and it was expected to reach 1.78 and 1.99 million users in 2012 and 2022 respectively.

For the movie platform, film system was turned into file system that caused a lot of transformation for the culture of movies production and watching movies, which the viewers could copy, share, and download the movies easily and not wasting a long time. Nowadays, the advent of the high-speed Internet directly influenced the movie business. That was the Internet media and the digital technology, and it not only affected in Thailand but also global countries that revolutionized terms of production, showing, and distribution. The present market of Streaming Video was worth globally more than 5,160 million dollars, and it was expected to reach 8,610 million dollars in 2022 with the major market in the North America. Anyway, if considering in details, it was found that the most growing region was Asia Pacific with the triple ratio of viewers who watched through smartphones during the years 2015-2017 (Salvador, 2019; Jam et al., 2011; Hassnain et al., 2022; Dragomir et al., 2017; Kurniawan et al., 2016; Tung et al., 2018). Hereby, with the specialty of Streaming Video, the viewers could select and watch the movies anywhere and anytime; thereby, it made the behavior tendency of viewers increasingly inclined to using smartphone globally, and it was the opportunity for Streaming providers to have another platform to make a fortune and to make their businesses grow. The phenomenon of Video Streaming in Thailand in 2015 created online-movie providers or Video on-demand providers through Streaming with legal copyrights no less than ten providers, including a lot of the providers who infringed the copyrights. It was consistent with the consumers' behaviors in the present time who needed convenience in hands and could not tolerate with any long waiting for anything anymore. With watching movies through Video Streaming, the viewers could be able to watch the movies through electronic gadgets connecting to the Internet conveniently, easily, and promptly (NBTC, 2020; Jam et al., 2016; Rachman et al., 2021; Yimnak et al., 2016; Manu et al., 2016).

Nowadays, in Thailand the online-movie providers or Streaming were increasing, and the competition marketing in Thailand was seriously taken. Hollywood HDTV was the first online-movie provider in Thailand, which pioneered the market by providing Streaming focusing on the service of movie variety that included from the classic movies to the international movies. After that, Primetime was the second online-movie provider, which came to open the market in Thailand by highlighting the new movies and the swiftness of bringing the new movies into the online service. Next, it was Iflix, the famous movie provider from Indonesia, which concentrated the buffet online-movies, and another remarkable feature of Iflix was gathering the popular Western series to the utmost.

Presently, for the main video streaming service provider with SVOD (Subscription Video on Demand), It was to provide watching online-TV by collecting monthly service fee, which the viewers could select to the movies to watch backwards. In Thailand, Netflix was the major provider as in many countries, which came to open the market by merging with many famous content creators of Thailand to produce and broadcast Thai series in some platforms such as Netflix, including Disney Plus, Mono Max, and Prime Video as well (NBTC, 2020; Jam et al., 2010; Chi et al., 2022; Luu et al., 2019).

In terms of the description of Streaming, it was utilized alternatively with the word OTT (Over-The-Top). In fact, OTT was used in the meaning of the media service, which provided the audiovisual through the Internet, whereas Streaming was intentionally meant the technique of transmitting the audiovisual with streaming and continuous data so that the viewers could listen to or watch the media promptly, which SVOD (Subscription Video on Demand) was another media service platform of OTT and utilized the technique of providing audiovisual with Streaming by collecting monthly or yearly subscription fees.

For Asia Pacific region, the fast and continuous growth of members called the attention of the OTT providers globally to invest and compete in the region furiously. Netflix, a USA company pioneering OTT service provider (Halton, 2021) occupied the leader of the online streaming market in the region (Zhao, 2020; Lotz, 2020). Hereby, for the previous Covid-19 duration, the measure to control Coronavirus pandemic positively affected the business considerably, which could be seen from the growth ratio of the business that highly rose when comparing to the duration before Covid-19 pandemic.

For the growth in Thailand, Ovum predicted that the income of the SVOD entrepreneurs overall would worth 181 million dollars in 2567, while the number of subscribers would be on the rise with the same tendency of the growth of global subscribers. (Infoquest, 2021; Jam et al., 2013).

The increase of subscribers influenced the SVOD providers in each platform had to compete extremely to attract the subscribers together with keeping the present members. A strategy that was utilized was investing in the content production within copyrights called “Commissions” or well-known in the name “Originals,” which the platform would use this strategy to cooperate with producers from each country to create the local contents that would win the viewers’ hearts domestically and at the same time attracted the viewers globally. It was consistent with the study of Frater (2017) and Zhao (2020) that the local contents were the key factor to the success of the company Netflix and made Netflix stay ahead of the rivals in Asia.

Apart from providing SVOD service, it was building the new community that people connected to people across the world based on tastes or interests (Douglas, 2018; Margaretha et al., 2023). For the world-class entertainment media expansion, if viewed based on macroeconomics it would be the combination of the world-class concepts such as Globalization and Streaming expansion. It could be considered that the transformation from the platform providing the world-class service caused multisided markets and network effects on many sectors that were discerningly related. Accordingly, the international streaming providers would influence many sectors that were related to the media industry based on Platform Imperialism or Platformization, which the content producers to be broadcast through online platform were forced to adjust to the business guidelines of platform such as adjusting the contents based on the users’ needs or the data that the platform learned from the groups of users or the viewers, and in terms of microeconomics, the concept of Globalization was another concept to be utilized to analyze the popularity of the world-class entertainment media. This concept was an example of the combination view between Globalization and Localization together to explain the complexity of the globalization of world-class media, which adjusted to be compatible with the local conditions, or it could be compared that it was micromarketing. Although it was the world-class business, how to design and how to adjust properly must be based on the tastes of each region.

The Entry into Post Download with Big Data and Video Streaming

The movie has gone through a lot of competition and bargain with the culture in viewing media of people in each era since the advent of television, video player, and digital until the Internet era in the present time. It triggered the concept of Big Data referring to immense data, which the basic database system could not store, and the data ratio was rapidly rocketed including a variety of data such messages, photos, videos, and sounds that seemed complex and connected to each other (Dumbill, 2012; Ahmed et al., 2022; Alahoul et al., 2016; Chen et al., 2018; Kou et al., 2017). These data were similar to an enormous Cloud that had a lot of data inside, which was utilized in various works including providing Video Streaming, and the technology advancement of information technology made Video Streaming gain more and more popularity with the concept corresponding to the lifestyles of modern people that needed convenience, speed, and could not tolerate with very long wait together with the high-speed Internet, which was better in effectiveness. This made online-movie platform or Video Streaming another platform that was compatible with the lifestyles of modern people in the present time. Video Streaming was broadcasting digital signal with sounds and motion pictures that was transmitted from Server through the Internet to Client for receiving the signal promptly based on real-time without leaving any data on Client when the working process finished, which was utilized as the viewers' needs. In business, it was called Video-on-Demand (VOD). In the United States, 2007, with the influence of the high-speed Internet, Netflix, the DVD rental business through the post office, revolutionized Business Model by providing the rental DVD Streaming through the Internet, which the customers could watch the movies through any gadgets that could access the Internet with collecting the monthly subscription fee until now.

From the poll result of exploring the Internet users' behavior in Thailand, 2015 (Electronic Transactions Development Agency, 2015; Awais et al., 2022; CHOU et al., 2017; Lavilles et al., 2018), It was found that the Internet users were on the increase in every using phase when comparing with the poll result in 2014. The users more than 80% had their own smartphones accessible to the Internet averagely 5.7 hours a day, and it was shown that watching the movies and online drama was the activity using the Internet the fourth under going into online society, searching the data, and reading electronic books respectively. The phenomenon Video Streaming in Thailand, 2015 created online-movie providers of Video on-demand through Streaming with legal copyrights no less than ten providers, including a lot of the illegal providers, which was consistent with the consumers' behaviors in the present time who needed convenience in hands and could not tolerate with any long waiting for anything anymore. With watching movies through Video Streaming, the viewers could be able to watch the movies through electronics gadgets connecting to the Internet conveniently, easily, and promptly.

Mirrless, T (2013) and Robertson, R (2012) explained the processes as follows: 1) Interpretation: interpreting the messages culturally that the local viewers would select to be exposed to the data from the world-class media to use differently, 2) Tailoring and Accommodating: the world-class entertainment media producers were prone to design and adjust the messages compatible with the locals, and 3) Combination of other cultures: it was to combine other local cultural components, especially the target groups.

From the process above, the primarily important positions in adjusting and controlling the

direction of the content of value chain of content production were the writer and the production team, particularly the contents of the movies.

Thus, this research was aimed to study the strategy of adjusting the content of the writers' team in the era that the movie media were not shown in the movie theater but stepped into showing on streaming media that had the extreme competition.

Objective

To study the strategies of streaming movies' contents on the Subscription Video on Demand (SVOD) in Thailand.

Literature Reviews

The story Circle

The story circle was a guideline in writing either short story, novel, or movie script, which the writing structure that Dan Harmon adopted from *The Hero's Journey* of Joseph Campbell, a writer and an academic of literature. *The Hero's Journey* appeared in telling legends everywhere globally, and almost every story telling would be conveyed in cycle style and covered the steps of story proceeding, which was relevant to:

The adventurous characters seeking for their needs and

Coming back with both physical and spiritual transformation

Harmon was the creator of *Rick and Morty*, which was the 30-episode series. This series turned very famous because the content was full of humor, and the story was rapidly conveyed together with Pop Culture combination plus scientific novel vibes that was similar to the characters from *Back to The Future*. The content was admired about the flavorful storytelling.

THE HARMAN'S CIRCLE was noticeably mentioned that the cycle of proceeding story vertically, horizontally, and clockwise from one to eight, which each number represented the different duration of the structure. The followings were the important explanation of the story aspects that were intended to reach in each step:

YOU – The characters were in safe area, and this was establishing the characters' well-being.

NEED – But they needed something; 'the needs' here might be something lasting existent but just provoked onto the surface from Inciting Incident. The start of incident that aroused the main characters to change their lifestyles in safe area.

GO – The main characters came into unfamiliar situations, and they had to do new things to pursue their needs.

SEARCH – Adapting to new things, they encountered with some challenges and struggled to be successful in lives.

FIND – Getting what they needed, and it was the wrong victory.

TAKE – Pay a lot for them. They knew that something they ‘needed’ was not really something they ‘wished’, and there was a price to pay for.

RETURN – Later, back to the familiar situation, set up a new goal, and the goal was ‘reality.’

CHANGE – Everything had changed either got better or got worse as everything had its change.

Harmon paved the structure of the story on straightforward hypothesis: the whole story was a cycle. The characters started from the safe area, discovered their needs, and moved out of the safe area. The exciting situation happened to them, next, they fulfilled their needs, and finally they came back to their own safe area again.

Conceptual Framework

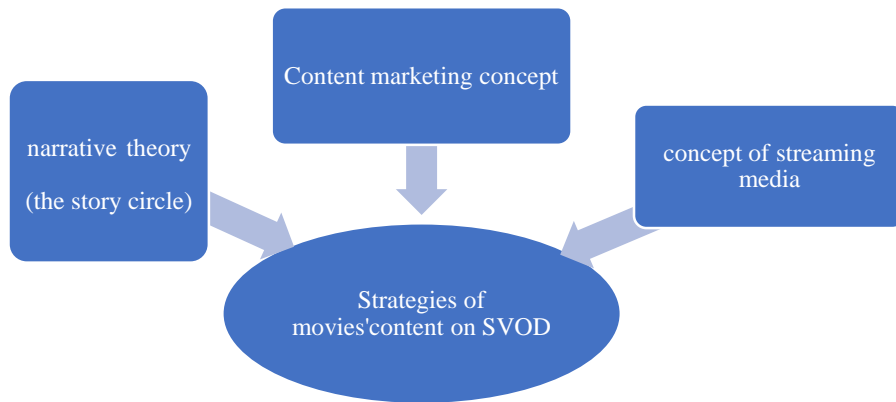


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Research Methodology

Population and Samples

This research aims to study the content of streaming movies based on the information from content creator, the sample group in this study is purposive sample as follow:

A group of streaming screenwriters whose works are published on SVOD media in Thailand such as Netflix, Prime etc. Regarding the campus where the faculty work, results showed that 89 percent of professors were working at the main campus. Smaller quantities of faculty were working at the branch campuses (Figure 2). Faculty belonged to 11 colleges and 23 Departments. Finally, 81 percent of faculty were working in undergraduate programs (Figure 2).

Research Instrument

The research instrument was detailed as the explanation below.

In-depth interview was applied to screenwriters' group in order to be utilized to meet the objectives of the research and used with semi-structured interview by giving the question outline into 2 parts:

The first part

Names of companies (the outdoor cinema units or companies)

Name – Surname of the interviewees (their positions)

The second part was comprised of open-ended questions regarding to the strategy of script writing as following questions;

What experience do you have in writing screenplays that have already been produced and released in theaters?

Have you applied the elements of screenwriting laid out by Aristotelian principles? If so, how? Or have you followed the principles of screenwriting in a different way?

How have you applied those screenwriting principles to your SVOD screenwriting work?

Do you think the elements of writing a film script for a theatrical release are different from those for an SVOD release? How?

As a screenwriter, what do you think about the term “Content is the King” when creating screenplays for SVOD media?

Collection of Data

The researcher conducted in-depth interview by using the question set to interview the sample groups with semi-structured interview. Namely, it was interaction direct to the main point of questions by facilitating the friendly ambience between the interviewer and the interviewees while recording their voices through digital recording system. Then, the voice data were transcribed and the data were kept systematically.

Data Analysis

Data from the in-depth interview questions as mention above, were focusing on the main points or the relevant points gained from the reply and were summarized into the thematic topic that would be analyzed in accordance with the research objective.

Ethical Approval

The research procedure and questions received ethical approval No. P2-0189/2566 from Naresuan University Ethics Committee for Human Research, Thailand.

Result

The Entertainment Content in The Movie World from Traditional to Streaming Era: From Aristotle to Dan Harmon Story Circle

From the interview of Thai content scriptwriters, it was found that although most contents were from the industrial movie content production, but when it was on streaming media, the traditional strategy in script writing such as dividing into Aristotle's three critical elements — ethos, pathos, and logos still remained. However, when the movie was on streaming, it was produced with the feature of content creation relatively focusing on the context of marketing communication.

In the process of writing Thai original script in international video streaming platform, it started with commercially offering the project, which was a part in the development of the movie content in Thailand, derived from the prepared data of the script writer and the production team. When it was on the main streaming of working, it would combine between the movie script in Hollywood style and the series script by developing script of streaming movie from Theme and Plot similar to general movie scripts. However, there would be adaptation consistent with the guideline and the need of the platform by increasingly using the marketing data and the consumers' behavior as the script components. Then, there were details of the genre, the concept, the theme, the target, the world, the overview, the characters, the summary of characters, the reference image of the characters, the mood and vibe of the story, and the possibility of creating the next episode. When the studio team got the completely detailed script that met the demand of every team, they would submit the script to the platform to be considered further if the platform was interested in, the studio team would continue the next steps.

Later, the next step of developing the script was to develop the expanded story structure by the script team would bring the elements in the previous step to expand in each scene: incidents in each episode, and they would orderly arrange from the first scene to the last scene and repeat this step from the first episode to the last episode. They would calculate the number of episodes in each movie series depending on the agreement, which for the America zone, it would take 6-8 episodes because it was suitable for the viewers' behavior in the present time that was likely to watch the movie series in a single stretch; however, for the Asia zone, it would prefer more episodes than the America zone. For example, Korea would take 16 episodes, but from the interview of Thailand movie series script team, it would be similar to the America zone: that was 6-7 episodes.

For the movie content on streaming in Thailand, one of the interviewers gave the comment that it was always original script; that was, it was about the completely new written, not adapted from any novels, short stories, movies, or other previous media. Hence, developing the movie content would start when the international platform decided to select the project offered by the studio team by considering the main concept, the story structure, the target group, and the marketing possibility, but in the SVOD period, the movie content form was produced for the subscribers of SVOD to watch. The proceeding and the decision would be consistent with convenient logic; that was, deciding to create the content by considering the developed script or written from data analytic-driven scripts. The characters were selected by analyzing the data, the market share, and the small-scale target group.

Hereby, the most important thing for producing the original script was creating the content reflecting the identity and the locality of the producer's country rather than trying to be another side of the Hollywood movie, whereas the local content that was produced had to be better than the original version of Western script and it should be exported in world-class level. To succeed in that level, the platform itself must have the script developer team gain insight into the explicit knowledge such as the data obtained from analyzing the viewers and their behaviors. Besides, it was relevant to the knowledge about how to tell a story universally such as the popular structure in the Western series and how to the script in style of character-driven story, which the script writer team in Thailand always relied on Dan Harmon's Theory instead of writing the script in style of Three-Act structure of Aristotle, the cornerstone of developing script writing in the early period of movie production.

Discussion

From the interview of Thai content production team, it was found that although most contents were from the industrial movie content production, but when it was on streaming media, the traditional strategy in script writing such as dividing into Aristotle's three critical elements — ethos, pathos, and logos still remained. However, when the movie was on streaming, it was produced with the feature of content creation relatively focusing on the context of marketing communication. Sarawut Srithongkam (2021) divided studying Video Streaming into 4 periods by using the communication theory of 4 major trends. The first period was studying the Video Streaming system and production. It was regarded as the interest in terms of production anchoring to the communication technology advancement, and the second period was focusing on the concept of effect and influence on the reviewers. Next, the third period was transformed into utilizing the benefits and the satisfaction of the viewers, and the fourth one was turning to the context of marketing communication.

When considering the movie industry components from the interview, the content creativity of the movie stepped in the fourth period that more concentrated on the marketing communication than the previous period, and Thai script writer team must adapt themselves from writing the movie script conveying the story in the style of Hollywood to writing the script borrowing the techniques of series script writing.

Grace Y. (2014) defined the word 'series' as the drama that had the open-ended plot and the main characters appearing continually in each episode. In Each episode, there might be various storylines either unraveled or ended, but the main storyline of series that was driven by the main characters must end with open-ended plot, not unraveled or ended. The movie series started to shine its art value in 1980-1990. In part of the story telling structure, the movie series still employed most of the television drama techniques; however, in the picture style, the movie series adopted most of the movie story telling techniques. As a result, it was the story telling that combined between television and movie techniques.

Venis L. (2013) divided the series into 3 types by considering the story telling structure as the follows:

Procedural Shows (Procedural-Driven Shows) was the series driven by the plot, and the main

characters always had a professional career or some skills such as an attorney, a doctor, a policeman, or a criminal analyst etc., and it focused on the story telling rather than the character's development. As a result, in each episode, it would be a new case that had new characters, and the story would be unraveled eventually and ended in that episode.

Character Shows (Character-Driven Shows) was the series proceeded by the characters, and the content of each episode would begin with a problem or a new obstacle that the main characters had to solve and overcome in order to reach the goal they intended. It focused on the character's development. In this type of series, the characters would be able to solve the problem of each episode successfully in the end of the story, and the series would be ended with introducing a new problem that the characters must encounter in the next episode.

Hybrids was the series that combined both the Procedural show and the character show together; that was, there were the main characters, and it focused on the development of the characters in each episode. The main storyline was proceeded continuously until the season of series ended, while there was sub-storyline that started and ended in the episode.

In the process of writing Thai original script in international video streaming platform, it started with commercially offering the project, which was a part in the development of the movie content in Thailand, derived from the prepared data of the script writer and the production team. When it was on the main streaming of working, it would combine between the movie script in Hollywood style and the series script by developing script of streaming movie from Theme and Plot similar to general movie scripts. However, there would be adaptation consistent with the guideline and the need of the platform by increasingly using the marketing data and the consumers' behavior as the script components. Then, there were details of the genre, the concept, the theme, the target, the world, the overview, the characters, the summary of characters, the reference image of the characters, the mood and vibe of the story, and the possibility of creating the next episode. When the studio team got the completely detailed script that met the demand of every team, they would submit the script to the platform to be considered further if the platform was interested in, the studio team would continue the next steps.

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in that level, the platform itself must have the script developer team gain insight into the explicit knowledge such as the data obtained from analyzing the viewers and their behaviors. Besides, it was relevant to the knowledge about how to tell a story universally such as the popular structure in the Western series and how to the script in style of character-driven story, which the script writer team in Thailand always relied on Dan Harmon's Theory instead of writing the script in style of Three-Act structure of Aristotle, the cornerstone of developing script writing in the early period of movie production.

Hadida A, et al. (2020) analyzed in viewpoint of the producer and the people involved in the American movie industry. It was regarded as the cornerstone of the major streaming platform, Netflix, and the significant principle that the executives of the traditional movie company used to decide about the production and the distribution of the movies. That was, it depended on the consideration of showing the movie in the movie theater and counting the income from the movie ticket distribution. However, the executives of streaming provider companies (and some parts became the movie producers) would decide by using the data whether the movie would create the new customer base or the new subscribers (with payment). Also, the concept of traditional studio was likely to focus on reaching the movie theater broadly, and the concept of streaming was to have a lot of movie's lists ready and accessible to the subscribers, which were relatively expansive and different. The offer was relevant to the remark from the production team and the script developing teams including the people involved in the industry of streaming content in Thailand as well.

To summarize, the script development would be improved or written from analyzing the data (the data analytics-driven scripts), the characters selected by analyzing the data, the market share, and the small-scale target group. The script writing style would develop from movies to series which is following the metrics of data algorithm streaming system. The amount of time watched, the success of a creative work is the amount and time that attracts viewers/consumers to the viewing system for the longest time. Adapting a creative work into a series with multiple episodes will result in much more viewing time than a movie. And airing 1-2 episodes at a time (in some series) makes viewers stick to the platform and spend more time in the system.

Apart from the content, the production process of streaming movie was also different that the most critical decision maker, the most significant role, was showrunner, who always controlled and supervised the whole production from the script to the budget management for production, the selection of production team and actors etc., including the editing control, the creator or the story owner would act as the showrunner, the head writer, and the pilot scriptwriter. It could be seen that the working structure for streaming movie in Thailand would change to quite similar to the working structure for series production in Hollywood.

Recommendation

Since this research was conducted at a time when many platforms were still in their early stages, which was a time of experimentation and exploration in co-production of original content between international and Thailand content creator and production team. For this reason, future research study should extend to the next phase, which was the stage in which the content directors and producers of each platform is run and operate by Thailand team.

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