

*Creative Content Strategy of Thai Films Industry Increasing Economic Growth
in COVID-19 Pandemic Situation*

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Abstract

This research aimed to investigate the factors that influence audiences' decisions to watch Thai films and examined the tactics, strategies, and economic value creation processes of the Thai film industry. The researcher studied the overview of content creation strategies in the film industry and the revenue of Thai films related to the economic values' creation using sample groups selected using a simple random sampling method and comprising the basic information of Thai films originally released in 2019-2020. The findings were as follows:

1. The most influential aspect of content strategy on the decision to watch Thai films was the use of engaging narrative techniques (mean = 4.05, SD = 0.80). There were additional factors that convinced audiences to watch a film, such as captivating characters, unconventional screenplay structures and unusual image presentations that were impossible to encounter in daily life or were related to tourism.
2. The content strategy of Thai films had impacted on economic value creation in terms of promoting tourism (mean = 4.05, standard deviation = 0.85).
3. The situation of Thai films during 2019–2020 (including the Covid-19 pandemic) revealed that the content strategy of Thai films was crucial for the stimulation and recovery of the Thai film industry (mean = 4.05, standard deviation = 0.91). In addition, contemporary Thai films have had to adapt to the Covid-19 pandemic and the current trends of Thai films affected by digital media, as of dramas, series etc. Consequently, entrepreneurs and film producers must keep up with the situation and adaptations.

Keywords: Thai Films Industry, Creative Content Strategy, COVID-19

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Introduction

The examination of Thailand's status across diverse dimensions is elucidated in light of the 12th National Economic and Social Development Plan spanning the years 2017 to 2021. An analysis of the economic landscape revealed discernible constraints in the initial triennium of the 11th National Economic and Social Development Plan, characterized by a deceleration in economic expansion and increased volatility. Notwithstanding these challenges, Thailand underwent a notable transformation in its production structure, transitioning from an agrarian focus to a greater emphasis on industrial and service sectors. (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board, 2017) Within the ambit of the 12th National Economic and Social Development Plan, strategic objectives were articulated, envisioning Thailand as a high-income nation with equitable income distribution. Positioned as a regional hub for transportation and logistics, the goal is to evolve into a trading and service-oriented nation, fostering the production of organic and safe agricultural products. Emphasis is also placed on nurturing creative and highly innovative industries with an environmentally friendly orientation (Direkwattanachai, 2012).

The enduring significance of the Creative Economy policy in Thailand's economic trajectory is evident, grounded in the fusion of cultural assets and creativity, innovation, or technology. This policy framework leverages economic processes or activities to generate products and services with commercial or social value. Thailand's creative industries, comprising 12 primary sectors, including the Thai film industry and the Performing Arts Industry Group, are identified as pivotal contributors to the country's economic advancement. (De Vany, 2004) In the broader context, these creative industries emerge as vital drivers aligning with the objectives outlined in the National Economic and Social Development Plan. Specifically, the Thai film industry, situated within the broader arts and culture domain, is acknowledged as a cornerstone in propelling the nation's economic development (Yotphonwat & Lapjarupong, P. 2009).

The Thai film industry holds paramount significance in the multifaceted development of the nation, impacting its economic, social, and cultural dimensions. Its recognition as a key component within the creative industries, as per the categorization in the creative industry database system of the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board, accentuates its competitive standing. (Klaisikaew, 2019) This classification not only enhances the industry's competitiveness but also serves as a catalyst for the formulation of strategies geared towards the production of innovative and novel cinematic works. Such strategies play a pivotal role in captivating the attention of consumers and viewers, thereby influencing popular trends within society and various demographic groups (Levison, 2010).

Despite the current gradual pace of expansion in production within the Thai film industry, attributed to the limited market share held by a few agencies, organizations, and investors, periodic resurgences underscore its inherent vibrancy. The industry's cyclical revitalization generates popularity trends among audiences and contributes significantly to revenue generation. The appeal of Thai films is intricately linked to various elements such as engaging narratives, well-developed characters, compelling scenes, renowned actors, excitement, uniqueness, and the exploration of new cinematic genres. (Davis, 2015) These aspects collectively constitute the content of the film, influencing audience decisions to purchase film tickets. In the realm of film language, the allure of these elements is encapsulated in the concept of "interesting film pages."

The film industry operates as both an investment in production and a creative endeavor, driven by the aim of deriving profits from viewer-generated income. Positioned as a mass media industry, it facilitates communication with large audiences, disseminating creative works to the public and creating economic value through selective viewing. (Gershon, 2017) Recognizing the consequential role of content creation in marketing strategies, advertising, and viewer persuasion, this study delves into the research topic, "Creative Content Strategy of Thai Films Industry Increasing Economic Growth in COVID-19 Pandemic Situation" The researcher underscores the importance of content in fostering economic value, shaping cultural identity, and contributing to the overall development of the film industry.

Research Question

The research topic is "Creative Content Strategy of Thai Films Industry Increasing Economic Growth in COVID-19 Pandemic Situation." The researcher has determined the questions for conducting the research: 1. What strategies does the Thai film industry have for creating content to create economic value, especially during the COVID-19 outbreak? 2. What factors influence the choice of watching Thai Films?

Objective

1. To study tactics, strategies, and economic value creation processes of Thai film industry.
2. To study various factors of choosing to watch Thai film of audiences.

Research Framework

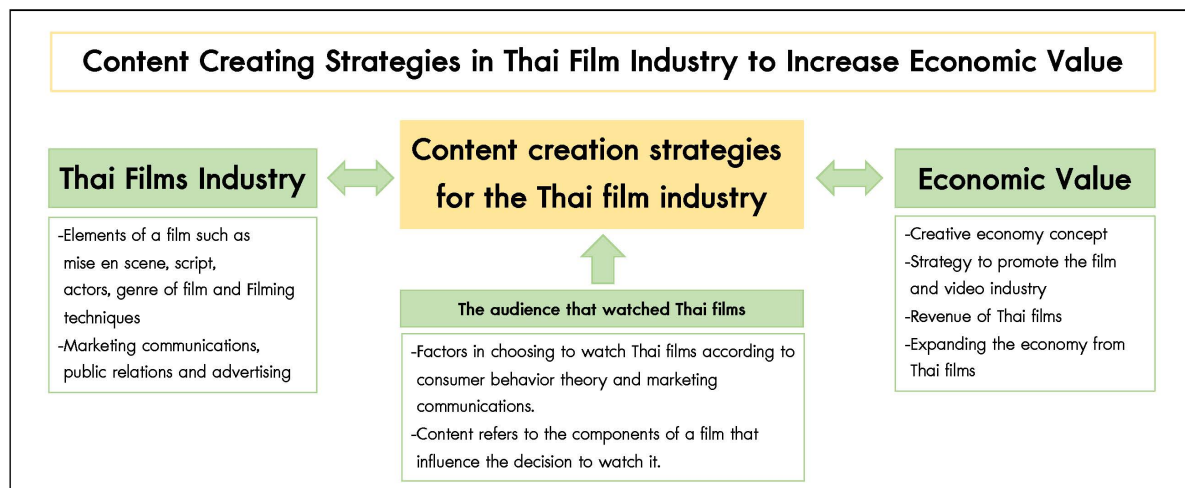


Figure 1: Research Framework

Research Methodology

1. Study information, theories, concepts, and relevant research documented in each issue and dimension.
2. Preliminary study of Thai films released in Thai cinemas between 2019 and 2020 using qualitative data analysis.
3. Conduct an audience survey to investigate the factors influencing film viewing choices. Prepare designs for a quantitative questionnaire, incorporating demographics, attitudes, motivation, satisfaction, and elements of film across various topics.

4. Collect quantitative research data by conducting surveys with audiences in Bangkok and representatives from various provinces across Thailand.
5. Process and analyze data from questionnaires to examine the relationship between the film producer's output and the audience's response.

Research Scope

The research targets the Thai film industry as its primary population, encompassing various stakeholders such as production agencies, organizations, companies, and investors engaged in the creation and dissemination of Thai films. Furthermore, the study includes the audience that actively engages with and watches Thai films as a significant subpopulation within this research framework.

The research data will be collected from two distinct sample groups: 1) Films exhibited nationwide in theaters during the period of 2019-2020, with a focus on comprehensively analyzing content creation strategies within the film industry and examining the economic impact on the creation of value, particularly in relation to the income generated by Thai films. 2) Survey responses will be gathered from audience groups in Bangkok and representatives from various provinces in each region, specifically addressing content-related issues to discern their film preferences.

Result

The findings from the research investigation on the "Creative Content Strategy of Thai Films Industry Increasing Economic Growth in COVID-19 Pandemic Situation" are elucidated in the subsequent sections.

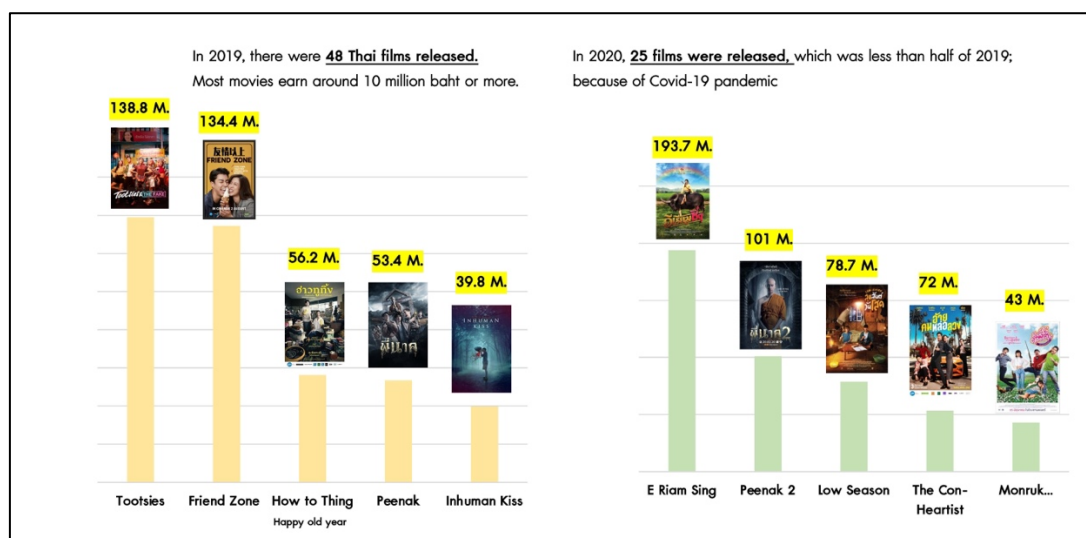


Figure 2: Income of Thai films shown in theaters (2019 – 2020)

In 2019, there were 48 Thai films released. The highest-grossing film was *Tootsies & The Fake*; its revenue was 138,800,000 baht. And in 2020, 25 films were released, which was less than half of 2019; because of Covid-19 pandemic, a number of films to be released were postponed. The highest-grossing film in 2020 was *E Riam Sing* earning 193,700,000 baht.

Table 1: The factors influencing viewers from various fields in choosing to watch Thai films
N = 387

Detail	\bar{x}	S.D.
Choosing to watch Thai films based on the interestingness of the script or topic in the film.	4.17	0.87
Choosing to watch Thai films based on artistic elements that are interesting, attractive, and exciting.	4.04	0.84
Choosing to watch Thai films for the skilled actors and their good acting abilities.	3.99	0.90
Choosing to watch Thai films featuring actors who have worked in previous films.	3.82	0.82
Choosing to watch Thai films based on advertising and public relations (promotion).	3.81	0.81

Table 2: The content strategies that affect the decision to watch Thai films

N = 387

Detail	\bar{x}	S.D.
Choosing to watch Thai films that have interesting narrative techniques.	4.05	0.81
Choosing to watch Thai films that feature intriguing character development.	3.97	0.89
Choosing to watch Thai films with a new script structure.	3.93	0.86
Choosing to watch Thai films that have unusual visual presentation content not seen in everyday life.	3.90	0.92
Choosing to watch Thai films with content related to current social issues.	3.80	0.85

Table 3: The content strategies of Thai films that affect the creation of economic value

N = 387

Detail	\bar{x}	S.D.
Strategies for creating Thai film content can promote tourism.	4.06	0.85
Content creation strategies for Thai films are important for generating income.	4.04	0.82
Content creation strategies for Thai films can promote competition in the Thai film industry.	4.01	0.84
The content creation strategy of Thai films can reflect Thai society.	4.01	0.91
The content creation strategy of Thai films can create a reputation for Thailand.	3.93	0.80

Table 4: The situation of Thai films in 2019-2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic

N = 387

Detail	\bar{x}	S.D.
Thai film content strategies are very necessary to stimulate and revive the Thai film industry.	4.05	0.91
Thai films today need to adapt to the COVID-19 situation.	3.98	0.87
Thai films today are affected by other digital media such as dramas, series, etc.	3.94	0.91
Thai films are currently affected by COVID-19.	3.93	0.91
Thai Films have been affected by viewing decisions and trends during COVID-19.	3.92	0.87

Conclusion

1. The most influential aspect of content strategy on the decision to watch Thai films was the use of engaging narrative techniques (mean = 4.05, S.D. = 0.80). There were additional factors that convinced audiences to watch a film, such as captivating characters, unconventional screenplay structures and unusual image presentations that were impossible to encounter in daily life or were related to tourism.
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Discussion

1. From a study of Thai films during 2019 - 2020, it can be shown that comedy films, love films, and supernatural films (Thai Novel) have gained high popularity. This shows the strategy of creating Thai film content that can lead to economic value creation.
2. During 2020, the number of films released in theaters was more than double less than in 2019, but the income of the highest-grossing Thai films was higher than in 2019. This shows that audience groups were still waiting and following to watch Thai films even during the COVID-19 pandemic.
3. The decision to choose to watch Thai films from the audience shows that a film's content creation strategy is important. It can be divided into elements of a film in various aspects such as the script, storytelling, actors, characters, social issues, and Film sequels.
4. Continuing to increase economic value, the research found that adding economic value in promoting tourism or enhancing Thailand's reputation is an important strategy that can be further developed. Additionally, this includes presenting Thai culture.

The research results are consistent with Phonpirun.P (2007) delineated the concept of the creative economy and its implications for Thailand, asserting that the creative economy manifests as a process or activity deriving from two principal factors: 1) intellectual capital or knowledge, and 2) application skills for leveraging creativity (or knowledge) to attain maximum commercial benefit. Intellectual capital can take the form of the original "knowledge base" or "new knowledge," serving as a foundation for expanding ideas. This form of capital may emanate from human capital, such as education and training that fosters novel ideas, as well as cultural capital, including Thailand's distinctive cultural heritage. Social capital, encompassing local customs and knowledge, also contributes to this intellectual reservoir. Application skills, or adaptive skills, encompass the proficiency required to apply knowledge and intellectual capital effectively in the production of goods and services. These skills play a crucial role in creating tangible value and economic worth through the realization of innovative ideas.

Moreover, the discernible trends within the Thai film industry underscore the necessity for governmental policies and support. Various challenges and circumstances have significantly impacted the Thai film landscape, particularly in the current context of the Covid-19 pandemic. Given these circumstances, strategic content interventions are imperative to stimulate and rejuvenate the Thai film industry. Aramwit R., & Thada-Amnuaychai M. (2016) research on the direction and trends of the Thai film industry during the period from July 2014 to July 2015 sheds light on pertinent details. This timeframe witnessed a decline in industry revenue attributed to reduced viewership of Thai films and a decrease in film production. In 2014, for instance, 40 Thai films were released with 35 earning less than 30-million-baht, indicative of a crisis in the industry.

The research findings suggest potential solutions to the challenges faced by the Thai film industry, drawing insights from successful approaches in countries such as South Korea and Australia. These examples highlight the transformative impact of governmental support on industry growth, contributing not only to the economic development of the film sector but also enhancing Thailand's global image. Consequently, Thai films can be viewed as flagship products with each production possessing substantial economic value, given the considerable budget required for filmmaking.

It is imperative for the government to perceive films as potent tools for promoting Thainess. Film content inherently encapsulates diverse Thai characteristics, encompassing elements such as cuisine, attire, and various aspects of Thai societal life. Leveraging these aspects not only facilitates the growth of the film industry but also provides a means for distributing Thai products abroad, showcasing the richness and uniqueness of Thai culture to an international audience.

Suggestion

1. For further study, the researcher can explore strategies for creating film content in the current situation, especially after the outbreak of Covid-19. Nowadays, there is increased popularity in watching films through the streaming system, providing insight into the current direction and trend.
2. Carrying out research design can involve adding a sample group to collect data, which includes Thai film producers such as producers, directors, actors, and scriptwriters.
3. The research results obtained this time, as a Thai film producer, can be used to enhance your ability to create works. This includes individuals involved in planning strategies for the Thai film industry and policies aimed at generating added economic value through media influence, "Soft Power."

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