

A Success of Content Communication Through Y-Series: A Case Study of 2gether the Series

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Abstract

The research entitled “A Content Communication through the Y-Series Entitled 2gether The Series” is a qualitative research aimed to study 1) the content presentation in y-series entitled 2gether The Series and 2) the exposure to the content of the y-series entitled 2gether The Series. The purposive sampling method was applied; and the y-series entitled 2gether The Series was selected. The qualitative approaches were used by analyzing play scripts and discussing with audiences of the series. The research findings were as following: 1) The narration was created based on a love story of university students that connected to the audiences of all ages. The characteristic of creative works was produced through the tradition of y-series which presented gays as main actors. The story was fun and realistic. Even though there were obstacles between 2 main characters, it finally became a happy ending. 2) The approaches raising the exposure to the content of 2gether The Series were the well-known theme songs among audiences that were rearranged to fit with the story. This created parallel experience by watching on both television and online media linking with hatch tag together with casting the right actor for the right character. The business strategy was implemented through fan meeting activities, which were considered as popular marketing events for a successful series to become a viral trend among audiences.

Keywords: Thaiboyslove, 2gether The Series, Thai Drama Television

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Introduction

The y-series is a television drama whose meaning is derived from 2 words including “TV series” and “Y” adopted from Yaoi in Japanese language. In Thailand, TV series is a series whose broadcasting length is about 30-60 minutes/episode broadcast once a week. Each episode has its own ending; there’s a conflict to be revealed at the end. The letter “Y” or Yaoi is an initial of a Japanese manga presenting a relationship of male homosexual whose target audiences are women. Consequently, Yaoi is considered as a manga by women for women.

In terms of subculture, the relationship of male homosexual may be called “boys’ love” which represents a love story of homosexual characters. The boys’ love is different from LGBTQ’s story because the y-series is forwarded among women and its story does not engage with LGBTQ. Therefore, the y-series typically presents the story of male homosexual which is created by women and consumed among women.

2gether The Series was based on the novel composed by “JittiRain”, a female writer. It is therefore considered as a y-novel composed by a female author. The story is about “Tine”, performed by “Metawin Opas-iamkajorn”, who wishes to find a true love in a masculine style in the university; but he has to meet “Green”, a pestering boy trying to flirt with “Tine” and never giving up. Consequently, “Tine” has to ask “Sarawat”, performed by “Vachirawit Chiva-aree” to be his fake boyfriend. Because of the intimacy and incoming obstacles, their love grows. This y-series was firstly broadcast every Friday on GMM25 at 10.00 p.m. during February 21st – May 15th, 2020.

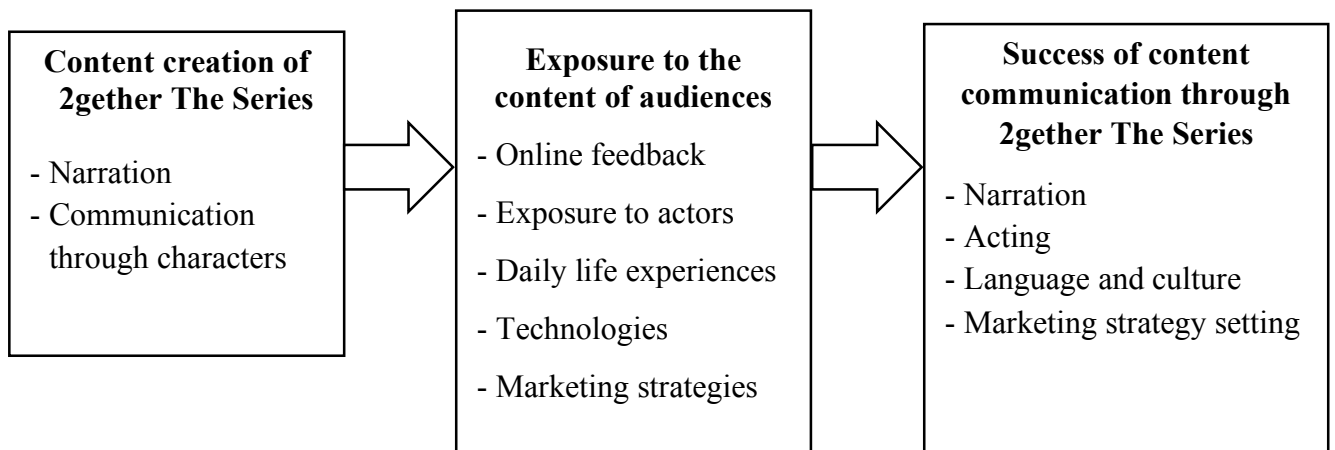
The series have been popular among a large number of audiences. The 2 major characters including “Metawin Opas-iamkajorn” and “Vachirawit Chiva-aree” have become more famous; and the number of followers, a current measure of popularity, on their personal Instagram has dramatically increased. The success of 2gether The Series has not only been well-known in Thailand but also in Philippines, Laos, Indonesia, China and Japan together with Latin-American countries. Thailand has finally got a reputation as a producer of the y-series because a lot of y-series have been produced and received positive feedback from audiences.

Accordingly, the researcher would like to study the strategy leading to a success of content communication through Y-Series: a case study of 2gether The Series, a widely popular series making other audiences get to know more about the y-series which were originally known among female audience groups only. 2gether The Series has got a wider target audience so the researcher would like to find out the key success factors leading 2gether The Series to the larger groups of audience as well as being accepted by a large number of audiences and to create a case study for other y-series producers in the future.

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the content presentation in y-series entitled 2gether The Series
2. To study the exposure to the content of the y-series entitled 2gether The Series

Research Framework



Research Methodology

The research entitled “A Success of Content Communication through Y-Series: A Case Study of 2gether The Series” was a qualitative research. The research methodology consisted research population and sample, research instrument, data collection, data analysis and research findings; and the researcher presented the analysis of data in descriptions.

The research population was a group of audiences watching 2gether The Series. 15 audiences were selected using purposive sampling technique. A group discussion with the sample was conducted using a semi-structured interview protocol to study the exposure to the content and the addiction to 2gether The Series.

2gether The Series was analyzed using content analysis technique together with the analysis of narration structure, TV drama script of its 13 broadcast episodes and the review of literature gathered from documents, researches and news; and the results gained from the analysis had mentioned in the discussion.

Research Results

The research results were divided into 2 parts according to research objectives as following:

Part 1 Content Presentation in Y-Series Entitled 2gether the Series



Figure 1. 2gether The Series

Source: GMMTV

The content presented in 2gether The Series was analyzed according to the concept of narration as follows.

Narration of the series had its own ending within one episode performed by actors. Its opening was under the condition of love. “Tine”, a major character, narrated his experience towards friendship and girlfriends. He was disappointed with his ex-girlfriends, so he tried to find a partner again without realizing that the match he met this time would be different from the one he had previously dated. “Sarawat”, another major character with difficult-to-access characteristics, was a person with a high privacy. He had to help pretend to be a boyfriend for “Tine” in order to make “Green” another young man who clearly flirted with Tine. Because of his look similar to a dazzling and outgoing girl, “Tine” who was still interested in women, had to find a woman to be a fake girlfriend; but it didn’t work. Therefore, he had to try to find a man with the same characteristics to make Green restrain his passion. Being under the condition of a fake boyfriend between “Tine” and “Sarawat”, the two male characters learned from each other with the background of the university. The story about the characters of the y- series applied a life of college students as the plot to make it easier to continue on matters that might present content required to be communicated beyond the youth level.

In terms of conflict, there were opposite characters in the story who were hindering relationship between “Tine” and “Sarawat”. The attitude of “Tine”, who was still confused about whether he liked females or males, was different from “Sarawat”, who initially didn't show any attitude at first in order to hide his feelings towards "Tine" and thought that "Tine" would not like a man like him.

The climax occurred when the turning point breaking point of the story or the condition requiring certain decision making from the characters in the series. For 2gether The Series,

the climax was in the situation that “Sarawat” could not hide his feeling towards “Tine”. He could not bear to see that Tine, his secret admirer, was about to tell another woman that he liked her. Furthermore, “Tine” realized that “Sarawat” had known that “Green”, who was the reason why “Tine” had to ask him to become a fake boyfriend, had already had a boyfriend who was a senior musician in the same club as “Sarawat”. Indeed, Green already had a boyfriend who was a senior musician in the same club as the Sarawat. Including the story that “Sarawat” had met Tine before since the previous year, the whole story sounded like “Tine” had been deceived and “Sarawat” had planned everything.

The resolution of the story in 2gether The Series was when hidden story had been explained and clarified. It was time for “Tine” and “Sarawat” to learn about their feelings towards each other followed by trying to live as a couple.

The story of the series had opened up new conflicts by presenting secondary partners, such as Tine's brother with Sarawat's friend and Sarawat's brother with his senior in the university; It ended with the opposite character, Sarawat's ex-lover, to be the ending point of the story so that “Tine” and “Sarawat” could learn to love in their own ways. In order to present the content about the relationship of the 2 major characters, known as a service for fan club, the love scenes were presented in the same expression as presented by heterosexual couples.

The ending of 2gether The Series was the conclusion of all relationships in the series which allowed audiences to capture their appreciation through the series theme songs of Scrubb Band before saying goodbye to audiences.

The narrative structure in 2gether The Series was similar to other drama series. In the beginning, it introduced the characters through conflicts to the critical point followed by relaxing point end the end of the story. The highlight was the selection of theme songs belonging to the band called Scrubb, a famous band since 2005 to present, as part of the story. Consequently, audiences were familiar with the content, music and melody of theme songs which made 2gether The Series different and unique. Moreover, the genre of the drama was a romantic comedy style which made the content attractive.

Due to its narration telling stories about male homosexual in terms of group culture, the expression of its values, norms and identities were different from the mainstream sexuality group. The love between 2 major male characters was personal issue and the plot did not say that the characters were LGBTQ, but were male characters who were in love with a specific person only. Thus, there will be differences with the mainstream groups in different dimensions throughout the narration including conflicts with mainstream sexuality groups, LGBTQ groups, mental conflicts, the issue of same-sex preferences, self-acceptance and standing in their own stance among the differences from the mainstream. This kind of narration would be a specific story or a specific world of a group called "y-girl", a group of female audiences who liked to make men fall in love with men, in terms of a non-gay man falling in love with each other.

Part 2 Exposure to the Content of the Y-Series Entitled 2gether the Series

There were factors related to the exposure of the viewers to the drama series ‘2gether The Series’ that promoted the awareness and content exposure of the audience as following:

The feedback from online communities on Twitter and the rating scale of drama series ‘2gether The Series’ started to raise from the 6th week of the broadcast or EP.6 with

approximately 342,600 viewers (AGB Nielsen, 2020) and was trending on Twitter No. 1 in every broadcast week with 4.8 million tweets worldwide with the hashtag #กันคุณจนจบ on May 15th, 2020. The drama series, '2gether The Series', was therefore widely talked about as the phenomenon of y-series drama with its highest ratings at that time and was exposed by a large number of people, making the two lead actors, namely Wachirawit Chiva-aree or Bright and Methawin Opas-iamkajorn or Win, were known and earned more fans as measured the number of followers on Instagram of Wachirawit surpassed 2.4 million and Methwin's surpassed 1.5 million within just one month.

Appropriate casting of characters from a bunch of good-looking young men and the performances of both major characters with the same chemistry; "Wachirawit Chiva-aree" as "Sarawat" and "Methawin Opas-iamkajorn" as "Tine" to represent the imagination from a popular y-novel which many people want it to be made into a series. The natural acting of the characters impressed a large number of viewers. In addition, according to the tradition of the y-series, the actors were often portrayed as real men who did not show any outward appearances of homosexual or behave that were more feminine, this had made the audience believe or satisfied with the realistic show.

Storytelling through student love life, novel or creative works in the Y genre were often plotted with university student scenes that could be easily connected to all groups who have had shared experiences. The unique characteristics of y-series were light-hearted, not over-expected. Although the path of love between the main characters contains obstacles, but it was lined with sweetness, and lead to happiness and fulfillment in the end.

The two-screen viewing experience: parallel broadcasts in both television and online media that connected with related hashtags. The producers of the series said that they intended to create ambience of watching a series together through a huge online world. At the same time, the English subtitle was also provided for the international audience to enjoy.

Moreover, this story had lots of fans from the original novel to follow; therefore it could be expected that the series would receive a warm welcome. Also, the series producers used the business strategy to create more profit by portraying the lovers on screen to real life situations and assigned the other prominent couples to do marketing activities, join television programs, be interviewed through various media to please the fans and create a trend.



Figure 2. 2Gether Live on Stage Poster

Source: GMMTV



Figure 3. Two Major Characters in the Event Entitled 2Gether Live on Stage

Source <https://thestandard.co/bright-win-global-live-fan-meeting/>



Figure 4 Atmosphere of the Event

Source: <https://thestandard.co/bright-win-global-live-fan-meeting/>

Conclusion

According to the results of the study, key success factors of the narration in 2gether The Series could be summarized as following : The narration through the love story of students connected audiences with the content because the majority of audiences was studying in the university or just graduated. Therefore, the story could be linked to experiences of each audience.

The actors fit in their characters very well. The narration was made according to the traditions of y-series including uncomplicated love story and actors representing masculinity which were appreciated by female audiences.

The content communication was aligned with songs of Scrubb Band whose music and lyrics caught the audiences. Therefore, the theme songs could reach the audiences and enhance the mood of the series.

The story was conducted through music and the characters were musicians. It was therefore possible to use the song as a symbol to communicate the meaning of love and care of the characters well.

Watching the series in an era where audiences turned to TV dramas more due to being in a state of lockdown under the COVID-19 pandemic and public stress in society made people want entertainment media that helped to relax and escape from bad things in society for a moment.

Social media were used for tracking and discussing through the hashtag of the drama series made the audiences feel a shared experience. They also felt like having friends to watch the series together via Twitter which became a parallel world connection between television and online media.

The online marketing strategies that reached the target audiences very well allowed audiences to follow their favorite actors including organizing fan meeting activities. Although the event could not be held in a normal format, the online fan meeting was perfectly replaced which made it more broadly reach other audiences.

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