



# มุ่งมองและพฤติกรรมการปรับตัวของนักแสดงวายไทยที่มีต่อบทบาท การแสดง ความสัมพันธ์กับเพื่อนร่วมงาน แฟบคลับ และภาวะสุขภาพจิต

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## บทคัดย่อ

วัตถุประสงค์ ความหลากหลายทางเพศกำลังเป็นกระแสในตลาดปัจจุบัน โดยเฉพาะชีรีส์สายรักชาย ซึ่งประเทศไทยเป็นประเทศส่งออกชั้นนำในอุตสาหกรรมนี้ ความนิยมนั้นนำไปสู่การเปิดรับสมัครนักแสดงหน้าใหม่จำนวนมากเพื่อตอบสนองความต้องการที่เติบโตไประดับนานาชาติ

**วิธีการศึกษา** การวิจัยเชิงคุณภาพนี้ดำเนินการกับนักแสดงชีรีส์สายไทยจำนวน 18 คน โดยใช้การสัมภาษณ์เชิงลึกแบบกึ่งโครงสร้าง โดยอาศัยการทบทวนวรรณกรรมซึ่งสามารถแบ่งออกเป็น 5 โดเมน ซึ่งจะนำไปวิเคราะห์ได้ถึงพฤติกรรมการปรับตัวที่มีต่อสถานการณ์ทั้งในด้านบวกและด้านลบ โดยข้อมูลที่ได้จากการสัมภาษณ์จะถูกวิเคราะห์ความถี่เนื้อหา

**ผลการศึกษา** มุ่งมองการเป็นนักแสดงชีรีส์สายเป็นไปในทางบวก ส่วนใหญ่คิดว่าการเป็นนักแสดงชีรีส์สายจะช่วยสร้างชื่อเสียงและโอกาสในการทำงานในชีวิต สำหรับมุ่งมองของบทบาทการแสดง 72% กล่าวว่า งานนี้ทำให้พากษาเรื่องสืบสานค่าธรรมดามาก แต่ก็ต้องทนเอง และการเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของชีรีส์ที่ประสบความสำเร็จทั่วโลก ในเรื่องของความสัมพันธ์กับเพื่อนร่วมงาน 28% กล่าวว่า ได้รับการปฏิบัติจากเพื่อนนักแสดงหรือทีมงานไม่ดีเท่านักแสดงที่มีชื่อเสียง ในด้านแฟบคลับ 50% กล่าวว่า กลัวจะได้รับคำวิจารณ์ในทางลบ และถูกบังคับให้มีลักษณะตรงตามความคาดหวังของแฟบ ในมุ่งมองจิตใจ 44% กล่าวว่า เพชรฆูหน้ากับความขัดแย้งในครอบครัว มีบุคลิกภาพลักษณะหลีกเลี่ยงปัญหา และเริ่มวางแผนอนาคตในอาชีพอื่น

**สรุป** งานวิจัยนี้ได้ค้นพบความสัมพันธ์ของการรับรู้ของนักแสดงชีรีส์สายไทยที่มีต่อตัวตนของตนเอง พฤติกรรมการปรับตัวจากการเปลี่ยนแปลงบทบาทจากบุคคลทั่วไปเป็นบุคคลที่มีชื่อเสียง ความสับสนทางอัตลักษณ์ทางเพศจากบทบาทการแสดงในบท LGBTQ ในชีรีส์สาย และความสัมพันธ์กับเพื่อนร่วมงาน และภาวะสุขภาพจิตของนักแสดง ในด้านความกังวลเกี่ยวกับการประเมินในเชิงลบ การจัดการกับความเครียด การสนับสนุนจากครอบครัว และแผนการสำหรับอนาคตของตนเอง ผู้เข้าร่วมการวิจัยมีประสบการณ์ทั้งในเชิงบวกและเชิงลบต่อการทำงานในวงการนักแสดงชีรีส์สาย

**คำสำคัญ** การปรับตัว ภาวะสุขภาพจิต นักแสดงชีรีส์สาย

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# Perspective and Adaptive Behavior Toward acting Role, Peer Relationship, Fan Club and Mentality among Thai “Y” Genre Actors

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## ABSTRACT

**Objective:** This research was therefore undertaken to study the perspectives and factors related to adapting behavior to acting roles, peer relationships, fan clubs, and mentality of Thai Y genre actors for benefit the adaptive behavior methods of the actors to positive and negative situations for good mental health.

**Methods:** This qualitative research was conducted in 18 Thai Y genre actors using a semi-structured in-depth interview, based on literature reviews which can separated in 5 domains which leaded to the actors' adaptive behavior to positive and negative situations. The collected data were analyzed via content analysis.

**Results:** Perspective of become a Y-series actor is mainly positive, mostly think it as an opportunity to be in this industry. For acting roles, 72% said this job made them felt value from fame and being part of successful series globally. Peer relationships, 28% been mistreated by co-actors or crew because they're in lower ranking. In fan clubs' aspect, 50% scared of being eyes on, must pretend being nice to match fans' expectation. In perspective of mentality, 44% have family dispute, have avoid any argument personality and start to plan their future in other occupation.

**Conclusion:** The correlation of Thai Y-genre actors' perception towards self, adaptive behavior from role transition from ordinary person to famous person, the gender identity confusion from Y-genre acting role and peer relationship and actors' mentality such as fear of negative evaluation, stress management, family supportive system and their future was discovered in this research. The research participants have experiences both positive and negative which impact on their mental health in the Y-genre industry environment.

**Keyword:** adaptive behavior, mentality, Y-genre actors

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## INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, Thai society is open with preferences and self-expression more widely. With an idea that people are free to be yourself, the emergence of LGBTQ+ content which was called in Thailand and Asia region as Y-series, Y stands for Yaoi in Japanese, which is the genre of homoerotic relationship between male characters fictional media created by women for women.

The LGBTQ+ contents began to emerge in the Thai film industry through media releases in 1990s. Initially, in the early period, these portrayals were participated in supporting character for satirical comedy purpose. These characters were typically used to subtly critique or satirize negative stereotypes associated with men who openly expressed their sexual orientation as lustful or flirtatious individuals.<sup>1</sup>

In 2016, "Sotus the Series, the famous Y-genre fiction was developed to series platform, the fame from fiction society and series society had made the view count more than 100 million view on Line TV.<sup>2</sup>

In 2020, GMMTV aired "2gether The Series" This 13-episode series was success locally and globally for both two lead actors. The success of Y-genre series had made the producer launch the "Still 2gether The Series" and "2gether The Movie" which won the "Most Popular Thai Film of 2021" of 30th Thailand National Film Association Awards, the special prize that was 100% public fan voting.

Another outburst international success of Y-genre series was in 2022, "Kinnporsche The Series" was ranked in Iquiyi's top steaming chart for 191 areas, was in number 1 global Twitter's ranking and was ranked in China's Weibo platform all episodes. International press such as The Straits Times, Teen Vogue, Rolling Stones India published the article of actors and the success of the series. All the main actors were famous enough to have World tour in Bangkok, Taipei, Singapore, Soul, Manila and Hongkong which can be acknowledge that Thai Y-genre series and actors had become the new key of exported industry of Thailand.<sup>3</sup>

In addition, the role transition from an ordinary people to famous person which everyone keeps an eye on and interested in private life. From research on the pressure of actors on fans' expectations created the stress that actors must behave in a good manner, be good-natured, always pleased fans and investors for future works. With high competition and sleep deprivation, forcefully pleasing fans for online reputation bursting caused stress or pressure to actors.<sup>2,4</sup>

Fans' affection for actors can range from the level of liking to passion and fanaticism, called 'Idolatry', which is admiration, and dreaming of the actors' goodness which can overlook the actors' small mistakes. They happy to support the actors, show intimacy to have a fulfilling relationship. To 'Idealize' is to expect that person to be according to our ideals, where actors should be a good example, unable to make slightest mistakes. Negative news can be spread through social media quickly which may become cyberbullying. The negative news will affect the actor's career, such as being removed from being a presenter or layoff of the series. The pressure of fan's expectation had become one of actors' biggest concern for their future career plan.<sup>5</sup>

There is no study in Thailand and international on the Y-genre actors' view directly. Hence, this study focuses on the perception and adaptive behavior which caused to actors in LGBTQ+ acting role, peer relationship, fans' support, and actors' mentality which there are high possibility that it may be different when compared to the perception of male actors due to the LGBTQ+ acting role context and Y-genre society.

## METHODS

In this qualitative study, 18 Thai Y genre actors were recruited by criterion sampling until data saturation, by sending the invitation to actor managers or agencies in Bangkok metropolitan region after the interviews, actors introduced another Y genre actors who's in the inclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria for Y genre actors were gender male actors who aged between 18 - 35 years old, have an experience in movies, musicals, short films in

LGBTQ+ roles and at least 1 - 5 years of published performances. The exclusion criterion was unwillingness to participate in the study. The purposive sampling was used to select subjects from current Y genre actors in the market.

The semi-structured in-depth interview questionnaire was developed by the researcher based on literature reviews. The questionnaire contained 5 domains in 15 questions as in **Table 1**. Three actors participated in a pilot study to test the reliability and were asked to give feedback on clarity and relevance. They found the questions was relevant to the topic, and clearly understood the questions and the purpose of the study.

The permission for conducting the study was given by the Head of the Department of Psychiatry, Faculty of Medicine, Chulalongkorn University (COA-0612/2023), after the study protocol was approved by the Institutional Review Board. The participants were selected according to the inclusion criteria and were given

a written and verbal explanation for the study and ethical consideration. They agreed to participate in the study, and the researcher made an appointment with the participants. All interviews were conducted in Thai, face-to-face interview or video online interview by participants' choices and were audio-recorded for verbatim transcription. All interviews lasted, on average, 150 minutes. The interview was managed by a researcher, who holds a degree in Communication Arts, specializing in Advertising and Film and has experience interviewing executives and news media in the entertainment industry spanning over 10 years. While data analysis was conducted along with a psychiatrist and a PhD who skilled in qualitative research.

All transcriptions and data analysis were performed in Thai and were later translated into English by the researcher for the purpose of this paper. The translation was discussed and proofread for accuracy by a native Thai translator and a native English speaker.

**TABLE 1** Semi-structured in-depth interview questions categorized into 5 main themes.

Theme	Questions
Becoming an actor	The reasons why joining the entertainment industry? The correlation of first work in entertainment and how to get a role? The beginning of being part in Y-series? The income of acting roles? Benefit and disadvantage of an actor in entertainment agency or freelance actor?
Acting role	How does the Y-character role you are given affected your perception of yourself? How does the Y-character role you are given affected the perception of those close to you (family, loved one, relatives, friends, and society)
Peer relationship	How does the relationship with the crew members, on-set actors affected to work?
Fan clubs	What does fanbase club affected to your self-perception? The consequences of fan clubs' expectation on actors' real-life identities affect their lives?
Mentality	Family relationship and supportive system? Dignity of being an actor considered by correlation of dream job and education Adaptive behavior for the role transition? When encountering problems or uncomfortable events, do you understand the cause of the problems. and how to solve that problem? What have you learned from working on set with crew members? How has it affected your self-perception? Your future's plan?

## RESULTS

This study was conducted in 18 Thai Y-genre participated actors were male, ages ranged between 22 - 33 years old; 10 of them were male in gender identity, 6 of them were LGBTQ+, and 2 of them were no answer. In relationship factor, 7 of them were in relationship, and 11 of them were single. The number of years of experience as an actor ranged from 1 to 13 years; 1 - 5 years has 8 persons; 5 - 10 years has 6 persons and over 10 years has 4 persons.

After the interview, the collected data were analyzed via content analysis which can be separated in 5 domains which led to the actors' adaptive behavior to positive and negative situations i.e., becoming the actor, acting role, peer relationship, fan clubs and mentality. The table will show the result of answers' frequency and content.

The results show becoming the actor aspect, the participants mentioned that becoming a celebrity has increased self-worth. For the financial aspect, participants who say their income is insufficient for living, these actors do not consider themselves top ranking actors or well-known in Y-genre series market.

**Acting role:** the majority has positive self-perception such as acknowledged the value in life by being part of success works, gain more self-esteem, made high rate of money for self and family while some has negative perception being labeled as Y-genre actors.

**Peer relationship:** majority has positive perception on relationship with co-actors or crew members as they are in the same age and gender while some has been treated differently by fame or ranking.

**Fanclubs:** majority acknowledged the benefit on having the fan club or fanbase group as it is win-win situation between actors and fans. For fans' expectation. Some were stressed by been judged their gender identity from their acting role and be treated sexual harassment from fans or others.

**Mentality:** Family supportive system is the main issue for self-value or stress management, half has negative behavior as they felt losing personal space, been criticized created stress in life, keep character to please fans and investors, made them feel uncomfortable and questions their value in life and been forced to hide their private for good reputation.

**TABLE 2** Summarized data analysis divided into each question and themes.

Becoming an actor		Question	Keyword and quotation
The reasons why joining the entertainment industry?		17% do it for money, while 39% has passion in acting, dreamed on working in the entertainment industry. 44% had been scouted by agency from their character or appearance	ID1: The one who is on the TV must be a rich, famous, successful person, I want to be in one day.
		ID15: My family worked as crew member in this industry, I saw my dad as my idol, I want to be part in this industry.	
		ID4: I was scouted by agency during my university, I studied in science field, so entertainment industry is so unreal, I'll try it.	
The correlation of first work in entertainment and how to get a role?		44% start with advertisement while 22% did the musical or short film. 28% start first role in Y-series (28%) and 6% start with normal drama	ID9: I saw the casting crew at Siam Square for Y-series that was originated by famous novel, I was drawn to try it and luckily, I've got selected, after this series I gained fame and fans to continue my Y-series journey onwards

**TABLE 2** Summarized data analysis divided into each question and themes. (con.)

Becoming an actor	
Question	Keyword and quotation
The beginning be part in Y-series?	All mentioned that it's an opportunity to be actor in Thai entertainment industry, never concern whether it's LGBTQ+ role. 17% chose to play in LGBTQ+ role for support LGBTQ+ society, 39% believed a good actor should be able to perform any roles while another 17% have famous Thai Y-series actors as role models
The income of acting roles? Benefit and disadvantage of an actor in entertainment agency or freelance actor?	50% of the acting role income is fulfilled in daily life while the others 50% said income is not enough, plan for second job to support daily life and family such as be a business owner or a production crew  ID3: Income from acting is not enough for my daily life, if you are not the main character or not in the high ranking, you will not get high paid. Income came from event or presenter contract. Be nice, do the fan service with partner to draw attention on social media, so the investor will see you in sight for consideration.
Acting role	
How does the Y-character role you are given affected your perception of yourself?	72% has positive self-perception while 28% has negative perception in self-identity and value  ID5: I studied in acting performance, so I don't like Y-genre series, they focus on the appearance of the characters and fan service. As a person who graduated on performance, I want to work in the real art performing society.
How does the Y-character role you are given affected the perception of those close to you	83% admired actors as a successful person who can be part of the movies and gain popularity globally while 17%, they looked down on actors who play love scene with men and been questioned about actors' gender identity and been insulted by older generation who don't understand diversity in society  ID8: Friends mocked me on playing love scenes, I've got sexual harassment from my role partners, it's out of agreement at some points. People assumed that I'm okay with sexual situation, but I am not. I've been sexual abuse from my co-actors, crews or even fans.
Peer relationship	
How does the relationship with the crew members, on-set actors affected to work?	72% have good relationship with crew members and on-set actors, as they in the same age and gender, so actors felt comfortable to talk to while another 28% have been treated by fame or ranking, if you are in lower rank, you will get lower allowance and be treated differently  ID6: For crew members, some are treated actors by fame or ranking, if you are in high rank, they will be treated nicely and give extra allowance. Even among on-set actors, if you are in lower ranking, some actors will not want to be associated with.

**TABLE 2** Summarized data analysis divided into each question and themes. (con.)

Becoming an actor	
Question	Keyword and quotation
Fan clubs	
What does fanbase club affected to your self-perception?	83% felt delightful on having the fanbase club, admired all the activities or projects that fans created on social media which will be affected to the actors' future works while another 17% happy with fans support but didn't want fans to judge personal life which create stress in actors  ID14: fans always want me to treat her exclusively, sometimes I play along with their requests, but end up causing drama among fans. The issue was big I must stop use social media for a while.
The consequences of fan clubs' expectation on actors' real-life identities affect their lives?	50% didn't worry about fans expectation, even if fans brought up rumors or behaviors, they excepted their actions, while the others scared of being eyes on all the time, must pretend being nice to match fans' expectation. Some were stressed by been judged their gender identity from their acting role and be treated sexual harassment from fans or others.  ID13: When I play LGBTQ+ role, fans assumed my gender by my character. I can't be myself; I can't have a girlfriend. I felt stress to pretend to keep character to satisfied what fans' want.
Mentality	
Family relationship and supportive system?	56% has friends and family who can be supportive system to the actors while 44% said family are not their supportive system for them if they are facing issue  ID12: I don't want anyone to know that I'm facing issues, I don't want them to think I'm a loser. I don't have a friend who I can trust and rely on like that
Dignity of being an actor considered by correlation of dream job and education	39% family supported to study in entertainment industry related faculties, they open to any future that actors wish for while another 33% said family didn't agree for entertainment path but admitted opportunity for actors try on. 28% mentioned family strongly disagree for entertainment path, actors fought with family to become actor when they in university admission  ID2: When I was a kid, I would like to become food scientist as my dad wants me to work in science field, it's a Thai norm. But when I went to see musical, I have a passion and decided to fight with my dad so I can study in performing arts. My relationship with parent isn't good after that day
Adaptive behavior for the role transition?	50 % has positive perception while the others have negative perception on losing personal space, criticism which leads to questions in self-worth  ID10: I'm stress as I don't know whether my behaviors will be affected to someone or not, I'm trying to keep character to maintain the fame, but it just stresses me out, it wasn't me at all, I felt like I must pretend to be someone, and it did cause drama. I must stop use social media to avoid criticism from fans and anti-fans for a while, do some meditate to sort it out.

**TABLE 2** Summarized data analysis divided into each question and themes. (con.)

Becoming an actor	
Question	Keyword and quotation
When encountering problems, understand the cause of the problems?	44% handle it by take a break to analysis the situation and find the best solution, when facing problems, always confront problems directly while the others change attitude on problems, internal problem solving  ID11: When I am facing drama on social media, I admitted that issue has occurred, and no one will save me. No one want to be involved on this. No matter what I did to solve this issue, but nothing helps. I do wish someone will step up to help me out but I'm on my own. I must deal with it myself.
What you learned from working with crew members? How does it affect your self-perception?	33% learned quick adaptive behavior to work with many types of people (33%) while 22% gain good connection in high societies which create an opportunity in future business or career path. 44% strongly affirm on social skills  ID17: I learned how to manage emotional or self-control as people keep an eye on me, it's undeniable to avoid criticism and I also learned about social skills; how to deal with people which other occupation might be unable to teach me this way.
Your future?	56% continue in entertainment industry whether be an actor, film director or scriptwriter while another 44% change to be a business owner or work in graduated field such as be a marketer. Averaged age to moves to do business is 35 years old.  ID18: I want to work in acting field. In the future if I can play in normal roles (non-Y genre movies) I would love to try it. If I'm too old to play, I might be an acting coach.  ID16: I'm planning to create supplement brand, not only that I'll open my own restaurant café, expected to open next year. I know that Y-genre actor job is a short-term job, when I'm over 35 years old, I will quit and run business only.

## Discussion

According to the growth number of Thai Y genre entertainment industry since 2014, The success of this industry globally had elevated the demand of the new Y-genre actors, without the preparation of the actor's mental health care who indeed facing role transition from ordinary person to a famous super star.

There was no study about the actors who specifically played the LGBTQ+ role about their role transition, their stress of negative evaluation from others in both work life and private life before. There was news informed that the Korean superstars become MDD due to the high expectation from fans and investors which cause them stress management issue, and some were committed suicide<sup>6-8</sup>

Actors' perception on Y-genre series, all willing to be part of this industry as Thailand is the top rank of biggest Y-genre entertainment internationally, they didn't concern their gender identity confusion themselves. They prefer to support LGBTQ+ pride because current global trend while some are LGBTQ+ himself. In income aspect, lower ranking actors need to have second jobs such as have their own business or work in the graduated field job to be sufficient their personal life. This group is often financially motivated and the decision to join the entertainment industry is influenced by family economic status or family relationships.

For acting role aspect, some concerned being labelled as Y-genre actor is not a good reputation for acting career as Y-genre series mostly focused on sex scene

but not acting skills which will reduce their future acting opportunity.<sup>9</sup> While closed one's perspective on LGBTQ+ role, actors received negative commentary which leaded actors to have negative feeling on LGBTQ+ and cause the gender identity frustration and were traumatized by filming intense roles to actors

For peer relationship aspect, for those actors who felt comfortable with co-actors, are mostly in the higher-ranking actors on Y-genre market. While those who felt left out, has been treated from crew members or even co-actors obviously different are in lower ranking. which cause stress and have negative feeling toward Y-genre entertainment.<sup>10</sup>

The stress of fans' expectation toward actors caused by forcing themselves to please fans and investors will offer future works. Actors must keep character role even in private life for fans' satisfaction.<sup>1</sup> Besides, people assumed actors are LGBTQ+ or willing to play sex scenes which caused sexual assaults both verbally and physically from co-workers, casting team or even fans. Some admitted their medical history as MDD or PTSD when compared to normal actors, The intensity of fans' expectation is higher as for fans' perception, actors unable to have girlfriend.<sup>11,13</sup>

Mentality aspect, Actors who has family dispute in gender identity issue or occupation's choice, playing sex scene with men lead to MDD and was treated by therapist at present.<sup>10,12</sup>

The adaptive behavior from role transition, loosing private life, unable to handle fans expectation as they only accept relationship with role partner. Live a life under spotlight cause them loosing self-identity and question about their life value.

For future aspect, same as income aspect, high ranking actors will continue in acting field as they see opportunity in acting career while lower ranking actors decided to own business such as wellness clinic, restaurants, or product branding, while some have their second job such as film crew, choreographer, or work in graduated field such as marketer or branding consultant along with working as an actor. Because received good

connection while work as actor, they acknowledge this benefit and will use fans support and this connection to expand their opportunity to pursue the happiness in life later.

### Limitations of the Study

The study delves into the perspectives, feelings towards work, and the public image of actors. Some interview questions touch on sensitive topics such as experiences of sexual abuse or income related to their profession, requiring cautious research methodology and participants confidential.

### Suggestions for Further Study

Study mental health of actors who play heterosexual roles in normal dramas (male-female), exploring their thoughts and perceptions in a society where sexual diversity is accepted as normal, enhancing understanding different from the current Thai Y-genre series.

## CONCLUSION

The perception of Thai Y-genre actors towards self, adaptive behavior from role transition from ordinary person to famous person, the gender identity confusion from Y-genre acting role and peer relationship and actors' mentality such as fear of negative evaluation, stress management, family supportive system and their future. The research participants have experiences both positive and negative which impact on their mental health in the Y-genre industry environment.

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### Conflict of interest

The authors, hereby, declare no conflict of interest.

## Authors' contributions

This qualitative research, the author (Nalinee Yospaiboon) responsible from research design, literary reviews, conduct method design, interview the participants, data analysis and write the manuscript. With the advice from co-responding authors (Buranee Kanchanatawan) about the article revision and literary review suggestions, due to the actors, this group of the participants has never been in any research either international journal or local one before which cause the literary review unable to find the peer reviewed journals. In addition, with a qualitative research related advice from another co-responding author (Tavee Cheasuwantavee) who is the qualitative research specialist. With all the advice from them, had made this manuscript accomplished smoothly.

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