

**THE FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE SUCCESS OF LIVE  
PERFORMANCES IN THAILAND**



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## **THE FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE SUCCESS OF LIVE PERFORMANCES IN THAILAND**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Nowadays the competition of the event management business in Thailand is cluster only among few big players. Still, some live performance of well-known performers or production companies surprisingly fail to sell all the tickets. Also, with high expectation, sometimes the shows turn out not as good as expected.

As noticed that the live performance of famous artists or eminent production teams cannot always guarantee the success of the show, this research aims to study the main factors that have a crucial impact on live performances. However because there are various kinds of live performance, this research focuses only on live concert and live talk show which are often held in Thailand.

The research found that in order to be able to sell the tickets well, the popularity of the performers or the audience's interest play an important role. Nonetheless, it is also crucial to perform and set the production up to their expectation so that they would leave the show with enjoyment and memorable experience.

**KEY WORDS:** Live Performance / Live Concert / Live Talk Show / Customer Engagement /  
Memorable Experience

21 pages

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

In Thailand, there are around 300 event management companies. Yet the competition in the industry is still low, as the business is cluster among few big players who have greater ability to provide complete coverage of services, in terms of the working teams and equipment, including their creativity. These factors make SMEs companies who are the majority in this business harder to compete with the giant ones.

As a frequent audience, I personally notice that some live performances that compose of well-known star as a performer who often come together with high standard production, sometimes fail to sell all the tickets. Thus, there are many seats left empty. Also, sometimes, with high expectation prior to the show, it turns out that the show is not as good as expected. On the contrary, some shows, such as Note Udom and Bird Thongchai, have been able to win the heart of audiences for over decades. Consequently, whenever the show is on scheduled, the tickets could be sold out in such a short period time.

As notice different results, the live performance of a famous artists or eminent production teams alone cannot guarantee that the success would be achieved. Therefore, there arises the wonder what are the factors that make the live performance successful.

The purpose of this research aims to study the factors that contribute to the success of live performances. Since there are many kinds of live performances, this study will only focus on the ones that often held in Thailand. Therefore, 2 types of live performances which are live concerts and live talk shows are selected to focus in this study. The research is conducted to learn about the attitude of both audiences and producers. In terms of audiences, this research will explore their behaviors and opinions toward these 2 kinds of live performances. Oppositely, it will also look at the production techniques and viewpoint from the show producer.

The first part of this research covers 2 theoretical frameworks, Experience Economy theory and Marketing Mix for services. Then, the methods of gathering information in the research are described. The next part provides the findings from both questionnaire of the audiences and the interview of the producer. Lastly, the last part would conclude the study and propose recommendations for further study.

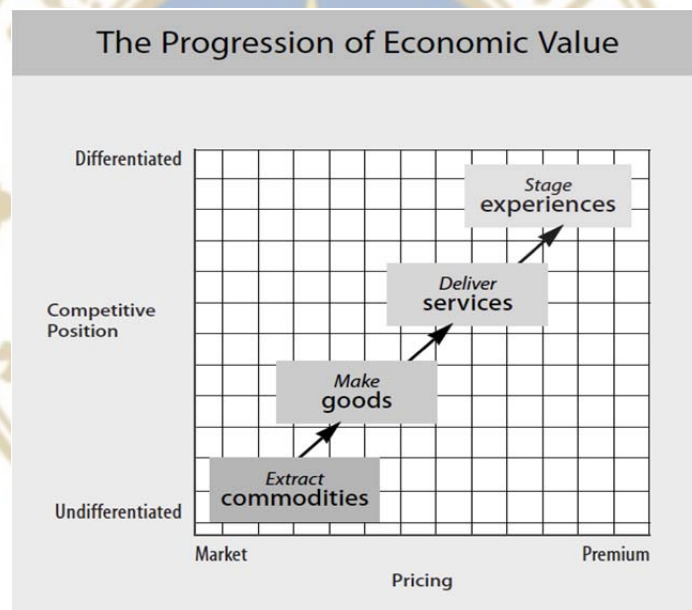


## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Experience Economy

In traditional believe, services will always come with an experience. But in fact experience actually provides different economic values from those delivered by services. It delivers an actual offering to customers, similar to what goods and services do.



**Figure 2.1 Welcome to experience economy**

**Source:** B. Joseph Pine II and James H. Gilmore (1998)

The fourth economic offering is to stage experiences which is the next step of service delivery. Stage experiences go further beyond services in terms of engagement and memorable events. That is apart from providing the services, the company must be able to engage customers in both physical and emotional ways so in the end it would leave a memorable event in customers' mind. While goods and services are external to buyers, experience is more individual and personal.

The concept of selling experience is known for being the core of the entertainment industry. Disney Land is the classic example of staging memorable experiences. It not only use services as a main stage, but also offer goods as something reminding them of their good experience. However, in reality other kinds of business can also stage experiences, as long as they can engage customers and create memorable experience.

To successfully create memorable experiences, the company starts from carefully selecting and designing the theme of the services and then deliver them in a consistent way. Broadly, it should integrate the following 4 key principles.

1. Theme the experience

Setting the theme, whether the company offers goods or services, can help envision the customers about what to be expected. The theme acting as a foundation will help shape all the relevant components into the same direction and thus can stage the event accordingly. All the harmonized surrounding would lead to positive impression and thus assist to create unforgettable experiences.

2. Harmonize impressions with positive cues

The company must deliberately try to deliver positive and consistent cues that will further contribute to the good impressions. And good impressions will in turn help create a long lasting experience. Scatter cues could make customers confused. So, the company must ensure that every details that occurs during the customer's interactions throughout their journey with the company is going under the same theme.

3. Engage all 5 senses

Apart from the cues, sensory stimulus that the customers absorb along their journey with the company can also reinforce the theme and help increase the engagement. It should be done through a good combinations of sensation. The higher level of engagement the sense can pull, the more it can enhance experiences.

4. Mix in memorabilia

Goods can represent the memories of that particular experience, just like what a postcards remind the travelers about their experienced journey. Often memorabilia goods can be priced higher than the one that solely provides the functional benefits because additionally they could reminiscence about the remembering experiences.

## 2.2 Marketing Mix for Services

Marketing mix is served as a combination of tools to help the company achieve the marketing campaigns. For general products, marketers propose to use 4 marketing mix which are product, price, place and promotion. However, because the services are physically different from the goods. Hence, the marketing mix used for services go farther than the original ones of the tangible products. It composes of 7 components, as followed.

### 1. Service

For products, the customers can easily see, touch and compare because they are tangible. But services needed the consideration beyond that. That is, the company must set the first priority to deliver customer satisfaction. It can be achieved by starting from being able to realize the kind of benefits and satisfaction customers want from the services. Then, the company need to deliver those benefits and satisfaction up to the level of the customer expectation.

### 2. Price

Comparing to general tangible products, pricing in services plays less important role. This is due to special characteristics of services. Despite of belonging to the same category or industry, services tend to vary and diversify. Thus, they are not directly comparable. Additionally, if the services offered are unique, it increases the flexibility to mark up the prices.

### 3. Place

Place serves as a distribution channel. For services, distribution channels can be viewed in 2 areas. Firstly, location is essential for direct purchases. Similar to general products, the better location of distribution channels, the greater chance that the products or services will be seen by the potential customers. Secondly, in many cases services are not sold directly, but through intermediaries. For instance, hotels may sell their rooms through travel agents. Likewise, financial services also need banks or financial institutions. Therefore, the company also have to take into account these intermediary channels as well.

### 4. Promotion

Since services are intangible, promotional tools can be used to make the services more tangible in customer's mind and thus help compare one service to another



better. Plus, because the customer cannot test the services before actual purchase, promotional campaign plays an important role, in order to communicate to the customers. The recommended tools are such as advertising to raise awareness, sales promotion, publicity and word of mouth.

#### 5. People

This includes all the people who involve in the services from the beginning until the end of delivery. All of their appearance and behavior will have a crucial impact toward customers' satisfaction. Consequently, customers tend to evaluate service quality from the performers, not the service itself. Moreover, the people here also include customer themselves. That is, the existing customers, if they are satisfied with the services, they can help spread word of mouth and thus help influence and draw in new customers.

#### 6. Physical evidence

Physical evidence includes all the environment and tangible components involving in the entire service delivery process. They function similarly to the packaging of the products. Therefore, physical evidences can help create positive attitude, good image and impression toward the actual services, as well as the service providers. There are 2 types of physical evidences, essential and peripheral evidences.

Essential evidence have the main crucial role to build environment of the services. Enhancing essential evidences, the marketers must make the service concept easily understandable so that the services will be more tangible in customer's mind.

Peripheral evidence acts as an add-on value to essential evidences such as complimentary gifts. Although it do not have importance to the services, it can be taken away by customers. For this reason, peripheral evidence can help remind how much the customer appreciate the services. Likewise, it also helps portray the company's image.

#### 7. Process

Process is the flow of activities along the service delivery, including the operational system. It is an important factor, since the customers will perceive these plow of fragmented processes as one integrated service. Therefore, the company must make sure to manage operational activates well to get high service quality.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Qualitative research method is used in this research to explore the focus group's motivation, feeling and thoughts. Both questionnaire and interview are conducted. Firstly, for questionnaire, conducted through an online survey, it is conducted to the focus group of total 6 people who have experience in live performances but vary in different degree. Some attend live performances regularly but others rarely do. Given that in Thailand live concerts are held more frequently, comparing to live talk shows, the focus group comprises of 2 sub-groups. They are a group having experience in both live concert and live talk show and another group having experience in live concert only

The questionnaire intends to study the behavior of the audiences. It seeks to explore the important factors that are likely to influence their purchasing decisions. Also, the questionnaire asks them to share their bad experiences of the shows so as to study about the factors that make the shows enjoyable and memorable for the audiences. The questionnaire composes of 4 sections.

#### **3.1 Questionnaire**

##### **3.1.1 Screen Questions**

1. Which type of live performance they have ever attended?
2. How often do they attend live performance?

These screening questions mean to screen the qualified focus group. Since this research focus on live concert and talk show, the focus group will contain only the people who used to attend either one or both of these 2 live shows. In addition, this research's focus group selects only those who attend such live performances at least 1 time per year. This is to scope down the study of the behavior and opinion of the right target group.



### **3.1.2 Demographic Questions**

1. Gender
2. Age

Demographic questions intend to know the age range and gender of the focus group. It can help learn their characteristics that might have part to influence the purchase decision and behavior.

### **3.1.3 General Questions**

1. The ticket price they normally buy
2. Who do they attend the live performance with?

These questions means study the general behavior of the target group

### **3.1.4 Specific Question**

1. What factors persuade their buying decision?
2. In their opinion, what factors make the show enjoyable and memorable for them?
3. Describe memorable or bad experience of the live performance they ever attended, if any

Specific questions focus deeper down into the focus group's motivation, expectation and personal experience. Firstly, the question target to explore the factors that are important to influence their purchasing decision. Secondly, they aim to study the components of the live show that contribute to the audiences' enjoyment and good memories. Lastly, in terms of bad experience, the focus group is asked to describe the incident that ever occurred to them.

## **3.2 Interview**

In order to seek points of view from the producer side, the interview is conducted to one expert who has been working in the entertainment industry for over 10 years. The interviewee is a senior marketing manager working at the leading entertainment company in Thailand. He is responsible for the marketing campaigns of live concerts, as well as managing artists who are under the contract with the company. The 30-minute

interview was conducted at his office. And the questions asked during the interview are as followed.

### **3.2.1 General Questions**

1. Holding a live show, what is the starting point that a company must consider?
2. Planning for live show production, what are the main things to be considered?
3. Each live show is unique and differ, how to set the ticket prices?
4. What channel does the company normally uses for selling the tickets?

These questions intend to explore general information about live performance productions, in terms of producer's side.

### **3.2.2 Specific Questions**

1. For producers, what are the differences between live concerts and talk shows?
2. How these 2 kinds of live shows vary in terms of production?
3. What a successful show means to the producers? And what are the key success factors to achieve them?

These questions intend to search for the information specifically about live concerts and live talk shows. They include comparison and contrast of both types of live shows.

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS

The focus group doing the questionnaire composes of total 6 people. The group can be divided into male 33% and female 67%. Most of them age between 26-35 years old or 83% of the focus group. The rest 17% age below 25 years old.

For the types of live performances they have ever attended, 2 sub-groups are seen. The first sub-group is the one having experience in live concert only, accounted for 33% of the focus group. The second sub-group, equivalent to 67%, has attended both live concert and live talk show.

Next is about the focus group's general behavior. Since this research selects only the people who attend the live performance at least once a year, the behavior of the focus group found is quite varied. The group ranges from those who infrequently attend the live performance to those who attend very often during the year. Equivalently each 33% of the focus group attends live performance, only one time, 2-4 times and 5-8 times per year.

Looking at the ticket prices they normally buy, the result also differs. Half of the focus group usually buy live show tickets at Bht 1,500-3,000. The ticket price range below Bht 1,500 are often purchased by 33% of the focus group. And the rest, accounted for 17%, generally buy the ticket price above Bht 4,500.

The area of study divided into 2 main areas. The first one is the factors that have an influencing impact toward purchase decision. The second one concerns the component of how to engage and produce enjoyable and memorable shows.

#### **4.1 Factors That Persuade Purchasing Decision**

According to marketing mix for services, there are 7 factors that play an important role influencing customer's purchasing decision, service, price, place, promotion, people, physical evidence and process. However, this research found that there are 3 main factors that tend to highly impact audience's purchasing decision.

**Table 4.1 Factors that are likely to influence the focus group's purchasing decision**

Factors	Quantity	Percentage
Favorite band, singer, artist	6	100%
Personal interest	5	83%
People accompanied	3	50%
Venue	2	33%
Ticket price	1	16%
Marketing campaign	1	16%
Ticket promotion, discount	-	-
Convenience to reserve or buy the tickets	-	-

From the table above, the top 3 factors that have high influential impact toward the focus group's purchasing decision are favorite artists, personal interest and people accompanied them to the show respectively.

#### **4.1.1 Favorite Artists**

The first ranking factor is the favorite band, singer and artist. 100% of the focus group agrees that if it is the show of their favorite artists, all of them are for sure likely to attend the show.

This factor is also confirmed true by the producer. He gives the first priority that the producer must be able to define the perspective audiences of a particular show. Before organizing a show, the first task of a producer is to define the target audiences of that particular show. This is because the target audiences are the ones who like and would support that particular artists. This means that each target group will have their own preference and favorite artists.

Observing target audiences can be done by looking at the number of fan base, YouTube viewed and Facebook & Instagram's followers. In addition, it can also be seen from how much the publicity the artist receives, when attending various kinds of events. However, it should be aware that high publicity alone cannot guarantee the large fan base.

#### **4.1.2 Personal Interest**

83% of the focus group agrees that even though the show is not their favorite one, if they are interested in that particular show. It is still very likely that they will buy the tickets and attend the show.

#### **4.1.3 The people accompanied**

The people who accompanied the audience to the show also have quite an important role in purchasing decision. The result of questionnaire shows that half of the focus group admitting that this factor is significant for them as well. Moreover, the result also found that 100% of the focus group usually go to the shows with friends. People who usually attend live performances with their family members accounted for 50% of the focus group. And lastly 33% generally go with their boyfriend or girlfriend.

However, contrast to marketing mix theory, there are some factors found to have low impact to influence purchasing decision. Only 33% of the focus group thinks the venue holding the show has an impact on their ticket purchase decision. Similarly, marketing campaign such as advertisement, billboards and posters seem to have little impact to their decisions, since only 16% of the focus group gives importance on this factor. Also promotional discount and the convenience of reserving or buying the tickets have no impact at all toward focus group's buying decision.

In producer's point of view, he will carefully select the venue so that it is line with the theme and purpose of that particular show. For instance, in case it is a large scale show of a popular star, the target audience is very likely to be large group. Also, the audience would highly expect to see great shows with spectacular light & sound system, as well as special effects. Therefore, the venue for this kind of show must be large enough to hold such large scale show. And it must be able to be equipped with complicated production and staging. For this reason, there are only several venues that are suitable for such large scale show. In general, these venues are often held the events. So, people usually know the location quite well. For this reason, the venue has low impact toward purchasing decision.

Similar to the focus group's result, planning for a live performance, the producer also weight very little on marketing campaign and discount. This is because



prior to the production stage, the ticket price range will be set to suit each specific target group. If the target group is young adult or adult, the ticket price range will be higher than those targeting at teenage group. Therefore, the pricing is already figured, according to the character of the target audiences. Unnecessarily marketing campaign and discount have to be used as a tool to persuade the audience' purchasing decision.

## 4.2 Factors That Contribute To Enjoyable And Memorable Shows.

**Table 4.2 The components that are likely to make show enjoyable and memorable**

Factors	Quantity	Percentage
The show	6	100%
Screen & Sound systems	6	100%
The seat	4	67%
Punctuality	3	50%
Engagement with audience	2	33%
Stage Decoration	1	16%

The result indicates 3 main factors that the focus group thinks it has high influential impact toward their enjoyment of the live performance. The 3 factors are the show, screen & sound systems, the seat. It is interesting to notice that 100% of the focus group choose the show and screen & sound systems. Also, most of both good and bad experiences shared are related to these factors.

### 4.2.1 The Show

All the focus group agrees that the show itself, including overall well-organization, smooth flow of the shows, fun and exciting performance, is crucial factor to create memorable experience for them.

In order to produce a good show, firstly for a talk show, it depends heavily on the context or the stories to be narrated during the show. The most important thing is that they must be something that every audience knows or familiar with. Most of the times, famous talk shows would involves politics and social trends because they are

well aware by the audiences at almost every age. Furthermore, the way that the stories are told must be humorous and sarcastic because audience's expectation from talk show is fun, entertaining and amusing stories.

On the other hand, the show for each live concert can vary, depending on the type of that particular concert and the expectation of the audience. If it is the concert of a rock band, the audiences tend to expect that they would dance and jump to their favorite songs in the concert. So, the most important thing is that the show must deliver exciting and heart beating atmosphere. In contrast, for pop artists' concert, stage decoration, sexy & fancy costume and dance should be the first to be considered.

Apart from different music genre, the origination of the artists can also affect the show pattern. For instance, broadly the shows of Western and Asian artists are quite different. For Western artist's concert, the audiences tend to expect that they would sit and enjoy listening to good music during the show. They would not mind how far their seats are because it is the live music that they mainly expect from the concert. Therefore, the shows here should focus more on the music delivery.

Oppositely, the audiences of Asian artists, particularly Korean artists, are likely to expect the intimacy. That is, the audiences tend to go to the concert because they want to see their favorite idols. The closer they can be, the higher satisfactions they tend have. Therefore, very often it can be seen that in the concert, the stage will compose of at least 2 main stages. Additionally, there will be the paths that stretch out in different directions so that the artists can walk around to meet audience in various areas. With this kind of stage, the audiences who do not sit at the front of the stage will also have a chance to see the artists up close. One of the focus group shared that in one concert she sat far away from the stage. However, one moment during the concert, the artist just appeared unexpectedly near her, while singing the song. This made her very surprised and happy to be able to meet the artist very close.

Another distinct characteristic in Asian artist concerts is the engagement between audiences and the performer. One of the focus group shares that when foreign artist unexpectedly sings Thai song in the concert, it creates good memories for her. Even time passes, whenever she happens to listen to that song, it would remind her of the good moments in that concert. This is because she feels that the artists really care about this concert, even though he comes to Thailand just for 1-day concert.



Also, in many concerts there would be a project initiated by the audiences at the end of the concert for their artists. From my personal experience, it comes in different forms. All audiences may sing a meaningful song to their artist or waive the light sticks in the pre-organized way to show the encouraging words such as love or the name of that artist. One of the focus group shared that in one last concert before his favorite band disband, the fans managed to show a goodbye fan-made video clip on the screen. He reveals that not only the fans and audiences were able to say goodbye for one last time, but also the band themselves was touched by this surprising video clip. This creates emotional engagement for both the audiences and the performers and thus leaves a good memory to him until today.

Apart from the shows, fan services during the concert can also help engage the audiences and create good experience. For instance, one of the focus group shared that she was so happy getting the drum stick that one member of the band threw to the audience at the end of the concert. According to experience economy theory, the drum stick here serves as a memorabilia that represent a good memory she had of that concert.

#### **4.2.2 Screen & Sound systems**

Secondly, there are some complaints about the screen and sound systems which are considered to be another essential factor that make the show enjoyable. For instance, when the seat is located so far away from the stage, watching the live performance, the audience has to rely solely on the big screen beside the stage. In some shows the camera men could not capture and switch between different angles well enough. Seeing unsmooth performances though the screen reduced their excitement and enjoyment. For the sound system, there is a comment regarding the live talk show that the volume level of the speaker is not stable for several moments.

#### **4.2.3 Punctuality of the show**

Lastly, it is about the punctuality of the show. This factor receives 50% vote of the focus group. One of the focus group shares that some shows that she attended started quite late. As a result, the performances ended later than it should. As the show finished very late at night, it was not safe for her to go back home. Another one shares that in one concert he bought the standing ticket. Before the show begins, he went in

the concert to standby for half an hour. However, it turns out that the show started about half an hour late. So, he ended up standing for 1 hour waiting for the show. This annoyed him so much.

For the producer's side, punctuality is also important for them, as it can indicate the professional organization of the production company. Some artists, especially foreign artists, may have to go directly to the airport, after the shows finish. For this reason, the delay of the show may cause them to miss their flight.



## **CHAPTER V**

### **CONCLUSIONS**

#### **5.1 Conclusions**

At first, some live performance may seem to be successful. However, there are times that the result turns out not as good as expected. So, after the study of significant factors for successful live performances, the findings found are divided into 2 main areas, before and after the show. Before the show starts, the research intends to find out the factors that influence purchasing decision. After the show ends, it aims to study the factors that contribute to memorable experiences.

Firstly, it is undeniable that before the actual show starts, one determinant of the show's success is indeed the number audience or the number of ticket sold. For sure, it is very essential to the producer, as it is related to profitability of the production. Moreover, although it may not directly impact the audiences, it could indirectly affect their first impression, once they enter the venue. In case there many seats left empty, the surrounding environment perceived would provide negative cues to the audiences. According the Experience Economy theory, this may oppose the creation of ultimate experience for the audience. Therefore, it can be concluded that it is important for both parties.

The marketing mix theory proposes 7 factors that could help influence the purchasing decision for services. However, the study found only 3 substantial factors that can highly influence the audience to purchase live performance's the tickets.

1. The artists play an important role in decision making. If it is the audience's favorite artists, they are likely to purchase the show tickets.
2. In case, it is not their favorite artists but the live performances are in their personal interest. Still, it is likely that they will purchase the ticket and attend the show.

3. People accompanied, especially friends and family members, can also help persuade the audience's purchase decision.

Other factors such as the venue holding the show, ticket price, promotion and discount have insignificant to no impact to influence the purchase decision.

Secondly, even if the tickets are all sold out but the show does not enjoy the audiences and thus ends without leaving memorable experience. Such live performance cannot be considered successful either. So, in order to create memorable experience for live shows, the producer must be able to engage audiences through the well-designed performances. The study found 3 factors that directly impact the audience's engagement and enjoyment.

4. The performance during the show is a highly considerable factor. It is very essential to deliver the shows that meet audience expectation. Therefore, the theme of all the performances, as suggested in Experience economy theory, must be well planned so that everything goes in the same direction to achieve target audiences' expectation.

The only distinct difference between talk show and live concert is the context and entertaining methods. Live concerts provide entertainment through music and eye-catching performances. So, the audience's expectation from the concert is somewhat easier to design. On the other hand, live talk shows engage the audiences through stories. The expectation of what stories would entertain the audiences is thus harder to guess. So, the context during the show must be the topics that they all are familiar of. Also, the talker should communicate in humorous and sarcastic ways to successfully entertain the audiences.

Apart from the shows that can engage the audiences through 5 sensations, let's not forget that goods purchased or items received from artists' fan service could also serve as memorabilia things to remind them of their good moments at the show.

5. Screen and sound systems, as well as the seats, must be well organized, since they would directly impact the audience's sensation to see the show and hear the sounds clearly. If the producer fail engage these sensation, enjoyment and good experience from the show can hardly be achieved.

## 5.2 Limitation

Firstly, the sample size, consisting of 6 people, is small and also the focus group is cluster into the people aged between 26-35 years old. So, their opinion might not be able to cover the opinion of the audiences whose age do not fall into these range, as they may see differently from the focus group.

Secondly, there is only one interviewee representing the producer's point of view in this research. Hence, his opinion may represent his belief and thus overlook some other relevant factors

Further research may include more variety of people in terms of age, background, occupation and lifestyle so that it can increase more coverage of factors and opinions. Also, the producers from various companies may be invited for interview. This may help open up to more different factors.





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