

**FACTOR CONTRIBUTING TO THE POPULARITY OF CULLEN  
HATEBERRY CHANNEL IN THAILAND**



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Entitled  
**FACTOR CONTRIBUTING TO THE POPULARITY OF  
CULLEN HATEBERRY CHANNEL IN THAILAND**


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Ittikorn Kaewkong

**FACTOR CONTRIBUTING TO THE POPULARITY OF CULLEN HATEBERRY CHANNEL IN THAILAND**

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**ABSTRACT**

This research explores the factors contributing to the popularity of the Cullen Hateberry YouTube channel in Thailand, focusing on the factors that resonate most with its viewers. Informed by content and audience feedback. By applying Uses and Gratifications Theory and Parasocial Interaction Theory, the study aims to understand how the channel meets the diverse needs of its audience and fosters strong viewer engagement. The research employs qualitative methods, including observational analysis of the channel's top 10 most viewed videos and thematic analysis of viewer comments. Findings indicate that the channel's success is largely due to its authentic portrayal of Thai culture from a foreigner's perspective, coupled with the engaging and relatable personalities of the hosts, Cullen and Jung. The channel's ability to create a sense of community among viewers and its alignment with the current Korean cultural trend in Thailand further enhance its appeal. The study provides valuable insights for content creators and media businesses seeking to engage audiences effectively in the digital age.

**KEY WORDS: YOUTUBE/ VIDEO/ TRAVEL**

28 pages

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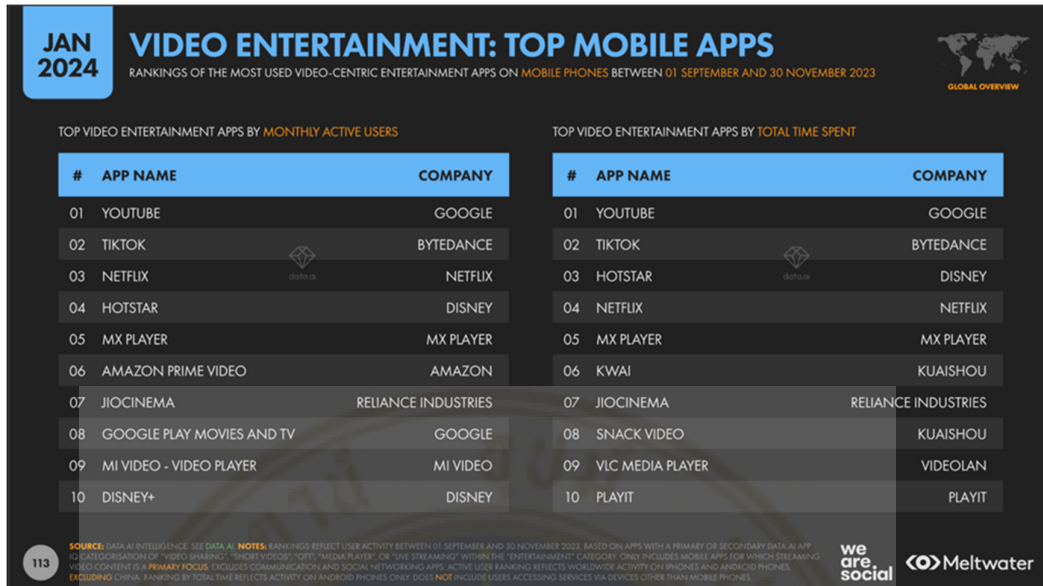


# CHAPTER I

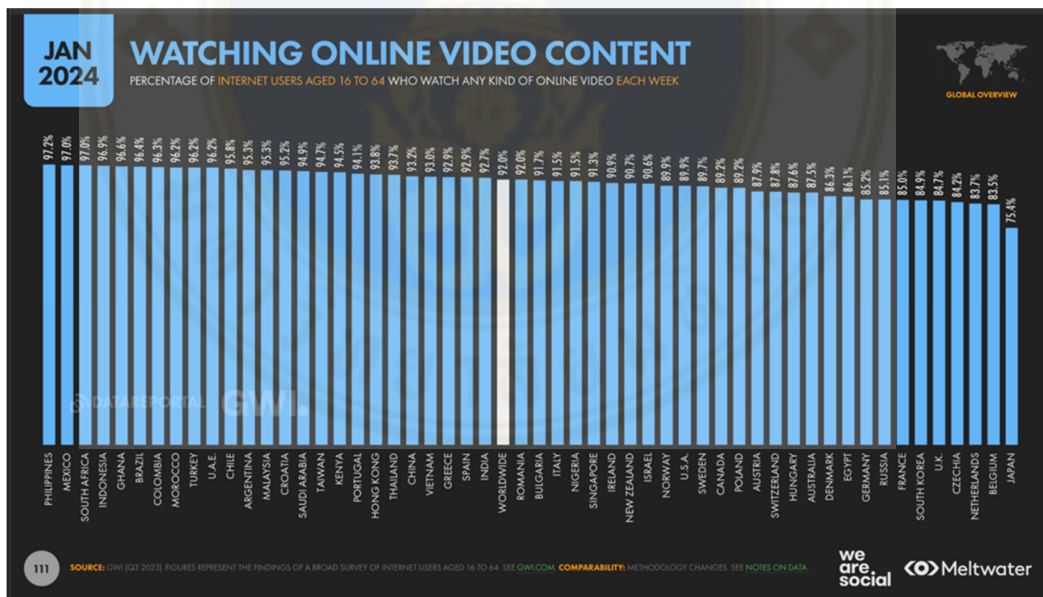
## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

The advent of the Digital Era has brought a profound transformation in how people engage with the world around them. Digital technologies are now embedded in our daily life, revolutionizing how we interact with public utilities, conduct business, and perform work. This continuous wave of innovation has not only aimed to enhance convenience but has also been tailored to meet the evolving needs of society in unprecedented ways. Among the many areas influenced by this digital shift, the realm of relaxation and entertainment stands out prominently. The rise of social media has redefined the landscape of entertainment and relaxation, becoming a cornerstone of modern leisure activities. As We Are Social Digital Report 2024 reveals, YouTube has emerged as one of the top video entertainment platforms, boasting an extensive base of monthly active users. YouTube's vast library of content, ranging from educational videos and DIY tutorials to music videos and live streams, caters to diverse interests and age groups. This platform's significance is further underscored by the fact that 93.7% of Thai people engage with online video content, surpassing the global average of 92.0%. This statistic not only highlights the popularity of YouTube in Thailand but also reflects the broader digital engagement trends within the country. Moreover, YouTube has become a critical platform for creators and businesses alike, offering monetization opportunities through ads, sponsored content, and membership programs. The platform's algorithm-driven recommendations help users discover new content, ensuring that viewers remain engaged and creators can reach a wider audience. For many Thais, YouTube is not just a source of entertainment but also a valuable tool for learning new skills, staying informed about current events, and connecting with communities of shared interests.



**Figure 1.1 Ranking of the most used video entertainment**  
Source: Kemp (2024)



**Figure 1.2 Percentage of online video content viewer by country**  
Source: Kemp (2024)

In recent years, the popularity of short-form content has surged. Platforms like TikTok have revolutionized content consumption by offering brief, engaging videos that quickly capture attention. This trend has also spread to YouTube with the introduction

of YouTube Shorts, catering to modern viewers' decreasing attention spans and the demand for immediate, digestible content (Dodds, 2024). Despite this shift towards shorter content, one notable success story stands out is Cullen Hateberry's YouTube channel. Cullen and Jung, two Koreans living in Thailand, have captivated Thai viewers by sharing their unique perspectives and experiences of living in and exploring the country. The channel's journey began in April 2022 with the video titled "Music producer life in Bangkok, introducing myself" In this video, Cullen laid out his vision for the channel, promising to share positive vibes and an exciting journey with viewers.

Initially, Cullen's content centered on his experiences as a Korean living in Bangkok, providing cultural insights that resonated with viewers curious about the expatriate lifestyle. He explored popular restaurants and served as a guide for his Korean friends visiting Thailand, gradually weaving more characters into the narrative. Despite these efforts, the channel initially struggled to gain significant attraction. The breakthrough moment occurred in February 2023 when Jung made his debut in the video titled "Thai local BBQ buffet, Only \$7?". This video concluded with a promise from Cullen and Jung to embark on a journey across Thailand together, introducing a new layer of excitement and anticipation for their viewers. This pivotal shift in content, coupled with the dynamic interplay between Cullen and Jung, played a crucial role in propelling the channel to new heights of popularity. Their approach to content creation deviate from the norm. Instead of focusing solely on informative reviews of specific locations, they emphasize genuine reactions and shared experiences during the trip. This authenticity strikes a chord with viewers, many of whom are inspired to explore Thailand in a similarly spontaneous and heartfelt manner.

From its humble beginnings, Cullen Hateberry's channel has experienced remarkable growth, now boasting 2.69 million followers. They have produced 116 videos, with 76 of them surpassing 1 million views. Their content, which includes exploring Thailand, cooking traditional Thai dishes, and trying various foods, is easy to follow and truly engaging for Thai viewers. The channel's evolution from a small group of friends to a widely recognized YouTube presence highlights the potential of digital media to reach and engage large audiences effectively. Therefore, Understanding the factors contributing to their popularity is crucial for researchers, as it provides valuable insights into the digital content landscape in Thailand and beyond.

## **1.2 Research Questions**

1. What are the common themes and type of content that contribute to the popularity of Cullen Hateberry's YouTube channel?
2. How do viewer comments reflect the reasons behind the popularity of Cullen Hateberry's videos?

## **1.3 Research Objectives**

1. To identify the types of content and elements that resonate most with viewers, contributing to the channel's success
2. To uncover the key factors and sentiments expressed by viewers that highlight why viewer are drawn to the channel.

## **1.4 Research Scope**

Qualitative methods are applied in this research through observation as the primary instruments. The observation focuses on identifying common themes and type of content across top 10 most view videos in June2024. Additionally, Thematic analysis is conducted using the top 5 comments on each video to gain insights into the themes and reasons behind the popularity of Cullen Hateberry channel from viewer side. This combined approach aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors that contribute to the success of Cullen Hateberry channel in Thailand.

## **1.5 Expected benefit**

This paper focuses on the success of the Cullen Hateberry channel within the Thai viewers landscape, aiming to identify the key factors contributing to their success. Understanding these factors can benefit content creators and media businesses by providing valuable consumer insights, which are essential for achieving success in any business. Additionally, the practical recommendations provided at the end of this paper can be instrumental in adapting and refining online strategies, making a more effective in engaging and retaining viewer.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

In this study, the researcher collected data based on relevant concepts, theories, and previous research to explore the factors contributing to the popularity of the Cullen Hateberry channel in Thailand. To achieve the research objectives, this chapter is divided into two sections. The first section defines related terms, while the second section discusses the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) and the Parasocial Interaction Theory, which will serve as the framework for this paper.

#### **2.1 Definition of related term**

##### **2.1.1 YouTube**

YouTube is an online platform that has become one of the most influential digital media services, transforming how content is created, shared, and consumed. Defined as a service where users can upload, view, rate, share, add to playlists, report, comment on videos, and subscribe to other users, YouTube hosts a vast array of content. This includes user-generated videos, corporate media, video clips, TV show snippets, music videos, short films, documentaries, live streams, and vlogs (Burgess & Green, 2018).

YouTube's business model is primarily driven by advertising through the Google AdSense program, which places ads that are tailored to viewer demographics and interests (Arthurs, Drakopoulou, Gandini, 2018). This targeted advertising ensures that users see relevant ads, which improves the effectiveness of advertisements and generates significant revenue for the platform.

Monetization is also a crucial aspect for content creators on YouTube. The platform partners with content creators, allowing them to earn a share of the advertising revenue generated from their videos. This partnership not only incentivizes the production of high-quality content but also provides a livelihood for many creators. YouTube further

supports content creators by providing tools to engage with their audience through comments, community posts, and live chats during streams (Lange, 2007). This interactive environment helps creators build loyal viewer bases and fosters a sense of community among viewers.

The impact of YouTube on media consumption, culture, and society is profound. It has transformed traditional media landscapes by offering an alternative platform for content distribution and consumption. One significant outcome of YouTube's influence is the rise of "micro-celebrities" and influencers who wield significant cultural and economic power (Abidin, 2018). These individuals have leveraged YouTube's global reach to build large followings and influence public opinion and consumer behavior.

YouTube has also revolutionized marketing and advertising. The platform provides brands with a direct channel to engage with their audience through video content. The integration of sponsored content, influencer marketing, and targeted advertising has fundamentally changed how companies reach and interact with consumers (Smith et al., 2012). Brands can now create personalized and engaging marketing campaigns that resonate more deeply with their target audiences.

### **2.1.2 Online video content**

Online video content refer to any video material produced and shared over the internet. This broad definition includes various formats such as vlogs, tutorials, web series, educational videos, music videos, and live streams. Burgess and Green (2018) highlight that the accessibility and versatility of online video platforms have revolutionized content creation, allowing a wide range of creators to distribute their work to a global audience. According to Guo, Kim, and Rubin (2014), online video content is defined as multimedia material produced in digital form and shared through online platforms for various purposes including entertainment, education, marketing, and personal expression.

Online video content has also revolutionized marketing and advertising strategies. These platforms offer brands a direct channel to engage with their audience through personalized video content, fostering deeper connections and engagement (Smith, Fischer, & Yongjian, 2012). Furthermore, The use of sophisticated algorithms by online video platforms to recommend content based on users' viewing history and preferences further enhances this engagement (Covington, Adams, & Sargin, 2016). This tailored



strategy not only enhances the visibility of new content but also keeps users engaged by showcasing a variety of relevant and interesting content.

### **2.1.3 Content creator**

According to Cunningham and Craig (2019), a content creator is someone who produces material intended for digital audiences, leveraging platforms to distribute their work and engage with viewers. This definition emphasizes the active role of creators in both the production and dissemination of content, highlighting their influence in shaping digital landscapes.

Effective engagement with the audience is a hallmark of successful content creators. This involves interacting with viewers through comments, live streams, and other interactive features. Ji et al. (2021) highlight that audience engagement not only fosters a sense of community but also provides creators with feedback to refine their content strategies. Building a rapport with the audience enhances loyalty and encourages consistent viewership.

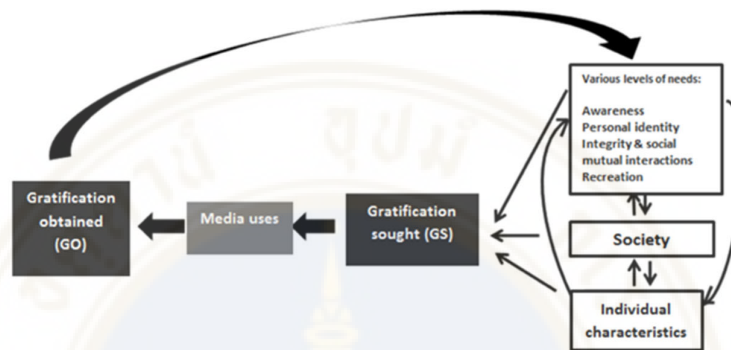
## **2.2 Related theory**

### **2.2.1 Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT)**

Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) is a significant framework within communication studies that delves into how media fulfills the diverse needs and motivations of its audience. This theory takes a functional approach, emphasizing that the primary role of media is to satisfy various user needs. UGT aims to answer two primary questions. First, why do people choose specific media, and what kind of satisfaction do they derive from it (Windahl, Signitzer, & Olson, 2008). Initially, the theory focuses on the audience's motivations, examining how individuals select media and how its type, content, and usage method fulfill their needs (Ruggiero, 2000). By addressing these questions, we can assess both the positive and negative impacts of using particular media.

Various categories have been proposed to classify these motivations, with McQuail's (1984) classification being the most prominent. This categorization includes awareness, personal identity, integrity, social interaction, and recreation. For instance,

awareness refers to the need for information and understanding of the world, personal identity involves media that reinforces an individual's values and self-concept, integrity encompasses the need for emotional and moral support, social interaction covers the use of media to maintain personal relationships, and recreation pertains to using media for entertainment and leisure.



**Figure 2.1 The model of Uses and Gratification Theory**

The advent of digital and social media has significantly broadened the scope of UGT's applications. Sundar and Limperos (2013) adapted UGT to the digital era, identifying new gratifications linked to interactive media, such as modality, agency, interactivity, and navigability. These new gratifications relate to the user's ability to control their media consumption experience, interact with content, and navigate through extensive information. For example, modality refers to the various forms and channels through which media can be accessed, such as text, video, or audio, while agency highlights the user's control over the content they consume.

Research on social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram further illustrates UGT's relevance in contemporary media studies. Whiting and Williams (2013) identified ten uses and gratifications for social media, including social interaction, information seeking, pass time, entertainment, relaxation, communicatory utility, convenience utility, expression of opinions, information sharing, and surveillance/knowledge about others. Social interaction refers to the ways users connect with others, while information seeking involves looking for updates and news. Pass time and entertainment highlight how users use social media to alleviate boredom and for enjoyment. Relaxation



emphasizes the stress-relief aspect, and communicatory utility refers to the practical use of social media for communication purposes. Convenience utility covers the ease and convenience of accessing information and services via social media. Expression of opinions and information sharing focus on how users articulate their thoughts and disseminate information, while surveillance/knowledge about others deals with observing and keeping up with others' lives.

Moreover, the integration of UGT with mobile media has been another significant development. Leung and Wei (2000) explored the uses and gratifications of mobile phone use, revealing that users are motivated by factors such as sociability, entertainment, information seeking, and fashion/status. The mobility and accessibility of mobile phones provide unique gratifications, such as constant connectivity and on-the-go information access, which have become essential aspects of modern life.

### **2.2.2 Parasocial Interaction theory**

Parasocial Interaction (PSI) Theory was first introduced by Horton and Wohl (1956) to describe the one-sided relationships that audiences develop with media personas, such as television characters, celebrities, and social media influencers. Additionally, Horton and Strauss (1957) found that regular viewers of television talk shows often felt a sense of familiarity and comfort with the hosts, akin to friendships. These interactions are termed "parasocial" because, unlike traditional social interactions, they are not reciprocal. Instead, they are based on the illusion of intimacy and friendship created through repeated exposure to media personalities (Giles, 2002). PSI is characterized by the audience's perception of a media persona as a real friend or confidant, even though there is no actual interaction taking place. This perception is strengthened by the media's ability to present personas in a relatable and engaging manner, often through direct address, intimate revelations, and consistent appearances (Rubin & McHugh, 1987). Over time, audiences may feel as though they know the media persona personally, experiencing emotional reactions to their actions and storylines similar to those felt in real-life relationships (Horton & Wohl, 1956). PSI Theory has evolved and expanded to encompass various forms of media beyond traditional television. With the rise of the internet and social media, Parasocial Interaction (PSI) Theory has become even more important. Unlike traditional media, social media allows for more frequent and varied interactions.

Users can comment on posts, like content, and sometimes even get responses from the personalities themselves, although these responses are often automated or managed by their teams.



## **CHAPTER III**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

The primary objective of this research is to understand the various factors contributing to the popularity of Cullen Hateberry channel in Thailand. Therefore, the research approach for this study will be qualitative research by utilizing observational analytics, thematic analysis and secondary data analysis. The study aims to identify common themes in Cullen Hateberry's videos that appeal to viewers, analyze viewer comments to uncover reasons behind the channel's popularity on viewer behavior. Additionally, reviewing secondary data sources serves as an additional method to validate the findings from an observation.

#### **3.2 Sampling**

The sample group used in this research study consists of top 10 most view videos from Cullen Hateberry channel on the YouTube platform during June2024. Additionally, the comments of viewers who have commented on the videos are also included for thematic analysis. Only the top 5 comments with the highest number of likes for each video will be used which will be 50 comments for data collection.

#### **3.3 Data Collection and Methodology**

In the context of Cullen Hateberry channel, observation involves watching and analyzing a selected sample of Cullen Hateberry's videos. This method helps describe the variables that contribute to the channel's appeal. Observational techniques will be used to note key elements of the videos about what they do mostly in each video. Each column in the table will aligns with the data collection methodology used in this study.

- The first column, "Video Ranking" lists the top 10 most viewed videos on the channel, ranked by the number of views. This helps identify the most popular content and sets a clear focus for detailed analysis.
- The second column, "Video Title" includes the title of each video, providing context and helping categorize the type of content featured in each video.
- The third column, "Views (million)" records the number of views each video has received, expressed in millions. This quantifies the popularity of each video, enabling comparison and trend analysis.
- The fourth column, "Team" notes the presence of team members or guest appearances in the video. Understanding the dynamics between Cullen, Jung, and any guests can reveal how interpersonal interactions contribute to viewer engagement.
- The fifth column, "Types of Destination" categorizes the types of destinations featured in the videos. Categorizing destinations helps analyze which types of locations attract more views.
- The sixth column, "Activities" lists the activities performed in the videos. Identifying activities helps determine what kind of content resonates most with the audience and contributes to the channel's appeal.

To design fifth and sixth columns, Researcher applied a Types of destinations- Main target markets and activities undertaken by Buhalis (2000) as a guide to ensure the generalizability and representativeness of video selection, covering most destination types and activities.

Video Ranking	Video Title	views (million)	Team	Types of destination	Activities
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					

**Figure 3.1 Example of observation result tables**

Types of destination	Leisure activities
Urban	Sightseeing
	Shopping
	Show
	Short break
Seaside	Sea
	Sun
	Sand
	Sex
	Sports
Alpine	Ski
	Mountain sports
	Health
Rural	Relaxation
	Agriculture
	Learning activities
	Sports
Authentic Third World	Adventure
	Authentic
	Charities
	Special interest
Unique-exotic-exclusive	Special occasion
	Honeymoon
	Anniversary

**Figure 3.2 Types of destinations-Main target markets and activities undertaken**

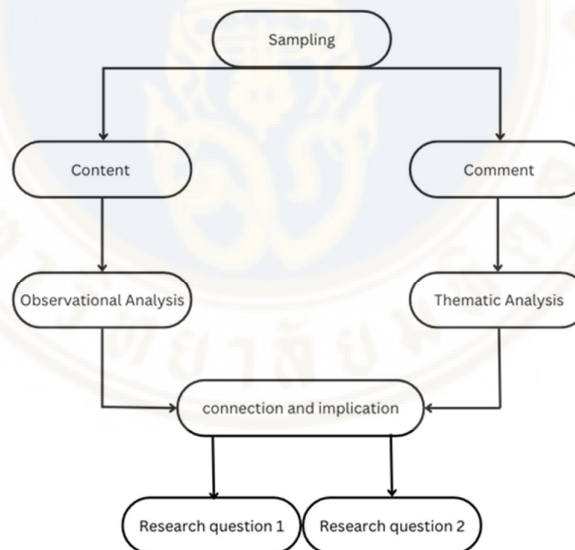
Source: Buhalis (2000)

Thematic analysis will be employed to analyze viewer comments. This method involves coding the data to identify context and patterns of top 5 comment from the top 10 most view video in the channel that will be 50 comments. The analysis is constructed from the Uses and Gratifications Theory to prevent the coding omissions. For uses and Gratification. We will be categorized into five main types of need included awareness, personal identity, integrity, social mutual interactions, and recreation.

Video Ranking	Video Title	views (million)	Comment Content	Gratification obtain
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				

**Figure 3.3 Example of comment analysis table**

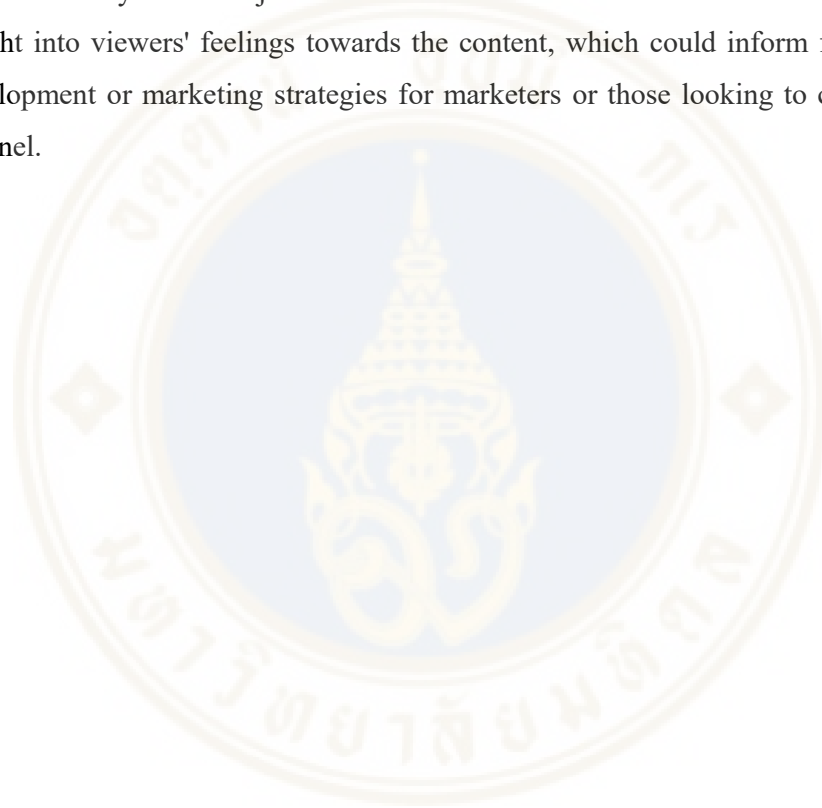
### 3.4 Data analysis procedures



**Figure 3.4 Data Analysis Procedure**

Based on the collected data through content observation and comments on the Cullen Hateberry Youtube channel and from studying related references, an analysis was conducted to identify relevant factors. These were then analyzed in conjunction with the theories used in the research study included Uses and Gratifications Theory and

Parasocial Interaction Theory. The researcher interpret and find connection within the data to formulate a comprehensive summary that best addresses the research objectives. From the data analysis, the researcher will be able to understand the reasons why viewers watch videos on the Cullen Hateberry channel and their feelings towards the content they view. The analysis was detailed by content type, using data frequency to break down the percentages for each video. This allowed for an understanding of which types of content garnered the most viewers. The content types with the highest viewership were then analyzed in conjunction with the comments on the videos. This will provide insight into viewers' feelings towards the content, which could inform future content development or marketing strategies for marketers or those looking to create a video channel.



## **CHAPTER IV**

### **FINDING ANALYSIS**

Upon analysing the data from the top 10 videos on the Cullenhateberry channel, the researcher identified key elements contributing to the content's popularity. These top 10 videos have accumulated 164.5 million views, accounting for 59% of the channel's total views. This means that just 10% of the videos are responsible for over half of the channel's viewership. Notably, 6 out of these 10 videos focus on rural life and primarily involve learning activities guided by Thai friend or local guide.





**Table 4.1 Observation result**

Video Ranking	Video Title	views	Team	Types of destination	Activities
		(million)			
1	Judy! Take everyone on a fun trip! At Suphanburi (Ft. Loi Krathong)	10	Cullen, Jung, Judy	rural	Relaxation, Agriculture, Learning activities
2	Judy took us into the forest to burn Khao Lam!   Nakhon Pathom	7.1	Cullen, Jung, Judy	rural	Learning activities
3	Take Judy to an unusual beach   Samut Prakan	6.8	Cullen, Jung, Judy	seaside	sea
4	We will go on a boat ride, trekking, rafting, and see the scenery.   Surat Thani	6.1	Cullen, Jung	alpine, seaside	Mountain, sports
5	Our first reunion trip!   Saraburi ep.1	6	Cullen, Jung, Judy, Dan	rural	Relaxation, Agriculture, Learning activities
6	When each day is boring, just pack your bags and go to Phu Kradueng!	5.9	Cullen, Jung, Dan	alpine	Mountain
7	I want to go on a chill trip. Rent a campervan and go!	5.8	Cullen, Jung	rural	Relaxation, Learning activities
8	Arrive at Mae Sot, continue with Umphang. Because we will find Tee Lor Su	5.7	Cullen, Jung	rural, alpine	Relaxation, Mountain
9	Camping and sleeping amidst nature...   Phetchaburi	5.6	Cullen, Jung	rural	Relaxation, Learning activities
10	Finally we have arrived....   Phuket Day 1	5.5	Cullen, Jung, Dan	seaside	sea, sports

The most popular video features a trip to Suphanburi, marking the first meeting between Jung and Judy. This video garnered significant interest, amassing 10 million views within six months. The content shows the ordinary life of people traveling with friends. Upon arrival, Judy acts as a tour guide, helping Cullen and Jung experience rural life. They spend the day engaging in agricultural activities and cooking with ingredients they gather, all under Judy's guidance. A highlight of the trip is their participation in the Loy Krathong festival.

In the second most popular video, the same theme continues as they visit Nakhon Pathom. The main content focuses on cooking Khao Lam (sticky rice in bamboo), again with the help of Judy, a Thai friend of Cullen and Jung. They mention how much they have learned from the experience. While this might seem like a typical activity for locals, it garnered 7.1 million views in just 4 months. The key elements of this video are not just the cooking instructions but also the exposure to a part of Thailand that many viewers might not be familiar with.

In the third video, titled "Take Judy to an Unusual Beach | Samut Prakan," the same type of content continues to draw interest. The content highlights various activities such as exploring local seafood restaurants, visiting markets, and enjoying scenic beach views. They also interact with locals, providing insights into the community's lifestyle and culture.

These activities might be familiar to many Thais, as they are experiences that one would typically have in Thailand. The Cullenhateberry channel provides a unique perspective on daily Thai life from the viewpoint of foreigners. This includes reactions to local food and places, offering Thai viewers a refreshing look at their own culture through the eyes of Cullen and Jung. This blend of curiosity and appreciation for Thai culture adds an extra layer of entertainment and connection. They craft content that speaks to a wide audience by focusing on everyday experiences, adventures, and the simple joys of life in Thailand. This relatability is key to their success, making viewers feel like they're part of Cullen and Jung's journey.

Moreover, upon examining the comments, one of the most interesting aspects is the significant amount of donations the channel receives. Many viewers donate substantial sums because they want to be part of the channel's success and support the

creation of this type of content. One particular comment stands out, where a viewer donated 179 THB and shared her thoughts

"I watch every clip and eagerly await new videos each week. The charm of Cullen and Jung comes from their personalities and attitudes, not just their looks. If I wanted to watch handsome people, I could choose from many Korean series. What I really appreciate is their natural behavior and the positive energy they exude. I enjoy watching with my daughter, and it's a time that makes us laugh together. It's very heartwarming and has even led to some positive changes in our habits. For example, my daughter used to be a picky eater, but after watching Cullen, she has become more willing to eat and try new things, even from roadside stalls. She's also become more adventurous, visiting places she never considered before. Recently, she even told me she wants to travel and bring snacks for dogs and cats like Cullen and Jung did."

This comment highlights how the channel's content has a meaningful impact on viewers' lives in positive way and creating a sense of connection between viewer and creator.

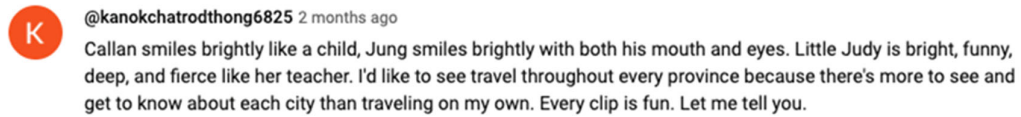
#### **4.1 Finding analysis**

1. uplifting and wholesome content that resonates with the Thai audience.

This connection aligns with the principles of the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT). The theory helps explain why viewers are attracted to the channel and what needs the content fulfils.

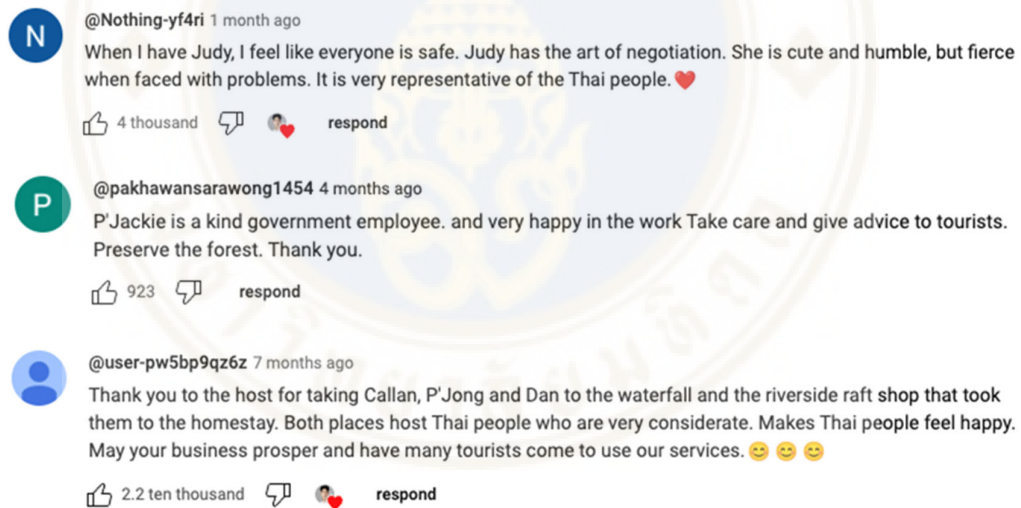
We can see that the content of this channel answer in every aspect of need.

Firstly, the channel significantly raises awareness about Thai culture, local traditions, and everyday practices. Through its videos, viewers gain new knowledge about places and activities they may not be familiar with as they see one of the host as teacher. This aspect of the content satisfies the viewers' cognitive needs by providing them with information and enhancing their understanding of the world. This approach makes viewers feel like they are learning alongside the hosts, creating a more engaging and relatable viewing experience through the mix of the hosts personalities.



**Figure 4.1 Example of comment on awareness**

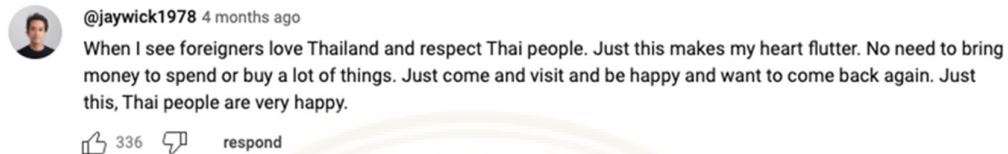
Secondly, the channel helps reinforce viewers' personal identity. The videos reflect the values and experiences of the hosts, allowing viewers to see themselves in the content. This connection helps viewers reinforce their own identity and values by aligning with the lifestyles and attitudes presented by Cullen and Jung. Many people express their gratitude to Judy and tour guide in the video that Cullen and Jung travel on their own without Judy for being a representative of Thai culture. They feel a sense of pride when they share the same nationality as Judy. This personal identification with the hosts creates a strong bond between the viewers and the content



**Figure 4.2 Example of comment on personal identity**

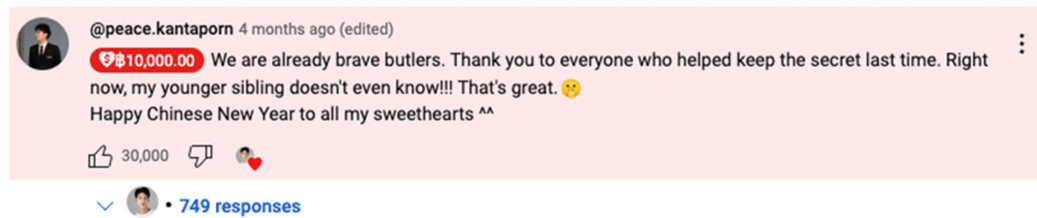
Cullen and Jung's genuine and respectful behavior builds credibility and trust with the audience. Viewers frequently comment on how much they appreciate the way Cullen and Jung speak and their respectful attitude towards Thailand and Thai people. The hosts demonstrate a deep respect for Thai culture and traditions, often expressing their gratitude and admiration for the country. This respect is evident in their interactions with locals and their sincere efforts to understand and participate in cultural practices.

This integrity resonates with viewers and reinforcing the perception that Cullen and Jung are genuine and trustworthy individuals who truly value their experiences in Thailand. This authenticity and respect for the host culture not only build credibility but also foster a sense of mutual respect and understanding between the hosts and their audience.



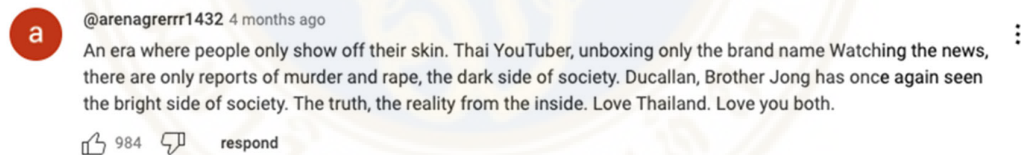
**Figure 4.3 Example of comment on integrity**

The channel also promotes a sense of social mutual interaction among viewers. By creating a community through engaging discussions in the comment, the channel enhances viewers' social integrative needs. Viewers feel a sense of belonging and social connection as they engage with other viewers and the hosts through comments and discussions. One significant aspect of this social interaction is the practice of viewer donations. Donations are often highlighted and appreciated in the comments by getting more like than ordinary comment, creating a sense of community contribution and mutual support. When viewers donate, it not only shows their support for the channel but also connects them with other viewers who value the content. The public recognition of donations through likes and comments further enhances this sense of community and shared purpose, as viewers feel that their contributions are noticed and appreciated by both the hosts and their fellow viewers. In this context, the group of dedicated fans who call themselves "ศ้อมใจฟู" ("All My Sweethearts") exemplifies this community. They actively engage with the channel and each other, promoting a supportive and interactive environment that contributes to the channel's popularity and success.



**Figure 4.4 Example of comment on social connection**

The recreational value of the content provides viewers with a source of relaxation, making the channel a preferred destination for their entertainment needs. This aspect of recreation is multifaceted. Firstly, the channel offers a variety of content that is light-hearted and fun, allowing viewers to escape from the stresses of everyday life. Viewers often say that watching the content feels like a form of escape, allowing them to take a break from their real-life. By joining Cullen and Jung on their enjoyable adventures, they can relax and unwind. The peaceful and fun nature of the videos gives viewers a mental break, helping them to feel more connected to the content and the hosts. This escape from everyday life is one reason why people enjoy the videos so much, as it provides a refreshing and enjoyable experience.



**Figure 4.5 Example of comment on recreation**

2. CullenHateberry channel is driven by strong viewer community.

The impressive popularity of Cullen Hateberry's YouTube channel is largely due to the connections it creates with viewers and fanbase it has built. Therefore, Parasocial Interaction Theory, which explains how viewers form one-sided relationships with media personalities is key to understanding this phenomenon (Horton & Wohl, 1956). The parasocial relationships formed between Cullen Hateberry channel and their viewers have significantly contributed to the development of a dedicated community.



A key aspect of parasocial interaction is the emotional bond viewers form with the hosts. CullenHateberry appear relatable and engaging, which helps viewers feel personally connected to them. This connection is built through consistent and positive interactions in the videos, where the hosts openly share their experiences, thoughts, and feelings (Rubin & McHugh, 1987). Viewers often express in their comments how much they look forward to new content and how the videos positively affect their mood and daily life. This emotional investment makes viewers feel as though they are part of the hosts lives, despite not interacting with them in real life (Giles, 2002).

The content of CullenHateberry channel also influences viewers' behaviors and attitudes. Many viewers express how watching the videos has inspired them to explore new places, try new activities, or adopt a more positive outlook on life. This influence extends to supporting the channel through donations, creating a shared sense of purpose and community. This behavioral influence is an evidence to the strong parasocial relationships that viewers have formed with the hosts.

CullenHateberry's success shows how well the channel meets viewer's needs for meaningful content, personal connection, and emotional fulfillment. The channel offers a lifestyle that people are looking for by sharing knowledge about Thai culture, reflecting viewer values, building trust, and providing relaxation, this can be the first key take away that explain the popularity. Moreover, The channel's success is largely driven by strong parasocial relationships, where viewers form emotional bonds with Cullenhateberry team. Even without real-life interaction, viewers feel personally connected to them through their consistent and positive presence in the videos. With this strong emotional bonds with the channel, it makes them donated and helps build a supportive and dedicated community around the channel.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Conclusion**

The remarkable growth and popularity of the CullenHateberry channel can be attributed to two key factors: the lifestyle it promotes and its strong viewer community. These elements are effectively explained by the Uses and Gratifications Theory and Parasocial Interaction Theory.

CullenHateberry channel successfully offers a lifestyle that resonates deeply with viewers. By sharing genuine experiences and reactions, Cullen and Jung have created a relatable and engaging narrative that fulfills viewers' desires for meaningful content. Their respectful and appreciative approach towards Thai culture, combined with their dynamic and spontaneous content, provides viewers with a unique perspective on everyday life in Thailand. The channel's focus on exploring Thai culture, cooking traditional dishes, and sharing personal experiences significantly contributes to its appeal. Viewers appreciate the authenticity and personalities of Cullen and Jung, which are major factors in the channel's popularity. The educational aspect of the content satisfies viewers' cognitive needs by providing knowledge about Thai culture and traditions from the foreigner view, enhancing their understanding of the world. This blend of curiosity and appreciation for Thai culture adds an extra layer of entertainment and connection, making viewers feel like they're part of Cullen and Jung's journey. Moreover, the sense of national pride also plays a crucial role. The channel often highlights Thai culture, traditions, and everyday life from a foreigner's perspective, which makes Thai viewers feel proud of their heritage. This positive portrayal of Thailand strengthens the connection between the channel and its audience, making viewers more inclined to support and follow the channel. Additionally, the channel benefits from the current Korean trend in Thailand. Korean culture, including its entertainment, music, fashion, and personalities, is highly popular among Thai viewers. Cullen and Jung, being Korean, naturally attract viewers



who are already inclined to enjoy Korean content. This existing interest in Korean culture gives the channel a significant boost in popularity.

The success of the CullenHateberry channel is also driven by its strong viewer community, built through parasocial relationships. Cullen and Jung's engaging personalities and genuine interactions with Thai culture build credibility and trust with the audience. Viewers feel like they are friends with the hosts, eagerly anticipating new content to see what Cullen and Jung will explore next. This strong connection enhances their loyalty and engagement, making them more likely to watch, comment, and share the videos. Moreover, the strong community engagement, evidenced by substantial viewer donations and active participation in comments, highlights the channel's impact and reach. Many viewers donate substantial sums because they want to be part of the channel's success and support the creation of this type of content. This financial support and active engagement create a sense of community contribution and mutual support, fostering a supportive and interactive environment that contributes to the channel's popularity and success.

## **5.2 Limitation**

Despite the comprehensive analysis and valuable insights gained from this study, several significant limitations must be acknowledged to fully understand the scope and constraints of the research. One major limitation is the reliance on data collected exclusively from comments on each video through the YouTube. These comments and user accounts do not specify the demographic of the commenters, which prevents the data from being grouped to distinctly categorize viewers. This lack of demographic information results in a potential gap in understanding the audience completely. Second, The sample size used in the study is another limitation. By focusing only on the top 10 most viewed videos and the top 5 comments for each video, the analysis might not capture the full spectrum of viewer engagement and preferences. A larger sample size could provide a more comprehensive understanding of these factors. Additionally, the analysis was limited to videos and comments from June 2024. This limitation means that viewer trends and preferences, which can evolve over time. Last, the number of views a video has can also influence the results. Videos that have been available for a

longer time, such as those uploaded 6 months ago might naturally have more views compared to newer videos. This discrepancy means some potentially valuable content with fewer views was not included in the analysis.

### **5.3 Recommendation**

To build on the findings and address the limitations, several recommendations will be proposed for future research with the expectation to achieve further success. Future research should include a larger number of videos and comments to provide a more robust analysis. This could involve sampling from a broader range of videos, including those with fewer views but potentially high engagement. A more extensive dataset would allow for a more detailed examination of viewer preferences and engagement patterns. Conducting longitudinal studies to track changes in viewer engagement and preferences over time would provide valuable insights. This approach could help in understanding how viewer interests evolve and how content strategies should adapt. Analyzing trends over an extended period could reveal deeper insights of the channel's success.

Additionally, combining qualitative and quantitative methods could enhance the understanding of viewer motivations and engagement. Surveys and interviews could complement thematic analysis of comments, providing a more comprehensive view of viewer behavior and preferences. Quantitative data such as viewer demographics, watch time, and engagement metrics could provide additional insights. Comparing the success factors of CullenHateberry with other successful channels in different cultural contexts could provide broader insights into digital content trends. This could help in identifying universal factors of success as well as culture-specific preferences. Understanding how different cultural elements influence viewer engagement could be valuable for content creators targeting diverse audiences. Last, Future research should aim to include more detailed demographic information about viewers. This could be achieved through surveys to gain insights into age, gender, and geographic distribution. Such data would enable a more nuanced analysis of viewer segments and their specific preferences.

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