

Japanese Audiences of Thai Boys' Love (BL) Dramas: Viewer Characteristics, Cultural Engagement, and Perceptions

Piya Pongsapitaksanti

Faculty of Sociology, Kyoto Sangyo University, Kyoto 603-8555, Japan

(Corresponding author's e-mail: piyatom@yahoo.com)

Received: 29 September 2025, Revised: 7 November 2025, Accepted: 11 November 2025, Published 17 November 2025

Abstract

This study investigates the demographic characteristics, viewing behaviors, and cultural perceptions of Japanese audiences of Thai Boys' Love (BL) dramas, a genre that has rapidly expanded across Asia and gained global popularity. While BL originated in Japan, Thai adaptations—often referred to as “Y dramas”—have been localized and re-exported, prompting new forms of transnational fandom and cultural exchange. Drawing on a quantitative survey of 1,734 Japanese respondents who had previously viewed Thai BL dramas, the study analyzes standardized data collected via Google Forms between January and March 2024. Participants were recruited through social media platforms and fan communities, and the survey included 27 items across four thematic sections: demographics, viewing behavior and motivations, perceptions of sexual diversity and cultural elements, and engagement with Thai culture. Descriptive statistics and chi-square tests were used to examine associations between sociodemographic variables and media engagement patterns. The findings confirm four hypotheses: (1) viewers are predominantly women aged 36–50 with relatively high educational attainment and employment status; (2) Thai BL dramas contribute to increased awareness and acceptance of sexual diversity; (3) engagement with Thai BL dramas leads to behavioral and attitudinal shifts toward Thai culture, including consumption of Thai products, language learning, and travel; and (4) younger and older viewers are more likely to engage in extended viewing, while younger and economically disadvantaged groups are less likely to pay for subscription services. The study highlights Thai BL dramas as transnational cultural texts that foster emotional connection, social dialogue, and embodied cultural curiosity among Japanese audiences. It contributes to scholarship on media globalization, gendered consumption, and queer representation, while addressing a gap in quantitative research on BL fandom. Limitations related to sampling and generalizability are acknowledged, and future research directions are proposed to deepen cross-cultural understanding.

Keywords: Thai BL dramas, Japanese media audiences, Transnational fandom, Sexual diversity perception, Cultural engagement

Introduction

Research background

Thailand has emerged as a dominant producer of Boys' Love (BL) dramas in Asia, accounting for approximately 55% of all BL titles broadcast across the region in 2024 (SCB EIC, 2025). In recent years, Thai BL dramas have also gained traction in non-Asian markets, including Russia, France, Spain, Italy, Central America, and South America (Prachachathurakit, 2024). This global expansion has fueled a rapid increase

in production volume: from a single title in 2012, the number of Thai BL dramas rose to 70 by 2022, with notable growth during the COVID-19 pandemic—30 titles in 2020, 47 in 2021, and 70 in 2022 (Bangkok Biz Online, 2020; Bunyavejchewin, 2018; Bunyavejchewin et al., 2024; Phadungthai, 2022, 2023; Rocket Media Lab, 2021; Santhichai, 2022). By 2024, the Thai BL industry had expanded by 20% year-on-year, reaching a market size of 3 billion baht, with projections exceeding

4.9 billion baht by 2025 (SCB EIC, 2025). The share of BL production costs within Thailand's entertainment sector rose from 0.7% in 2019 to an estimated 3.9% in 2025, reflecting an average annual growth rate of 17%.

While the BL genre originated in Japan through manga and anime subcultures, Thailand has localized and redefined it as live-action television content—referred to domestically as “Y dramas.” These productions have attracted substantial international audiences, particularly in Japan, where BL fandom has long been established. The rising popularity of Thai BL dramas among Japanese viewers exemplifies the dynamics of transnational media flows, cultural adaptation, and fandom practices in the digital era.

The surge in Thai BL viewership in Japan over the past decade marks a significant shift in East Asian popular culture, media consumption, and identity negotiation. Originally emerging as yaoi and BL manga in Japan, the genre has undergone transformation and re-importation through Thai adaptations, especially during the pandemic. With increased time spent at home, many Japanese viewers discovered Thai BL dramas via free content on YouTube. In 2020, social media platforms such as X (formerly Twitter) played a pivotal role in amplifying interest in Thai BL dramas and Thai male idols (Pongsapitaksanti, 2023).

From a transnational cultural perspective, Vinitphol (2023) traced the historical development of BL culture in Japan and Thailand, highlighting processes of localization and hybridity. BL culture, originating in Japan, was adapted in Thailand and subsequently re-exported to Japan as a cultural commodity. Baudinette (2023) positioned Thai BL media within a broader transnational phenomenon, contributing to the expansion of Japanese queer popular culture across East and Southeast Asia. Welker (2022) further noted that by the early 2020s, Thai live-action BL dramas had achieved unprecedented global popularity and acceptance. Nearly 50 years after the publication of the first BL manga in Japan, Thai BL dramas now enjoy high viewership and strong support among Japanese audiences.

Despite their growing visibility, empirical research on Japanese reception of Thai BL dramas remains limited. Existing scholarship has examined BL as a site of gendered fantasy and queer representation (Suganuma, 2015), and more recently as a form of

cultural soft power and queer visibility (Baudinette, 2021; Prasannam & Chan, 2023). Studies have also explored Thai BL fandom as a transnational space where Japanese audiences negotiate cultural meanings (Shimauchi, 2023).

In terms of audience analysis, the emergence of *tai-numa*—a Japanese cyber-fandom of Thai BL enthusiasts—on X during Japan's nationwide stay-at-home period in March 2020 illustrates the genre's resonance. Jirattikorn (2025), through in-depth interviews, found that Thai BL dramas offer visions of love and identity that transcend normative constraints, portraying queer relationships as neither marginal nor transgressive. Shimauchi (2024) similarly argued that Thai BL fandom constitutes a transnational, transcultural, and trans-subcultural contact zone, where fans collaboratively reflect, negotiate, and update shared values in a non-hierarchical environment.

However, most existing studies rely on qualitative methods, and there is a notable lack of quantitative research on Japanese audiences of Thai BL dramas. Specifically, little is known about how sociodemographic factors shape viewing behaviors and how such engagement influences perceptions of Thailand and sexual diversity.

This study addresses these gaps by analyzing survey data from Japanese viewers of Thai BL dramas. It examines their demographic characteristics, viewing behaviors, motivations, and perceptions, and considers the broader cultural and social implications of their engagement. By situating Thai BL dramas within the context of transnational fandom and cultural exchange, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of how media flows across borders shape identity, cultural perception, and everyday practices.

Research objective, research questions and hypotheses

The primary objective of this study is to examine the characteristics, viewing behaviors, and perceptions of Japanese audiences of Thai BL dramas, with particular attention to how sociodemographic factors (e.g., age, occupation) influence media behavior. The study also seeks to assess the extent to which Thai BL dramas contribute to shifts in perceptions of sexual diversity and Thailand's national image.

Drawing on prior research on BL media and gendered consumption, studies have shown that BL media are predominantly consumed by women, who often engage with such content as a means of exploring alternative gender and sexual identities beyond heteronormative frameworks. Existing scholarship further indicates that BL fandoms have historically been dominated by women, particularly those beyond adolescence (Bunyavejchewin et al., 2024; Fujimoto, 2015; Jirattikorn, 2025; McLelland, 2000; Pongsapitaksanti, 2025; Shimauchi, 2023). From a social perspective, BL dramas function as cultural texts that mediate understandings of sexuality and diversity, providing audiences with an accessible and emotionally resonant space to engage with queer narratives (Suganuma, 2015).

Moreover, from the approach of transnational media flows, the globalization of BL content illustrates how media circulates across borders, reshaping cultural perceptions and fostering new forms of fandom (Iwabuchi, 2015; Jenkins et al., 2013). Thai BL dramas, in particular, have been identified as a form of cultural soft power that enhances Thailand's visibility and influence in regional media markets (Baudinette, 2021; Prasannam & Chan, 2023). Additionally, regarding digital platforms and fan participation, the rise of streaming services and social media has facilitated the spread of Thai BL dramas, enabling participatory fan practices such as online discussions, fan art, and event attendance, which extend beyond passive viewing (Shimauchi, 2023; Jenkins et al., 2013). Based on this literature, the study poses the following research questions and hypotheses:

Research questions

1. What are the demographic characteristics of Japanese viewers of Thai BL dramas?
2. How do Japanese audiences engage with Thai BL dramas in terms of viewing frequency, platform usage, and motivations?
3. What perceptions of sexual diversity and Thailand's national image are shaped through the viewing of Thai BL dramas?
4. How do sociodemographic variables (e.g., age, occupation) influence viewing behaviors and subscription practices?

Hypotheses

H1: Japanese viewers of Thai BL dramas are predominantly working-age women with relatively high educational attainment and employment status.

H2: Thai BL dramas contribute to increased awareness and acceptance of sexual diversity among Japanese audiences.

H3: Engagement with Thai BL dramas leads to behavioral and attitudinal shifts toward Thai culture, including consumption of Thai products, language learning, and tourism.

H4: Younger and older viewers are more likely to engage in extended viewing, while younger and economically disadvantaged groups are less likely to pay for subscription services.

Methodology

Research design

This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design to examine the demographic characteristics, viewing behaviors, and cultural perceptions of Japanese audiences of Thai Boys' Love (BL) dramas. The survey method was selected to enable standardized data collection across a broad sample, allowing for statistical analysis of relationships between sociodemographic variables and media engagement patterns.

Participants and sampling

Participants were Japanese residents who had previously watched at least one Thai BL drama. A total of 1,734 valid responses were obtained. Recruitment was conducted via online platforms frequented by BL fans, including social media groups, fan forums, and streaming communities. A call for participation was posted on X (formerly Twitter) fan pages dedicated to Thai BL dramas, novels, and manga—spaces widely followed by Japanese users. Given the popularity of Google and X among Japanese internet users, Google Forms was selected as the survey platform.

Eligibility was determined by self-reported viewing experience and informed consent. Due to the absence of a comprehensive sampling frame, stratified sampling was used to ensure alignment with the study's inclusion criteria. Convenience sampling was also employed to facilitate efficient data collection. While practical, this approach may limit generalizability.

Therefore, the following limitations should be considered: (1) the sample may not be representative of the broader population, (2) selection bias may influence responses, and (3) findings may not extend to other regions or social groups. Future studies should adopt more representative sampling strategies and conduct comparative surveys across diverse populations.

Survey instrument

The survey consisted of 27 closed-ended and multiple-choice items, organized into four thematic sections (see Appendix for the full questionnaire):

1. Demographic information (6 items): Gender, age, marital status, parental status, educational attainment, and occupation.

2. Viewing behavior, Motivations, and Exposure (9 items): Frequency and duration of viewing, platforms used, subscription payment status, viewing context (alone or with others), motivations for viewing, and initial exposure channels.

3. Perceptions (9 items): Familiarity with the term “Y drama,” perceived cultural elements, and attitudes toward sexual diversity.

4. Cultural engagement (3 items): Participation in fandom-related activities (e.g., attending events, purchasing Thai products, studying Thai language) and perceptions of Thailand’s national image.

To ensure reliability and validity, the questionnaire was developed with reference to existing studies and reviewed by four subject-matter experts. A pilot test was conducted with a subset of respondents to assess clarity and ease of response. Based on feedback, ambiguous wording was revised, and response formats were refined.

Data collection and analysis

Data collection was conducted online between January and March 2024. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained electronically. No incentives were provided, in order to encourage sincere responses. All data were anonymized and securely stored, with access restricted to authorized researchers. Ethical approval was granted by the institutional review board of the author’s affiliated institution.

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize demographic characteristics and viewing behaviors. Cross-tabulation and chi-square (χ^2) tests ($p < .001$)

were performed to examine associations between sociodemographic variables (e.g., age, occupation) and behavioral indicators such as viewing time and subscription payment. All statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS version 31, and results were interpreted in relation to existing literature on BL media, transnational fandom, and cultural perception.

Ethical considerations

This study adhered to ethical guidelines for human subjects research. Participants were informed of the study’s purpose, the voluntary nature of participation, and the anonymity of responses. Consent was implied through survey completion. No personally identifiable information was collected, and responses were used solely for academic purposes. During data entry, responses were coded to maintain anonymity, and no individuals or institutions were identifiable.

To contextualize the survey findings, supplementary materials related to Thai BL dramas and their audiences were reviewed. The following sections present an analysis of the 1,734 responses, focusing on the characteristics, behaviors, and perceptions of Japanese viewers of Thai BL dramas.

Result

Characteristics of Thai BL drama viewers

According to the results of this survey, the general profile of Japanese viewers of Thai BL dramas can be characterized as single women between the ages of 36 and 50, without children, who are primarily employed either full-time or part-time. Specifically, in terms of gender, 90.0% of respondents identified as female, 5.4% as LGBTQ+, 1.0% as male, and 3.6% chose not to disclose their gender (see Figure 1). Regarding age distribution, 43.0% were between 36 and 50 years old, 22.2% between 23 and 35, 18.6% over 51, 11.1% between 19 and 22, and 5.1% under 18 (see Figure 2). In terms of marital status, 58.5% of respondents were single, 34.9% were married, and 4.9% were divorced. Additionally, 68.5% reported having no children.

With respect to educational background, 53.6% had completed undergraduate studies, 36.4% had completed middle or high school, 7.9% held a master’s degree or higher, and 1.9% had completed only elementary education (see Figure 3). Regarding occupation, 44.2% were company employees, 20.0%

part-time workers, 14.8% students, 5.8% self-employed, 5.5% housewives or househusbands, 4.0% government

workers, 2.0% unemployed, 1.6% teachers, and 2.1% selected “others.”

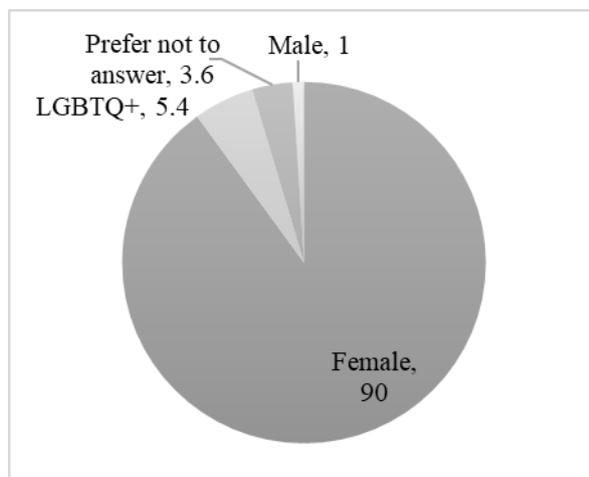


Figure 1 Gender of respondents

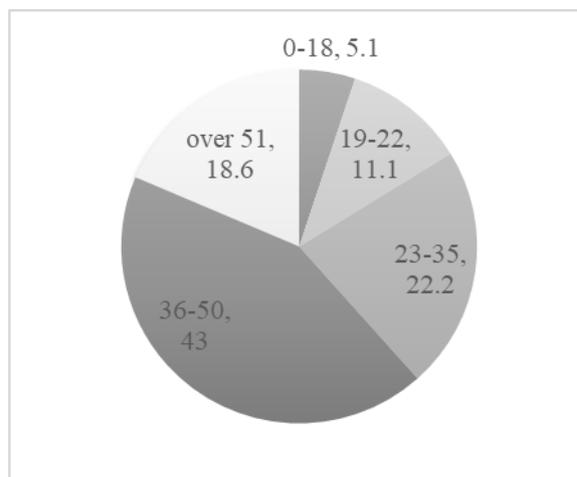


Figure 2 Age of respondents

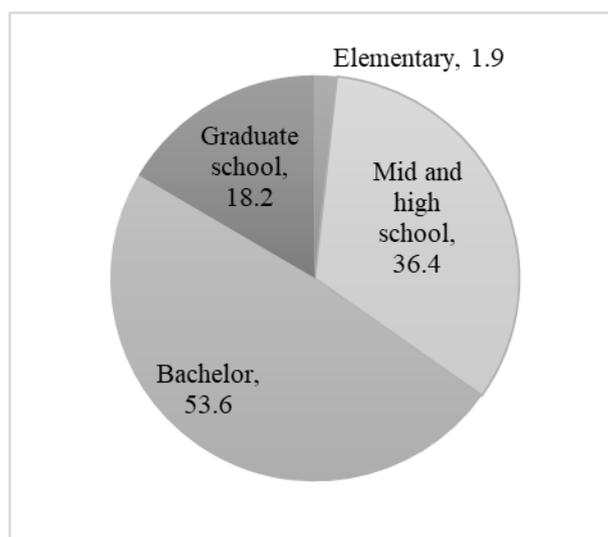


Figure 3 Educational attainment

Viewing behavior of Thai BL drama audiences

Second, the viewing behavior of Japanese audiences of Thai BL dramas—including platforms used, viewing frequency, motivations, and initial exposure—can be summarized as follows. Japanese viewers typically watch Thai BL dramas alone for one to three hours or more per week, primarily via free streaming services such as YouTube or paid subscription platforms accessed through drama apps, with subscription fees paid individually. Most respondents began watching Thai BL dramas prior to 2021, often influenced by social media. The primary motivations for viewing include admiration for the actors and strong interest in the storyline. Many viewers

perceive BL drama narratives as either fictional or potentially based on real events.

In terms of specific data, multiple responses indicate that 87.4% of viewers use YouTube, 85.4% use video streaming applications, and 15.3% watch via television (see Figure 4). Weekly viewing time is distributed as follows: 40.3% watch for more than three hours, 39.0% for one to three hours, and 20.8% for less than one hour (see Figure 5). Regarding payment, 76.8% of respondents regularly pay subscription fees, while 23.2% do not. A majority of 93.5% watch Thai BL dramas alone, whereas only 3.5% watch with family members.

As for motivations, multiple responses show that 87.6% watch because they like the actors, 85.9% because they enjoy the storyline, 30.6% to be exposed to foreign cultures, 4.7% because they like the original novel or manga, and 4.2% to engage in conversations with friends (see Figure 6). Regarding initial exposure, 63.5% discovered Thai BL dramas through social media, 19.2% through recommendations from friends, relatives, or acquaintances, and 17.5% through mass media such as television, radio, magazines, or newspapers (see Figure 7).

In terms of spending, 42.8% of respondents spend less than ¥5,000 per month on Thai BL fandom-related activities. Meanwhile, 20.4% spend between ¥5,000 and ¥10,000, 24.3% between ¥10,000 and ¥30,000, 7.9% between ¥30,000 and ¥50,000, and 4.6% spend more than ¥50,000 on average per month. Regarding viewing history, 37.1% have been watching for two to three years, 26.1% for more than three years, 18.8% for one to two years, 10.3% for one year, and 7.8% for six months.

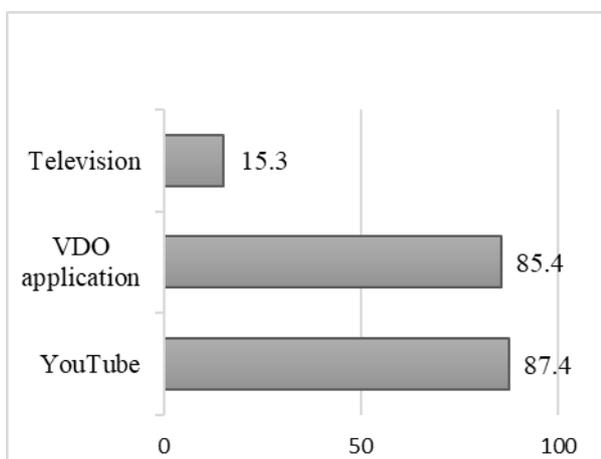


Figure 4 Viewing platforms for Thai BL dramas

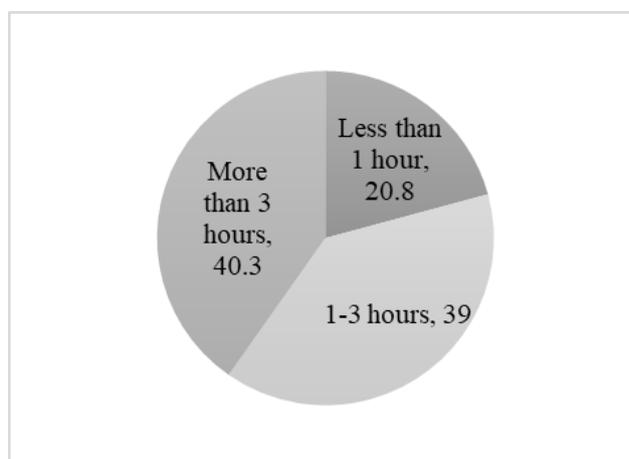


Figure 5 Weekly viewing time for Thai BL dramas

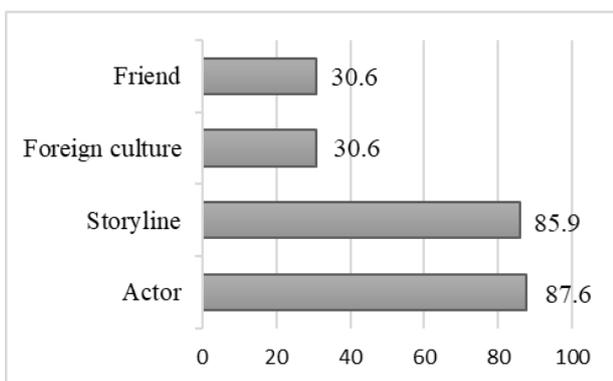


Figure 6 Reasons for viewing Thai BL dramas

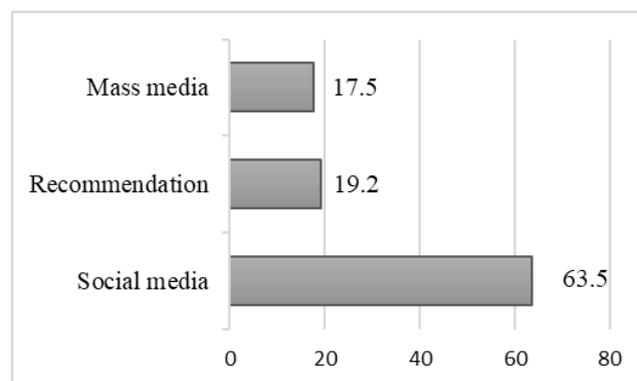


Figure 7 Initial exposure to Thai BL dramas

Perceptions of Thai BL dramas

Third, this section explores the perceptions formed through the viewing of Thai BL dramas. In Thailand, these dramas are commonly referred to as “Y dramas,” and 90.9% of respondents were familiar with this term and its usage within Thai media culture, while 9.1% were not. A significant portion of Japanese viewers indicated that they do not perceive Japanese cultural elements in Thai BL dramas: 43.8% responded

negatively, 24.7% were neutral, and 28.0% affirmed such perceptions.

A high percentage of respondents stated that Thai BL dramas have contributed to their understanding of sexual diversity in society. Specifically, 61.2% believed that these dramas promote greater societal understanding of sexual diversity, 28.4% were neutral, 5.4% disagreed, and 5.0% selected “other” (see Figure 8). Regarding interpersonal relationships, 77.8%

reported discussing Thai BL dramas with friends, 58.1% with online acquaintances, and 52.3% with family members, while only 5.8% had not talked to anyone about their viewing habits. When asked about their family’s reaction, 49.9% said their family had no particular opinion, 36.2% felt understood, 8.4% believed their family disapproved, and 5.5% selected “others.”

Many viewers regarded Thai BL dramas as essential media content. Respondents rated the perceived necessity of these dramas on a five-point Likert scale (1 = not necessary at all, 5 = very

necessary), yielding a mean score of 4.54 (M = 4.54). As this value is substantially higher than the scale midpoint (2.50), it suggests that respondents who perceived Thai BL dramas as “necessary” experienced a personal attachment or sense of emotional comfort derived from such media (see Figure 9). Furthermore, 96.0% expressed an intention to continue watching Thai BL dramas, 3.7% were neutral, and only 0.3% did not plan to continue. In addition, 76.1% reported a willingness to recommend Thai BL dramas to others, with 20.6% remaining neutral and 3.3% indicating no desire to recommend them.

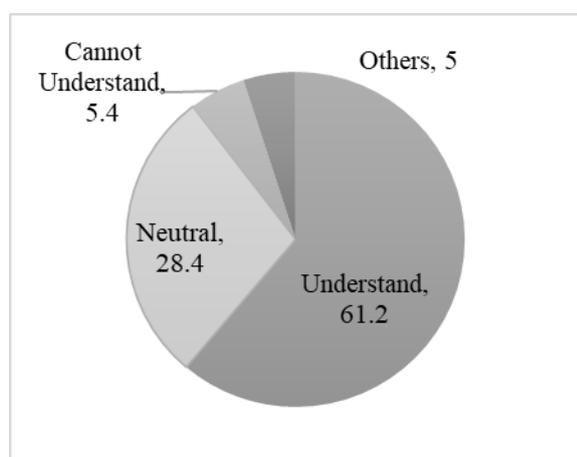


Figure 8 Understanding of sexual diversity

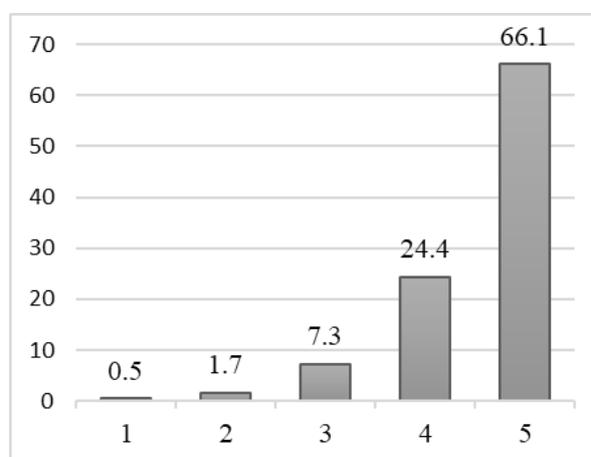


Figure 9 Perceived necessity of Thai BL dramas

Cultural engagement of Thai BL dramas

Following their engagement with Thai BL dramas, Japanese viewers reported a wide range of related activities that reflect both cultural interest and fan participation. Specifically, 84.0% attended live concerts or fan meetings, 75.9% posted on social media, and 74.3% visited Thai restaurants or began cooking Thai food at home. Additionally, 65.4% purchased Thai products, 55.8% made new friends who share similar interests, 55.0% began studying the Thai language, 32.5% traveled to Thailand, and 11.9% created idol illustrations or self-published fan works (*doujinshi*) (see Figure 10). These behaviors suggest that Thai BL dramas serve as a gateway to deeper engagement with Thai culture.

In terms of national image, respondents associated Thailand with attractive men (63.6%), openness toward sexual diversity (58.9%), and delicious cuisine (49.5%). Other impressions included Thailand as an urban country (38.1%), a country of wealthy people (31.4%),

and a safe and beautiful destination (7.4%) (see Figure 11). Beyond Thai BL dramas, viewers also expressed interest in BL content from other regions, with 56.0% showing interest in Japanese BL, followed by 44.7% in Taiwanese BL, 32.7% in Korean BL, 13.1% in Chinese BL, 10.6% in American BL, 5.7% in Filipino BL, and 2.8% in BL content from Hong Kong.

Variable relationships — cross-tabulation analysis and chi-square analyses

To examine associations between respondents’ sociodemographic characteristics (e.g., age, occupation) and viewing behaviors or perceptions, cross-tabulation and chi-square (χ^2) analyses were conducted. Statistical significance was defined as $p < .001$ as follows:

Age and Weekly Viewing Time: A significant association was found between age group and weekly viewing time, $\chi^2 (8, N = 1734) = 26.54, p < .001$. Overall, 40.3% of Japanese viewers reported watching Thai BL dramas for more than three hours per week.

Notably, respondents aged 0–18 (43.8%) and those over 51 (50.8%) were more likely than other age groups to engage in extended weekly viewing.

Age and Subscription Fee Payment: The relationship between age and payment behavior was significant, $\chi^2(4, N = 1734) = 41.72, p < .001$. While 23.2% of all respondents indicated that they do not pay subscription fees, this tendency was more pronounced among younger viewers. Specifically, 44.9% of respondents aged 0–18 and 33.9% of those aged 19–22 reported not paying for streaming services.

Occupation and Subscription Fee Payment: Subscription payment behavior also varied by occupation. A significant association was observed

between occupation and payment status, $\chi^2(9, N = 1734) = 70.85, p < .001$. Civil servants (90.0%), teachers (85.2%), housewives or househusbands (80.0%), and company employees (79.8%) were significantly more likely to pay subscription fees. In contrast, students (39.1%) and unemployed individuals (31.4%) were more likely than other occupational groups to not pay for streaming services.

In summary, both younger and older generations tend to spend more time watching Thai BL dramas compared to other age groups. Additionally, younger viewers, students, and unemployed individuals are particularly less likely to pay subscription fees for streaming platforms.

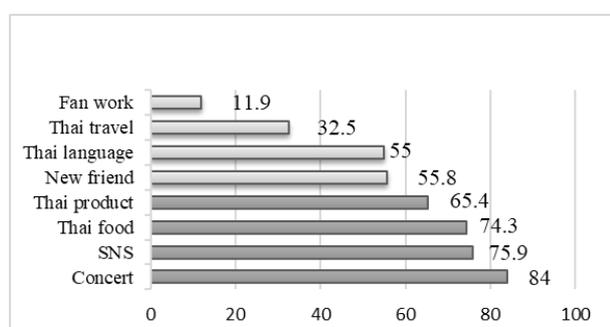


Figure 10 BL-related activities among viewers

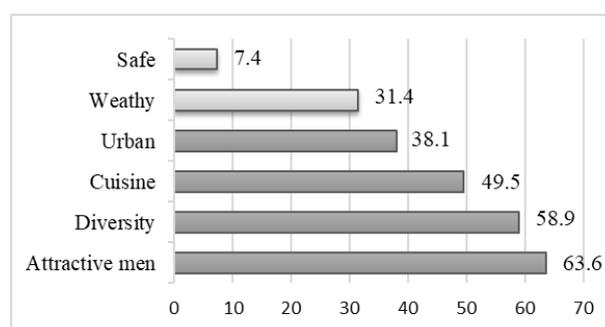


Figure 11 National image of Thailand among viewers

Discussion and interpretation

The results of this study provide robust support for all four proposed hypotheses, offering a comprehensive understanding of Japanese audiences' engagement with Thai BL dramas and the broader cultural implications of transnational media consumption.

Demographic profile and gendered fandom participation

The first hypothesis—that Japanese viewers of Thai BL dramas are predominantly working-age women with relatively high educational attainment and employment status—was strongly supported. The demographic profile of Japanese viewers revealed in this study aligns closely with existing scholarship on BL fandoms. The finding that 90.0% of respondents identified as female, with a significant proportion aged 36–50, suggests that Thai BL dramas attract a mature female audience, many of whom are single and childless. This demographic composition challenges the stereotype of BL fandom as primarily youth-driven and instead highlights the sustained engagement of adult

women in transnational media cultures.

The predominance of heterosexual women among Japanese viewers of Thai BL dramas can be explained by the long-standing historical and cultural positioning of BL media in Japan as a genre created primarily by and for women. Since the emergence of *shōnen-ai* and *yaoi* in the 1970s, BL has functioned as a space for women to imaginatively explore alternative gender and sexual identities beyond patriarchal and heteronormative frameworks, without necessarily identifying as LGBTQ+ themselves (Fujimoto, 2015; Vinitphol, 2023). This tradition of female-centered authorship and consumption has established BL as part of *fujoshi* subculture rather than as a direct expression of queer identity. Consequently, even when Thai BL dramas entered the Japanese market, they were received largely through this pre-existing lens of women's media consumption rather than LGBTQ+ community engagement.

The relatively low proportion of LGBTQ+ viewers does not imply a lack of queer resonance but rather reflects the distinct social dynamics of Japanese media

culture, in which queer narratives are often mediated and consumed through heterosexual female audiences. This pattern highlights a complex relationship between representation and identification, wherein BL operates less as a community-centered queer media form and more as a heteromediated space of queer imagination. Such audience characteristics appear distinctive to Japan and differ from patterns observed in other national contexts (Bunyavejchewin et al., 2024; Jerome et al., 2022; Jirattikorn, 2023; Koaysomboon, 2020). This underscores the need for future research to explore how heterosexual female engagement with BL content contributes—directly or indirectly—to shifts in social attitudes toward sexual diversity in Japan.

Regarding to age, marital Status, and cultural consumption, the age distribution, with 43.0% of respondents aged 36–50 and 18.6% over 51, suggests that Thai BL dramas resonate with viewers who may have greater autonomy in media consumption and disposable income. The high proportion of single respondents (58.5%) and those without children (68.5%) may further explain the sustained engagement with fandom activities, as these individuals potentially have more time and fewer familial constraints. This supports previous findings that BL media often serves as a space for emotional investment and imaginative exploration, particularly among women navigating non-normative desires or relational structures.

Moreover, the educational background of respondents—53.6% having completed undergraduate studies and 7.9% holding a master's degree or higher—indicates that Thai BL drama viewers are relatively well-educated. This may correlate with the ability to engage with subtitled or untranslated content, as well as with broader interest in cross-cultural narratives. The occupational data further supports this interpretation: 44.2% of respondents were company employees and 20.0% were part-time workers, suggesting that Thai BL dramas appeal to working adults across employment types. The presence of students (14.8%) and self-employed individuals (5.8%) also reflects the genre's reach across different lifestyle contexts.

Interestingly, the relatively low percentage of unemployed respondents (2.0%) and housewives/househusbands (5.5%) suggests that Thai BL dramas are not primarily consumed as leisure content by those outside the workforce, but rather as part

of a broader media engagement among employed individuals. This challenges assumptions that fandom participation is limited to those with excess leisure time and instead positions Thai BL drama consumption as a meaningful cultural practice embedded in everyday life.

Viewing behavior of Japanese audiences

The viewing behavior of Japanese audiences of Thai BL dramas reveals a pattern of individualized and sustained engagement with transnational media. The overwhelming majority of respondents (93.5%) reported watching Thai BL dramas alone, suggesting that this media consumption is primarily a personal activity rather than a shared domestic or social experience. This aligns with prior research on BL fandoms, which often emphasize solitary viewing as a space for emotional immersion and imaginative exploration. The solitary nature of viewing may also reflect the niche status of BL content and the continued presence of social stigma surrounding queer narratives, even when consumed by cisgender heterosexual women.

Platform usage data indicates a strong preference for digital streaming services, with 87.4% of respondents using YouTube and 85.4% accessing content via dedicated drama apps. This suggests that Thai BL dramas are highly accessible to Japanese audiences through both free and paid platforms, facilitating transnational media circulation. The relatively low percentage of television viewers (15.3%) underscores the shift away from traditional broadcast media and toward mobile, on-demand consumption. These findings reflect broader trends in media globalization, where fan-driven discovery and algorithmic recommendation systems—particularly on social media—play a central role in shaping viewing habits (Jenkins et al., 2013).

Additionally, viewer motivations were primarily affective and narrative-driven: 87.6% cited admiration for the actors and 85.9% expressed interest in the storyline. These results highlight the importance of character appeal and romantic plotlines in sustaining viewer engagement. Notably, 30.6% of respondents reported watching Thai BL dramas to be exposed to foreign cultures, suggesting that cultural curiosity and transnational interest are secondary but meaningful drivers of consumption. This supports the notion that BL dramas function not only as entertainment but also as

informal cultural texts that mediate perceptions of gender, sexuality, and national identity (Baudinette, 2021).

The data on initial exposure reinforces the centrality of social media in the dissemination of Thai BL content. With 63.5% of respondents discovering these dramas through platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, or YouTube, it is evident that fan communities and digital networks play a pivotal role in shaping media visibility. Recommendations from friends and acquaintances (19.2%) and mass media exposure (17.5%) were less influential, suggesting that grassroots circulation and peer-to-peer sharing are more effective than institutional promotion in reaching Japanese audiences. This finding echoes previous studies on participatory culture and fan-driven media flows (Ito et al., 2010).

Furthermore, spending data reveals a spectrum of financial engagement, with 42.8% of respondents spending less than ¥5,000 per month and 4.6% spending more than ¥50,000. These figures suggest that while Thai BL fandom is accessible to casual viewers, a significant subset of fans invest substantial resources in related activities. This includes subscription fees, merchandise, event participation, and possibly travel. The fact that 76.8% of respondents regularly pay for streaming services indicates a willingness to financially support content creators and platforms, which may contribute to the sustainability of the Thai BL industry and its international reach.

Moreover, the distribution of viewing history—where 63.2% of respondents have been watching for more than two years—demonstrates long-term commitment to the genre. This sustained engagement suggests that Thai BL dramas are not merely a passing trend but have become a stable part of Japanese media consumption for certain demographics. The longevity of interest may be attributed to the continuous production of new titles, the development of actor fandoms, and the evolving narrative complexity of BL content.

Cultural recognition, social impact and interpersonal dialogue

The second hypothesis—that Thai BL dramas contribute to increased awareness and acceptance of sexual diversity among Japanese audiences—was supported. Regarding sexual diversity and social impact,

a notable finding is that 61.2% of respondents believed Thai BL dramas contribute to greater societal understanding of sexual diversity. This supports the argument that BL media can serve as a vehicle for promoting inclusive values, even when presented within romantic or entertainment contexts. While 28.4% of respondents expressed a neutral view and only 5.4% disagreed, the overall positive perception suggests that Thai BL dramas are not only consumed for pleasure but also interpreted as socially meaningful texts. These results resonate with previous studies that position BL media as a site for negotiating gender and sexuality in non-threatening and emotionally resonant ways (Suganuma, 2015). This also aligns with observations that Thai BL dramas encourage Japanese audiences to develop a greater understanding of sexual diversity (Jirattikorn, 2025; Shimauchi, 2024).

This finding reflects respondents' social perception of BL dramas as potentially educational or inclusive media. It is important to note, however, that the survey item—“Do you think watching Thai BL dramas helps society better understand sexual diversity?”—measures perceived societal benefit rather than individual attitudinal change. This distinction is particularly relevant in the Japanese context, where BL consumption has historically been mediated through the female gaze, allowing women to imaginatively explore non-heteronormative relationships within a safe and affective space without necessarily aligning with LGBTQ+ advocacy or identity. Recognizing this nuance, future research should include more direct attitudinal measures, such as items assessing changes in personal beliefs, empathy toward LGBTQ+ individuals, or support for gender and sexual equality. Such approaches would help determine whether the perceived social impact of Thai BL dramas corresponds to genuine shifts in audience attitudes or remains primarily a symbolic perception of inclusivity.

The high level of familiarity with the term “Y drama” (90.9%) among Japanese viewers indicates a strong awareness of Thai media-specific terminology and suggests a degree of transnational media literacy. This familiarity reflects not only repeated exposure to Thai BL content but also the integration of Thai fan discourse into Japanese fandom spaces. The relatively low percentage of respondents unfamiliar with the term (9.1%) further supports the notion that Thai BL dramas

have achieved recognizable cultural status among Japanese audiences.

Interestingly, perceptions of cultural hybridity within Thai BL dramas were mixed. While 28.0% of respondents affirmed the presence of Japanese cultural elements, a larger proportion (43.8%) did not perceive such influences, and 24.7% remained neutral. This suggests that although BL as a genre originated in Japan, its Thai adaptation is largely viewed as culturally distinct. The findings align with previous scholarship that emphasizes the localization of BL narratives in Thailand, where cultural, linguistic, and social contexts reshape genre conventions (Baudinette, 2021). Baudinette (2019) describes this as a “glocalization” of Japanese BL narratives, while Vinitphol (2023) emphasizes the hybridization of Japanese and Thai cultures, resulting in a new, established cultural form. The Yaoi culture imported from Japan in the 1990s has since been localized into a distinctly Thai “Y culture,” which now enjoys global reach. The absence of perceived Japanese elements may also reflect the success of Thai BL dramas in constructing their own aesthetic and thematic identity.

The data also reveal that Thai BL dramas serve as a catalyst for interpersonal dialogue. A majority of respondents reported discussing their viewing habits with friends (77.8%), online acquaintances (58.1%), and family members (52.3%). This indicates that BL media consumption is not entirely private or stigmatized, but rather shared across social networks. However, family reactions were mixed: while 49.9% reported no particular opinion from family members and 36.2% felt understood, 8.4% perceived disapproval. These findings suggest that while Thai BL dramas may foster open conversation among peers, generational or cultural gaps may still influence familial acceptance.

Moreover, the average rating of 4.54 on a five-point scale for the perceived necessity of Thai BL dramas underscores their significance within the media lives of Japanese viewers. This score, well above the midpoint, reflects a strong sense of value attributed to the genre. Moreover, the overwhelming majority (96.0%) expressed an intention to continue watching, and 76.1% indicated a willingness to recommend Thai BL dramas to others. These figures suggest not only sustained engagement but also active endorsement, positioning Thai BL dramas as both personally

meaningful and socially shareable content.

Cultural engagement beyond media consumption and shifting national imaginaries

The third hypothesis—that engagement with Thai BL dramas leads to behavioral and attitudinal shifts toward Thai culture—was supported by a wide range of fan activities. The findings indicate that Thai BL dramas function not merely as entertainment but as a cultural gateway, prompting Japanese viewers to engage with Thai society in tangible and multifaceted ways. A substantial proportion of respondents reported participating in activities that extend beyond passive viewing, including attending live concerts or fan meetings (84.0%), posting on social media (75.9%), and engaging with Thai cuisine through restaurant visits or home cooking (74.3%).

The purchase of Thai products (65.4%) and the study of the Thai language (55.0%) further reflect a deepening interest in Thai culture, while the formation of new friendships based on shared fandom (55.8%) points to the role of BL dramas in facilitating social connectivity. Notably, 32.5% of respondents reported traveling to Thailand, indicating that media engagement can influence real-world mobility and tourism. The creation of idol illustrations and self-published fan works (11.9%) also highlights the productive dimension of fandom, where viewers become cultural producers within transnational fan communities.

Although attending live concerts or fan meetings and creating idol illustrations or self-published fan works are typical Japanese fandom practices, the content of these activities in the context of Thai BL dramas is frequently centered on Thai actors, narratives, and cultural symbols. Consequently, such fan practices represent a form of transcultural engagement, through which Japanese audiences interact with and reinterpret Thai culture via localized fan traditions. These behaviors illustrate how Thai BL dramas foster affective transnationalism, wherein media consumption facilitates embodied cultural practices and lifestyle adaptations that bridge national and cultural boundaries (Iwabuchi, 2015).

Respondents’ perceptions of Thailand reveal a shift in national imagery shaped by BL media. Thailand was most commonly associated with attractive men (63.6%), openness toward sexual diversity (58.9%), and

delicious cuisine (49.5%). These associations reflect the thematic and aesthetic elements emphasized in Thai BL dramas, which often foreground romantic male relationships, inclusive social dynamics, and visually appealing settings. The perception of Thailand as an urban country (38.1%) and a nation of wealthy people (31.4%) may be influenced by the polished production values and aspirational lifestyles depicted in BL narratives. However, only 7.4% viewed Thailand as a safe and beautiful destination, suggesting that while BL dramas contribute to positive cultural impressions, they may not fully reshape broader geopolitical or safety-related perceptions.

These findings support the argument that media representations play a significant role in constructing national images, particularly when mediated through emotionally resonant genres like BL. Japanese audiences' engagement with Thai BL dramas has led them to perceive Thailand not only as a modern and friendly nation, but also as one rich in unique cultural elements and full of excitement (Jirattikorn, 2025). The selective nature of these perceptions also underscores the importance of narrative framing and character portrayal in shaping audience imaginaries (Chua & Iwabuchi, 2008).

Regrading to regional media preferences and transnational fandom, beyond Thai BL dramas, Japanese viewers expressed interest in BL content from other regions, with 56.0% favoring Japanese BL, followed by Taiwanese (44.7%), Korean (32.7%), Chinese (13.1%), American (10.6%), Filipino (5.7%), and Hong Kong (2.8%) productions. This distribution suggests that while Thai BL dramas serve as a central node in transnational BL fandom, audiences remain open to diverse regional expressions of the genre. The relatively high interest in Japanese and Taiwanese BL may reflect linguistic proximity, cultural familiarity, and established media infrastructures, while the lower percentages for Western and Southeast Asian content may indicate barriers related to accessibility, translation, or cultural resonance.

These patterns highlight the complex dynamics of regional media flows and the role of BL dramas in fostering cross-cultural curiosity. They also point to the potential for Thai BL dramas to serve as a model for other national industries seeking to engage international audiences through emotionally compelling and

culturally distinctive storytelling.

Generational viewing patterns, economic access and subscription behavior

The fourth hypothesis—that younger and older viewers are more likely to engage in extended viewing, while younger and economically disadvantaged groups are less likely to pay for subscription services—was supported through cross-tabulation and chi-square analyses. The results reveal distinct generational patterns in the viewing behavior of Thai BL drama audiences in Japan. Notably, both the youngest (0–18) and oldest (51+) age groups were more likely than other cohorts to engage in extended weekly viewing, with 43.8% and 50.8%, respectively, watching for more than three hours per week. This bimodal distribution suggests that Thai BL dramas appeal across generational lines. Both younger and older viewers tend to have more available leisure time, which may enable more frequent viewing of Thai BL dramas. These findings challenge the assumption that BL media is primarily youth-oriented and instead highlight its resonance across diverse age groups.

Age and occupation were both significantly associated with subscription fee payment, revealing disparities in economic access to streaming platforms. Younger respondents, particularly those aged 0–18 (44.9%) and 19–22 (33.9%), were more likely to consume Thai BL dramas without paying for subscription services. This may reflect limited financial autonomy among younger viewers, who rely on free platforms such as YouTube or shared accounts. Conversely, older and professionally employed respondents—especially civil servants (90.0%), teachers (85.2%), housewives/househusbands (80.0%), and company employees (79.8%)—were significantly more likely to pay for streaming services. These patterns suggest that economic stability facilitates more formalized media consumption and may contribute to the sustainability of the Thai BL industry through paid viewership.

The low subscription rates among students (39.1%) and unemployed individuals (31.4%) further underscore the role of socioeconomic status in shaping access to media. While these groups may still engage deeply with Thai BL content, their reliance on free platforms may limit exposure to premium content or

affect the visibility of certain titles. These findings align with broader media studies literature on digital inequality and the stratification of cultural access in online environments (Napoli & Obar, 2014).

Conclusion and future directions

This study provides a comprehensive examination of Japanese audiences of Thai BL dramas, highlighting their demographic characteristics, viewing practices, cultural perceptions, and behavioral outcomes associated with transnational media engagement. The findings reveal that the plurality of viewers are single women aged 36-50, with relatively high levels of education and stable employment. Their engagement with Thai BL dramas is marked by individualized viewing, frequent use of digital streaming platforms, and sustained interest developed over several years.

Thai BL dramas function not only as entertainment but also as cultural texts that promote awareness of sexual diversity and stimulate cross-cultural curiosity. A substantial proportion of respondents reported openly discussing their viewing habits with peers and family members, indicating a normalization of BL content in everyday social discourse. Moreover, the genre serves as a gateway to Thai culture, inspiring various forms of engagement such as attending fan events, consuming Thai food and products, studying the Thai language, and traveling to Thailand. Collectively, these patterns illustrate how transnational media consumption can facilitate affective connections and intercultural understanding between Japan and Thailand.

Statistical analyses further demonstrate that sociodemographic factors influence media engagement. Younger and older viewers tend to watch for longer durations, while younger and economically disadvantaged groups are less likely to pay for subscription services. Occupation also plays a role in subscription behavior, with civil servants, teachers, and company employees more likely to financially support streaming platforms.

Overall, Thai BL dramas have emerged as a meaningful site of transnational fandom, cultural exchange, and social reflection. They enable Japanese viewers to engage with narratives of love, identity, and diversity while reshaping perceptions of Thailand and its cultural landscape. These findings contribute to

broader discussions on media globalization, gendered consumption, and the role of popular culture in shaping cross-border understanding. The observed relationships between sociodemographic variables and viewing behavior have also implications for both fandom studies and media industry strategy. For scholars, the data highlight the importance of considering age and occupation when analyzing fan engagement, particularly in transnational contexts where access and motivations may vary. For content producers and distributors, the findings suggest that pricing models and platform accessibility should be tailored to accommodate younger and economically constrained viewers, who represent a significant portion of the audience but may be underserved by subscription-based services.

While this study offers valuable insights into the characteristics and perceptions of Japanese audiences of Thai BL dramas, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the use of convenience and stratified sampling via online platforms may limit the generalizability of the findings, as the sample may not fully represent the broader population of Thai BL viewers in Japan. Second, self-reported data are subject to response biases, including social desirability and selective recall. Third, the cross-sectional design captures audience attitudes at a single point in time, without accounting for longitudinal changes in media engagement or cultural perception. Finally, while the survey instrument was carefully developed and piloted, the interpretation of culturally nuanced concepts—such as sexual diversity and national image—may vary among respondents. Future research should address these limitations by employing more representative sampling methods, incorporating longitudinal designs, and integrating qualitative approaches to deepen understanding of transnational fandom and media reception. In addition, future research may build on these insights by conducting comparative studies across national contexts and examining the role of fan production and online communities in sustaining transnational BL fandoms.

Acknowledgments

This work was supported by JSPS KAKENHI Grant Number 24K05242 (Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research [C]), Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports,

Science and Technology, Japan) and the Suntory Foundation Research Grant (2022-2023). I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all survey participants and to my research collaborators for their invaluable support.

Declaration of generative AI in scientific writing

The authors declare that generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools, including large language models, were used solely to assist with language editing, text polishing, and improving readability of the manuscript. No AI tool was used to generate original ideas, analyze data, interpret results, or draw scientific conclusions.

All content, including conceptual framework, methodology, data analysis, and final interpretations, was developed and verified entirely by the authors.

The authors take full responsibility for the accuracy and integrity of all reported information.

CRedit author statement

Methodology: Associate Prof. Hideki Hiramatsu, Associate Prof. Hinata Shinsuke, Assist. Prof. Masayuki Nishida, Associate Prof. Rujirat Vinitphol.

Funding acquisition: JSPS KAKENHI Grant Number 24K05242 (Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research [C], Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Japan) and the Suntory Foundation Research Grant (2022-2023)

References

- Arponsii, S. (2022) *Rue 'si ri wai' nilae khue sop phao woe khong thai [Is the "Y series" Thailand's true soft power?]* *GQ Thailand*. Retrieved from <https://www.gqthailand.com/culture/article/series-y-soft-power>
- Bangkok Biz Online. (2020). *Song munkha talat 'si ri wai' rueang rak 'chai chai' thi dai chai khon du thuk phet [Exploring the market value of "Y series"—male–male love stories embraced by all genders]*. Retrieved from <https://www.bangkokbiznews.com/lifestyle/884794>
- Baudinette, T. (2019). Lovesick, The Series: Adapting Japanese 'Boys Love' to Thailand and the creation of a new genre of queer media. *Southeast Asia Research*, 27(2), 115-132.
- Baudinette, T. (2021). *Regimes of desire: Young gay men, media, and masculinity in Tokyo*. Ann Arbor, USA: University of Michigan Press.
- Baudinette, T. (2023). *Boys Love media in Thailand: Celebrity, fans, and transnational Asian queer popular culture*. London, UK: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Bunyavejchewin, P. (2018). *The Wai (Y[ao i]) genre: Local BL media in Thailand* [Conference presentation] (pp. 1-32). In Proceedings of the Boys Love Media on the Move II: Southeast Asia panel. Mechademia Conference on Asian Popular Cultures, Kyoto, Japan.
- Bunyavejchewin, P. (2022). *The queer if limited effect of Boys Love manga fandom in Thailand* (pp. 181-193). In Welker, J. (Ed.). *Queer transfigurations: Boys love media in Asia*. Honolulu, USA: University of Hawaii Press.
- Bunyavejchewin, P., Tungkeunkunt, K., Kamonpetch, P., Sirichuanjun, K., & Sukthungthong, N. (2024). Socio-demographics, lifestyles, and consumption frequency of Thai Boys' Love series content: Initial quantitative evidence from Thailand. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 10(1), 1-20.
- Fujimoto, Y. (2015). *The evolution of BL as "playing with gender": Viewing the genesis and development of BL from a contemporary perspective* (pp. 76-92). In McLelland, M., Kazumi, N., Sukanuma, K., & Welker, J. (Eds.). *Boys Love manga and beyond: History, culture, and community in Japan*. Mississippi, USA: University Press of Mississippi.
- Hiramatsu, H. (2023). Thai BL drama heno michi: "LGBTQ drama" kara BL drama heno eborushon [The path of Thai BL drama: An evolution of "LGBTQ" drama into BL (Y) drama]. *The Journal of Thai Studies*, 23, 31-43.
- Iwabuchi, K. (2015). *Resilient borders and cultural diversity: Internationalism, brand nationalism, and multiculturalism in Japan*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
- Jackson, P. (2011). *Capitalism, LGBT activism, and queer autonomy in Thailand* (pp. 195–204). In Jackson, P. (Ed.). *21st century markets, media, and rights*. Hongkong, HK: Hong Kong University Press.

- Jenkins, H., Ford, S., & Green, J. (2013). *Spreadable media: Creating value and meaning in a networked culture*. New York, USA: NYU Press.
- Jerome, C., Ahmad Hadzmy, A. J. b., & Su Hie, T. (2022). "I can see myself in them, but they are not me": Asian Boys' Love (BL) drama and gay male viewers. *Social Sciences*, 11(4), 163.
- Jirattikorn, A. (2023). Heterosexual reading vs. queering Thai Boys' Love dramas among Chinese and Filipino audiences. *Intersections: Gender and Sexuality in Asia and the Pacific*, 49. <https://doi.org/10.25911/R1B3-1K82>
- Jirattikorn, A. (2025). Reclaiming youth and desire: Alternative civility and Japanese middle-aged women's fandom of Thai Boys' Love dramas. *Asian Studies Review*, 1-19.
- Koaysomboon, T. (2020). Everything you need to know about Thailand's thriving Boys Love culture. *Time Out Bangkok*. Retrieved from <https://www.timeout.com/bangkok/lgbtq/thai-boys-love-culture>
- Napoli, P. M., & Obar, J. A. (2014). The emerging mobile Internet underclass: A critique of mobile Internet access. *The Information Society*, 30(5), 323-334.
- Phadungthai, T. (2022). *Phapruam wongkan wai 2022 toklong talat wai thai khai arai yu?* [Overview of the Y industry in 2022: What is the Thai Y market really selling?] *The Standard*. Retrieved from <https://thestandard.co/overview-of-y-industry-in-2022/>
- Phadungthai, T. (2023). *Phapruam si ri wai pi 2023 mae krasae mai wue wa tae nueaha nasonchai* [Overview of Y series in 2023: Less hype, but compelling content]. *The Standard*. Retrieved from <https://thestandard.co/overview-of-the-y-series-in-2023>
- Pongsapitaksanti, P. (2023). Thai BL dorama no hatten: Tokuchou seisaku to sono eigyou [The development of Thai Boys' Love (BL) drama: Characteristics, production process, and its influences]. *The Journal of Thai Studies*, 23, 19-29.
- Pongsapitaksanti, P. (2025). Thai BL dorama shichousha no tokucho koudou ninshiki oyobi shakajinkouteki tokucho tonon kanren: Thaijin nitaisuru ankeitochousa [The characteristics, behaviors, and perceptions of Thai Boys' Love (BL) drama audiences and their relationship with socio-demographic attributes: A questionnaire survey of Thai audiences]. *The Journal of Thai Studies*, 25, 121-136.
- Prachachathurakit. (2024). *Talat to 3 phanlan si ri wai phi kasut to yot sop phao woe radap lok [BL drama market peaks at 3 billion baht, advancing Thailand's global soft power]*. Retrieved from <https://www.prachachat.net/d-life/news-1649288>
- Prasannam, N. (2019). The Yaoi phenomenon in Thailand and fan/industry interaction. *Plaridel*, 16(2), 63-89.
- Prasannam, N., & Chan, Y. (2023). Thai Boys Love (BL)/Y(aoi) in Literary and Media Industries: Political and Transnational Practices. *Intersections: Gender and Sexuality in Asia and the Pacific*, 49. <https://doi.org/10.25911/FC44-RB16>
- Rocket Media Lab. (2021). *Samruat chakkrawan si ri wai thai pi 2020 – ton pi 2021 [Mapping the universe of Thai Y series from 2020 to early 2021]*. Retrieved from <https://rocketmedialab.co/database-yseries/>
- SCB Economic Intelligence Center. (2025). *Khai khwam lap si ri wai thai het dai ching tid trend lok [Unlocking the secrets of Thai BL dramas: Why they became a global trend]*. Retrieved from <https://www.scbeic.com/th/detail/file/product/9687/h3fuc83e5r/In-focus-BL-GL-20250107.pdf>
- Shimauchi, S. (2023). Thai Boys' Love drama fandom as a transnational and trans-subcultural contact zone in Japan. *Continuum*, 37(3), 381-394.
- Shimauchi, S. (2024). Inter-Asia referencing and orientalist consideration of the transnational fandom of Thai Boys' Love drama in Japan. *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 25(3), 386-405.
- Suganuma, K. (2015). *Contact moments: The politics of inter-cultural desire in Japanese male queer cultures*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- Vinitphol, R. (2023). BL bunkakaramiru bunka no haiburiditi: Nihon ni yunyuusareta "Thai BL" no rekishi [Cultural hybridity in the context of Boys' Love culture: The history of Thai Boys' Love reimported to Japan]. *The Journal of Thai Studies*, 23, 3-17.

Welker, J. (2022). *Boys Love (BL) media and its Asian transfigurations* (pp. 1-16). In Welker, J. (Ed.). *Queer transfigurations: Boys Love media in Asia*. Honolulu, USA: University of Hawaii Press.

Appendix: Survey questionnaire (English Translation)

Description: This questionnaire was administered to Japanese individuals who had previously viewed Thai BL (Boys' Love) dramas. It was designed to collect data on viewer demographics, viewing behaviors, motivations, perceptions, and cultural engagement. The survey was conducted by a university-based research team and used exclusively for academic purposes. No personally identifiable information was collected.

Section I: Viewing behavior

1. *Have you ever watched a Thai BL drama?* 1) Yes 2) No (If No, the survey ends here. Thank you for your cooperation.)

2. *How did you first encounter Thai BL dramas?* (Select all that apply) 1) Recommendation from friends, relatives, or acquaintances 2) Social media (e.g., SNS) 3) Television, radio, magazines, or newspapers 4) Other (please specify)

3. *When did you begin watching Thai BL dramas?* 1) Within the last 6 months 2) About 1 year ago 3) 1–2 years ago 4) 2–3 years ago 5) More than 3 years ago

4. *On average, how many hours per week do you watch Thai BL dramas?* 1) Less than 1 hour 2) 1–3 hours 3) More than 3 hours

5. *Through which platforms do you watch Thai BL dramas?* (Select all that apply) 1) Paid streaming services (e.g., Netflix, U-NEXT, Amazon Prime, Telasa) 2) Free streaming services (e.g., YouTube) 3) Television 4) Other (please specify)

6. *Do you regularly pay subscription fees to watch Thai BL dramas?* 1) Yes 2) No

7. *Who do you usually watch Thai BL dramas with?* 1) Alone 2) With friends 3) With relatives or family 4) With others online 5) Other

8. *Do you talk to anyone about watching Thai BL dramas?* (Select all that apply) 1) Friends 2) Online friends 3) Family 4) No one 5) Other

9. *On average, how much money do you spend monthly on Thai BL fandom-related activities?* 1) Less than ¥5,000 2) ¥5,000–¥10,000 3) ¥10,000–¥30,000 4)

¥30,000–¥50,000 5) More than ¥50,000

Section II: Viewer perceptions

10. *Why do you watch Thai BL dramas?* (Select all that apply) 1) I like the actors or idols 2) I enjoy the storyline 3) I like the original novel or manga 4) To experience foreign cultures 5) To talk with friends 6) Other (please specify)

11. *What do you think about the storylines in Thai BL dramas?* 1) Completely fictional 2) Could happen in real life 3) Both 4) Other

12. *How does your family feel about you watching Thai BL dramas?* 1) They understand 2) They have no particular opinion 3) They disapprove 4) Other

13. *Do you notice any Japanese cultural elements in Thai BL dramas?* 1) Yes 2) No 3) Not sure 4) Other

14. *Are you aware that BL dramas are referred to as “Y dramas” in Thailand?* 1) Yes 2) No 3) Not sure

15. *Do you think watching Thai BL dramas helps society better understand sexual diversity?* 1) Yes 2) No 3) Not sure 4) Other

16. *What activities have you engaged in as a result of watching Thai BL dramas?* (Select all that apply) 1) Attended live concerts or fan meetings 2) Made new friends with similar interests 3) Registered or posted on social media 4) Visited Thai restaurants or started cooking Thai food 5) Traveled to Thailand 6) Studied the Thai language 7) Purchased Thai products 8) Created idol illustrations or self-published fan works (doujinshi) 9) Other (please specify)

17. *What image do you now have of Thailand after watching Thai BL dramas?* (Select all that apply) 1) Urban country 2) Country with many attractive men 3) Country with delicious food 4) Beautiful and safe country 5) Country with many wealthy people 6) Open to sexual diversity 7) No particular image 8) Other (please specify)

18. *To what extent are Thai BL dramas necessary to you?* 1) Not important 2) Slightly important 3) Neutral 4) Important 5) Very important

19. *Do you intend to continue watching Thai BL dramas?* 1) Yes 2) No 3) Not sure

20. *Would you recommend Thai BL dramas to others?* 1) Yes 2) No 3) Not sure

21. *Which countries or regions produce your favorite BL dramas?* (Select all that apply) 1) Thailand 2) Japan 3) Taiwan 4) Korea 5) China 6) Hong Kong 7)

Philippines 8) Western countries 9) South America 10)
Other (please specify)

Section III: Demographic information

22. *Gender:* 1) Male 2) Female 3) LGBTQ+ 4)

Prefer not to answer

23. *Age:* 1) Under 18 2) 19-22 3) 23-35 4) 36-50

5) Over 51

24. *Marital status:* 1) Single 2) Married 3)

Divorced 4) Living with a partner 5) Other

25. *Do you have children?* 1) No 2) Yes 3)

Currently pregnant

26. *Highest level of education completed:* 1)

Elementary school 2) Junior high school 3) High school

4) Bachelor's degree 5) Master's degree 6) Doctoral
degree

27. *Occupation:* 1) Company employee 2)

Government worker 3) Self-employed / Freelancer 4)

Teacher 5) Full-time homemaker 6) Part-time /

Temporary worker 7) Student 8) Unemployed 9) Other