TELEVISION SOAP OPERA: GENDER, CONSUMPTION BEHAVIOUR AND ITS GRATIFICATIONS AMONG ADULT

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ABSTRACT

This research focuses on TV soap opera among adults at Asia Pacific University of Technology and Innovation (APU). A structured set of questionnaires has been distributed to 400 adults who works or study at APU with ages between 21-40 years. It is interesting to know why they are watching a TV soap programme and what sort of gratifications they can fulfil when they watched a TV soap programme. This research has also looked at gender influences towards their perceptions and watching behaviour of TV soap. The results of this study have indicated that while females are the majority of the TV soap audience with low to middle class income earner, however most of them fall in the category of light TV viewers rather than heavy TV viewers. This has marked the changing of audience behaviour rather than what has been presented in previous since five decades ago. The study has concluded that viewers watched TV soap for emotional relief and pleasure other than for entertainment reasons. In addition, this paper reviewed several reactions and perceptions towards gender related issue of male-female domination in the character of TV soap. Interestingly, the results have indicated that gender played an important role in giving perception about male-female domination in the character of the TV soap as well as in other gender-related issues in this study.

Field of Research: Genre, gender, tv soap opera, audience consumption behaviour, perception, uses and gratification, cultivation analysis.

1. Introduction

Genre studies are important because they provide us with insights about what texts are or should be like, how they are created, and how they functions for audiences. Genre shape our expectations of what films, television shows, or videos we will be seeing or songs we will be listening to will be like. Genres are also important because they enable us to talk about the relationship of texts to other texts in terms of form as well as content.

The word genre is French and means “kind” or gender and is very similar to generic. When we decide to watch a television show we usually consider, among other things, the kind of programme we will be watching. In general terms, what to expect from kind of program or, more precisely, what kind of gratifications we might expect from each genre.

Developing the idea of tertiary text that, where viewer creates meaning from texts through the process of interpretation rather than passively consuming the superficial storyline, Brown (1994) attempts to give the balance of power in meaning-making to audience rather than text. The viewers render storylines and narratives meaningful by relating them to their own lives of people they know and it is
the retelling of episodes and the discussion of plotlines with others which give fans an additional pleasure (Ross, Nightingale, 2008).

A range of new studies of television soap has stressed the way in which viewers construct, negotiate and perform a multiplicity of meanings and gendered identities. In his work on sexed subjects and gendered representations in soap opera, Chris Baker (2005) stated that while soap opera does produce certain symbolic forms of gendered spectatorship, for example the subject position of ‘ideal mother’ there is a difference between ‘the analysis of spectatorship’ conceived a set of subject position constructed in and trough texts, and the analysis of social audiences, understood as the empirical social subjects actually engaged in watching. It has been argued that the central theme of soap opera are mainly about interpersonal relationship, marriages, divorces, children and so forth, chime with a traditionally domestic concerns of women so that soap opera is a space in which women’s concerns and point of view are validated and from which women take pleasure.

Other studies of soap opera audience confirm both the general genre competencies of the audience and a sense of collective, collaborative network of viewing. Thus, in Seiter’s (1989) study a network of women viewers used each other to keep on track of the complex plot developments over a long period of time. This networks is often family based; mother and daughter or neighbourhood centred and topics of discussion included speculation about future developments and moral; ideological judgements with textual devices that produce a variety of modes of femininity but with the extent to which textual subjects positions are ‘taken up’ by concrete women and men.

In his study, Baker (2005) further expressed that the gender concerns the cultural assumptions and practices which govern the social constructions of women and men while sex refers to the biology of the body. Both sex and gender are taken to be discursive-performative social constructions and in dissociable.

A study by Buckingham (1987) and Robson (1982) on British soap showed that young audience were highly ‘knowing’ about the constructed nature of news programmes and able to achieve a critical distance. They both argued that viewers’ pleasure in the text was enhanced by the likelihood of discussing episodes with their friends.

According to Rubin (1985), soap watching functioned as a surrogate friend for social inadequate. There was often studies that viewers did talk about shows with other people and that there was a great deal of pleasure derived both from individual consumption but also the post-broadcast discussion with friends, family and or/workmates.

Ang theorised a notion of ‘emotional realism’ so that the pleasures of affect for audiences were derived from a shared sense of personal tragedy. As with Ang’s fan, women are not cultural dupes unable to distinguish between reality and fantasy, but rather enjoy particular cultural products both their intrinsic self as well as for the vicarious pleasures they afford. Indeed, Thomas (2002) suggests that fans of ‘quality’ programmes such as Inspector Morse will often identify precisely with the values inscribed in such dramas, so that the text become part of viewers own personal narratives.

This research is dedicated to fill the gap of research on TV soap opera among adults. It has investigated the audience consumption behaviour of TV soap opera and determined some gender differences in their perceptions in male-female domination and gratifications they seek to have when they watched TV soap. The results of study should help media practitioners, scholars and student to further understand on audience research in TV programme, in this case the TV soap opera as one of popular genre among media audience.

In general, this research seeks to:

a) Determine the watching behavior of TV soap opera among adult.

b) Analyse the uses and gratifications of watching TV soap.

c) Investigate different perceptions among male and female audience of TV soap programme towards some gender related issue and the characters in the TV soap.

The research results indicated that the gender of respondent played a contributing factor towards perception of TV soap, their watching behaviour and also several key issues have been highlighted during the audience engagement in watching TV soap. In addition the relevant literature of terminologies about tv soap opera and related media theories were examined to determine where the results reported by this paper fit into the body of knowledge.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Definition of Soap Opera

Robyn R. Warhol (1998) mentioned that the soap opera audience contains men as well as women, the genre "soap opera" carries heavily feminine connotations in contemporary culture, as it has been marketed and addressed to women since its early twentieth-century radio-broadcast origins. Scholarship on soap opera viewing generally takes this for granted, depicting soap viewers as predominantly female, and interpreting the messages soap opera plots transmit to women. He also states that soap opera plots are highly structured over the long term, and in that sense, they provide a glimpse at the emotive implications of what it means to live "feminine" experience in contemporary U.S. culture.

John Fiske's *Television Culture* gives us a succinct list from Mary Ellen Brown which outlines what she considered the eight generic characteristics of soap operas in 1987. They are:

a) Serial form which resists narrative closure
b) Multiple characters and plots
c) Use of time which parallels actual time and implies that the action continues to take place whether we watch it or not
d) Abrupt segmentation between parts
e) Emphasis on dialogue, problem solving, and intimate conversation
f) Male characters who are “sensitive men”
g) Female characters who are often professional and otherwise powerful in the world outside the home
h) The home, or some other place which functions as a home, as the setting for the show

Early radio programs included some targeted to the female listener. Advertisers found success with how-to and self-help programs that could highlight the use of a food, cosmetic, or cleaning product in their generous doses of advice patter. By the early 1930s, household product advertisers successfully underwrote serialised dramas ("soap operas") in the daytime hours, and their assumptions that women were the primary listeners during those hours meant that narratives often revolved around central female characters and that segmentation of story and commercial must conform to the working woman’s activities as she listened.

Several of the popular radio soap operas made the transition to television, with many new ones created for the medium which would eventually eclipse radio in audience numbers. Daytime hours on television also included game and talk/advice shows, whose rhetorical strategies assumed women’s capacity as caretaker of the family's economic and emotional resources. The make-up of daytime programming on the broadcast networks has stayed remarkably the same over the years, although soap opera plots seem
to take into account the presence of male viewers (not only making male characters more important, but mixing action genre ingredients into the narratives (Gender and Television, n.d).

Many primetime dramas of the 1950s, 1960s, and early 1970s drew on the "masculine" emphasis of genres successful in other, prior media forms; novels, films, and radio. The western, the detective/police thriller, science fiction, and the medical drama featured controlling male characters, having adventures, braving danger, solving problems through reason and/or violence. Many critics have pointed to the goal-oriented nature of these generic forms, as opposed to the more open-ended, process-orientation of the serialized melodrama assumed to appeal to the female viewer. Yet the primetime dramas addressing the male audience have never precluded the development of characters and community (Mary Desjardins, n.d)

Dramas are one of the most important forms on television and in all media. Program such as soap operas, situation comedies, action-adventure shows and so forth can consider as drama. Their common characteristics are that they are all narrative fiction in which there is conflict of either serious or comic nature (Berger, 1992).

Arthur Asa Berger (1992) further suggested that a set of polar opposition that explain or explicate important elements in all program types and genres. These polar opposites can be labeled the objective and emotive. By objective is which that expresses the nature of reality as it is, or as we can know it. The “objective” is the world of things, the world of events that actually happen (as contrasted to fictions that involve make-believe events that never really happened), the world or rational. The emotive, on the other hand, involves the effective aspects of consciousness that is personal feelings, emotions, that sort of thing. This is what included in tv soap opera.

2.1.1 Typical consumer for tv soap.

Modleski cites statistics showing that 90 percent of soap viewers in the early 1980s were women, and she and other feminist theorists have shown how the multiple climaxes, the lack of closure, the constantly shifting points of view, the priority of dialogue over action, and the depictions of female power so common in daytime soaps mark them as a specifically feminine alternative to masculine narrative traditions in both high and low culture. While the audience for daytime soaps may be less literally "female" today than Modleski envisioned it as being fifteen years ago, viewers are engaged in a pursuit that is markedly feminine.

Research around audiences on soap opera span more than half a century, with early studies by Arheinm (1944) and Warner and Henry (1948) identifying the ‘typical’ consumer (of radio soaps) as working-class women with little education and or possibilities for advancement. However another study by Herzog (1944) the same period found that women across all class positions enjoyed soaps although, typically, the consumer was married, between the age of 18-35 years with a high school education and living in rural area (Ross, Nightingale, 2008). Herzog analysis of soap consumers was more ‘positive’ than other studies, suggesting that audience used soap opera to teach them about aspirational middle-class values and behaviors. Later studies by Compessi in 1980, which also adopted ‘uses and gratification’ approach, began to conceptualize soap audiences as being more educated than previous studies had suggested but still characterized them (women) as being socially lacking or isolated, watching soap for escape.

The study believed that audience shared experience and bad luck or outcome provides strong identifications between audience and character. Viewers’ thus used television’s narratives to comment upon and come to understand events in their lives, thereby providing themselves with a certain pleasure and perhaps relief (Wilson, 1993).
Developing ideas of tertiary text, where viewers create meaning from the text through the process of interpretation rather than passively consuming the superficial storyline, Brown (1994) sees that the viewers render the storylines and narratives meaningful by relating them to their own lives or the lives of people they know. And it is the retelling of episodes and discussion of plotlines with others which gives fans and additional pleasures.

Other studies relevance in this area, Morley (1986) study of ‘Family Television’ in which he seeks to understand how television is interpreted and used by different families with a specific focus on power and gender. From his qualitative interviews with 18 South London working-class families, two important conclusion draws here. First, drama and fiction features more in the preference of women than men for whom sport and news are more central. Second, while men deny talking about television, women use it as a conversation piece.

2.2 Uses and Gratification Theory

Rubin (1994) has argued that audience activity that the deliberate choice by user of media content in order to satisfy their need. This is the core concepts of the uses and gratifications approach. (James W. Tankard Jr, 2001).

The theory of uses and gratification was developed in 1960s and focused on the uses people made of media and the various gratifications the media provided for people. This perspective did not asked “what does media and the texts they carry do to people” but “why do people choose this or that kind of programming?” It is assumed that people choose this certain texts on the basis of needs they have and gratifications they seek, and thus are active participants in the communication process. In this case, it is not the medium but the genre that is of major significance. This is because media carry (though they also affect) texts (or kinds of programs in the case of radio and television) and texts within a genre tend to be formulaic. The genre is found in between the medium of transmission and the specific text and provides a way of seeing how texts might be used and the kinds of gratifications they provide (Berger, 1992).

The uses and gratification approach was first described in an article by Elihu Katz (1959) turned to question “What do people do with the media?” Blumler and McQuail (1969) used the uses and gratifications approach as the overall research strategy in a study of the 1964 general election in Britain. One of the central aims of their study was “to find out why people watch or avoid party broadcasts and both of them began the task of determining people’s motives for watching political broadcasts by using open-ended questions to interview a small sample. On the basis of responses to these questions, the respondents drew up lists of eight reasons for watching political broadcasts such that indicates that people used the political broadcasts as a source of information about political affairs and for reinforcement reason.

Mc Quail, Blumler and Brown (1972), based on their research in England further suggested the following categories:-

a) Diversion – escape from routine and problems; emotional release.

b) Personal relationship – social utility of information in conversation, substitute of media for companionship.

c) Personal identity or individual psychology – value reinforcement or reassurance; self-understanding; reality exploration, and so on.

d) Surveillance – information about things that might affect one or will help one to do or accomplish something.
While Katz, Gurevitch and Haas (1973) see the mass media as a means used by individuals to connect themselves with others (or disconnect). They listed 35 needs taken “from the (largely speculative) literature on the social and psychological functions of mass media’ and put them into three categories:

- **a) Cognitive needs** – acquiring information, knowledge and understanding.
- **b) Affective needs** – emotional, pleasurable, or aesthetic experience.
- **c) Personal integrative needs** – strengthening contacts with family, friends and so on.

The uses and gratification approach is used in this research in order to explain the gratification needs from the respondents by watching television soap and that somehow the gratification needs might be different according to individual.

An important study related to this research is by Herzog in 1944 who examined the functions of radio soap operas fulfilled for regular listeners. Some listeners found emotional release from their own problems. For others, listening provided escape, while a third group sought solutions to their own problem.

One recent development has been a movement away from conceptualizing audiences as active or passive to treating activity as a variable (Rubin, 1994). That is, sometimes media users are selective and rationale in their processing of media messages, but at other times they are using the media for relaxation or escapism. These differences in type of audience activity might also have consequences for media effects. For instance, cultivation effects of the type proposed by Gebner and his associates might be most likely to occur when audience members are viewing television for diversion and escapism (James W. Tankard, Jr, 2001).

Another new direction has been to focus on media use for satisfying particular needs. For instances, one possible use of mass media is to relieve loneliness. Canary and Spitzberg (1993) found evidence supporting this use, but the relationship depended on the extent of loneliness. They found the heaviest use of the media to relieve loneliness was in the situationally lonely, or those who were temporarily lonely.

**2.3 Cultivation Theory**

Cultivation theorists are best known for their study of television and viewers. Some studies have considered other mass media from this perspective, and have dealt with topics such as gender roles, age groups, ethnic groups and political attitudes. A study of American college students found that heavy soap opera viewers were more likely than light viewers to over-estimate the number of real-life married people who had affairs or who had been divorced and the number of women who had abortions (Dominick, 1990).

Cultivation Theory was developed to explain the effects of television viewing on people’s perceptions, attitude and values. The theory came out of a long-term, extensive program of research by George Gebner and his colleagues at the Annenberg School of Communication at the University of Pennsylvania. Cultivation researchers have shown that the differences between heavy and light television viewers show up even across a number of other important variables, including age, education, news reading, and gender (Gebner and Gross, 1976a). That is, these researchers realized that the relationship between television viewing and different views of the world could be actually caused by other variables, and they attempt to control other variables.

Gebner received criticisms from Paul Hirsch and other researcher and in response to their criticism, Gebner and his associates revised cultivation theory by adding two additional concepts; mainstreaming and reasonance.
These concepts take account of the fact that heavy television viewing leads to a convergence of outlooks across groups. For instance, heavy television viewer of low-income and high-income categories share the view that fear of crime is a very serious personal problem. Light viewers in the two categories however, do not share the same view. The light viewers who are low in income tend to agree with the heavy viewers in both categories that fear of crime is a problem, while the light viewers who are high in income tend not to agree that fear of crime is a problem. Resonance occurs when the cultivation effect is boosted for certain group of the population. For instance, heavy viewers both males and females are more likely than light viewers to agree that fear of crime is a serious problem. But the group that agree the most strongly is females who are heavy viewers, because their particular vulnerability to crime is said to “resonate” with the portrait of a high-crime world presented on television.

The addition of mainstreaming and resonance to cultivation theory is a substantial modification of a theory. The theory no longer claims uniform, across-the-board effects of television on all heavy viewers. It now claims that television interacts with other variables in ways such television viewing will have strong effects on some subgroups of persons and not on others.

Rubin, Perse, and Taylor (1988) cast further doubt on cultivation as a general, across-the-board effect due to heavy, ritualistic television viewing. In their survey of viewers, they found effects of television viewing on perceptions of social reality, but the effects were program-specific. That is, viewers of daytime serials tended to score lower in perception of altruism and trust in others; viewers of evening dramas (which often deal with control of others by powerful characters) tended to have lower feelings of political efficacy; and viewers of action and adventure shows expressed more feelings of concern about their own safety. They also found that age, gender, and socioeconomic status, viewing intention (planning to watch television), and perceived realism (of television content) were better predictors of faith in others than television exposure. The results provide some evidence that viewers actively and differentially evaluate television content, or, to put it another way, that the television audience is an active one.

3.0 Research Methodology

3.1 Sample and data collection method

A face to face survey was distributed to 400 respondents who volunteered to participate in this research. To avoid lack of honesty and accuracy in terms of demographic profile of respondents, researcher has to distribute the survey to whom researcher only know the person. Therefore, it is quite time consuming for the researcher to collect the data of the survey to ensure accurate audience profile and sample being taken and to understand audience consumption pattern and habits when they watch soap or drama. Prior to this research, 30 samples being taken through face to face survey for some validation of the questions required in this research. Sample must at least watched TV soap opera or drama within the previous weeks ago. This is to ensure the samples can recall at least some of the contents in the TV soap. This type of logic of sampling called purposive or judgmental sampling is appropriate but samples can comprises of different races, religion and nationality. Even though that the findings cannot represents any meaningful population, the test run might effectively uncover any peculiar defects in the questionnaires. The equal number of respondents in both genders, male and female is required as this research intended to see how watching soap difference between gender.

The respondents were asked based on any television soap opera that they watched in some previous week or recently and they are required to fill up 50 questions in the survey. The questions were divided into three categories that are section A for demographic data, Section B for attitude and watching behaviour data and Section C for perception towards some roles of male and female in the tv soap content.
4.0 Finding & Discussion

4.1 The Demographics Analysis.

The respondent behavioural analysis as below:

Table 1.1: Gender and ages of samples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age 20 – 30 years old</th>
<th>Age 31-40 years old</th>
<th>Total number of respondent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total respondent</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.1 showed the ages for both gender; male and female audience of TV soap. The same amount is taken for both gender and age to avoid bias and to see the difference of both age and gender towards the watching pattern of TV soap.

It is important to note that majority of TV soap audience is in range group of 20-30 years and they are females while their social status varies from students and unemployed, non-professional worker and professional worker with at least degree holder in any disciplines.

Table 1.2: Total number of respondent according to occupation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Total number of respondent</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed and students</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional/ Academic staff</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-professional and non-academic staff</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.2 can described the socio-economic income and education level of respondents. Student and non-academic staff are respondent who gained a degree certificate level and below and they can be considered as low income earner. The surveyed purposely done among non-academic staff who worked as a clerical staff only to measure the different level of social status among respondent.

They are volunteered sample who watched any TV soap opera whether local or international TV soap. Finding shows that student is the highest percentage in group who watched TV soap opera consists of 82% from male respondent and 68% from the female respondent.
Table 1.3 Number of respondents according to race.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Malay</th>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>Indian</th>
<th>Others (non-Malaysian)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

APU is an international university located at Bukit Jalil with almost 80 percent of the students are from international while 100% of academic staff who are lecturers is Malaysian with different races and non-academic staff is all Malaysian. However, based on the research sample taken, 72% of male and 62% of female respondents are Malaysian.

In final questionnaire, the sample must identify any title of TV soap opera that they watched regardless of the language of the TV soap. In the findings, various TV soap from different countries were put on the list as the respondents come from a different background of nationality, races and religion especially for students that are almost 80% came from the Middle-East of Asia and West of Asia and most of them only watched soap which is mainly produced by their origins country. However, some respondents also mentioned watching an international TV soap that produced by Hollywood and Latinos such as *Gossip Girls, Bold and Beautiful, La Usupadura* and *Maria Mercedes* as these are the type of TV soap which are famous and also broadcasted in their country.

4.2 The Behavioural Analysis.

According to the findings from three groups of respondent; student and unemployed, non-professional/non-academic staff and professional worker/academic staff, they were first questioned about what factors makes them choose to watch the tv soap. Three main answers were distributed in the questions that are the storyline, the talent and other factors that required them to specify.

The respondents were asked to choose among three reasons why they tuned in to TV soap. The highest reason for both genders to tune in to TV soap is because of entertainment that consists of 67% of total respondent which is 134 male respondents and 153 female respondents from any group of occupational status. Boredom shows as a reason for tuned in for 23% of total respondent, with 25 males and 21 females. Other reasons have been specified by the respondent such as motivated by the character development and the storyline.
The reason for entertainment and boredom cannot be mixed as entertainment can be factors like enjoying the storyline, enjoying the talent or music in the TV soap, while boredom can be reason like escape from the routine, hobby or time-filler for an individual.

They were also asked about the frequencies of watching TV soap and time that they usually watched TV soap such as during “weekdays”, “weekend” or “No specific time and day”. 6% of respondent, who is male watched TV soap during weekdays while female consist of 11%. 11% of male respondent watched TV soap during weekend while female reaches the lowest percentage during weekend, 8%. However, both male and female have determine the highest percentage, 32% and 31% each for male and female for ‘no specific day and time’ of watching TV soap. It shows that both genders are tied with some other things or activities other than watching soap due to their schedule as a student and employee.

To see detail into their hours spent on watching TV soap, four types of answer were distributed. First choice is if they spend less than two hours of watching TV soap, once in a week. Second choice is if they spend more than two hours, once in a week. Third choice is if they spend more than two hours but more than one time in a week, while the final choice is if they spend more than two hours, more than one time in a week. Among the four choices, only if the respondents choose first choice that they can be considered as a light viewer of TV soap. The second, third and final choice were regarded as a heavy viewer of TV soap. These groups of respondent might have tendencies to watch several kind of TV soap in a week. Throughout the finding, 34% percent of total respondent consist of female who watched less than two hours, one time in a week while male respondent consist of 26%. Therefore, total number of respondent who watched less than two hours of TV soap once in a week is 240 or 60%.

The finding shows that the members of APU are not the heavy viewers of TV soap as they only tune in to TV to watch the particular TV soap opera once in a week with less than two hours. It shows that they might watch only one TV soap that they really likes or otherwise they should do other activity such as surfing internet, engaged in sports or other social activities or perhaps watching other type of genre of TV programmes. Here, perhaps to conclude that TV soap is not popular genre among APU community.

In order to understand factors influence the respondent to watched soap, they were asked whether they watched the TV soap alone or not. Male respondent also scores 5% higher than female respondent about watching the TV soap alone. That would mean that the male respondent watched the tv soap because they watch it for their own reason such as for entertainment or boredom and did not influenced by other social factors to sit together in a couch to watch the TV soap such as family, friends or partner, or in other words that they were ‘force to see’ certain kind of TV soap by these third person.

It is important to understand the post broadcast behaviour of TV soap among respondents. The respondents were tested whether they are true fan of a particular soap and enable further understanding towards engagement of audience with the TV soap. This can be done by asking the respondent whether they will find friends of anybody to discuss about the soap such as storyline and talent. It can measure their interest towards the soap and sometimes to build their “own community” of the soap. They were also been asked whether they will follow up any activities regarding TV soap such as promotion or concert.

At the first place, both genders were asked whether they follow up any events or read material related to the TV soap that they watched. Only 12% of respondent who is male agree that they actually follow any events related to the soap while female respondent scores higher than the male respondent with 16%. As APU members are considered as light viewer of TV soap regardless of their gender, they also scored higher as 26% of male respondent and 23% of female respondent did not follow up with any events related to the TV soap. However, according to gender, female respondent tend to follow up the activities related to TV soap even though the percentage for male’s group are more respondent who are to be categorised as a heavy viewer of TV soap is higher.
In the findings, the female respondent who scores higher in ‘follow up events related to TV soap’ also scores higher than male respondent in finding friends to talk about the TV soap. It would mean that the female respondents at APU have a tendency towards the post broadcast behaviour in TV soap. 30% of female respondents said that they will talk about the TV soap with their friends while only 16% of male respondent do.

4.3 Perception in the Role of Male and Female in TV Soap Content.

In section C, the respondents were asked several questions relating to their perception of roles of male and female in the TV soap they have watched. The first question to ask is whether they agree with the statement of “woman usually dominates the scene in TV soap”. Finding states that 36% of respondent who is female say ‘yes’ that woman usually dominates the scene in TV soap while 26% male agree on this. Male respondents at the other hand did not agree that male usually play a secondary role in the character of TV soap at the next question. It shows that male respondent feels that male also play a primary role or should dominate the scene in TV soap. These two questions to show a direct response of these two genders in the role playing in the TV soap. Male respondents did not agree that female dominates the scenes in the TV soap programme, they also did not agree that male play a secondary role in the TV soap. The detail of findings shows at the below graph.

The respondent must be able to give their perceptions toward the character played in the tv soap that they watched. They were asked about a hero, heroin, villain or antagonist and protagonist character found in the TV soap.

At the other hand, the respondents were asked whether they are satisfied in the storyline and the character development in the TV soap that they watched. It is also important to see here that if they were satisfied in the content and characters in the TV soap, these feelings could influence their watching behaviour that is either to keep on tuning watching it or perhaps not to.

In my point of view, the factors lead to the female respondent to talk about the TV soap was mainly because of their dissatisfaction of the storyline and the character development of the TV soap as the female respondent scores higher than the male respondent for this question. In the findings, male respondent seems not to be so critical in thinking about their satisfaction level for both storyline and the character development or character played in the TV soap and the male respondent also not taken an active role to talk about the TV soap among their friends. It could be that they are not really interested about the TV soap that they are watching or perhaps they are lack in emotional release for the soap they watched. Findings also stated that less percentage of male respondent who actually agree that the content of TV soap can help them to deal with the problem in their real life. Very least of 8% from total respondent drawn from female who are not sure whether the content in the TV soap can actually help them to deal with problem in their real life. The result of findings shows as below.

The final findings that is important here is the emotional realism that the respondent gained from watching the TV soap. Most of male and female respondent agree that even though that the TV soap provides emotional realism, but they are aware that the TV soap is just for entertainment. They believed the TV soap is a planned program for its intended audience. Very least of respondent did not aware of it and not sure of the situation that the TV soap created for entertainment, but they believed that the storyline of TV soap contains emotional realism to provide an audience with a lesson and education.

5 .Conclusion and Recommendations

It is important to note that this paper is only focused on the study among 400 respondents with equal number of male and female respondent in APU, as a private academic institution in Malaysia. The results even though cannot be generalised to a large number of population as it is only specific to one
community and academic institution, however this research is very significant to understand the pattern of watching behaviour among males and females audience and it’s just supported previous research study about TV soap opera audience. Majority of TV soap are still female audience however they are falls under category of light viewers of TV soap. Previous research about TV soap opera make a tremendous findings about the viewer of TV soap opera that is female with low to middle class level, majority are housewives with age between 18 – 35 years is now see the changing in trend where these group of people spend more time to other activities rather than becoming heavy viewers of TV soap. Findings from results shows that respondents in this study who are young adults are the light viewers of TV soap with 63% of total respondent doesn’t have specific time and day to watch TV soap programmes, 51% of total respondent does not follow any events related to the TV soap such as concert or fan club activities. The respondents are also seeks to gratify their affective needs such as for emotional, pleasurable, or aesthetic experience. The respondents, regardless of their gender are aware that even though TV soap opera provides emotional realism but it is for entertainment but they have overestimated the perceptions towards male-female domination in TV soap scene that TV soap is dominates by the female and that the female character in TV soap is more outstanding than the male character. It is noted that 60% of the total respondent taken in APU are light viewers of TV soap which is female higher of 8% than male and that they have high perception towards female domination in the TV soap. It was interesting in the findings that each gender of male and female has a tendency to say that their own gender play important role or dominates the scene in the TV soap. For example, female respondents have a higher percentage of saying that the female talent dominates the scene in the soap while male respondent has a higher percentage than female to disagree that the male play a secondary role in TV soap. Therefore it can be said that gender play an important role in giving out a perception about the gender issue in research. It is important to note that the research topic is general and open to any kind of TV soap opera that the respondent has been watched or is currently watching, therefore the perception of certain statement about TV soap may vary from different kind of races, religion and nationality of the respondent. As this can be the limitation of the research, it is hope that in the future research that the study can focus at only one type of TV soap such as previous study of Dallas (1985) and The Young and Restless (1995) in qualitative study so that the findings have in detail analysis of an individual interpretation towards the TV soap. However because of the time constraint, this research only managed to look at the difference of gender and consumption behavior and perception towards TV soap at only one institution and community.

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