

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

In the present society, media technology has rapidly paved its way to serve consumers' needs and successfully played a crucial role in people's lives. People now enjoyably consume several kinds of media, such as television, radio, newspapers, books, magazines, computer games, Internet, etc. for various purposes. Among the consumers of all ages, teenagers or adolescents, which are the young people in the transitional age filled with curiosity, needs, and changes in emotional development, are easily attached to and affected by media reception and its influences.

In Thailand, even though the emergence of electronic technology like Internet or video games has been successfully welcomed among teenagers, these young people still read. Besides comic books, another popular type of recreational printed media that they pay much of their interests in are teen novel books. Back in 2004, a fantasy-sci-fi novel for teens called "The White Road" by a Thai teenage writer whose pen name is "Dr. Pop" made its first opening with a big success by attracting many teenage readers with more than 70,000 books published within a short period ("เดอะไวท์โรด", 2547). The readers enjoyed and were fascinated with the adventure story that opened their imagination. As a result, "The White Road" has been consecutively written in many episodes to serve the readers' needs and demands. Furthermore, the introduction of Korean romance teen novels, of which the contents portray love and relationship with people of the opposite sex, has phenomenally created popularity in teen novels among teenagers, especially girls. Since then a lot of publishers, such as Jamsai Publishing, Sataporn Books Publishing, 1168 Publishing, etc., have started releasing Korean novel books into the market, and many female teenage readers ensure that they own them. Consequently, with the rise of popularity in teen novel books, various content types of teen books are made available to match the readers' interests. They are, for example, action, adventure, fantasy, romance, science, investigation, and so on.

This raises a question why teen novel books have become popular among Thai teenagers. The answers can lie in that teenagers look for books that do not only provide the readers with entertainment, but that also contain characters, settings, plots and conflicts resembling or reflecting their own lives and that can take them away from the unpleasant reality (Giblin, 1982, as cited in Parrish and Atwood, 1984, p. 7). Besides, the basic element that is prevalent in teen novel books of many content types is about love, which is the basic need of man – to love and to be loved. Many teen novel books nowadays respond to these mentioned needs.

However, as a kind of printed media that has a vital influence on teenagers' reading interests and reading habits, it is questionable if reading teen novel books causes any effects to the readers. A relevant International research by Raymond A. Mar and his colleagues (2006) studied the association between fiction reading and social understanding and awareness. The study revealed the positive result that reading fiction helped the readers develop their social ability and empathy. The readers tended to understand other people better because most of the fictitious stories reflected people's everyday life.

Relatively, although not focusing on teen books in particular, teenage students who were chosen as reading ambassadors of Sataporn Books Publishing expressed their opinions towards the benefits of novel reading in general. Charaskorn Khongthai, a student of Satriwithaya 2 School, stated that she learned more experiences of life through reading novels. When encountering problems, she would make better decisions to cope with them. Thitiwat Chaikimanon, a student of Thepsirin School, said that reading novels helped him memorize the contents of textbooks better and read the books at a faster speed. Lastly, Ketkaew Boonnakkha, a student of Rajabhat Suansunandha Demonstration School, insisted that reading novels provided her with enjoyment and emotional relief (สาคี, 2550).

Nevertheless, the negative effects have not been concretely analyzed yet, so it is interesting to find out if teen novel book reading behavior will affect different aspects of the lives of teenage readers. Therefore, this research aims to discover what teen novel book reading behaviors are among teenage readers in Bangkok Metropolis, such as how often they read each week, how many hours they read each time, what types of

teen novel books they like and so on as well as investigating what the effects – both positive and negative – of teen novel book reading behaviors on the teenage readers are. As a result, the research's findings can be useful for both readers and parents and for future study.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

What are the teen novel book reading behaviors and the effects of teen novel book reading behaviors on different aspects of the lives of teenage readers in Bangkok Metropolis?

1.2.1 What are the behaviors of teenage readers in Bangkok Metropolis in reading teen novel books?

1.2.2 What are the reasons that influence the teenage readers to read teen novel books?

1.2.3 What are the effects of teen novel book reading behaviors on different aspects of the lives of teenage readers?

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this study are as follows:

1.3.1 Main Objective:

To reveal the teen novel book reading behaviors and the effects of teen novel book reading behaviors on different aspects of the lives of teenage readers in Bangkok Metropolis.

1.3.2 Sub-Objectives:

1.3.2.1 To study the behaviors of teenage readers in Bangkok Metropolis in reading teen novel books.

1.3.2.2 To explore the reasons that influence teenage readers to read teen novel books.

1.3.2.3 To find out the effects of teen novel book reading behaviors on different aspects of the lives of teenage readers.

1.4 DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

Definitions of the terms of this study are as follows:

1.4.1 **Teenagers** mean both male and female readers in Bangkok Metropolis, aged between 12 and 18 and studying at secondary school level or high school level. Moreover, these teenagers must read teen novel books.

1.4.2 **Teen novel book** refers to a kind of printed media that portrays a genre of fiction that is written, published for, or marketed for teenagers, roughly between the ages of 12 and 18.

1.4.3 **Types of teen novel books** include action, adventure, fantasy, history, investigation/suspense, mystery, romance and science.

1.4.4 **Teen novel reading behaviors** include types of teen novel books often read, frequency of teen novel books read within a week and duration of time spent on reading teen novel books each time.

1.4.5 **Effects of teen novel book reading behaviors** include both positive and negative effects on the teenage readers' lives in terms of health, economy, education, relationship with family, and relationship with friends.

1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This research studies the teen novel book reading behavior and its effects on teenage readers aged between 12 and 18 and studying at secondary school level or high school level at three schools, each of which is located in Bangkoknoi district, Phayathai district, and Chatuchak district. The sample of this study consisted of 180 students, 60 of which were from each school.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The usefulness of this study is to reveal the behavior of teenage readers in Bangkok Metropolis in reading teen novel books and also the effects of teen novel book reading behavior on different aspects of life, i.e. health, economy, education, relationship with family, and relationship with friends. These findings can be beneficial to both parents and future readers. To parents, especially those whose

children read teen novel books, they will know both the reading behavior and the effects so that they can understand and support their children in teen novel book reading as another optimistic recreational activity in case the findings are positive. In contrast, if the effects are negative, the parents will get more involved in closely observing and giving their children advice on ways to balance their time for teen novel book reading. To future readers, they will learn and be aware of their teen novel book reading habits and, later, be able to cope with the negative effects of teen novel book reading behavior that may occur.

Apart from the benefits on parents and future readers, school librarians can take the findings of this study into consideration whether teen novel books are appropriate and worthwhile type of reading material to be put in libraries.

1.7 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

The study of “Teen Novel Book Reading Behavior and Its Effects on Teenage Readers in Bangkok Metropolis” is divided into five chapters. The first chapter is an introduction which consists of background, the statement of the problem, the objectives of the study, the definitions of terms, the scope of the study, the significance of the study, and the organization of the study. The second chapter provides a review of the literature and previous similar research. The third chapter covers the research methodology regarding subjects of the study, materials used in this study for data collection, procedures and data analysis. The fourth chapter reveals the results of the study. Finally, the last chapter presents summary of the study, summary of the findings, discussion, conclusions, and recommendations for further research.