

A Study on the Viewing Behavior of Malaysian Chinese Watching Taiwan Tzu Chi Da Ai TV

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Abstract: This study explores the relationship between Buddhist Compassion Relief Tzu Chi Foundation's Da Ai TV and Tzu Chi Malaysian Members. This study used the interview method to collect information from 15 interviewees. By exploring the audience's viewing motivation and satisfaction, this study finds that the reasons for watching Da Ai TV are that the content of the programs is considered as "Positive," "Inspiring," and "Educational." The satisfaction of receiving Da Ai TV is "Needs for Spiritual Growth," "Improvement of Interpersonal Relationships," and "Practice of Tzu Chi Activities." By investigating the cultural proximity, this study finds that "Closeness" and "Familiarity" in the language and "Traditional Gender Roles" in Confucianism are in line with the experience of the audiences. The "Filial Piety" won the audiences' approval and was considered educational. The Buddhist background of Da Ai TV makes it easy for Malaysian Chinese audiences to learn Buddhism by watching the programs.

Keywords: Audience research, cultural proximity, Malaysian Chinese, Tzu Chi Foundation, TV viewing behavior

1. Introduction

According to Index Mundi (2021), the total population of Malaysia is 33,519,406. Malays and other indigenous peoples accounted for 62%, more than 20 million people in Malaysia. Chinese accounted for 21%, about 7 million people; Indians are 6%, and non-citizens accounted for 10%. As the second-largest ethnic group in Malaysia, the Chinese immigrants can be traced back to 1405. Residents from the coastal areas of mainland China came to the Malay Peninsula with Zheng He's voyage to Southeast Asia. After Malaysia's independence in 1957, the Chinese people's idea of "returning to the roots" gradually changed to "Settle down in Malaysia" (Wong, 2015). After World War II, nationalism and racial difference policies affected the relationship between different ethnic groups in Malaysia (Tan, 2015). However, with a multi-ethnic society, the various ethnic groups have only been interacting in the commercial market. There are very few inter-ethnic marriages, and they each hold different lifestyles (Kim, 2014; Purcell, 1948).

In Malaysia, nationality and traditional culture cannot be separated from the influence of religion. According to a survey conducted by the Malaysian Ministry of Statistics (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2011), Buddhism is the main religion of the Chinese people, accounting for 83.56%, followed by Christianity at 11.05%, and folk beliefs that integrate Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism account for 3.41%. According to the same statistics as above, Malay people believe in Islam, 100% (p. 82), while the followers of Hinduism are mainly of Indian origin. The religions of different ethnic groups are distinct. This is also reflected in TV viewing behavior.

According to a survey conducted by Malaysia's leading media group (Media Prima Berhad, 2011), 8 TV (21.3%), NTV 7 (19.1%), and Astro's TV channels (13.5%) are the favorite TV channels of Malaysian Chinese. In addition to the broadcast video channels TV 2, NTV 7, 8 TV channels, Astro satellite TV channels also provide Malaysian Chinese with Chinese series and movies from mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. On the other hand, according to a survey on the ratings of TV channels in different languages in Malaysia, the percentage of Chinese audiences who watched the Malay-language channel TV 9 is almost 0% (Media Prima Berhad, 2015).

Buddhist Compassion Relief Tzu Chi Foundation, known for short as the Tzu Chi Foundation, is a Taiwanese international humanitarian and non-governmental organization. Master Cheng Yen founded the Tzu Chi Foundation in 1966 (Tzu Chi Foundation, 2019). The foundation has members and volunteers in 50 countries, with 502 offices worldwide (Tzu Chi Foundation, 2014). In 1998, Tzu Chi's Da Ai TV station officially started broadcasting, disseminating Master Cheng Yen's teaching and the life stories of Tzu Chi members. In 1999 it broadcasted worldwide via satellite. Now, Da Ai Channel is developing towards a full range of communication media. In addition to radio and television, it also includes various emerging platforms such as websites, social media, podcasts, and digital interactions (Tzu Chi Culture and Communication Foundation, 2021). Although Da Ai TV is a TV channel with a Buddhism background, the range of programs is diverse. There are more educational programs, documentaries, and news programs than religious programs. It also includes international programs such as "Tzu Chi Malaysia," "Indonesia Big Love Weekly," "Da Ai Headlines," and "Tzu Chi This Week."

Although the local TV in Malaysia has relatively no pornographic content, the government is concerned that the Malay ethnic group who believe in Islam will be affected by other religions. Therefore, the dissemination of religious information is strictly controlled (Human Rights and Labor, 2013). However, Da Ai TV is from Taiwan and is a non-profit TV station with a Buddhism background that conforms to the Buddhist beliefs of most Chinese Malaysians. In 2003, the installation of the Da Ai TV station in Malacca was not widespread, and there were very few people watching it (Lu & Chung, 2018). In 2008, Tzu Chi Malaysia Branch promoted a one-time paid set-top box installation service which allowed audiences to watch all Da Ai TV programs simultaneously with the audiences in Taiwan (Zou, 2008). In 2013, the official application of Da Ai TV Station was launched, and from then on, Da Ai TV

Station could be watched on mobile phones or tablets via the Internet (Chang & Li, 2013). Now, the audiences worldwide could watch Da Ai TV programs through the Da Ai official website, the Da Ai TV App, YouTube, and online live broadcasts.

According to the Tzu Chi Monthly Magazine published by the Tzu Chi Foundation in 2016, Malaysia, with a Chinese population of less than 7 million, has more than 1.2 million Tzu Chi members (Yeh, 2016). Many Tzu Chi members in Malaysia entered the Tzu Chi Organization because they watched the Da Ai Channel (Yeh, 2017). This research aims to explore the audience behavior of Malaysian Tzu Chi members watching Da Ai TV Programs.

2. Literature Review

Cultural proximity is a concept proposed by Straubhaar (1991). It is widely used to study intercultural media, and it is believed that cultural factors are significant in receiving information. When the foreign cultural content in the media is similar to the local one, it will be easier for the audiences to understand the content or the values presented by the media and share the meaning. Therefore, the cultural proximity proposed by Straubhaar can explain why audiences prefer culture or media context that is similar to their own culture (Ksiazek & Webster, 2008).

The concept of cultural proximity recognizes the audience's initiative in selecting media and enriches the audience's interpretation of culture (Straubhaar, 2000). The audience can actively choose media and interpret the meanings of media content by themselves. The audience will prefer to choose media content similar to their cultural background from cultural proximity. A study also found that if the language presented in the media content is familiar to the audience, it will increase the program's viewership (Teo, 2012). If the cultural proximity of the media content is higher, the audience's acceptance will be higher. The cultural values or language of the higher proximity is the main reason why cross-cultural audiences are willing to receive multi-national TV programs (Iwabuchi, 2002; Hou, Tsai & Chen 2011). Therefore, if the quality of domestic TV programs is better than the foreign TV programs, the audience will prioritize domestic TV programs because the language, morals, and values presented by domestic TV programs are familiar to the audiences. Otherwise, they will choose foreign TV programs that are more similar to their own culture (Lee, 2007).

Lee and Ho (2002) found that Taiwanese audiences enjoy Japanese TV dramas because they have similar values: Confucianism. Tsai analyzed 18 Korean dramas with the theory of cultural proximity and found that the Korean dramas with higher ratings in Taiwan have more Confucianism concepts, which value family and society, sacrifice and dedication, and proper behavior (Tsai, 2006). Li and Li adopted the cultural proximity perspective to examine the relationship between the cultural values presented in Taiwan's Idol dramas and their popularity among Taiwanese and Asian audiences. The results show that cultural values do affect the ratings of Idol dramas. In particular, Confucianism is popular with Asian audiences (Li & Li, 2011). Lee and Wang (1995) studied the development of satellite TV and policy

changes in Asian countries. They also found that the Asia-Pacific media market can be classified by cultural similarity: Confucianism profoundly influences areas including Mainland China, Taiwan, Japan, South Korea, North Korea, and Singapore. The other area is India, where most people believe in Hinduism. The third is the Islamic culture, including Pakistan, Indonesia, Bangladesh, and Malaysia. And the last are the countries that use English as their primary language, like Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines (p. 146).

Confucianism has influenced universal values in East Asia. These values are even partly integrated with Buddhism, and they have become the norms or standards to judge one's behavior (Wen, 1989). Therefore, although the Malaysian Chinese live in a country that prioritizes Malay and Islamic culture, and has experienced the British colonial period, with some Chinese raised in the English education system, their values are still fundamentally tied to Confucianism. In addition, most Malaysian Chinese still use the Chinese language as their mother tongue, and more than 80% believe in Buddhism.

The distance between Taiwan and Malaysia is not close in terms of geographical location; however, the core values of Chinese culture are based on the traditional concept of Confucianism and have a commonality in daily events, social interaction, and festival celebrations. The mainstream in Malaysia is Malay and Islamic culture. Under these social conditions, it is difficult for the Malaysian Chinese to accept Malaysian media content. The Malaysian Chinese are proficient in the Chinese language, and they believe in Buddhism as the majority. Tzu Chi Foundation is from Taiwan but well accepted among Malaysian Chinese and has gathered many members there. Tzu Chi's Da Ai TV broadcasts Chinese language programs with Confucian culture and Buddhist background. This study aims to explore the viewing motivation and satisfaction among the Tzu Chi members and investigate the cultural factors in the programs of Da Ai TV that affect the viewing behavior of audiences in Malaysia.

3. Research Methods

In Taiwan, the most common research on the viewing ratings of religious TV channels is quantitative questionnaire surveys. Although this research approach helps us understand the phenomenon and propose explanations, inevitably, the experience and meanings of the cases cannot be presented. Wimmer and Dominick (2000) proposed that in-depth interviews can obtain detailed information through accurate answers from interviewees. Wang (1990) also pointed out that the advantages of in-depth interviews are that it is easy to get complete details and have a deeper understanding of the issues. Although it can sometimes be challenging to understand, well-curated interview methods can provide a rich set of data (Qu & Dumay, 2011). In addition, the individual interviews were more likely to raise socially sensitive discussion topics than the focus groups (Kaplowitz, 2000). Especially ethnic culture, religious beliefs, and other related issues in particular are very sensitive in Malaysia. Therefore, this research uses the individual in-depth interview method to explore the interviewees'

experiences and feelings on viewing Da Ai TV to understand the relationship between the Tzu Chi members in Malaysia and the Tzu Chi Da Ai TV in Taiwan.

The interview outlines for this study first asked the interviewees about their viewing motivation and satisfaction toward Da Ai TV. Secondly, this study used the concepts of cultural proximity, including factors of language, culture, and religion, to examine how Malaysian Tzu Chi audiences recognized these three factors.

This research used the snowball sampling method; the interviewees were obtained through the introduction of Malaysian Tzu Chi members. The target audiences are people who have installed and watched Da Ai TV programs for at least three years or more, and by the legal age of majority in Malaysia are all 21 years of age or above.

The interviews were conducted in Malaysia in May 2016. After that, the interview data was transcribed verbatim, and the data was confirmed with the interviewees before being analyzed. There are 15 interviewees in this study, including eight women and seven men, all aged between 30 and 69 years old. The 15 interviewees have different religious beliefs. Amongst them, one believes in traditional Chinese religion, one believes in Taoism, and the rest of the interviewees believe in Buddhism. Three interviewees were initially Buddhists, and the rest became Buddhists after joining Tzu Chi.

According to ancestors' origin, three interviewees are Teochew people, two Hainanese, six Fujianese, three Hakka, and one Cantonese. Different interviewees are familiar with different languages. All 15 interviewees are good at using Mandarin and their native dialects. However, the familiarity of Malay, English or other dialects varies from person to person. Some interviewees can speak Malay, English, or their local dialects, but some cannot. In addition, the most-watched program selected by the interviewees is "Da Ai Drama," followed by "Life Wisdom," "Wisdom at Dawn," and "Da Ai News." The "Da Ai Drama" is a TV series adapted from the real-life stories of Tzu Chi members. "Life Wisdom" and "Wisdom at Dawn" are both spiritual programs by Dharma Master Cheng Yen.

The basic demographic information of each interviewee is shown in Table 1. All interview materials were recorded after obtaining the interviewees' consent and presented in the research results in an anonymous form.

Table1. Information of Each Interviewee

ID	Age	Sex	Viewing years	Ancestors' origin	Familiar dialects	Favorite programs
A	68	F	9	Teochew	Hokkien, Teochew	Da Ai Drama, Life Wisdom
B	64	F	5	Cantonese	Cantonese	Da Ai News
C	50	F	9	Hainanese	Cantonese, Hainanese, Hokkien, Teochew	Daily Journal of Dharma Master Cheng Yen, Life Wisdom, Yin Yuan Friends
D	47	F	5	Fujianese	Hokkien	Da Ai Drama, Life Wisdom
E	51	F	7.5	Fujianese	Hokkien	Da Ai Drama

F	60	F	11	Hakka	Hakka, Hokkien	Da Ai News, Wisdom at Dawn
G	40	F	8	Teochew	Hokkien, Teochew	Da Ai Drama
H	42	F	8.5	Fujianese	Cantonese, Hokkien	Da Ai Drama, Life Wisdom
I	53	M	5	Fujianese	Hokkien	Da Ai Drama
J	45	M	9.5	Hakka	Cantonese, Ha Teochew	Da Ai Drama, Yin Yuan Friends
K	30	M	4.5	Fujianese	Hokkien	Wisdom at Dawn
L	54	M	5.5	Hainanese	Hainanese	Da Ai Drama, Da Ai News
M	67	M	8.5	Teochew	Cantonese, Teoc Hokkien	Da Ai Drama, Daily Journal of Dha Master Cheng Yen
N	53	M	--	Hakka	Hakka	Life Wisdom, Wisdom at Dawn
O	69	M	6.5	Fujianese	Hokkien, Teochew	Da Ai Drama

4. Analysis

In this study, we interviewed 15 Tzu Chi members in Malaysia about their viewing experience of Da Ai TV programs. After the interview, according to the purpose of the study, the data was first grouped into two categories, “Viewing Motivation and Satisfaction” and “Cultural Proximity.” Moreover, under the “Cultural Proximity,” the data was further divided into three subcategories: “Language,” “Confucianism,” and “Religious belief.” After categorizing, the data from different interviewees were classified according to similarities, and then representative cases were selected from these similar experiences and presented below.

4.1 Viewing Motivation and Satisfaction

Firstly, what kind of feelings do the interviewees experience that show their viewing motivation?

I think the media's purpose is to report the truth and lead people to the right path. The so-called stopping evil and promoting good is to report good things, not to convey bad things. Most Malaysian media report bad news, such as political party quarrels, gossip privacy, car accidents, etc. We never watch other drama series. Those series are written in scripts to lead you to chase after them, not like Da Ai Drama which provides true stories. (M)

Interviewee M is dissatisfied with politicians arguing on local TV in Malaysia. He believes that news reports should lead society in a positive direction. He hates other TV series' false and commercialized content, so he only watches Da Ai Drama.

I often tell others that Da Ai TV is organic. It has no pollution and no violence. It talks a lot about values and morals. People now focus on excitement and perception. For most audiences, perhaps it's too boring and dull. But for me, I prefer this kind of drama, which is purer and more positive, making me feel comfortable. (G)

Whether it's a local TV station or other TV stations, they narrowed your knowledge of the world. But Da Ai TV improves your understanding of the world, which is impossible from commercial TV channels. For example, the Syrian refugee issues, as this is a sensitive topic here. But when watching the news, which is from Hong Kong or Taiwan, the reports are excessively exaggerated. But Da Ai TV reports what we should do to help the incident after it has happened. I think it is pretty different. (J)

Similarly, interviewees G and J also believe that Da Ai TV provides better quality programs. The reporting perspective of Da Ai News can enhance audiences' vision and help make the world better. It can be considered that the interviewee prefers Da Ai TV because of the feeling of "Positivity" in the TV programs.

The content of the programs provided by Da Ai TV is diversified, but because of its religious TV background, there are many religious-spiritual programs amongst them. This study found that many interviewees would seek inspiration from the Da Ai TV program to face difficulties.

There is a Tzu Chi sister who was also suffering from cancer. Da Ai TV broadcasted her story, and there was a lecture connecting with Master Cheng Yen. Master said: "Everyone's life is like a train. This train is always moving. People may get on and off along the way, but you still have to get off when the train reaches the end. So you have to let yourself say that you have no regrets at the end and get off during this process. Take it well." In this sentence, I have a solid feeling... You have to let yourself not regret the trip of life, so you have to cherish your current lifetime. Those words make me think I can't stop. (C)

Interviewee C is a cancer patient. While she felt uncertain and weak, she inadvertently watched the Da Ai TV program and was deeply moved. Master Cheng Yen used a Tzu Chi member's experience to show this person's strong attitude toward cancer. This content inspired interviewee C, helped her accept the test of illness, and she participated more actively in Tzu Chi charity events without letting herself have any regrets. The positive content provided by Da Ai TV can help people be inspired, learn from, and change their negative thoughts.

Because at that time, my father had already passed away, my mother's personality was extreme, and she had some illnesses, like depression. So I installed Da Ai channel at home to change my mother's way of thinking. (L)

Interviewee L hopes the Da Ai TV will guide his depressed mother, so he has installed Da Ai Channel at home, hoping that his mother will be exposed to positive content by watching Da Ai TV programs. Through the examples of interviewees C and L, it can be found that the audience believes that the content of Da Ai TV can make them change their mindsets and improve their relationships with their families. It can be considered that the interviewees watched Da Ai TV because they thought the content of the program was "Inspiring."

Some interviewees said that they installed and watched Da Ai TV to give the next generation a good education through high-quality program content. At the same time, it is also an opportunity for Malaysian Chinese to learn the Buddhism philosophy from Master Cheng

Yen.

A Tzu Chi Auntie talked to me several times in school, saying that Da Ai TV's program is very healthy, and she often told me stories about Da Ai Drama. She also said that the content provided by Da Ai TV is without violence and pornography and is very suitable for children to watch. (F)

Interviewee F heard about Tzu Chi Foundation in the past but did not know much about Tzu Chi, let alone watching a program on Da Ai TV. Through the introduction from colleagues, she agreed with the idea of Da Ai TV. She believed that such TV programs would benefit her children and reduce children's exposure to pornographic, violent, and other inappropriate TV programs. Therefore, she installed the Da Ai TV channel at home.

Watching Da Ai Tv is like inviting and welcoming Master Cheng Yen into your home. Whether you have family problems or not, it will never be wrong to have Master Cheng Yen in your home. At least our children will never learn anything bad. (L)

Through L's interview, the Da Ai TV programs symbolize Cheng Yen's daily exhortation and companionship for the overseas Tzu Chi members. Interviewee L also believes that although Master Cheng Yen is not in Malaysia, he can still learn positive attitudes through Da Ai TV. Via the interviews, we can see that Malaysian Tzu Chi members keep watching Da Ai TV for their children's education and diligence. It can be considered that the interviewees watch Da Ai TV because they feel that the content is "Educational".

Secondly, what kind of satisfaction can the Malaysian Tzu Chi members receive by watching Da Ai TV? In the interview, it was found that after installing Da Ai Channel, some interviewees were willing to spend more time watching the programs because they agreed with Tzu Chi's spiritual philosophy or the need to receive Buddhism Dharma education.

Every morning I watch "Wisdom at Dawn by Dharma Master Cheng Yen." Today, I felt very stressed, so I watched the Master's teachings. I learned that we can overcome any difficulties as long as we have a positive mindset. Sometimes, I watch Master Cheng Yen because I am looking for a method for navigating life. Sometimes when I am feeling annoyed, I listen to Master's teachings, and then my mind changes in one second, then I understand why I like "Wisdom at Dawn by Dharma Master Cheng Yen" so much. (G)

Interviewee G has been watching Master Cheng Yen's teaching program regularly every morning and uses religious-spiritual programs to balance her mind and increase her resilience to setbacks. When facing daily life difficulties, she would think of Master Cheng Yen's words and use Master's teachings to meditate on her mood and reflect on her behavior.

I got into a business partnership with friends in the past. A junior boss just left because he lost money in gambling, and then we were all dragged down badly... It was excruciating at that time, and it was the most difficult time. I couldn't fall asleep. Sometimes my heart kept beating fast, and sometimes I kept waking up at three or four o'clock. Even after such a long time, it was still a shadow in my mind, but after experiencing this, I have learned that I need to change my mind from time to time and be grateful for everything. At that time, the Da Ai TV became essential. It gave me positive

energy. Otherwise, I would have continued thinking about some bad things, like revenge. But from then to now, the bad thoughts slowly faded away then I figured that what was happening was fate. (K)

In addition to the religious-spiritual program of Da Ai TV, “The Da Ai Drama” also plays a role in inspiring the interviewees. The real story of Tzu Chi member Lin Chaofu in the Da Ai Drama, inspired interviewee K very much. Lin Chaofu, a wealthy person who owned many family properties but loved gambling, later experienced an epiphany because of Tzu Chi, which deeply touched interviewee K. Interviewee K faced huge losses after his business partner, who loved gambling, ran away. He watched Master Cheng Yen's teachings every day and let himself gradually go through the most challenging time of his life.

Through the interviews, it can be seen that the interviewees' most excellent satisfaction in Da Ai TV is “Spiritual Growth.” They can improve their outlook on life by watching Da Ai TV programs.

We learn from the lives of each of them, how they change their attitudes towards themselves, their families, and their children, and the changes after they have joined Tzu Chi. Especially with my father, it was tough to communicate with him. Although it's still hard for me now, at least I let go of a lot and don't mind so much. (E)

Interviewee E, who feels she was a little bit dominant, watched Da Ai TV's religious-spiritual program and Da Ai Drama. When she observed the lifestyle and behavior of the characters in the programs, she slowly changed her attitude and learned to communicate with her father gently. Gradually, her father also felt the tenderness of interviewee E, and the relationship between father and daughter became better.

The feeling of the mother in the Da Ai Drama is the same as mine. Because we all hope that our children become successful, and want to give them a good education, we teach them strictly. After watching the Da Ai Drama, I understood that I don't need to communicate with children through beating and scolding. (D)

Interviewee D, who watches the Da Ai TV programs every day, learned from the Da Ai Drama that rigorous education overwhelms children. The story of real people and actual events is close to real life, and interviewee D also feels the same and understands that there are many ways to educate children, other than just beating or scolding them.

After watching Da Ai TV, the audiences might change their attitude and improve their relationship with their family members. Their family members' attitudes towards them also became smoother during the interaction. Through the interviews, “Improvement of Interpersonal Relations” could be an excellent satisfaction of watching Da Ai TV. By watching Da Ai TV programs, they can improve their inclination and improve family interaction.

I am in the training group, so I often watch Da Ai TV. I usually take the clips of Da Ai News and incorporate them into the training courses. For instance, in our last course this month, I linked the words of the Dharma or Master Cheng Yen with the news or events that happened recently so that everyone can understand the meaning of the

Buddha and Master's teachings. The teachings in the Buddhist scriptures are applicable in real life. It seems like in the earthquake that happened in Tainan, when we saw disaster relief workers risking their lives for disaster relief, we would think of the scriptures in "The Essence of Infinite Meanings." (C)

Interviewee C, a training team member in Tzu Chi Foundation, takes some of the material from Da Ai News which she thinks is suitable as examples to share with Tzu Chi's fresh members, adding richness to the training courses and activities.

We also do charity and visits here. We want to see how other people, like Tzu Chi members in Taiwan or other countries practice Master's teachings. In other words, how they act when there is a disaster. Maybe one day we can refer to their experience in Malaysia. We learn more about it when we participate in a charity event by watching the Da Ai TV. For example, after visiting the people in need and then watching the Da Ai TV again, checking when those Tzu Chi members in Taiwan visit, how do they provide their care to those in need? When we visit, we think, "Oh! We can do the same." (F)

Interviewee F, who trained and became a Tzu Chi volunteer, believes that watching Da Ai TV and participating in Tzu Chi activities are complementary. Through Da Ai TV, she can understand how Tzu Chi members and volunteers in Taiwan or other countries conduct charity events and help people after disasters in different regions.

Interviewees C and F show that Tzu Chi members in Malaysia could increase their practical ability in Tzu Chi charity events by watching Da Ai TV.

According to the interview, the audience's motivation for watching Da Ai TV could be classified into "Positive," "Inspiring," and "Educational." These three matters in the program contents motivated the audience watching Da Ai TV. In addition, the satisfaction that Malaysian Tzu Chi members received from watching Da Ai TV could be classified into "Needs for Spiritual Growth," "Improvement of Interpersonal Relationships," and "Practice of Tzu Chi Activities."

5. Cultural Proximity

5.1 Languages

In addition to Mandarin, the 15 interviewees in this research were able to master the dialect of their native provinces. The ancestors of the interviewees in this study came from six different provinces. The Fujian Province accounted for the most significant number, with 13 interviewees all proficient in the Hokkien language. The other two interviewees speak different dialects. Interviewee B speaks Cantonese and N speaks Hakka.

I don't speak Hokkien, but by watching Da Ai drama, I might learn this dialect. Although there are many programs in Da Ai TV that use Hokkien, all of them are with Chinese subtitles, so I understand." (B)

"We don't have problems with the language but it doesn't mean I understand all of it. It

seems that when Master Cheng Yen teaches us, we can understand 80 to 90% because the Hokkien in the Da Ai TV is somewhat different from ours, but basically 80 to 90% is fine. (K)

Many of Tzu Chi TV programs are in the Taiwanese dialect. Interviewee B's family root is from Guangdong province. Even though she does not understand Hokkien, she has learned Chinese and used the subtitles provided on TV to understand the content. Interviewee K is a Hokkien speaker, but Taiwanese and Hokkien are initially from the same language family. There is a high commonality between Taiwanese and Hokkien as well as a slight difference. Therefore, it is not difficult for the Hokkien speakers from Malaysia to understand the programs. Thus, the "Familiarity" in the language is why Malaysian Chinese audiences could enjoy Tzu Chi Da Ai TV without problems.

I prefer Chinese-language programs. I think Malay-language programs are not very suitable for me. Maybe this is because our culture is not very similar. I don't watch Malay-language series. (G)

"I tried to watch Malay series in the past, but I couldn't grasp the main point and didn't understand what it tried to express. I chose Da Ai Drama because of its familiarity and kindness. The programs are in Chinese, and the content is very positive and close to real life. (J)

Interviewee G said that she prefers Chinese dramas to Malay dramas. Even though she has received Malay education before, she has been influenced by her family since she was a child. She still prefers and is accustomed to the Chinese language and culture. Similarly, interviewee J, who has been exposed to TV since he was a child, also felt more cordial and comfortable watching Da Ai TV. Therefore, the sense of "Closeness" to the Chinese language is why Malaysian Tzu Chi members view Tzu Chi Da Ai TV.

I didn't understand Taiwanese dialect at first, but after listening to it for a while, I can understand the meaning. It is similar to our Hokkien dialect. In fact, the programs in Da Ai TV are excellent especially because they have English subtitles. (F)

Interviewee F enjoys watching Da Ai TV's religious and spiritual programs. However, she could not understand the Taiwanese dialect initially, but she could adapt without hindrance after a while. On the other hand, most of the programs of Da Ai TV provides bilingual subtitles in Chinese and English. Therefore, interviewee F can also learn how to explain and express the profound meaning of Dharma in English through Chinese and English subtitles. The subtitles play a significant role.

5.2 Confucianism

My father used to be quite strict. We were not allowed to go out at night. He would beat us and even lock us out so we grew up afraid of our father, and we were very obedient! Mom is a good wife and mother. She is a traditional lady; she dares not to go against my dad. She is almost the same as the mother in "Where the Heart Belongs." When I watch the

Drama, I feel as if I am emerging to the story, and it is easy to tear up, especially those feeling-aggrieving plots. The feeling reminds me of my childhood. (A)

The recently broadcasted "Where the Heart Belongs" Drama is almost similar to the story of our parents' time. I can relate to the story. My mother-in-law is like this. My mother is also the same. Traditional women in our culture are mainly family oriented. I think all the contents of this Drama are very close to reality. (B)

Interviewee A said that her past life experience is similar to the plot content of many Da Ai dramas. She grew up in a traditional Chinese family with a strict father and a loving mother who obeys her husband. The scenes in Da Ai Drama are easy for her to resonate with. Interviewee B recalled the past life of the Chinese communities in Malaysia from the Da Ai Drama. The traditional gender roles presented by the Da Ai Drama were very close to her experience.

The core of Chinese people is based on Confucianism, especially filial piety and morality. Tzu Chi is based on Buddhism, with great love and morality. I think it is the same, but Confucianism lacks the concept of vegetarianism. If you put filial piety first, I think it's the same as Buddhism and Confucianism. Tzu Chi also said that two things cannot be waited for, benevolence and doing filial piety. (H)

Interviewee H believes that the values embodied by Da Ai TV are based on Confucianism, which is the same as the values of traditional Chinese culture accepted by Malaysian Chinese.

The dramas of other TV stations are messy. I don't think it is suitable for the audience. It is better to watch the content with filial piety. It will be better, touching and worth watching. (O)

Interviewee O, who likes to watch Da Ai Drama, also said that Da Ai TV is different from other TV stations in Malaysia. It does not have too many complicated political factors and a commercial atmosphere. The best part is that the Da Ai drama presents a rich Confucian culture and highly educational concepts in the program.

The Da Ai Drama is the favorite program of the interviewees in this research. Many of the stories started from the early times in Taiwan, and most of the early Chinese immigrants in Malaysia came from the southern coastal area of China. Therefore, the growth process of Malaysian Chinese and life experience have many similarities with the people in Taiwan in early times. They could not grasp the key points in Malay dramas but easily resonate in watching the Da Ai Drama. According to the interviews, they are familiar with the traditional gender roles in Confucianism. They agree with the filial piety values, such as respecting parents and fraternizing with siblings in the Da Ai Drama. They believe that the content of Confucianism presented in the Da Ai Drama is educational.

5.3 Religious Belief

According to the profile of the interviewees, the 15 interviewees have different religious beliefs. One believes in traditional Chinese religion, one believes in Taoism, and the rest of

the interviewees believe in Buddhism. Three of the interviewees were initially Buddhists, and the rest became Buddhists after coming to Tzu Chi.

The Buddhism we believed before is not the real Buddhism; it was the traditional folk beliefs mixed with Buddhism and Taoism. My family mainly believed in Guanyin, but we worshiped Guanyin with incense, and praying with incense is a Taoism method of worship. After participating in Tzu Chi, I learned about what real Buddhism is. (E)

Interviewee E's knowledge about Buddhism is from the elders in her family. Because Taoism, Buddhism, and the traditional Chinese beliefs have high similarities and overlapping concepts, this makes it easy for people to recognize themselves as Buddhists. Interviewee E understood Buddhism after participating in Tzu Chi and received more knowledge about Buddhism through Da Ai TV.

Although many Chinese people say they believe in Buddhism, I think it is mixed with three religions: "Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism." This is a traditional Chinese religion. I go to Buddhist and Taoist temples to worship the gods and worship my ancestors, which is the traditional religion of most Chinese people here. Da Ai TV belongs to Buddhism so I don't feel unfamiliar. Malaysia is an Islamic country. Within the Islamic doctrine, they exclude other religions, but Tzu Chi never excludes other religions. In short, Da Ai TV encompasses all human beings. (M)

According to the experience of interviewee M, although he believes in the Chinese traditional religion, which comprises Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism and since Buddhism does not exclude other religions, he can join Tzu Chi to learn the teachings of Master Cheng Yen without feeling unfamiliar.

Through interviews, this research found that the "Familiarity" and "Closeness" in the language and the "Traditional Gender Roles" in the Confucianism in the Drama reflected the experiences of the Malaysian Tzu Chi members. The "Filial Piety" gathered the audiences' agreement and is considered educational. The Buddhist background of Da Ai TV is the affinity for Malaysian Chinese and made it easy for Tzu Chi members in Malaysia to learn the authenticity of Buddhism by watching Da Ai TV programs.

6. Discussion

According to the interview data, Da Ai TV provides positive, inspiring, and educational programs to motivate Malaysian Chinese Tzu Chi audiences. These make audiences think it is helpful to aid their spiritual growth, improve interpersonal relationships, and educate the next generation. These findings respond to the previous studies by Chou and Bai. Chou and Bai (2010) pointed out that when the Da Ai Drama converts the real stories of Tzu Chi members into a TV series, it highlights the goodness of human nature and avoids using vulgar language, killing scenes, interpersonal conflicts, and other negative plots. Moreover, even news reports highlight more positive aspects than other reports (Chou, 2015). One after another, this research found that the interviewees met their needs for spiritual growth through watching the

Da Ai TV programs. This finding is in line with Bi (2002). Buddhists who watch Buddhist programs can gain a sense of peace of mind.

In addition, this study found that Malaysian Tzu Chi members watch religious-spiritual programs on Da Ai TV to get close to Master Cheng Yen in Taiwan. Moreover, they learn the behaviors and methods of Tzu Chi members in other regions and use the know-how in local Tzu Chi activities in Malaysia, such as garbage classification, environmental protection, visiting the people in need, and disaster relief.

Besides, this study found that the religious beliefs of the audiences do not affect their viewing behavior. Even the interviewees who believe in the Chinese traditional religion will not feel inconsistent with the Da Ai TV. This finding may be similar to the point of view of Abelman (1987) that if the audiences often watch religious TV programs, it is a relatively particular viewing behavior, and according to Yeh (2005), such viewers are more dissatisfied with the general TV programs. In this research, all the interviewees are related to Tzu Chi Foundation, therefore, they can be considered as the audiences who are originally interested in information related to religious, spiritual, and positive content. Moreover, there are many similarities between Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism. These three religions are well merged into one belief and not exclusive, and have become a common belief among Chinese people.

This study found that the Da Ai TV with a Buddhist background can help Malaysian Chinese, with more than 80% of the Buddhists absorbing and understanding Buddhism's teaching. This point is similar to Hsu's (2012) research on the audience's viewing of Da Ai TV in Taiwan. Both overseas and domestic Tzu Chi people have spiritual and informative needs for Da Ai TV. They hope to get information about Tzu Chi and get close to Master Cheng Yen through Da Ai TV, especially Malaysian Chinese people living in a social environment that prioritizes Malay culture and Islamic religion. In addition, the cultural factor of Malaysian Tzu Chi members' viewing of Da Ai TV also involves the similarity of language and culture. This study found that the "Closeness" and "Familiarity" in the language are the cultural factors for Malaysian Tzu Chi members to watch the Da Ai Channel. This is also in line with the findings of Teo (2012), that if the language presented in the media content is familiar to the audience, it will increase the program's viewership.

Moreover, most of Da Ai TV's programs were shot in Taiwan because they represent Taiwan's lifestyle, culture, and values. But compared to the local mainstream Muslim culture in Malaysia, the content of Da Ai TV's programs is closer to the language and culture of Malaysian Chinese. It doesn't make it difficult for the audiences to understand the interpersonal interaction in the programs, agree with the values in the programs and resonate with them. Although Da Ai TV is foreign, because the language, morals, and values are familiar to Malaysian Chinese, Tzu Chi members prioritize the Da Ai TV over the domestic TV programs because the content of Da Ai TV is closer to their culture. Because of this particular situation, this finding is slightly different from Lee's (2007) point of view. The research findings in this paper are consistent with the research results of Huang (2003). It is

not the globalization or localization of the program but the connotation of the program that boosts the audience's motivations to receive the content.

Through interviews, this research found that the plot of “Da Ai Drama” presents the “Traditional Gender Roles” in Confucianism, which is very close to the experience of the audiences, and the “Filial Piety” has made Malaysian Chinese identify and resonate with Da Ai Dramas. Likewise, this finding echoes Li and Li’s findings (2011) that Confucian cultural values are more popular with Asian audiences. However, the findings of this study could only show that traditional gender roles correspond to interviewees’ experiences, but that does not mean that they agree with traditional gender roles. The findings of this research are more or less consistent with Iwabuchi (2002) and Hou, Tsai and Chen (2011), that if the cultural proximity of the media content is higher, the audience's acceptance will be higher. This finding is also similar to Lee’s (2007) point of view that says that the higher the closeness of cultural values or language, the more audiences are willing to receive international TV programs.

7. Conclusion

This study explores the relationship between Buddhist Compassion Relief Tzu Chi Foundation’s Da Ai TV and Malaysian Tzu Chi Members. Using the interview method, this study collected information from 15 interviewees. By exploring the viewing motivation and satisfaction of the audiences and investigating the cultural proximity in the programs of Da Ai TV, this study found that the motivations for Malaysian Tzu Chi members to watch Da Ai TV could be for the reasons that they regard the content of the programs as “Positive,” “Inspiring,” and “Educational.” The satisfaction received by the Tzu Chi members in Malaysia in watching Da Ai TV could be classified into “Needs for Spiritual Growth,” “Improvement of Interpersonal Relationships,” and “Practice of Tzu Chi Activities.” The “Closeness” and “Familiarity” in the language and the “Traditional Gender Roles” in the Confucianism presented in the programs are in line with the experience of the Chinese audiences in Malaysia, and the “Filial Piety” makes the audiences agree with it and consider it as educational. The Buddhist background of Da Ai TV increased the familiarity and made it easy for Malaysian Chinese audiences to learn Buddhism by watching Da Ai TV programs. The findings of this study showed the context of the international connections of the Chinese community and interpreted the “cultural proximity” of Malaysian Chinese audiences to Taiwanese audiences. And the connotation of the program boosts the audience's motivation to receive Da Ai TV.

This study found that language and subtitles are essential factors that affect overseas audiences’ understanding of the program’s content. Therefore, this research recommends that all media exploring overseas markets must strengthen subtitles. Bilingual subtitles will help overseas audiences understand the content of the programs and help them learn Chinese. In addition, although the research found that the content of “Da Ai Drama” presents the

“traditional gender roles” in Confucian culture and is close to the experience of readers, the “spirit of filial piety” has been even more recognized and resonated with the Chinese audiences in Malaysia. However, because of the older age group of the interviewees, it is difficult to say that the findings of Confucian culture could be applied to audiences of different age groups.

This study used qualitative in-depth interviews as the research method. The advantage lies in understanding the audiences’ experiences and feelings. It helps to understand the audiences’ motivation and satisfaction and how cultural factors affect overseas audiences. However, the disadvantage is that there was no way to obtain relevant information about the viewership ratings of Da Ai TV in Malaysia during the sampling process. Besides, it is also challenging to find the interviewees due to the inability to grasp the viewing population, only through introducing the Tzu Chi organization in Malaysia and using the snowball sampling method to gather the 15 interviewees. In addition, the involvement of the Tzu Chi Foundation may affect the audiences’ viewing motivations and satisfaction; therefore, it is not easy to determine whether the Chinese community as a whole widely accepts the content of Da Ai TV, although according to the information from Tzu Chi Foundation in 2016, with a population of less than 7 million Malaysian Chinese, there are more than 1.2 million Tzu Chi members (Yeh, 2016) in Malaysia. This ratio shows the significance of the Tzu Chi Foundation in the Chinese community in Malaysia. Therefore, to fully understand the viewing behavior of Da Ai TV in Malaysia, future research focused on non-Tzu Chi audiences is essential.

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