

# Oshin, a Pro-Social Media Role-Model, in Thailand

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The purpose of the present paper is to investigate the effects of a highly popular Japanese soap opera, "Oshin", in Thailand. We draw upon social learning theory (Bandura, 1977; 1986; 1997) to investigate certain role-modeling effects among "Oshin's" viewers in Thailand, including the learning of certain pro-social values from Oshin, the lead female character in the soap opera.

We begin by providing a historical background on "Oshin's" broadcast in Thailand, followed by a discussion of the concept of role-modeling, including the modeled behaviors portrayed by Oshin. Our multi-method approach, including both quantitative and qualitative data-collection procedures, is then outlined. Results are presented about (1) the degree to which the Thai viewers perceived Oshin as a positive role-model, and (2) the various pro-social values that the Thai viewers reported learning from Oshin.

### "Oshin" in Thailand

The Japanese soap opera, "Oshin", was first broadcast in Thailand on the Army Television Channel 5 in November, 1984. Thailand was the second country where "Oshin" was broadcast outside of Japan; Singapore was the first. To date "Oshin" has been broadcast in 53 countries (Table 1), making it the most watched Japanese TV program of all times (Singhal & Udornpim, 1997; Mowlana & Rad, 1992). In Thailand, "Oshin" was broadcast on four nights a week from Monday to Thursday between 9:20 and 10:20 p.m. Each Thai episode was an hour long. In Japan, 297 episodes of "Oshin", each of 15-minute duration, were broadcast in 1983. In Thailand, four Japanese episodes were combined to make

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Table 1 Countries Where "Oshin" Has Been Broadcast.

	Country	Year
1.	Japan	1983
2.	Singapore	1984
3.	Thailand	1984
4.	U. S.	1984
5.	Australia	1984
6.	China	1985
7.	Poland	1985
8.	Hong Kong	1985
9.	Macau	1985
10.	Brazil	1985
11.	Belgium	1985
12.	Canada	1985
13.	Malaysia	1986
14.	Indonesia	1986
15.	Iran	1986
16.	Sri Lanka	1987
17.	Saudi Arabia	1987
18.	Brunei	1988
19.	Mexico	1988
20.	Qatar	1988
21.	Bahrain	1989
22.	Syria	1990
23.	Philippines	1990
24.	Dominica	1990
25.	Bangladesh	1990
26.	Peru	1990
27.	Pakistan	1991
28.	Bolivia	1991
29.	Panama	1991
30.	Nepal	1992
31.	Guatemala	1992
32.	Nicaragua	1992
33.	Egypt	1992
34.	India	1992
35.	Romania	1993
36.	Chile	1993
37.	Uruguay	1993
38.	Jamaica	1993
39.	Ghana	1993
40.	Honduras	1993
41.	Cuba	1993
42.	Vietnam	1994
43.	Taiwan	1994
44.	Myanmar	1995
45.	Costa Rica	1995
46.	Paraguay	1995
47.	Laos	1995
48.	Mongolia	1995
49.	Cambodia	1996
50.	Sudan	1996
51.	Turkey	1996
52.	Bulgaria	1996
53.	Macedonia	1997

Source: Singhal & Udornpim (1997); NHK International (1997, personal correspondence).

a one-hour program. The program was translated and dubbed in Thai. Soon after "Oshin" first aired in Thailand, millions of people became hooked to the program. "Oshin" had audience ratings of up to 81 percent in Thailand (NHK International, 1991). In 1994-1995, "Oshin" was re-broadcast on Thai Television Channel 3, Monday to Thursday from 3:45 p.m. to 4.15 p.m. (this time each episode lasted for half-an-hour). While no precise figures exist, audience ratings for this second "Oshin" broadcast were somewhat lower, given the non-prime time afternoon viewing hour (Singhal & Udornpim, 1997).

"Oshin's" entry into Thailand was somewhat circuitous. When "Oshin" was being broadcast in Japan during 1983-84, the Singapore Ambassador in Japan became hooked to the television series (Takahashi, 1995). He persuaded NHK, the Japanese producer of "Oshin", to broadcast the television series in Singapore. By mid-1984, "Oshin" had begun broadcasting in Singapore, and instantly built a loyal audience following. At that time, a Japanese advertising official, who heard about the phenomenal audience response to "Oshin" in Singapore, became convinced that "Oshin" would draw large audiences in Thailand, given "the economic and social situation of Thailand was very similar with that of "Oshin". Many children in [Thai] rural areas had to go to the town to make a living", as Oshin had done in the television series (Takahashi, 1995, p.2). Through the efforts of this Japanese advertising official, Dentsu Company, a distribution agent of media products in Thailand, and Ratch Films, a private media company, "Oshin" entered the Thai television market in late 1984.

The translator for "Oshin" was Dr. Thanoos Amaralilit, a medical doctor specializing in tropical medicine at Bumrungrad Hospital in Bangkok (Amaralilit, 1991). He had watched several episodes of "Oshin" when it was being broadcast in Japan and was highly moved by its poignant storyline. He was especially equipped to translate "Oshin" into Thai, having translated over 100 Japanese cartoons, films, and television programs into Thai in previous years.

## Oshin as a Role-model

The story of the TV soap, "Oshin" revolved around the life of the central female character, Oshin. "Oshin's" story was historically situated in the Meiji era of Japan in the early 1900s, a time when the Japanese people, especially women, faced tremendous hardships. The story traced her life from age seven to eighty-three, documenting the difficulties she faced, and overcame, in moving from a state of abject poverty to prosperity. When Oshin was young, her family was so poor that they barely had enough to eat. At age seven, she was sold by her family for a bale of rice to a timber merchant in whose home she served as a baby-sitter. She ran away when she was ill treated and falsely accused of stealing. Then Oshin learned calligraphy, arithmetic, and hairdressing from other

employers who were impressed by her enduring spirit. In her youth, she fell in love with a handsome young man, only to find out that he was in love with her best friend. Eventually, she married Ryuzo, the son of a wealthy farmer. The business they established was razed to the ground by the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923. Oshin then moved to stay with her mother-in-law, who treated her very badly. During the outbreak of World War II, her eldest son died in the fighting, and her husband committed suicide. She lost her house and went through many deprivations. However, she never despaired. She worked hard, cared for her family, and treated others with respect. Eventually she was able to establish a fish-peddling business, which grew in scope until she became the owner of Tanokura supermarkets, a highly profitable business predicated on customer service and product quality.

The TV soap opera used a series of flashbacks to depict the ups and downs in the life of Oshin. "Oshin" was labeled by many as a 'four-hankie heart-tugger': Just when Oshin's life began to pick up, a tragedy followed (Haberma, 1984). However Oshin never gave in, transcending every tragedy that came her way by virtue of personal strength, intelligence, and a quite aggressiveness in looking out for the well-being of her family (Lull, 1991). On one hand, Oshin, as a media role-model represented the archetypical image of a modern woman creating prosperity for her family; on the other hand, she was "an embodiment of traditional Japanese female virtues, primarily self-restraint and self-sacrifice" (Harvey, 1995, p. 76).

## Role-modeling

Social learning theory (Bandura, 1977; 1986; 1997) argues that people can learn new values and behaviors by watching role-models. Such learning, which occurs by watching role-models either in real life or on the mass media is referred to as observational learning. Four sequential processes lead to observational learning (Bandura, 1977): (1) attentional processes, (2) retention processes, (3) motor reproduction processes, and (4) motivational processes.

Attentional processes are important because observational learning does not occur unless people attend to, and perceive accurately, the significant features of the modeled behavior. Once people have attended to the modeled behavior, it is important that the behavior be retained in their memory. This retention typically occurs in the form of visual image and/or verbal codes. Further, for learning to occur people need to be able to reproduce the symbolic actions that they previously attended to and retained. Bandura (1977) refers to this third process as motor reproduction. Acquiring a behavior by attending to it, retaining it, and having the ability to reproduce it, however, does not mean that people will actually perform the learned behavior (Bandura, 1977). People perform learned modeled

behaviors if they lead to outcomes they value. Thus, motivational processes are important for the performance of newly-learned behaviors.

The most important factor, according to Bandura (1977), that influences the viewers to perform or not perform a previously learned behavior are the positive or negative reinforcements associated with that behavior (Bandura, 1977). Viewers receive reinforcement when they observe the consequences of a role-model's behaviors. Two kinds of effects, inhibitory or disinhibitory, can typically result from the viewers' observation of the role-model's behaviors and their consequences (Bandura, 1986). Inhibitory effects occur when viewers perceive the role-model as being punished for performing a certain behavior. This negative reinforcement, even though of a vicarious kind, decreases the likelihood that the viewers will perform the newly-learned behavior at a later time. Disinhibitory effects occur when viewers perceive the role-model as being rewarded for performing a certain behavior. This positive reinforcement increases the likelihood that the viewers will perform the newly-learned behavior at a later time.

How can social learning theory inform our understanding of Oshin's role-modeling effects in Thailand? How might "Oshin's" viewers learn pro-social values and behaviors from this television model? In one of the early episodes of the soap opera, when Oshin was only seven years old, she finds out that her grandmother was eating only one meal a day as there was little food in the home. Touched by her grandmother's sacrifice, Oshin brings her share of the food for grandma, pleading with her to partake in it. Oshin's grandmother and mother are emotionally moved by Oshin's thoughtfulness. However, grandmother insists that she is "old" and "useless" and given the paucity of food, the young ones should be fed first. Oshin disagrees and emphasizes that everyone should share the hardship.

From watching the above episode, viewers might learn from Oshin about the value of interdependence or mutual helpfulness. They may learn behaviors such as being caring, considerate, and respectful to elders. By attending to Oshin's behaviors on the TV screen, retaining the visual imagery and spoken words associated with them, and reflecting on how these behaviors may be reproduced in their personal lives, viewers can acquire these new behaviors in their repertoire (Bandura, 1977; 1986). The motivation to perform these learned behaviors, however, according to Bandura, will be influenced by viewers' perceptions of the consequences that accrued to Oshin when she performed these behaviors. If viewers perceive that the consequences (relational or economic) associated with Oshin's behaviors were positive, they will be reinforced (in other words disinhibited) to perform these behaviors at a later time (Bandura, 1986; 1997).

## Research Questions

Utilizing the theoretical framework of social learning, the present study sought answers to two research questions:

1. To what degree did the Thai viewers perceive Oshin as a positive role-model?
2. What prosocial values did the Thai viewers report learning from Oshin?

## Method

A multi-method approach was employed to gather both quantitative and qualitative data on the perceptions of Thai viewers about Oshin. A survey of "Oshin" viewers yielded quantitative data on (1) the degree to which Oshin was perceived as a positive role-model, and (2) the various pro-social dimensions the viewers learned from Oshin. Further, open-ended responses in the survey questionnaire and focus group interviews yielded rich qualitative data on viewers' perceptions, interpretations, and understanding of Oshin's character.

### *The Survey*

Our survey was conducted in the Bangkok metropolitan area in 1996. Our sample was purposive in that it included only those respondents who had previously watched "Oshin" and had a fair memory of it. Our two research questions called for such a purposive sample of respondents. The respondents were students of an extension degree program at Ratjabhat Institute Chankasem in Bangkok, Thailand. These students were relatively older than regular undergraduate students, which was appropriate for our study since many had watched "Oshin" when it was first broadcast in Thailand in 1984. Our survey questionnaire was translated from English to Thai, pre-tested, refined and then distributed by the first-author, a native Thai researcher. The researcher visited several classes at Ratjabhat Institute during regular class hours and invited those who had watched "Oshin" to participate in the study. Participation was voluntary. Some 117 students, who had watched "Oshin" previously, filled out the survey questionnaire. To enhance their recall, each questionnaire included a few still pictures from "Oshin" on its cover sheet.

### *Measuring the perception of Oshin as a positive role-model*

Thai viewers perceptions of Oshin as a positive role-model were operationalized along a 5 item role-modeling scale which included the following dimensions: (1) Oshin represents a positive role-model for me, (2) I will be



happy if my daughter behaves like Oshin, (3) Oshin's behaviors deserved to be rewarded, (4) behaviors like Oshin's are valued in Thai society, and (5) I would love to have Oshin's characteristics. The role-modeling scale was a 5-point scale in which number 1 represented "strong disagreement" and 5 represented "strong agreement."

*Measuring the learning of pro-social values from Oshin*

Viewers' learning of prosocial values from Oshin were operationalized along 23 pro-socially desirable Thai instrumental values identified by Komin (1991). Suntaree Komin (1991), a Thai scholar, conducted the first empirical research on cherished Thai values. Komin (1991) identified 23 instrumental values held strongly by Thai people (Table 2). She began with Anderson's (1968) well-known list of 555 personality-trait words. She then applied Rokeach's (1973) criteria of eliminating extreme words, sex-linked words, physical characteristics, relatively unfamiliar words, and words with negative characteristics. She reduced the personality trait names to 146, and had a large sample of Thai people rate those traits on a scale that measured the likableness and social desirability of the trait names. From this analysis, 23 Thai instrumental values were distilled.

Our purpose was to investigate which of these 23 instrumental values our Thai viewers reported learning from Oshin. To minimize the potential response bias associated with these positive values, seven anti-social value items were

Table 2 Thai Instrumental Values

1.	Being self-controlled, tolerant-restrained.
2.	Being independent.
3.	Being responsive to situation-opportunities.
4.	Being contented.
5.	Being interdependent, mutually helpful.
6.	Being capable.
7.	Being calm-cautious.
8.	Being caring-considerate.
9.	Being loving-affectionate.
10.	Being forgiving.
11.	Being grateful.
12.	Being ambitious-hardworking.
13.	Being polite-humble.
14.	Being obedient-respectful.
15.	Being educated.
16.	Being courageous.
17.	Being honest-sincere.
18.	Being responsible.
19.	Being fun-loving, humorous.
20.	Being imaginative, creative.
21.	Being clean-neat.
22.	Being kind-helpful.
23.	Being broadminded, open-minded.

Source: Komin (1991)



randomly included with the preceding 23 prosocial values. These seven anti-social values were: (1) being aggressive, (2) being materialistic, (3) being self-centered, (4) being tricky, (5) being greedy, (6) being selfish, and (7) being deceitful. The survey participants were asked to identify their level of agreement or disagreement on a 5-point intensity scale with statements that embodies these value dimensions, for instance, "I learned from Oshin to be tolerant and restrained," "I learned from Oshin to be caring and considerate," and so on. Many of these values were personified in the soap opera by Oshin.

In addition, survey participants also responded to the following open-ended question: "Of all the behaviors that Oshin depicted in the TV series, is there any behavior you have specifically adopted in your life based on viewing the soap opera?"

#### *Focus Group Interview*

Thirty-two viewers of "Oshin" participated in three focus group interviews. The participants were between 25 and 45 years of age and all had undergraduate college degrees. The first group consisted of 9 participants (7 females and 2 males); the second group consisted of 11 participants (9 females and 2 males); and the third group consisted of 12 participants (10 females and 2 males).

A 15 minute episode of "Oshin" was played before each focus group interview to help the participants' recollection of "Oshin". This episode focused on Oshin's return to her home to visit her father who was every sick and about to pass away. She observes that her parents are being ill-treated by her eldest brother. She gives them support and comfort.

Each focus group interview lasted about an hour. The respondents did not seem to have any difficulty in recalling the salient details about "Oshin", even though some had watched it over 12 years ago. A considerable amount of interaction occurred in these focus group prompting synergistic effects and yielding many rich qualitative insights about Oshin. Each focus group interview was audio taped and then translated and transcribed from Thai to English.

## **Results**

#### *Respondent Characteristics and Exposure to "Oshin"*

Demographic data for our 117 survey respondents, who were chosen purposefully because of their exposure to "Oshin", are presented in Table 3. The demographic data showed 64 percent of the participants were female and most of the participants (71 percent) were between 20 to 30 years old.

*Exposure to and Memory of Oshin*

Data relating to respondents' degree of exposure to "Oshin" and their memory of the main character Oshin is presented in Table 4. Some 45 percent of the survey participants watched "Oshin" during its first broadcast (1984-1985), 27 percent watched the second (1994-1995), and 28 percent watched both broadcasts. The data indicated that 61 percent of the respondents watched more than half of the "Oshin" series, some of 15 percent of the respondents watched more than 90 percent of the episodes. Some 54 percent of the respondents reported having a fair memory of the main character Oshin; some 33 percent reported remembering the main character Oshin well; and 14 percent remembered the central character Oshin very well.

Some 9 percent of the respondents said they discussed the plot, situations, and the character of "Oshin" quite often with others. Some 70 percent of the respondents reported having some discussion about "Oshin" with others. The remaining 21 percent of the respondents did not discuss "Oshin" with others. Our focus group respondents alluded to how "Oshin" led to the spurring of interpersonal communication: One respondent said, "The program was very popular at that time. If you did not watch it, you could not discuss it with your friends the next morning." Another respondent agreed: "If you did not watch it, you could not join your friends in the discussion. It was a very hot topic of discussion."

Table 3 Demographic Data of the Survey Participants

	age below 20	age 20-30	age 31-40	age 41-50	Total
Female	1 (1%)	59 (50%)	14 (12%)	1(1%)	75 (64%)
Male	3 (3%)	24 (20%)	14 (12%)	1(1%)	42 (36%)
Total	4 (3%)	83 (71%)	28 (24%)	2 (2%)	117 (100%)

Table 4 Exposure and Memory of Oshin

		Memory of Oshin			Total
		Fair	Well	Very well	
Time Watched	First broadcast	26 (22%)	19 (16%)	8 (7%)	53 (45%)
	Second broadcast	20 (17%)	9 (8%)	2 (2%)	31 (27%)
	Both	17 (14%)	10 (9%)	6 (5%)	33 (28%)
Total		63 (53%)	38 (33%)	16 (14%)	117 (100%)
Exposure	More than 90%	4 (3%)	5 (4%)	9 (8%)	18 (15%)
	Between 50%-90%	25 (21%)	24 (21%)	4 (3%)	53 (45%)
	Between 10%- 50%	31 (26%)	8 (7%)	3 (3%)	42 (36%)
	Less than 10%	3 (3%)	1 (1%)	-	4 (4%)
Total		63 (53%)	38 (33%)	16 (14%)	117 (100%)

### *Perception of Oshin as a Positive Role-model*

Research Question #1 asked: To what degree did the Thai viewers perceive Oshin as a positive role-model?

The average score for viewers' perception of Oshin as a positive role-model was 3.64. In this five point intensity scale, a score of 3 represents "Disagree Some and Agree Some" and a score of 4 represents "Agree" with the scale item. Thus, an average score of 3.64 can be interpreted to mean that Thai survey participants generally perceived Oshin as a positive role-model. An analysis of the focus group interview data (presented later) demonstrates the complex nature of such perceptions.

The reliability of the role-modeling scale was quite high (Cronbach alpha of 0.89). Individual items in the five-item role-modeling scale were analyzed to identify the contribution of each item to the overall reliability of the scales. All items contributed significantly to the scale reliability. One way analyses of variance for the perception of Oshin as a positive role-model yielded no statistically significant differences between (1) male and female participants,  $F(1, 115) = 2.59, p \leq .11$ , (2) among different viewers' age groups,  $F(3, 113) = 1.20, p \leq .31$ , (3) among viewers who had watched the first, second, and both sets of "Oshin's" broadcasts,  $F(2, 114) = 1.7, p \leq .19$ , and (4) among viewers who had varying degrees of exposure to "Oshin",  $F(3, 113) = 1.68, p \leq .17$ . In essence, Oshin as a media model seemed to strike a chord with both genders, all age groups, viewers of both of "Oshin's" broadcasts, and both heavy and light viewers.

The focus group interviews and the open-ended responses revealed that most of the respondents viewed Oshin as a positive role-model, worthy of emulation for themselves and their daughters. One woman respondent said: "If I can be just 1/100 of Oshin, I will be very happy. Another said: "I want to possess Oshin's characteristics like endurance and tolerance." A mother said: "I want my daughter to have Oshin's characters." Another mother said: "I want my daughter to be able to fight for a better life as Oshin did."

However, some respondents pointed out certain behaviors of Oshin that they did not want to emulate. One woman respondent said "Oshin gave in too easily to the wishes of her husband and her family"; Another said: "I want my daughter to keep up with modernization. We [women] have equal rights as the men. I think Oshin is too old fashioned." A third respondent said: "If I were Oshin, I would not give in that much to my family"; and "Oshin should fight back ... she should not always tolerate."

While a majority of our focus group respondents agreed that Oshin's behaviors deserved to be rewarded in Thai society, some disagreed. Some perceived Oshin to be "aggressive" and noted that Oshin did not listen to her husband. Other focus group participants disagreed with the above observation:

"Although Oshin led her family, I believed that she did it unconsciously. Oshin never behaved in such a way that showed that she directed her husband." Some focus group respondents felt that Oshin's modeled behaviors were not appropriate for women in Thailand: "If I live with Oshin, I will feel very uneasy. Oshin lives too much by her own ideas and thoughts." Ironically, a few participants admired and perceived Oshin to be a role-model worth emulation for precisely the same reason: "She dares to decide for her life;" "She does that she believes is right;" and "I like Oshin as she dares to do what she thinks is right."

The contrasting views offered by these participants provide evidence that any modeled behavior by a media character is perceptually subject to complex and multiple interpretations (Singhal & Rogers, 1999).

#### *Learning of Pro-social Values from Oshin*

Research Question #2 asked: What prosocial values did the Thai viewers report learning from "Oshin"?

Principal components factor analysis with varimax rotation was conducted to assess the degree to which viewers' learning of the 23 pro-social values from Oshin were clustered together. Four factors emerged from the factor analysis (Table 5). Factor loadings which were greater than 0.478 in absolute value were included as factors (Stevens, 1996). Factor one was labeled as learning about "being considerate to others" and it accounted for over 28 percent of the variance. Factor two accounted for over 18 percent of the variance and it was labeled as "being behaviorally appropriate". Factor three was labeled as "being dedicated" and it accounted for 9.3 percent of the variance. Factor four was labeled as "being thoughtful and imaginative" and it accounted for 9.1 percent of the variance. The correlations among the four factors are reported in Table 6.

The data presented in Table 5 indicated that four of the 23 Thai pro-social values that viewers said they learned from Oshin ("being caring-considerate", "being capable", "being courageous", and "being calm-cautious") had factor loadings greater than 0.478 in more than one factor. However, "being caring-considerate" and "being capable" had greater factor loadings on factor 1 than on factor 2. Thus, "being caring-considerate" and "being capable" were included in factor 1 and excluded from factor 2. "Being courageous" appeared in both factor 1 and factor 3. Since the factor loading of "being courageous" was greater on factor 3 than on factor 1, it was included in factor 3 and excluded from factor 1. The value of "being calm-cautious" appeared to load equally on both factor 1 and factor 2. Thus, it was excluded from both factors. Descriptive statistics suggest that viewers of "Oshin" reported learning more about "being considerate to others", factor 1, than any other value dimensions since it had the highest mean and the lowest standard deviation among the four factors. The mean score

Table 5 Rotated Factor Analysis of the Prosocial Learning

Prosocial values	Factor 1 (Being considerate to others)	Factor 2 (Being behaviorally appropriate)	Factor 3 (Being dedicated)	Factor 4 (Being thoughtful and imaginative)
1. Being kind-helpful	<b><u>0.78982</u></b>	0.18737	0.21557	0.11728
2. Being forgiving	<b><u>0.76888</u></b>	0.31439	0.0771	0.07742
3. Being obedient-respectful	<b><u>0.75899</u></b>	0.14247	0.2077	0.13571
4. Being grateful	<b><u>0.7446</u></b>	0.31918	0.22186	0.10534
5. Being clean-neat	<b><u>0.69413</u></b>	0.21331	0.08993	0.18677
6. Being caring-considerate	<b><u>0.64005</u></b>	<b><u>0.51426</u></b>	-0.13005	0.12954
7. Being honest-sincere	<b><u>0.6315</u></b>	0.29695	0.40818	0.14271
8. Being educated	<b><u>0.62155</u></b>	0.27556	0.27616	0.22319
9. Being polite-humble	<b><u>0.6173</u></b>	0.44267	0.20459	0.21976
10. Being loving-affectionate	<b><u>0.59792</u></b>	0.37426	0.01091	0.24
11. Being capable	<b><u>0.54993</u></b>	<b><u>0.49046</u></b>	0.19525	0.08238
12. Being responsible	<b><u>0.53954</u></b>	0.38162	0.26508	0.24299
13. Being contented	0.26175	<b><u>0.74095</u></b>	-0.00929	0.1687
14. Being interdependent, mutually helpful	0.34961	<b><u>0.64968</u></b>	0.08996	-0.02101
15. Being self-controlled, tolerant-restraint	0.3235	<b><u>0.63802</u></b>	0.43399	0.18755
16. Being responsive to situation, opportunity	0.24823	<b><u>0.62434</u></b>	0.27856	0.25803
17. Being independent	0.21058	<b><u>0.62019</u></b>	0.42952	0.28416
18. Being calm-cautious	<b><u>0.59173</u></b>	<b><u>0.59235</u></b>	0.08251	0.12919
19. Being ambitious-hardworking	0.10961	0.11439	<b><u>0.82129</u></b>	0.09686
20. Being courageous	<b><u>0.50624</u></b>	0.13338	<b><u>0.59257</u></b>	0.01583
21. Being imaginative, creative	0.11418	0.23362	0.16646	<b><u>0.81069</u></b>
22. Being fun-loving, humorous	0.17982	0.04747	-0.02235	<b><u>0.80259</u></b>
23. Being broadminded-open-minded	0.34312	0.37511	0.25471	<b><u>0.47969</u></b>
Eigenvalue	6.5370741	4.184301	2.147177	2.112027
Percent of variance	28.422061	18.19261	9.335553	9.182727
Total Percent of variance = 65.13295				

Note: Bold if factor loading is greater than 0.478

of factor 1 is 4.04 with S.D. of .66; of factor 2 is 3.95 with S.D. of .722; of factor 3 is 3.67 with S.D. of .57; and of factor 4 is 3.50 with S.D. of .70.

The scores for each multi-item pro-social learning dimension were analyzed for their reliability. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.94 for the "being considerate to other" factor, 0.84 for the "being behaviorally appropriate" factor, 0.57 for the "being dedicated" factor, and 0.70 for the "being thoughtful and imaginative" factor. All the Cronbach alpha coefficients were relatively high except for the "being dedicated" factor which was expected to be low because of the low numbers of items in the factor (only two items were comprised this factor). Thus, the dimensions of prosocial learning from Oshin investigated in the present study appeared to be highly reliable.

One way analyses of variance were performed to assess differences on prosocial learning dimensions between male and female groups, and among different groups of viewers (who watched the first, second, and both broadcasts.) No statistically significant differences were found on any of those analyses. The analyses of variance between male and female groups shown  $F(1, 115) = 3.23, p \leq .07$  for pro-social learning dimension #1 (Being considerate to others);  $F(1, 115) = 2.47, p \leq .12$  for pro-social learning dimension #2 (Being behaviorally appropriate);  $F(1, 115) = 1.47, p \leq .22$  for pro-social learning dimension #3 (Being dedicated); and,  $F(1, 115) = .46, p \leq .50$  for pro-social learning dimension #4 (Being thoughtful and imaginative). The analyses of variance among viewers who watched the first, second, and both broadcasts yielded  $F(2, 114) = 1.18, p \leq .31$  for pro-social learning dimension #1 (Being considerate to others);  $F(2, 114) = 1.78, p \leq .17$  for pro-social learning dimension #2 (Being behaviorally appropriate),  $F(2, 114) = .58, p \leq .55$  for pro-social learning dimension #3 (Being dedicated), and  $F(2, 114) = 1.23, p \leq .29$  for pro-social learning dimension #4 (Being thoughtful and imaginative).

The focus group interviews revealed that viewers were attracted to Oshin because of the prosocial values that she modeled. One respondent said: "I watch

Table 6 Correlation among the four prosocial learning dimensions from "Oshin"

Correlation	Being considerate to others	Being behaviorally appropriate	Being dedicated	Being thoughtful and imaginative
Being considerate to others	1.0000	.8320**	.5424**	.5363**
Being behaviorally appropriate	.8320**	1.0000	.5255**	.5537**
Being dedicated	.5424**	.5255**	1.0000	.3374**
Being thoughtful and Imaginative	.5363**	.5537**	.3374**	1.0000

N of cases: 117 2-tailed Signif: \* - .01 \*\* - .001

it because I can learn from her." Another said: "The story is about real life, and we can learn from it." A third respondent said: " I think learning from other's experiences is very valuable. That's why I watch "Oshin." "It teaches us to live in society;" A fourth respondent said: " I learned from Oshin about the good and bad in society." An open-ended response from a survey participant said: "In my life, I learned from Oshin [the] values of education and improving oneself and I recognized them throughout my life."

Responses from the focus group interviews and the open-ended survey questions suggested that demonstrating endurance, expressing gratitude, working hard, displaying courage, and being responsiveness to situations/opportunities were certain prosocial values that the participants reported learning from Oshin's character. Among these learned values, demonstrating endurance and expressing gratitude were values that the survey and focus group respondents reported learning the most from Oshin. One interview participant said: "Oshin teaches me that in order to get what I want, I have to endure." Another participant said: "I learned [from Oshin] to have endurance which will lead me to make progress in life." One interview participant called Oshin "an iron lady" for her endurance. Another participant said: "We should be like Oshin. If one way cannot solve the problem, Oshin will try another way. She never gives up." Oshin taught the participants the importance of expressing gratitude, especially to their parents. One commented: "I learned about gratitude. We have to take care of our parents, especially when they are sick." The majority of the interview participants repeated the same theme of being grateful to their parents and other persons who have helped them in their lives.

Many interview participants admired Oshin for working so diligently and they reported learning from her that hard-work pays off: "We have to work hard to get what we wanted and to be success." Many also admired Oshin's courage: "Oshin dares to decide for her life;" "She has her own mind and courage to do what she thinks is right;" "Oshin dares to do what she thinks;" and "She has courage to go against the norm of her society." The survey and focus group interview participants also learned from Oshin about the importance of adjusting oneself to face different situations: "I learned that in our life we have to adapt to situations." Another respondent said: "We must learn to survive and adapt to situations like Oshin." A third respondent said: "I learn to adjust and adapt myself to situations like Oshin has adjusted and adapted herself to different situations such as during the war time and the recession time." A fourth respondent said: "Look at Oshin, she can adapt herself to situations and be on her own without her husband." A fifth respondent said "I like Oshin as she is very optimistic and can adjust herself to situations very well."



## Conclusions

Some 64 percent of our survey respondents had watched "Oshin" during the first broadcast (1984-85) in Thailand, and 27 percent had watched "Oshin" during its second broadcast (1994-95). Our research was conducted 11 years after the first broadcast and about 2 years after the second broadcast. Despite this time lag, the respondents had no difficulty in recalling the salient details about "Oshin", and reported learning certain pro-social values from Oshin. Given that our respondents were purposely chosen from those who had a fair memory of "Oshin", this finding is not surprising. Of course, it is hard to tell whether or not viewers actually put into practice any of what they say they learned from the role-model of Oshin.

The findings in this study support the potential of utilizing principles of social learning theory in formulating entertainment-based educational media strategies (Singhal & Rogers, 1999; Nariman, 1993). Participants perceived Oshin to be a positive role-model for their lives. Viewers reported learning certain pro-social values from watching Oshin. Our findings reflect the utility of applying social learning theory in media-based interventions directed at large populations, in natural field settings, with prosocial effects as dependent variables. Previously, most research on social learning theory has been conducted with small populations, in experimental settings, with aggression measures as dependent variables. Singhal & Rogers (1989) reported similar findings from their study of the Indian television soap opera "Hum Log." Their study showed that "Hum Log's" viewers learned prosocial models of behavior from generally positive role-models and expressed a strong desire to emulate them in real life. Similar findings on role-modeling effects were obtained from research evaluations of soap operas in Tanzania (Rogers, Vaughan, Swalehe, Rao, Svenkerud, Sood, & Alford, 1997); Mexico (Nariman, 1993), and Peru (Singhal, Obregon, & Rogers, 1994).

No statistically significant differences were found among male and female viewers' perceptions of Oshin as a positive role-model even though Oshin represented a female character. This finding suggests that role-modeling need not be gender specific. Moreover, male respondents did not differ from female respondents in their learning of pro-social values from Oshin. There were no significant differences among male and female on all of the four pro-social learning dimensions in this study. This finding suggests that male and female viewers have an equal potential to learn pro-social values from an entertainment-based educational program regardless of their gender or the gender of the television character.

However, not every participant in this study perceived Oshin to be a positive role-model, showing the multiple readings that exist for every text. Several female focus group participants stated that they did not want their daughters to

have Oshin's characteristics (e.g. deference to husband) since such characteristics are not appropriate in the present Thai society. Several participants also perceived that Oshin represented a negative role-model for gender equality. In their opinion, women should not always follow or comply with their husbands' wishes the way Oshin did. They disagree with Oshin for giving in to her elder brother and for sacrificing so much for her family.

More than 80 percent of our survey participants discussed "Oshin" with friends and family members and 9 percent of these participants discussed the soap opera very often. Lozano & Singhal (1993) suggested that one of the advantages of the soap opera genre over other media genres in promoting educational issues is that soap operas spur interpersonal discussion among viewers (Singhal & Rogers, 1999). Viewers become involved in the life of the media role-models and the situations they find themselves in. Interpersonal communication about these modeled behaviors can enhance the efficacy of viewers, leading to the adoption of new ideas or behaviors (Rogers, 1995; Bandura, 1997). The results of this study reinforce the advantages of utilizing the soap opera genre, which naturally spurs interpersonal communication among viewers, to promote the learning of pro-social values.

Although this study reported several significant findings, it also has its limitations. First, the study measured the dependent variable of prosocial learning effects among Thai viewers by using Komin's (1991) Thai values list. Thus, the findings that relate to prosocial learning effects from "Oshin" are limited to the Thai context. Second, random sampling was not utilized in this study to select participants. Our research questions called for a purposive selection of "Oshin's" viewers. Our sample size was also not large enough to approximate a true population parameter. Thus, generalization beyond the sample group needs to be made cautiously. Third, by using a self report method, the study only measures participants' perceptions of prosocial learning from "Oshin" rather than the actual behaviors learned. The study also does not capture the performance of the prosocial behaviors that were learned. There may be some important differences between perceived prosocial learning and the actual performance of prosocial behaviors.

This study can be extended in several directions. First, this study has shown that entertainment-based educational programs like "Oshin" can potentially have prosocial learning effects on viewers, even if there may be differential impacts on different viewers. Mass media researchers and program producers need to further examine the specific strategies that produce these effects. For example, how should a media character be developed in the course of a program to promote prosocial values? Are some pro-social values easier to promote than others? Are there limits to the values that can be taught through media role-models? Second, this research might be replicated in another country context where "Oshin" is popular and which is culturally diverse from Thailand. The findings

can provide a comparative understanding of the role-modeling effects of Oshin outside of Japan. Third, our five-item role-modeling scale, even though it showed high reliability, was specific to our "Oshin" study and could be improved further. The scale should be used to measure learning from a negative role-model, or perhaps with a character who has low potential to serve as a positive role-model. The scale can thus be further refined and improved to more accurately measure all types of role-modeling behavior.

Finally, researchers and program producers need to consider the ethics of such entertainment-based educational strategies (Brown & Singhal, 1990). Which prosocial values should be promoted or not promoted through a program? Values are viewed differently in different cultural contexts. Furthermore, within cultures, audiences may dispute the pro-socialness of certain values. These questions should be considered by researchers and practitioners interested in the use of entertainment based educational programs.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> The present article draws upon Udornpim (1997) and Singhal & Udornpim (1997). We thank Dr. Michael J Papa for his advice during the conceptualization and implementation of this study. We also thank Bangkok University for providing an institutional base for us to conduct the present study.

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