

Developing Approaches and Presentation Models for Performing Arts Thesis in the Digital Era

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Abstract

The research titled “Developing Approaches and Presentation Models for Performing Arts Thesis in the Digital Era” investigates teaching methods and presentation formats for the Performing Arts Thesis course in the Thai Classical Dance program, Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. This qualitative study employs document analysis, interviews, and observations to gather data. The findings reveal that the Thai Classical Dance program has consistently conducted thesis teaching and presentations for over two decades. These theses serve as a culmination of students’ knowledge, skills, and creative capabilities. In 2024, the course underwent significant reform to incorporate modern perspectives and address industry demands. The teaching process is structured into three stages: (1) skill assessment, (2) creative work presentation, and (3) academic output presentation. Advisors from the department provide close supervision throughout the process. The new structure divides thesis presentations into two main categories: creative works and academic outputs. Creative works are further divided into group and individual presentations. Group performances include *Sunanta Cabaret*, the mixed-media dance-drama *Rak Long Khu*, and the contemporary dance piece *Sirena*. Individual works highlight specialized skills, such as the *Paksa Himmaphan* solo make-up design. Academic outputs involve presenting creative research articles for publication in national or international journals or as conference reports. This research aims to provide a systematic framework for managing and presenting performing arts theses in line with contemporary industry requirements. It enhances academic and creative contributions to the field while expanding opportunities for sustainable dissemination to diverse audiences in the digital age.

Keywords: performing arts thesis, academic outputs, creative works, teaching framework

1. Introduction

Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University is a premier higher education institution in Thailand, guided by the vision: “A leader in producing professionals for sustainable social development.” The university’s mission encompasses six primary objectives: (1) to develop curricula and innovative teaching methods that produce graduates recognized for their professional excellence; (2) to provide academic services and transfer technology to communities and international societies, fostering value creation; (3) to conduct research, generate innovations, and create economic value; (4) to establish networks with external organizations and leading universities both domestically and internationally, enhancing professional expertise and self-reliance; (5) to enhance internal organizational efficiency by integrating advanced technology for professional management; and (6) to preserve and develop cultural heritage, positioning the university as a central hub for arts and culture benefiting society.

The Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University boasts a rich history of over 50 years (Silapawattanatham,2004). Initially, in 1973, the faculty did not exist as an independent entity. Instead, the “Music and Dramatic Arts Department” offered diploma programs specializing in Thai dramatic arts. Over time, the university recognized the potential of integrating diverse arts disciplines, including music, dramatic arts, and visual arts. This strategic consolidation positioned Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University as a leader in fine arts education. Consequently, on March 1, 2005, the Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts was officially established. The faculty’s mission is to produce graduates who excel in their respective art disciplines while upholding intellectual and ethical values (Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University,2024). It emphasizes nurturing graduates who are skilled practitioners, academically proficient, effective communicators, creative thinkers, and service-minded professionals. This foundation equips graduates to contribute meaningfully to the arts and society at large.

The Bachelor of Fine Arts in Performing Arts (Thai Classical Dance) program, offered by the Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts, is a four-year undergraduate program designed to produce graduates with integrated skills, knowledge, and experience in both Thai and global performing arts (Jirajarupat, P., Wanta, C., Vasinaron, M., & Phetruchee, M.,2022). Graduates are expected to uphold ethical values, moral principles, and professional responsibility, enabling them to pursue successful careers in the performing arts. As part of their studies, students are required to complete the Performing Arts Thesis course in their final semester. This course serves as a comprehensive assessment of their theoretical and practical expertise, including their artistic abilities as performers and creators (Phetruchee, M., Vasinaron, M., Khathawi, W., Iamkrasin, S., & Wanta, C.,2024). The creation of a performing arts thesis involves developing an original performance based on a topic or concept approved by the academic committee. These performances must be presented publicly and evaluated by an external committee of experts to ensure quality. Students typically work in pairs under close supervision and guidance from their performance advisors.

In the current era of digital transformation, the performing arts industry has undergone significant changes, requiring graduates to possess diverse expertise and adaptability to meet evolving market demands. Graduates must also adopt open-minded attitudes toward diverse forms of performing arts and demonstrate the ability to integrate performing arts with other disciplines. As the performing arts industry continues to adapt to the demands of the digital era, the development of innovative approaches and presentation models for performing arts theses has become increasingly crucial. These advancements aim to equip graduates with the skills and knowledge needed to excel in a competitive and rapidly evolving industry, while also ensuring that their creative works reach broader and more diverse audiences.

1.1 Research Objective

The objectives of this research article aim to study teaching methods and presentation formats for the Performing Arts Thesis course in the Thai Classical Dance program, Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University

2. Body of paper

2.1 Research Methodology

This article was conducted by qualitative research method. The data collections were consisting of document study from Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University library and various online resources. The interviews of lecturers and students of the department were arranged,

including the observation of learning and teaching process. The focus group were arranged. The key informants were 5 lecturers, who were take responsibility in teaching Performing Arts Thesis. The obtain data were analyzed and presented in descriptive format.

2.2 Research Result

The results indicate that the Thai Classical Dance program has been conducting thesis teaching and presentations for over two decades. These theses represent a culmination of students' knowledge, skills, and creative abilities. In 2024, the course underwent significant reforms to integrate modern perspectives and respond to industry demands. The teaching process is structured into three main stages:

2.2.1 Skill Assessment

This initial stage evaluates students' expertise in various performing arts skills, including choreography, music design, set design, lighting design, costume design, makeup design, and hairstyling. Students must pass these assessments to utilize their specialized skills as the foundation for creating their thesis projects, ensuring they are well-prepared for the creative process.

2.2.2 Creative Work Presentation

This stage focuses on developing and presenting performance projects through three phases: pre-production, production, and post-production. Students' work undergoes periodic evaluations to maintain academic and creative standards before being showcased to public audiences, demonstrating their ability to transform technical skills into compelling performances.

2.2.3 Academic Output Presentation

The final stage involves documenting creative works in academic formats, such as research articles, academic papers, or conference proceedings. This step emphasizes the academic potential of students by bridging creative practices with scholarly research, thereby contributing to the knowledge base of performing arts.

This structured process introduces two distinct types of thesis presentations:

2.2.3.1 Creative Works

Creative works are performances based on innovative frameworks and concepts, presented as either group or individual projects. Notable examples in 2024 include:

2.2.3.1.1 .Sunandha Cabaret: A performance that celebrates Suan Sunandha Palace's cultural and historical heritage through cabaret, incorporating themes like palace life, diversity, and LGBTQ+ inclusivity. Elaborate stage sets and storytelling recreate the charm of the palace for the audience (2024, December 20 Interviewed by Phakamas Jirajarupat)

Figure 1: Sunanda Cabaret



Source: Photo by Phakamas Jirajarupat, 2024

2.2.3.1.2 Rak Long Khu: A mixed-media contemporary dance drama blending Western dance techniques with digital technology. This performance portrays a tragic love story and demonstrates advanced skills in choreography, stage design, and theatrical effects.

2.2.3.1.3 Sirena: A contemporary dance inspired by Western mermaid myths, utilizing modern choreography, innovative hairstyling, and makeup techniques to deliver a visually captivating performance.

2.2.3.1.4 Paksa Himmaphan Makeup Design: This unique thesis focuses on advanced makeup artistry inspired by mythical Himmaphan creatures, showcasing expertise in facial structure, color theory, and intricate design techniques.

2.2.4 Academic Outputs

Academic outputs transform creative works into written research, such as articles or conference papers. These outputs highlight students' scholarly capabilities and expand the academic framework of performing arts. For example, one student's research article was accepted for publication in TCII, reflecting the program's emphasis on academic excellence.

All thesis projects, both creative and academic, require approval from advisors and evaluation by internal and external experts. This ensures adherence to principles of academic freedom, social responsibility, and equality, as outlined in the Higher Education Act B.E. 2562 (2019) (Royal Thai Government Gazette, 2025). These principles affirm the role of higher education institutions in advancing academic and societal development. The integration of digital tools and methodologies has expanded creative possibilities, enabling students to produce performances that resonate with contemporary audiences. By encouraging experimentation and innovation, the Performing Arts Thesis course serves as a platform for

students to push boundaries, refine their skills, and prepare for professional careers in the performing arts.

3. Conclusion

This study, “Developing Approaches and Presentation Models for Performing Arts Thesis in the Digital Era,” provides a comprehensive framework for enhancing thesis teaching and presentation in the Thai Classical Dance program at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. Through its three-stage structure—Skill Assessment, Creative Work Presentation, and Academic Output Presentation—the program equips students with technical expertise, creative abilities, and scholarly rigor. By integrating modern perspectives and digital methodologies, the reformed approach addresses industry demands, enabling students to craft performances that resonate with contemporary audiences. The division into Creative Works, such as *Sunanta Cabaret* and *Sirena*, and Academic Outputs highlights the program’s dual focus on innovation and academic contribution. Furthermore, rigorous evaluations ensure adherence to academic freedom, social responsibility, and equality, as mandated by the Higher Education Act B.E. 2562. This research not only advances the field of performing arts education but also sets a precedent for adapting traditional disciplines to the digital age. Future studies could explore the application of this framework to other performing arts programs, further expanding its impact on education and industry. These findings underscore the program’s role in fostering excellence and adaptability in a rapidly evolving creative landscape.

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