

EMBODIMENT THEORY IN THAI CLASSICAL DANCE

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative research was to explore the relationship between Embodiment theory and Thai classical dance. The author synthesized knowledge from texts, academic documents, self-training, experiences from teaching and performing, observation and expert interviews. The data were analyzed by criticism the inductive and deductive, analyzed by categorizing information, analytic induction, and verifying the validity of the findings with the experts. It was ascertained reliability and validity again with triangulation. The data were also presented by analytical description. The finding showed that Thai classical dancers practiced Pleng Cha Pleng Reow seriously, took a long time, and repeated many times until the skill was born. Intensive training leads to off-line cognition, implicit memory, reasoning, and problem-solving when there is an immediate problem. Thai classical dancers create and present creative dance from our own embodied cognition, including academic knowledge and customs. This theory results in a unique and stunning performance style called Trick and Identity of Thai classical dancers. And show the reason how to cast Thai classical dancers in various roles. Because in the end, Thai classical is the most aesthetically pleasing.

Keywords : Thai classical dance, Embodiment theory, Pleng Cha Pleng Reow, Thai court drama

INTRODUCTION

Thai classical dance refers to a performing art or form of creative activity that involves rhythmic body movement and performed in front of an audience. Such as Khon, Thai court drama, puppets, Likae, Nora, Mor Lam, Rabum, Ram, Fon, Searng etc. Those belonging to the royal court style and those for the public. (Koanantakul, 1991) In the Copyright enactment 1994, Thai classical dance includes to work that involves dancing, authentic dancing, acting, or acting that makes up a story and pantomime. Therefore, Thai dance has a comprehensive meaning, including all forms of Thai performing arts. Incidentally, this article *Thai classical dance* refers only to the Khon and Thai court drama performances of the Fine Arts Department, which are performed at the royal court only.

In 2022, the author published Thaw Worachan (Wad) The famous actress in the reign of King Rama IV, who created Pleng Cha Pleng Reow Narai, the special holy and noble dance. The article refers to her biography and outstanding dance inventions of Thaw Worachan (Wad). In addition, Thaw Worachan (Wad) also creates and presents Pleng Cha Pleng Reow Narai from her own embodied cognition, including academic knowledge and customs in the royal court (environmental situation). The author found that Pleng Cha Pleng Reow Narai reflected the form of performances. Especially performances to worship sacred things in royal ceremonies. These reflect the concept of Thaw Worachan (Wad), the connection between the mind and the world. The study of the biographies and creations of Thaw Worachan (Wad)

dance demonstrated an outstanding artist's protagonists, ideas, values, and personalities. (Phetruchee M. a., 2022)

The author later discovered that the Embodiment theory had a more significant impact on Thai classical dance than practicing and led to the creation of unique works in the field of dance. Additionally, the theory played a vital role in the selection process of performers in Thai classical dance. The results of the study highlighted the interesting attributes that make Thai classical dance distinct.

OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this qualitative research was to explore the relationship between Embodiment theory and Thai classical dance.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The author synthesized knowledge from texts, academic documents, self-training, experiences from teaching and performing, observation and expert interviews. The data were analyzed by criticism the inductive and deductive, analyzed by categorizing information, analytic induction, and verifying the validity of the findings with the experts. It was ascertained reliability and validity again with triangulation. The data were also presented by analytical description.

RESULT

The finding showed that: Thai classical dancers practiced Pleng Cha Pleng Reow seriously, this dance is a fundamental practice that all students of Thai Dramatic Arts must be trained before performing more difficult performances. It is a Mae Tha that has existed since the Ayutthaya period. It is assumed that the Grandmaster in the early Rattanakosin period had defined it as an exercise in the primary posture of the practice of Khon Drama. We take a long time, repeated many times until the skill is born. The aim of the practice is the beautiful dance method (Yamakhup, 1983). Implicit memory means that we learn a specific skill until it becomes automatic. Implicit memory occurs in off-line cognition, and off-line cognition depends on the body. Although separated from the environment, mental activity is based on a device developed for interaction with the environment, the mechanism of sensory processing, and movement control. It also consists of reasoning and problem-solving, meaning having a mental model enhances a solution (Wilson, 2002). Thus, it can characterize the movement of the organs with the pattern of the level: precise degrees and directions as mentioned above. Intensive training leads to off-line cognition, implicit memory, and reasoning and problem-solving when there is an immediate problem.

The relationship between memory and embodied cognition has been demonstrated in various studies. Moreover, through a wide variety of tasks in general, the study of embodied cognition and memory examines how the body manipulates it. How does it cause a change in memory performance? or on the contrary, Manipulation through memory tasks leads to subsequent physical changes (Dijkstra & Zwaan, 2014). It is consistent with Wilson, Margaret (2002)'s notion that the body plays a vital role in shaping the mind. Therefore, the mind must be understood in the context of its relationship with the interacting bodies in the world. These interactions can be cognitive activities that we experience in everyday life, such as driving, talking, and imagining objects in a room. However, these cognitive activities are limited by memory capacity. The memory system is based on the body's experience with the world, especially in series-episode memories. A memory system is determined by content and is

remembered based on experience by the person who remembers it (Wilson, 2002). Especially in the royal rituals that require beauty in every aspect. It reflected the meticulousness of creating dramatic works from the concept, definition of organ movement, use of space, the element, and the choreography, especially the signs conveying the meaning.

Thai classical dancers have repeatedly practiced Pleng Cha Pleng Reow for a long time until we have offline cognition, implicit memory, reasoning, and problem-solving processes. This is consistent with researcher as in (Kijkhun, 2004) said that the gorgeous performer should have basic skills in Thai dance practice and good communication of emotions in performances. The performer's personality should be related to a drama's character because the performers as a medium to convey the beauty of the dance moves and to mean to the audience. From the analysis of the choreography creations, performers must have dance tactics. Dancing must concentrate the mind, understand the principles and use of dance movements in the form of dance. The dancing posture must be in balance. Dancing uses energy to move the body by defining its intensity, slow, fast, possibly balanced, or unbalanced poses, and different energy. All organs must move concerning each other and be in balance. Use performance concentration to control movements. Weight transfer so that both the left and right organs meet each other properly and do not lose balance. The dance postures are set up in mind, and the dancing practice often until they become skillful. Therefore, it will add value and be pleasing to the performance.

The royal court is an excellent source of royal theater artists in ancient times because of their rigorous training. The trained person can move the organs at a defined level. The degrees and directions of organs movements are precisely patterned, even when the body is separated from the environment (off-line cognition). The sensory processing and implicit memory mechanisms lead to reasoning and problem-solving in immediate problems. The following method has been passed down since ancient times. This theory can explain the selection of Thai dance performers for different roles. The author had suspicions because Thai dance experts casting performers from different trained (men and women styles) to perform the same roles. For instance, Ketsuringyongpleng's character in the Suwanahong drama. A performer expresses it with different styles, and it can be observed that those with a masculine background will tend to act in a masculine way, while those with a feminine background will act in a feminine way. This report may sound unusual, leading the reader to question what the performance will entail. However, the male or female expression in the same character is a result of training in the Thai dance style, known as embodiment theory. This training technique results in a unique and stunning performance style called Trick and Identity.



Fig. 1-2 Ketsuringyongpleng's character in the Suwanahong drama.

The performers express it with different styles.

Source: Mananshaya Phetruchee

According to embodiment theory, Thai dance experts believe that casting performers with personality traits that match the characters in the story is crucial to expressing their personality and character traits beautifully and realistically. Pusadee Limsakul stated that the true personality (offline cognition, implicit memory, reasoning, and problem-solving processes) of the actors greatly influences the expression of the characters. Therefore, casting requires the careful selection of actors who can perform without hesitation or embarrassment. If the actors' personality and character traits contradict the roles they are playing, even their best attempts to act can affect the viewer's experience of the drama. The audience may not receive the intended experience, and the performance may not seem realistic and harmonious. (Limsakul, 2006)

However, it is a practical example. It describes the answer. Future generations can study, analyze, interpret, and use as a model for conservation and further development to create based on Thai court dramatic productions. It continues to make increases to the Thai dramatic art circle. The analysis and interpretation in this research article are only a personal approach based on research methodology, reflection, note-taking, and artistic dance analysis. The author has communicated perspective individually. In the future, if it will be analyzed, interpreted more deeply with more findings, and clearly explain the thought processes of the ancient expert. It will make the academic knowledge in the field of Thai dramatic art more extensive.

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