

“THE WISDOM STUDY OF MORLUM PERFORMANCE IN CASE OF UBON’S STORY TELLING MANNER, PETCH UBON BAND, UBON RATCHATHANI PROVINCE, THAILAND”

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ABSTRACT:

The wisdom study of Morlum performance in case of Ubon’s story telling manner, Petch Ubon Band, Ubon Ratchathani Province, this time is a qualitative research. The objectives of the research are to study and to gather knowledge of Morlum’s telling manner, Petch Ubon Band, systematically. The research results reveal that the Morlum performance in case of Ubon’s story telling manner, Petch Ubon Band, is the band conserving the Morlum performance in case of Ubon’s story telling manner, Petch Ubon Band, and is the only band that remains in Thailand. The band was established in 1975 having Mr. Chalot Songserm (Por. Chalot Noi) as the Head of the band. The goal of establishing the band is to preserve the art and culture of Morlum performance in case of Ubon’s story telling manner, Petch Ubon Band, to become more well-known. From studying the wisdom of Morlum performance in case of Ubon’s story telling manner, Petch Ubon Band, the knowledge has been compiled based on the knowledge management theory process to organize the information systematically. The information can be classified in depth consisting of the Morlum performance in case of Ubon’s story telling manner, Petch Ubon Band, which has changed by the era. The factor of changing various elements is due to the popularity of Morlum to play the role. Therefore, Petch Ubon Band has to adjust and develop the performance to suit the modern time more. Some elements have no more used today such as the scene used in the performance, the backward dance to the scene, etc. The researchers have analyzed the data and categorized important information in writing to produce empirical data to preserve the art of Morlum performance in case of Ubon’s story telling manner, Petch Ubon Band, to remain in the future.

Keywords:

local wisdom, performance, knowledge management, Morlum, Petch Ubon Band

Article Received: 18 October 2020, Revised: 3 November 2020, Accepted: 24 December 2020

INTRODUCTION

In the current world, things change quickly whether in materials, culture, society, and daily life that have changed completely. As the advancement of technology has entered to play a role in life, it possibly causes the goodness that has been practiced since the past to disappear. This can be called “Culture change” (Pariyat Ngamsanga, 2010, p. 1). The current culture spread to various areas around the world. Such change is caused by the influence of foreign culture to play a greater role in the art and culture. Causing the younger generation to become less interested in traditional values and culture resulting in the present generation not understanding the value that exists in local

knowledge and thinking that traditional culture is outdated, difficult to access, and hinder the development in the future (Nuryani Tri Rahayu, 2020, P.215). However, humans have learned to change about current trends as well. The culture is a link among countries to have a good relationship leading to the exchange of knowledge and mutual understanding. For the “Performing arts” of each country in the Asian region, performing art is an indicator of the uniqueness of each country. In Thailand, there are performing arts that indicate regional identity as well. For the north, there is the art of silk thread pulling dance. In the southern region, there is the performing art of Norah dance. In the central region, there is the performing art of

classical dance. For the northeast region, there is the performing art called “Morlum”.

Morlum is the northeastern local culture that has been passed down for a long time. However, when the problem of social change occurs in the present day, the northeastern culture has to adapt and change to better suit the era. Morlum performance originates from the wisdom of the Isan people that has existed since the ancient time. The Isan people initiated this wisdom of Morlum performance in order to create fun. The show will be performed after work to reduce stress or fatigue from daily work. Morlum performance is initiated from folk storytelling and incorporated folk music to the beat. The only one piece of music instrument in that era was “Kaen (reed mouth organ)” without many tools or technology to help as in modern time. When the era changed to adapt to be popular among the consumers, Morlum performance has become a new style of acting. The problem of social change is not the only problem occurring to the Morlum industry. There are still some main problems that need to find a way to be solved. That is inheritance, transfer of knowledge and the collection of knowledge that will extend to the systematic storage of knowledge related to Morlum.

Knowledge management is to collect valuable knowledge into categories (Saengchai, Sawasdee, & Jermisittiparsert, 2019). The purpose of this knowledge arrangement is to enable the knowledge to be used immediately. Such valuable knowledge arises from having a large number of personnel with experiences to transfer the knowledge that is distributed among people in order to disseminate knowledge for the whole organizations as much as possible. At present, if the information is not organized into a knowledge system in persons, it will not be used and may be lost over time (Vasso Stylianou, Andreas Savva, 2016, P.1515). Knowledge has played a large role in the society and can be used to gather the knowledge of Morlum performance in case of Ubon’s story telling manner, Petch Ubon Band, by allowing all the knowledge separated from one

another to be grouped into one group and made even more systematic for the benefit of users in the future. At present, no one has gathered the knowledge and stored the knowledge about Morlum performance in case of Ubon’s story telling manner, Petch Ubon Band, clearly. There is only the transfer of knowledge from generation to generation or self-study or from imitation of favorite artists using the experiences gained from viewing Morlum performance in case of Ubon’s story telling manner, Petch Ubon Band. As it has not been recorded in writing much, the setting up and performing of Morlum performance in case of Ubon’s story telling manner, Petch Ubon Band, are quite difficult. If you have never had experience in setting up and performing Morlum performance in case of Ubon’s story telling manner, Petch Ubon Band, it may not be able to proceed.

From the aforementioned statements, the researchers have studied and gathered the data from documents and interviews. It was found that the problem of Morlum performance in case of Ubon’s story telling manner, Petch Ubon Band, is that there is no systematic compilation of information and data collection about Morlum performance in case of Ubon’s story telling manner. This is because at present, several bands of Morlum performance in case of Ubon’s story telling manner have closed down. The band’s owners passed away without successors and no new methods occurred. The knowledge about Morlum performance in case of Ubon’s story telling manner and various elements of Morlum performance in case of Ubon’s story telling manner have not been gathered. The compilation of knowledge of Morlum performance in case of Ubon’s story telling manner that have existed since ancient time began to disappear with the changing social trends that change over time. The researchers are then interested in studying the wisdom of Morlum performance in case of Ubon’s story telling manner, Petch Ubon Band, in order to gather knowledge and store the knowledge concretely to bring benefits to future

generations as a way of study for those interested. For the objectives of this research, the researchers would like to study and gather knowledge of Morlum performance in case of Ubon's story telling manner, Petch Ubon Band, Ubon Ratchathani Province.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the wisdom study of Morlum performance in case of Ubon's story telling manner, Petch Ubon Band, Ubon Ratchathani Province, the researchers studied the concepts, theories related to knowledge management in order to bring the information gained from the study to organize the knowledge system into categories and easily accessible to those interested in studying Morlum performance in case of Ubon's story telling manner, Petch Ubon Band. Moreover, the researchers studied the theory of wisdom in order to analyze the data about the components used in performing Morlum performance in case of Ubon's story telling manner. The main information is from the local wisdom of the personnel in Petch Ubon Band which has accumulated from real experiences including the transfer of wisdom about the Morlum performance in case of Ubon's story telling manner to new generations who are interested in the Morlum performance. The researchers focus on the collection of the basics of history to the performing composition of Morlum performance in case of Ubon's story telling manner, Petch Ubon Band, to be more empirically.

RESEARCH CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In conducting the research on the wisdom study of Morlum performance in case of Ubon's story telling manner, Petch Ubon Band, Ubon Ratchathani Province, the researchers studied the data from evidence documents and related researches. The researchers analyzed the results in accordance with the qualitative research methodology. The important data collected from

knowledge is generated from studies and field study mainly focusing on the study of knowledge of Morlum performance in case of Ubon's story telling manner, Petch Ubon Band. The researchers studied by visiting the area to collect the important data from doing the interview, taking notes during the interview, and taking photos in order to use the information obtained from the interview to prepare the data and verify the accuracy by using the triangular method. The obtained information is categorized. The research findings are analyzed and reported with descriptive analysis methods. In this interview, the researchers have specified the scope of the important informants including the group of senior artists working in the Petch Ubon Band for a period of 30 years or more, the group of 10 actors in the Petch Ubon Band, the group of 10 musicians in the Petch Ubon Band, the group of 10 hirers, and the group of 10 audiences.

RESEARCH TOOLS

The tools used in this research are the interview forms on the wisdom study of Morlum performance in case of Ubon's story telling manner, Petch Ubon Band, Ubon Ratchathani Province, consisting of 4 forms; 1st Interview form for senior artists, 2nd Interview form for actors and musicians, 3rd Interview form for Morlum hirers, 4th Interview form for Morlum audiences. All of the 4 interview forms have been through the process of examining the content coverage from the experts in order to obtain complete information. The experts are Assistant Professor Dr. Supawan Satjapibun, Assistant Dean for Standards and Teaching Profession Experience under the supervision of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Faculty of Education, Srinakharinwirot University, Dr. Kamla Musika, Department of Humanities, Faculty of Liberal Arts, Ubon Ratchathani University, Acting Sub Lt. Dr. Chainat Mapetch, Lecturer in Art, Music and Folk Performances, Faculty of Dramatic Arts, Roi Et College of Dramatic Arts, Bunditpatanasilpa Institute, Ministry of Culture.

When having received the evaluation form of the interview from the experts, the researchers modified and applied the interview form that has been evaluated as a guideline for data collection as well as analyzing the research results based on the conceptual framework and the research objectives to be presented in an analytical descriptive format. When having received the information from the interview, the researchers brought knowledge to analyze data and categorize according to knowledge management theory process in order to obtain important information such as the background of Petch Ubon Band, performance style, steps of performance, performance costumes, etc.

RESEARCH RESULTS

For the research on the wisdom study of Morlum performance in case of Ubon's story telling manner, Petch Ubon Band, Ubon Ratchathani Province, the researchers applied the concepts, theories of knowledge management to study and gather knowledge of Morlum performance in case of Ubon's story telling manner, Petch Ubon Band, systematically. The concepts and theories related to the study of folk wisdom in performing Morlum performance in case of Ubon's story telling manner, Petch Ubon Band, including the knowledge in performing Morlum performance in case of Ubon's story telling manner, Petch Ubon Band. The researchers analyzed the data and presented according to the research objectives. The contents are divided into 2 main topics as follows.

1. Regarding the background of Morlum performance in case of Ubon's story telling manner, Petch Ubon Band, it was founded in 1975 at the house No. 454 - 456 Jangsanit Road, Nai Mueang Sub-district, Muang Ubon Ratchathani District, Ubon Ratchathani Province. The founder of Petch Ubon Band is Mr. Chalot Songserm or Por. Chalot Noi Songserm (National Artist in Folk Performing Art of "Morlum" for the year 2005). The beginning of the establishment of Petch Ubon Band was due to the gathering of professional

artists such as Mr. Chalot Songserm)Head of Petch Ubon Band(, Mr. Duang Wangsalun)Song composer(, Mr. Jom Srisuk)Committee of Petch Ubon Band(, Mr. Suwan Thimanon)Committee of Petch Ubon Band(and Mr. Prayat Namsri)Committee of Petch Ubon Band(. They found Petch Ubon Band with the goal of the operation in preserving the northeastern art and culture in the northeastern style of Morlum performance in case of Ubon's story telling manner that is unique to the Ubon people until today (Suwan Thimanon, Chalot Songserm, Jom Srisuk, Personal Communication, 20th February, 2019).



Picture 1: Founders of Petch Ubon Band who are still alive at present

)Source: Jaruwan Songserm. The photo was taken on 20th February, 2019(

2. Regarding the elements of Morlum performance in case of Ubon's story telling manner, Petch Ubon Band, the details in the performance elements are as follows:

2.1 Regarding the style of Morlum performance in case of Ubon's story telling manner, Petch Ubon Band, the researchers collected the data of knowledge in the style of Morlum performance in case of Ubon's story telling manner, Petch Ubon Band, using the knowledge management process which can be divided into 3 styles. The first style is the performance style used in 1975 - 1977. There are 5 steps including the ceremony of veneration, the intro show of Morlum, the pre-performance dubbing, the performing of Morlum performance in case of Ubon's story telling manner, the farewell to the audiences, etc. The 2nd

and the 3rd styles are the performance styles used since the year 1978 until present. Due to the current trend of Luk Thung Morlum, the performance has been changed to be more interesting by adding the process into 8 steps. These have been carried out to the present day, namely, the ceremony of veneration and commemoration of teacher, the host's opening speech, the playing of Royal Anthem and the opening performance of the band, the singers sing the country songs, the pre-performance dubbing, the performing of Morlum performance in case of Ubon's story telling manner, the farewell to the audiences to thank the audiences, etc.

2.2 Regarding the make-up and costumes in Morlum performance in case of Ubon's story telling manner, Petch Ubon Band, the make-up is often made to suit the roles and types of characters in performing Morlum; 1. Make-up of the male and female protagonists, 2. Make-up of the villains, 3. Make-up of the jokers, etc. The costumes of Morlum performance in case of Ubon's story telling manner can be divided into 3 styles. The 1st costume style was from 1975 – 1977. The men were influenced by Li-ke dressing having the costume called the diamond costume with the head ornament. The pants were decorated with diamond gaiters. For Morlum women's costumes, the gold jewelry was used. The women dressed in Thai Boromphiman and Chakri Thai costumes. The 2nd costume style was from 1978 - 1997. The dresses of the male Morlum were diamond dresses including the diamond dresses sewn together or separate diamond vests. For the pants, skirts were added to cover the crotch of the male actors. The entire set of cover was decorated with diamonds. For the female Morlum, they popularly wear Thai Chakri dresses and there was an additional evening dress to be more modern. The 3rd costume style was from 1997 - present. There is a change of dressing style. The male Morlum wear the diamond dresses decorated with crystals. For the head part, the head ornament is used as same as those of Li-ke. The pants and skirts are sewn together for easier wearing. The

female dress code is called Thai applied dress decorated with Lao breast cloth embroidered with pearl. For hairdressing, the women wear a crown instead of gold ornament. They commonly use silver jewelry and wear brogans to become the identity of Petch Ubon Band until today. (Mookda Kenti, Personal Communication, 26th October, 2019).



Picture 3: Diamond costumes of male and female Morlum of Petch Ubon Band

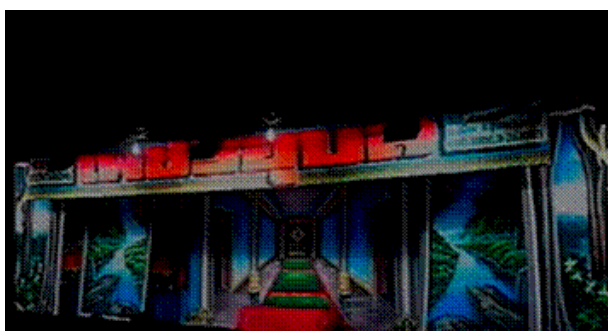
(Source: Chukiart Eaknam. The photo was taken on 25th October, 2019.)

2.3 The musical instruments used in Morlum performance in case of Ubon's story telling manner, Petch Ubon Band, in the earliest times were founded only Kaen (reed mouth organ), drums, and rhyming cymbals for fun only. When the trend of the country performance came to play the role, the Petch Ubon Band has changed to match the era by bringing international musical instruments in the string type such as electric guitars, bass guitars, finger wedge instruments (keyboards), beat type such as drums, tom-tom drums, blowing type such as Kaen (reed mouth organ), saxophone, trumpet, trombone, etc. in order to make the audiences more fun (Metha Rungreang, Personal Communication, 22nd February, 2019).

2.4 The story used in Morlum performance in case of Ubon's story telling manner, Petch Ubon Band, can be categorized as follows. The 1st type is the story arising from the inscription into a palm leaf. The person who can compose this story must be the person who ordained before. The content of

the story will insert the doctrine of Buddhist teachings such as the story of White Egret, Vessantara Jataka Murals, etc. The 2nd type is the northeastern ancient literature such as Thao Kam Ka Dam, Sai Nan Na Kaen, etc. The contents of this type of story come from the Isan ancient literature that the author has used as a form of story-telling for actors to use. The 3rd type is the legend which is the story told by the old people in the past to the descendants from generation to generation. The author brings the story to compose in order to convey the story in the form of Morlum performance (Chalat Songserm, Personal Communication, 20th February, 2019).

2.5 The backdrops used in Morlum performance in case of Ubon's story telling manner, Petch Ubon Band, have been influenced by the performance of Li-ke in the central region. The Morlum backdrops consist of the throne hall backdrop, the forest backdrop, and the cottage backdrop. Petch Ubon Band used the cloth backdrops during 1975 – 1977. When there was a change in the performance style, the use of the backdrops in the Morlum performance were canceled and replaced by the badges decorated with sequins to create glitter instead. In the year 1994 with the capitalists investment in order to preserve the northeastern art and culture of Morlum, the cloth backdrop were used again. However, in this time, it was just creating media to disseminate the Morlum performance to the audiences. The cloth backdrop was not brought to be used because the stage used in the performance could not be installed with the cloth backdrop.



Picture 4: Cloth backdrop of throne hall of Petch Ubon Band

(Source: Ratchabut, Chalat Songserm.)2001).

Yak Hai Phern Tai To Tai. Live performance VCD of Morlum performance in case of Ubon's story telling manner, Petch Ubon Band, Thailand.

Ratchabut Entertainment Co., Ltd.

2. The stage used in Morlum performance in case of Ubon's story telling manner, Petch Ubon Band, have been changed according to the time when the trend of new style of performance came to replace. The researchers found that the stage used in Morlum performance in case of story-telling manner can be divided according to the time period in 3 types. The 1st form is that the stage used in Morlum performance in case of story-telling manner is the permanent construction of shelter stage popularly constructed at a temple or in the middle of the village. The construction of the stage will be provided by the hirer for Petch Ubon Band. The 2nd form is that as Petch Ubon Band does not perform Morlum by travelling or collecting the entrance fees, the stage therefore has changed to a temporary stage form (steel frame scaffolding) which can be installed and moved easily. The construction of the stage consists of a steel frame made into 2 tiers with the plank used for making the floor of the stage. There is a power supply system and an increase in the number of lamps making the audiences clearly see the performers. The final step of installation is to bring the canvas to enclose the lower part of the stage. The 3rd form is that the stage has been modified in terms of increasing equipment. The scaffolding is made to be larger. The stage decorations have been changed from stand signs to vinyl signs. The original signboard has a heavy weight in installation requiring more installation resources and limited storage space. The form and the size of the stage depend on the hirer who proposed what size and we can arrange the form according to the needs of the hirer.

2.7 The opportunity used in Morlum performance in case of Ubon's story telling manner, Petch Ubon Band, occurs from the merit making of the annual tradition according to the concept of Heat

Sib Song Khong Sib Si of the Isan people. In the northeastern culture, when there is an annual merit-making ceremony, theaters are hired to be entertained in viewing. The most popular ceremonies in hiring Morlum include Annual merit making, Buddhist Lent, Kathin Ceremony, Pha Wed Ceremony, Headstone laying ceremony, gable apex raising ceremony, sacred boundary stone laying ceremony. All are the most popular works which the hirers hire the performance. At present, it includes the performance in the retirement ceremony or the reminiscing of past deceased parents such as the merit making or the funeral which Morlum is also hired to perform.

2.8 In hiring Morlum performance in case of Ubon's story telling manner, Petch Ubon Band, there is the hiring form that clearly define the characteristics of hiring and work together with the mutual agreements. The Band's leader has used the form since 1975 at the beginning of Band's establishment. The agreements were modified following the changes in the hiring and they are used to this day. In hiring, the hirer must pay a deposit in advance as agreed with the Morlum office. The Petch Ubon Band will sign 2 contracts for the hirer to keep. If errors occur in hiring or breach of contractual agreements, the legal actions can be taken. Currently, the hiring form for the Petch Ubon Band can be divided into 3 types. The large band type is the integrated hiring type. The Petch Ubon Band will be responsible for bringing the stage and audio equipment by themselves along with bringing the dancers to perform the show. The medium band type is that the hirer has to provide the stage and the sound equipment for Morlum performers. The Band will reduce the number of performers and musicians at the price as agreed with the hirer. There will be no dancer in this type. For the small band type, the hiring is similar to hiring the middle band. The small band is exclusive. There are around 10-15 Morlum performers as some hirers prefer to watch the show in small size with cheap price. The Petch Ubon Band then organizes this hiring form by maintaining the quality of the

show as before and the performance is fully prepared for the audiences further.

RESEARCH DISCUSSION

From conducting the research on the wisdom study of Morlum performance in case of Ubon's story telling manner, Petch Ubon Band, Ubon Ratchathani Province, the researchers found that the history of the Morlum performance in case of Ubon's story telling manner, Petch Ubon Band, has undergone a period of significant transitions that are a factor in the formation of the Petch Ubon Band and the journey in the Morlum performance in case of Ubon's story telling manner, Petch Ubon Band, which have been changed according to the times. Some elements of the Morlum performance in case of Ubon's story telling manner, Petch Ubon Band, have not been used at present such as the use of cloth backdrop as a backdrop for the Morlum show, dance back to the scene, etc. The Band has adapted to the trend that has occurred for the survival of the Petch Ubon Band. The Petch Ubon Band has adapted and developed the performance according to the needs of the audiences. The Band also pays attention to the creation of hiring forms allowing hirers to have more hiring options. The researcher has organized the knowledge to be divided into 2 major topics; 1) the history of Petch Ubon Band, 2) the style of Morlum performance in case of Ubon's story telling manner which can tell the steps before and after the Morlum performance systematically. The main factor that the Petch Ubon Band has existed to this day is due to the determination of Mr. Chalot Songserm, Head of Petch Ubon Band, who practices Morlum performance and invents special techniques and tricks to make the singing in a specific way that can be unique for identifying the work of Por. Chalot Noi Songserm, Head of Petch Ubon Band. The singing is based on seasonal nature with the rhythm, rhyme, and sound smoothly correspondent with the composed poem. This leads to uniqueness that is impossible to imitate his voice.

From the wisdom study of Morlum performance in case of Ubon's story telling manner, Petch Ubon Band, Ubon Ratchathani Province, the researchers found the findings which are factors in the existence of the Petch Ubon Band to be popular until today. These can be divided into 2 topics; 1. Management of the Petch Ubon Band which is the factor to retain people in the Band to stay altogether for a long time. The management of the Petch Ubon Band is in the form of family having Mr. Chalot Songserm as a head of a family to take care of the lives of his subordinates as well as transferring knowledge without hoping for return. 2. Having capitalists investing in making the media to be disseminated to public can create the revenue for the Company and the Petch Ubon Band. It is an investment in business to purchase monopoly rights. The Company does not have requirements that the Band must be affiliated with the company and does not have an obligation to not be able to perform in that story. The only one thing that cannot be done is to repeat the script and the story that have already been recorded without the permission from the company. This will be a violation of the Company's copyright immediately. This is, therefore, a mutual benefit with the same goal in preserving the northeastern art and culture in the northeastern style of Morlum performance in case of Ubon's story telling manner not to disappear. This is correspondent with Navin Kumar Singh (2013, P.15) stating that the globalized world which can give access to many languages and diverse cultural resources will benefit the world society and economy. Therefore, the academicians should encourage the native culture and local cultural heritage everywhere to be preserved and regarded until being accepted at the national and global level for the culture to continue further.

In studying and collecting the knowledge of Morlum performance in case of Ubon's story telling manner, Petch Ubon Band, Ubon Ratchathani Province, the researchers wish to collect all data to be a database of Morlum performance in case of Ubon's story telling

manner, Petch Ubon Band. The performance still maintains the original style without many changes in performance. Now, in Ubon Ratchathani Province, only Morlum performance in case of Ubon's story telling manner, Petch Ubon Band, remains. Therefore, the researchers have gathered and stored the knowledge systematically in order to preserve the northeastern Thai performing style of Morlum for the benefit of the academic and Morlum industry to be used as a database to support knowledge for those who are interested to study for further development from researches not to lose the important information over time.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From researching the wisdom study of Morlum performance in case of Ubon's story telling manner, Petch Ubon Band, Ubon Ratchathani Province, it is found that at present the Morlum performance in case of Ubon's story telling manner begins to reduce from the Morlum field. The main factor is due to the difficulty in singing and making the melodious sound. Therefore, it is necessary to have people who have a lot of knowledge and ability in acting and have a good voice. Currently, only the Petch Ubon Band performs the Ubon melodies in the original form. Thus, those who will inherit, transfer, and carry on the Isan arts and culture in the aspect of this Ubon's story telling manner of Morlum performance are needed for not to make it lost in time.

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