

Promoting Thailand's Creative Tourism: A Case Study of Thai Classical Dance Lessons

Yutthapoom Suwannavej¹, Watcharaphong Soongpankhao¹ & Suwanna Kemdang¹

¹ Faculty of Liberal Arts, Rajamangala University of Technology Phra Nakhon, Thailand

Correspondence: Watcharaphong Soongpankhao, Faculty of Liberal Arts, Rajamangala University of Technology Phra Nakhon, 86 Phitsanuloke Road, Dusit, Bangkok 10300 Thailand

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Abstract

Thai performing arts play a crucial role in Thailand's tourism industry. This article discusses Thai Dancing Arts' role in promoting Thailand's creative tourism, relevant models, and theories. The article also displays a prototypical example of the Thai dancing lesson in conjunction with the use of technology. Additionally, the article delves into the practical aspects of teaching basic Thai dancing to foreign tourists or English-speaking learners. This article could help practitioners, policymakers, and private or public tourism authorities incorporate Thai dancing lessons into their creative tourism programs to disseminate Thai culture, add value to Thai intangible cultural heritage, and promote Thailand's tourism.

Keywords: creative tourism, Thai Classical Dance Lesson, ESP

1. Introduction

Culture is an important part of adding value to Thai tourism at both the local and national levels, and many countries have put in place strategies to promote creative tourism and cultural tourism to attract foreign tourists with cultural differences to experience or be part of a new cultural experience that they are not familiar with. These include lifestyle, performing arts, and cultural buildings. The purpose is to drive the country's economy, build an image, connect international relations, and foster Thailand's cultural "soft power" (Bangkokbiznews, 2022).

Creative tourism is a form of tourism that has changed significantly from cultural tourism. As a result of economic and social changes, which respond to changes in the lifestyle of new groups of people, Creative tourism is a form of tourism that emphasizes the engagement between tourists (the guest) and tourists (the host) and promotes serious participation through experiences derived from learning in tourist areas (authentic-active participation). Develop their creative potential together, which will create early memories to the point of a deep impression in the tourism area (understanding the specific culture or spirit of the place). This creative tourism provides a new answer that is in line with the tastes of today's tourism. Not only do they want to "see" different societies and cultures, but they also want to learn and understand the cultural heritage of the tourist area deeply while developing their potential through practising the arts and cultural activities of the tourist area.

Academics and tourism agencies have presented various examples related to the promotion of creative tourism, such as the Creative Tourism Thailand project operated by the Special Area Development Organization for Sustainable Tourism (DASTA, 2020), which has selected creative tourism activities in various regions of Thailand. A total of 21 activities under the concept of Be Local Artist for a Day gather local wisdom, art, and culture to be presented concretely so that tourists have the opportunity to learn and create a direct experience with the community and travel along the route of the project, such as the Lantern Route, Tung Kha King, Nan Province. More examples are the path to learn the Ta-Khon ghost mask in Dan Sai District, Loei Province, or Mun Mang Mud My Route Prophecy from Fabric Patterns Khmerat District, Ubon Ratchathani Province, etc.

Another form of creative tourism that creates a learning experience that is well-known and popular among foreigners is the Thai Cooking School, which brings the knowledge and identity of Thai tastes, ingredients, cooking techniques, and food plating to foreigners in the form of workshop lessons. Another important example is the use of Thai dance as content for demonstrations, training, or business development. It attracts tourists who are interested in performing arts and stimulates the economy. Currently, few public educational institutions and private schools in Thailand offer Thai dance training to foreigners. The training course is organized for one day or in the

form of a short-term course, which presents an artistic and cultural identity and creates a soft power that can generate income for the country. However, more record-keeping, standardization or widespread academic dissemination must be done. An important identity and part of Thailand's cultural expression trend is Thai dance, which is not only for entertainment. Chaisongkram (2001) said that Thai dance can describe its characteristics and reflect the characteristics of Thai society that are different from other places.

Currently, Thai dance has become very widespread, not only among people in the dance circle (ingroup), dance artists, and dance audiences but also among those outside the field of Thai dance (outgroup). At the same time, government agencies, educational institutions, private agencies, and independent artist groups have the opportunity to disseminate Thai dance performing arts at the international level. Both were held in Thailand, inviting foreigners to participate and organizing performances and workshops abroad for them to have the opportunity to exchange ideas. The above is based on conservation, restoration, development, transmission, and dissemination (Soongpankhaio, 2019).

One of the obvious obstacles is the involvement of those involved in cultural dissemination and tourism promotion. Culturally, they must act as a transmitter of knowledge. Explain the performance style, dance moves, and dance skills for foreigners, which are the problems of using English to communicate. This is because using English for specific purposes is different from using English for daily communication. Wirunrak (2004) said about the role of dance in spreading identity that one of the problems for viewers from different cultures is that they do not understand much about the language, music, rituals, and meanings of the performance and do not have time to watch it fully. The purpose of this article is to present the importance of the English language. To disseminate Thai dance to promote creative tourism. Related principles and theories, as well as examples of media and patterns of technology use as part of the process of cultural dissemination, may benefit the community. Government and private agencies, dance artists, or the general public who want to use English are part of disseminating Thai dance in order to increase the value of intangible cultural heritage and promote Thai tourism.

2. Creative Tourism

Creative tourism is "tourism that encourages tourists to exchange and learn to deeply understand the socio-cultural values and environment of tourist areas through direct experience with the owners of the area or cultural owners" (Working Group of the Creative Tourism Model Project, 2012, cited in Wisudthiluck, 2015, p. 72).

Richard (2010) has proposed two basic modes of implementation for creative tourism:

- 1) Using creativity in a tourist activity
- 2) Using creativity as a backdrop for tourism

The first form is already practised in creative tourism activities that allow tourists to participate in the tourist area. However, the use of creativity as a backdrop for tourism or creating an atmosphere in various tourist attractions is becoming increasingly popular. For instance, UNESCO has designated Shantafe as a Creative City of Arts and Crafts, and it organizes learning-related activities. Training in pottery, the art of the Pueblo tribe in this district, has been famous for its traditional cooking courses. The Museum of Traditional Art offers a variety of experiences for creative tourists to participate in, ranging from purchasing locally made products to visiting, tasting, and learning specific skills in the tourist area.

Richard (2010), one of the founders of the creative tourism concept, pointed out a new form of tourism called "Creative Tourism." However, it is a part of cultural tourism. In the overall picture, it is a form of tourism that has shifted its interest from tangible cultural resources to abstract cultural resources. Many tourists turn their attention to tourism, image, identity, lifestyles, atmosphere, narratives, creativity, and media.

In addition, the original interest is that tourists often focus on the value of high culture, such as castles, palaces, etc. Art galleries and museums have also changed to pay attention to everyday cultures, such as local restaurants, markets, houses, and community lifestyles that will make tourism meet and participate in the "real life" of people from the past to just spectators. Besides, tourists demand activities in the places they travel to for a longer period. At the same time, creative tourism is considered an important tool that encourages tourists to have a deep understanding of the specific cultural features of a place, with the intention of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to encourage the exchange of learning. Promoting diversity and intercultural dialogue.

Creative tourism differs from traditional crafts or heritage tourism, where tourists are only spectators from a distance, such as taking pictures and buying souvenirs. However, creative tourism is linked to cultural or arts tourism, which is passive tourism that is visiting and contemplating, to tourism where tourists actively participate in cultural activities through experiencing, participating, and learning. The goal is to enhance their learning and

creativity through hands-on experiences, which they can apply in their daily lives upon their return. Additionally, it contributes to their journey of self-actualization, self-expression, and identity, enabling them to stand out in the contemporary world.

There are various forms of creative tourism, such as learning activities such as pottery making and weaving, and the following forms of activities can be used to organize workshops:

1) Indulging in local cuisine, desserts, or winemaking: Traditional liquor can also be arranged for tourists to have experience through participating in wine, local liquor, or snack tasting with knowledge and hands-on experience (experience or open ateliers).

2) Seeing: Instead of travelling to see specific spots, it is arranged as a visit along the route, such as the route to visit the perfume coconut plantation in Chachoengsao province, Thailand, so that tourists can see the process from the beginning of planting coconut trees to caring for coconut trees. The process involves harvesting the coconuts and transforming them into food or souvenirs, among other activities.

3) Buying can also adapt such activities to the experience of walking through the gallery or shop window. Richard (2011) has made adjustments to the map of creative tourism. It represents a form of experiences and products due to the use of creativity as a background and wide-ranging creativity as an activity that requires increasing involvement, ranging from products for trading to itineraries, experimentation, testing, and learning. There are four types of carriers of creativity: products, processes, people, and environment.

Creative tourism thus opens up new opportunities for the tourism industry, which is in a whirlpool, making tourism areas similar. Creative tourism has the potential to adapt to the travel habits of the new generation of tourists. There is a tendency to respond to the need to search for meaning and need new experiences to enhance their potential. It is also a form of tourism that focuses on tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

The appeal of creative tourism is clear, highlighting its diversity and ability to adapt to creative activities based on capital. Cultural assets are present, deeply rooted in the region, and intricately connected to the local community. Creative tourism provides visitors or tourists with opportunities to engage in specific activities. Having a space that aligns with one's unique activities is paramount. Some activities link themselves to the fame raised in the past, such as tourism in the footsteps of the famous poet Sunthorn Phu in Phetchaburi Province, Thailand. Some have used the designer's fame to elevate their traditional craft internationally.

Under the public health standard "New Normal", by continuing responsible tourism from 2020 to continue to move forward for sustainable Thai tourism by making Thai people aware of the value and jointly increasing the value of Thai tourism through safer domestic tourism, the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) has determined three operating methods:

1) Stimulate the growth of domestic tourists in a balanced manner. Invite and encourage people in Thailand to travel to secondary urban areas or secondary tourist attractions in major cities. Encourage travel on weekdays through information services from the TAT, as follows:

Stimulate the frequency of travel to experience the value of the Thai brand. We are presenting unique local Thailand travel experiences and organizing events to attract target groups to travel.

Diversify travel to secondary areas according to the area's identity, targeting tourists who like the uniqueness of each locality while managing the travel flow of foreign tourists in Thailand. To distribute the number of tourists from the main city to the secondary city and secondary tourist attractions in the main city.

Promote tourism to experience the value of weekdays. Focus on target groups interested in the experience and value of tourism that goes beyond the price by presenting the value of weekday tourism in a clear and suitable way for the target group. Encourage more Thai tourists to visit on weekdays.

Marketing communication aims to establish a trend of domestic travel by creating and disseminating tourism information through channels that align with the behaviour and needs of tourists, thereby increasing the frequency of travel demand. 1.4 Marketing communication aims to establish a trend of domestic travel by creating and disseminating tourism information through channels that align with the behaviour and needs of tourists, thereby increasing the frequency of travel demand.

2) Create travel experiences: Prioritize increasing travel spending by implementing the following strategies:

Maintain the average length of stay with creative stories and travel activities.

The goal is to increase the average daily expenses of Thai tourists by developing and creating added value for tourism activities. Tourism products and services that provide a valuable travel experience that reflects Thai

wisdom and the Thai way, or products that have won the Thailand Tourism Awards or Amazing Thailand Safety and Health Administration (SHA), as well as creative tourism attractions

Promote creative tourism: We aim to empower local communities to develop and offer products that reflect the Thai way of life, adding value on their own in collaboration with communities, networks, and start-up groups that work creatively to create innovation in tourism

3) Develop brand value to be equivalent to the value of foreign tourism. This aims to make Thai people realize the value of Thai tourism, which has and is more than expected. The process is as follows:

Establishing a Domestic Tourism Trend. It presents the value that tourists will get from tourism in Thailand that is as good as foreign tourism through the marketing communication campaign “Amazing Thailand”, with the concept that “Tourism in Thailand is more amazing than before”.

Strengthen the sustainability of Thai tourism brands. Responsible tourism and developing marketing competitiveness for socially and environmentally responsible partners (Department of Tourism, 2020).

3. Instructing Thai Dance to Foreigners

Makpa (2015) surveyed the opinions of foreign tourists about arts and cultural attractions in Bangkok. The study revealed that foreign tourists needed help comprehending the performance’s content. This is in line with Soongpankhao (2019), who said that the main obstacle to the dissemination of Thai dance to the world is the language limitation of dance teachers, educational and tourism personnel, or related dance artists, including the problem of using English as a medium to communicate with technical vocabulary and specific sentence form. For example, English terms used to refer to body organs and understood only in the dance industry differ from commonly used terms such as the top of the head, the outer end of the eyebrow, the upper part of the ball of the foot, etc. Picture 1 shows the body’s organs, which are called and understood only in the dance industry.

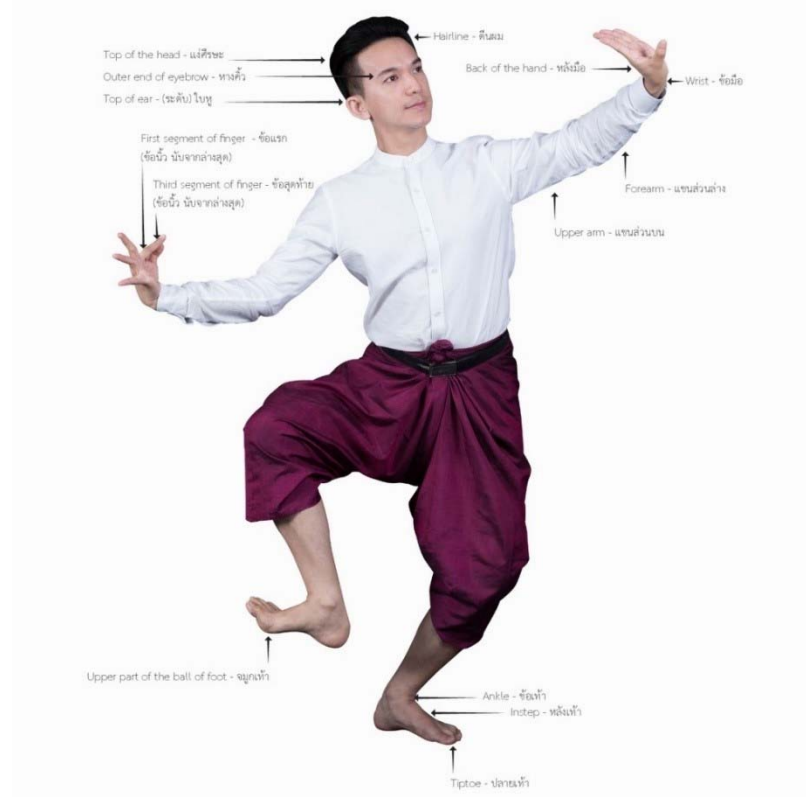


Figure 1. The body organs of the dancers are called and understood only in the dance industry

Source: Soongpankhao, 2019, p. 84.

Organizing creative tourism activities that use Thai dance as an important part of knowledge transfer, training, and creating new experiences for foreign tourists can be started in the following three steps:

1) Analyze the learners

Before bringing tourists to learn about performing arts and culture, the event designer may analyze basic information that plays an important role in the design of the tourist's activity, such as age, occupation, interests, basic knowledge of performing arts, the appropriate time for organizing Thai dance training activities and applying the knowledge learned to further develop in the future

2) Design the event/lesson

Designing dance training activities by the tourist route is important to create an impression and tell a story that will increase interest. Choosing a performance set that aligns with the local culture, such as the Sukhothai World Heritage Tourism Route in Thailand, may be suitable for training in archaeological dance (e.g., Sukhothai dance). Additionally, tourist routes in the northeast province of Thailand with the tradition of fireballs may organize training on fireball performances to align with local traditions, etc. Presenting performances to foreign tourists should be appropriate for their duration and learning abilities, avoiding those demanding advanced performance skills or requiring lengthy training sessions. The chosen performance should be a folk performance, entertaining, and easy to learn in the short term.

3) Prepare content and activities

Regarding the provision of dance training content and activities for foreigners, Soongpankhao (2019) said that teaching basic Thai dance to foreigners involves the use of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in education or academics in the form of a teaching curriculum that focuses on language content by focusing on situations and topics. The terms used in teaching are dance terminology and general terms to communicate with foreign learners so they understand the content and can practice it correctly. In the next section, a sample of basic Thai dance training activities for foreigners for 1 hour is presented as a guide for those interested in using them for foreigners.

Table 1. Example of lesson plan

<i>Topic</i>	Basic Thai Dancing Workshop
<i>Duration</i>	60 Minutes
<i>Materials</i>	1. Video-Samples from the book entitled "English for Instructing Basis Thai Dance to Foreign Learners" (Soongpankhao, 2019) or samples from Youtube.com 2. Fabric for loincloth
<i>Time</i>	<i>Activity</i>
10 Mins	<i>Introduction</i> The instructor greets the students, introduces themselves, and provides information about the training, such as what activities the 60-minute training duration consists of from the beginning to the end, and then explains the history and basic forms of Thai dance to the learners to see pictures of various forms of Thai dance such as Khon, dance, dance, folk performances, etc. The instructor will show a video for students to watch as a short preview of each type of performance. Example of Khon performance video: https://youtu.be/qZmJIRUtdG
15 Mins	<i>Preparation</i> Instructor guides or demos the following Instruction regarding wearing a loincloth for Thai dance students is given by opening a demonstration video in English and then allowing students to try to wear a loincloth in pairs. Example of a video demonstrating loincloth: https://youtu.be/cVcHM8c3_w4?t=62 Prostration and sitting are the first steps before beginning Thai dance teaching and learning activities. The instructor demonstrated prostration or sitting for the male and female postures for students to watch and follow. Prostrating posture: https://youtube.com/shorts/5VeIZFbiM1A?feature=share Sitting posture: https://youtu.be/TUu_iIe3teM
5 Mins	<i>Warm-up</i> The instructor demonstrates the preparation of the body before practicing Thai dance, the instructor demonstrates body preparation by bending the hands and arms. Example of a video demonstration of hand bending: https://youtu.be/fHLkmOxoTLM Arm bending: https://youtube.com/shorts/3X0woRseOMY?feature=share
15 Mins	<i>Practice</i> In the practical stage, it will be explained and demonstrated. The instructor may choose simple dance vocabulary and gesture language to convey, for example: Dance postures – Upper/Lower Chip, Upper/Lower Wong Dance Language – Postures that represent I, you, love, angry, cry. Instructors can play demonstration videos for students to

	watch and try to follow. Example of a dance demonstration video: https://youtu.be/QZW1o0EopiQ Dance Language: https://youtu.be/Q0Q0NzqZ5pc
10 Mins	Review Known as “Tell Me a Story”, this activity allows learners to practice language, gestures, and dance to form simple sentences or short stories. The instructor may select one student to perform a dance gesture such as “I-Love-You” without pronouncing it, and then let the rest of the students guess what the sentence is. This step aims to review the content that has been learned. If there is time, other learners may be selected to practice the dance language and gestures for their friends to guess as appropriate.
5 Mins	Close In the next order, the instructor summarizes past activities, expresses gratitude, or introduces activities related to other arts and culture to promote tourism. In addition, if the relevant agencies want to poll opinions or collect data for research from tourist groups, you can use this time to politely ask tourists to provide their responses. This can be an online form or a documented questionnaire.

The sample lesson relies on technology to explain the content related to Thai dance in English, including presenting examples of art and cultural performances to foreigners in a concrete way. This enhances the appeal of teaching and learning management. It can be applied to teaching Thai dance to foreigners online through various channels today.

4. Conclusion

This article highlights the significant role of the English language in disseminating Thai dance to promote creative tourism. This article explores related principles and theories, along with illustrative activities that integrate technology into the process of cultural dissemination, potentially yielding benefits for the community. Dance artists, government agencies, and the general public aim to spread Thai dance. They promote Thai tourism through strategic design in creative tourism, arts and culture tourism, or related sectors. This type of creative tourism may be an option that aligns with today’s tourism tastes, which not only want to “see” different societies and cultures but also stimulate the desire to learn and deeply understand the performing arts’ cultural heritage. At the same time, they develop their potential through the practice of artistic and cultural activities in the tourist area. They may receive new inspiration after returning to their normal lives. Effective creative tourism may require serious cooperation of personnel from all country sectors. In addition, the relevant authorities should focus on developing foreign language proficiency. This is because it is the basis for expanding knowledge, especially in the current situation where Thailand has to deal with the decline in the number of tourists during the pandemic era and compete with other countries to attract tourists to spend time in Thailand.

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Authors’ contributions

Sample: Asst. Prof. Dr. Soongpankhao and Dr. Kemdang were responsible for study design and revising. Asst. Prof. Dr. Soongpankhao drafted the manuscript and Asst. Prof. Dr. Suwannavej revised it. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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