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Music Education Policies and their Implementation in the Higher Education System in Thailand: What Does the Future Hold?

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Abstract

The development of Music Education in Thailand's Higher Education has been impacted by external changes in the social, political, and administrative contexts. In the next period (2008-2017) Thailand's music education system will be confronting significant tendencies including a society dominated by a free capitalist economy and an alternative tendency toward spiritual well-being within the culture. Thailand's music education system must be prepared to adjust to these issues. This research shows that accommodating these changes includes: (1) increased focus on the transition from basic education to higher education prioritizing the development of students into professional musicians (2) emphasis on music education for the general public, making music education available to people of all segments of society (3) developing opportunities for music creation and learning and (4) greater empowerment of musicians, music teachers, and music scholars. These four areas should allow Thailand to respond to future trends and develop music education in Thailand's higher education institutions accordingly.

Introduction

This article is a part of the dissertation for a Doctor of Philosophy in Music Education at the College of Music, Mahidol University, Thailand, on the topic of the Development of Music Education in Higher Education in Thailand. The purpose of this study was to determine the past, present, and future of music education in higher education and to design the ideal future of music education policies and their implementation in Thailand's higher education in response to various upcoming tendencies of the society, the world, and the domestic context in the next period. This article focuses on the trends of music education in Thailand's higher education institutions in the next period (2008-2017) and makes strategic suggestions.

According to the study, music education in higher education has developed and provided instruction for more than seven decades; however, it still faces various problems. According to information from the seminar on music education in Thailand in 2006 at the College of Music, Mahidol University, the 40 states and private higher education institutions providing music programs lack efficiency in providing education. Each institution faces various problems such as a lack of staff, instructors, instruments, buildings, and funding. During the interview with the music scholar, Sugree Charoensook in 2006, he criticized music education's status in Thailand's higher education because "...the higher education institutions which are universities want to provide music programs considered to be modern and necessary...But every institution faces a lack of budget, human resources, teaching areas and facilities, and knowledge. The only thing that they have in common is shared problems. Every university providing a music program has similar problems."

From the data analysis of music education in higher education, the expansion of the music programs in Thailand's higher education institutions have faced various problems. For instance, the continually changing political systems connected with education lead to an

inconsistent policy and delayed administration. Discussion and study of music were considered as matters of minor importance. The national policy normally gives importance to major matters or social problems. Moreover, the Office of the Higher Education Commission (OHEC) did not consider music graduates to be in demand. During the interview with the Secretary-General Office of the OHEC, Sumate Yamnoon in 2008, he suggested that: "...so music programs have not been supported and facilitated like other programs such as engineering, medicine, and nursing." As a result, the institutions responsible for providing music programs still face funding restrictions, the major obstacle towards institutions achieving excellence in music education.

Music programs have rapidly grown in a number of Thai institutions. The development from the past until now shows that music education in higher education arose from the need to educate artists, the need to use music as a unifying factor during political turmoil, and the desire to change the public's perception of the music profession. Nowadays, there are new philosophies in music education (Charoensook, 2008).

The global and educational trends in the future play significant roles in influencing music education. Studying various emerging trends is an important task to prepare for the future. This article features historical information, current details on managing music education in higher education in Thailand and other countries. The study concludes by offering strategic suggestions according to the upcoming trends in the next period (2008-2017).

Research Methodology

This study employs various research methods with the aim to use the collected database as reference to find solutions to the research objectives. The procedures include:

(1) **Documentary analysis:** Printed and web-based documents, domestic and international, as well as primary sources related to the development of music education in

higher education for Thailand, research papers, relevant documents concerning music education in higher education and various trends affecting Thailand's music education in higher education in the next period (2008 – 2017) were analyzed and identified.

(2) ***In-depth interviews and brainstorming session:*** Key informants in music education, music industries, professionals in Thailand's education field, futurologists, policy and strategy makers, as well as the concerned stakeholders shared ideas regarding trends and directions of music education in higher education in the next decade. The brainstorming session was divided into 3 steps: (1) Presenting a brief background to the participants including research questions, important data on music education in higher education, and important trends affecting music education; (2) Discussing the questions with the participants and allowing the participants to interactively share opinions on the topics; and (3) Summarizing the data extracted from the brainstorming session.

Findings

Background: Music Education in Thailand's Higher Education from 1934

From the recognized beginnings of formal music education in Thailand in 1934, development has not progressed by itself, but has been impacted by external changes in the social, political, and administrative contexts of each period. In this regard, it is possible to summarize formal music education development into five periods.

Early Training of Performing Musicians: 1934-1969. The preliminary period when music education advanced from local community learning into music programs in a school system (courses for music professionals, not just basic music courses offered in general education which had already existed since the reign of King Rama V). In this initial period, there were several factors which accelerated the progress, most notably the national reformation and modernization after the 1934 transformation from an absolute to a

constitutional monarchy, which brought about an increased focus on intensive national development to reach a Western level (Nakornthap, 2006). The performing arts became one of the focal points in that government's agenda. At that time, there were massive intellectual disagreements and a negative attitude towards the performing arts. Some groups openly rejected the calls to reform music education, leading to financial budget constraints. Bunditpatanasilpa institute was originally established using local music teachers who did not hold any educational degree (Fackchamroon, 1996), but did have extensive knowledge and expertise in music. Courses offered at the new school included music teacher training courses. Thailand then was able to produce music teachers holding high school and diploma certificates (1952) under the administration of the Fine Arts Department.

Training Musicians through Teacher Education: 1970-1975. Thirty-five years after the initial period, music education program development entered the second phase. In this period, the key change was the government policy on educational opportunity enhancement aimed at increasing the number of students and teachers. Music lessons were classified as "art education" in the National Education Plan Year 1960 (Revised Edition). Music became a compulsory lesson, leading to a national shortage of music teachers. At the same time, teacher training schools throughout the country were upgraded to provide training at an academic degree level (Tanom Intarakumnerd, personal communication, 3 February, 2009). These factors led to an increase of music teachers in the music education major under the Thailand Government's Teacher Training Department. This was a major change compared to the first period, when music education courses were offered only as vocational degree courses.

Internal factors in music education led to a nationwide demand for a bachelor degree qualification, as so many people at that time already held a vocational diploma. This demand precipitated the establishment of the music education bachelor degree curriculum (Prateep Lountrattana-ari, personal communication, 15 March, 2006). This period is regarded as the

period of *Producing University-Based Music Graduates: 1976-1988*. Music education programs at the bachelor's degree level expanded into the various regions of Thailand. The higher education development policy of the time focused on enhancing the capability and role of Thailand on the global stage and producing graduates to feed the market especially in medical science, computer, engineering, and various branches of sciences.

The next period of music education was the period of *Higher Degrees in Music-Promoting Musical Scholarships: 1989-1997*. In this period the Masters Degree curriculum in Music was introduced for the first time in Thailand to enhance the qualifications of music teachers by adding more research skills. The program offered was "Ethnomusicology". Within six years two additional courses were introduced, i.e., "Music Education" and "Musicology" followed by other curricula.

Music education in Thailand has continuously expanded along with education in Thailand in the past period. (from 1998-2007) In the past period, many new curricula, branches, majors, offices, and also new universities and academic institutions have been opened. There have been many efforts to upgrade academic institutions. This phenomenon has raised concerns regarding the quality of the education in Thailand and has caused academic degree inflation, and lack of quality and efficiency (Tongroach, 2008). Since 1999, higher education in Thailand has been reformed in several ways including the establishment of educational standards, which leads to the need to reform music education policies and their implementation in the social context of globalization. Due to educational reform, universities in Thailand became autonomous universities under government control for better administration and management. The College of Music, Mahidol University, was the first music institute to become an autonomous college under university control. It served as a model for other music programs in autonomous university systems.

Social changes, the economy, technology, the expansion of the service industry, and the expansion of the music industry have also affected music education in Thailand. As a result, music has been more influential in social and cultural contexts at the global level (Charoensook, 2008). During this period, new curricula have been developed and new majors have been introduced such as jazz studies, music composition, music entertainment, music production and engineering, music business, and music technology. This final period can be called the period of *Training Professional Musicians: 1997-2007*. Even though there are more curricula at present, most of them are in universities in Bangkok. There are not many new curricula or majors in universities outside of the capital city. However, Thailand is innovative in the sense it is the first country in Southeast Asia whose universities provide music education from undergraduate to doctoral degrees.

Music in Higher Education: Developments over the Past Period (from 1998-2007)

Institutional Profiles. As a result of the 1999 restructuring of education in Thailand, all universities and academic institutes that provide tertiary education fall under the Office of the National Education Commission (ONEC), Ministry of Education. There are 47 higher education institutions offering music programs as of 2010. They can be categorized into several groups including:

- 1) Public (State-funded) universities, ten offer music as a major;
- 2) One university classified as an Open university (unrestricted admission to every program) offers music as a major;
- 3) Thirty-one Rajabhat universities (community colleges) offer music programs as major,
- 4) Three private universities offer music as a major;
- 5) Three vocational institutions in the Rajamangala Universities of Technology group offer music as a major; and

6) One institution under the jurisdiction of the Government Fine Arts Department (Banditpattanasilpa Institute, Ministry of Culture) offers music as a major. According to the statistics in 2010, four universities in the public university group that offer music as a major have transformed themselves into autonomous universities. (See figure 1)

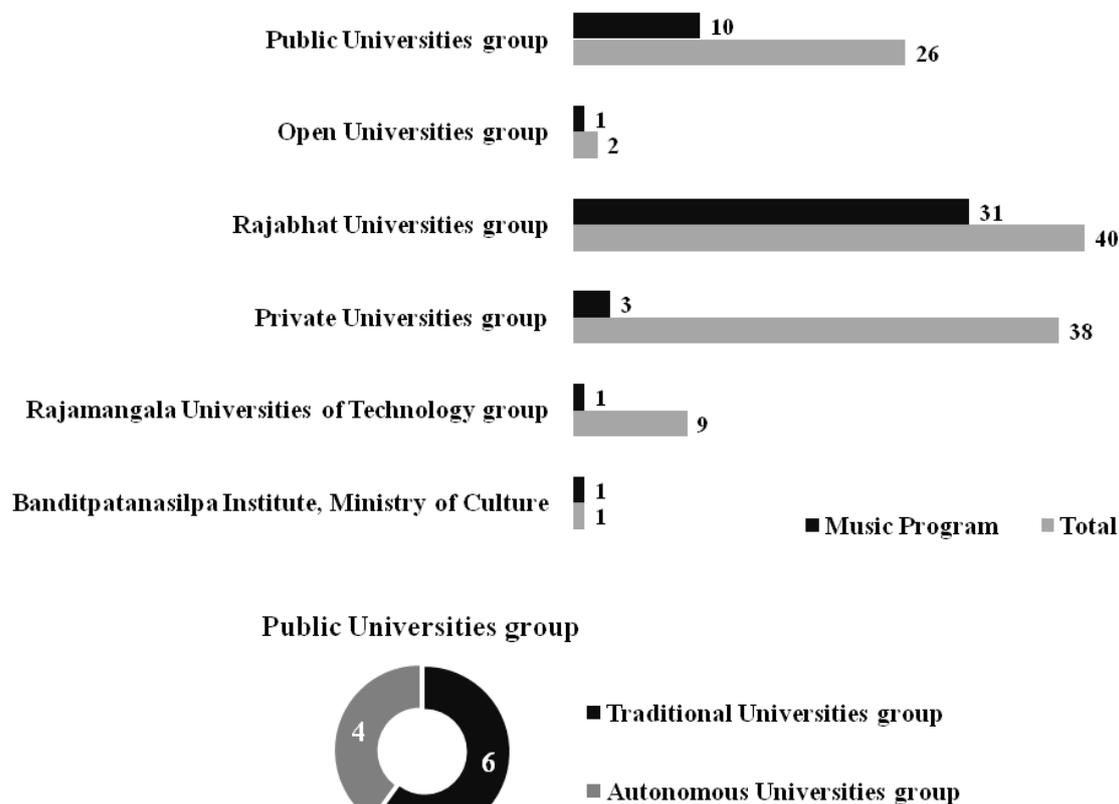


Figure 1. The quantitative expansion of higher education institutions offering music programs categorized by types of institutions

According to the details of music programs offered by the institutions mentioned above, 47 institutions offering music as major are classified into two groups as follows: (1) founded as College/School/Faculty/Conservatory of Music, six administrative groups or 11.54% of the total units involved, and (2) concerned faculties, 46 administrative groups or 88.46% of the total. Therefore, altogether there are 54 administrative groups from 47 institutions offering music programs.

Music programs in Thailand are currently presented under the auspices of several different areas of study, depending on the university. Music Programs are offered under specific university areas as listed as follows: Humanities and Social Sciences, 27 locations or 58.7%, Fine and Applied Arts or Fine Arts, nine locations or 19.57 %, Education, five locations or 10.87%, Humanities, three locations or 6.52%, Arts, one location or 2.17%, and the Institute of Language and Culture for Rural Development, one location or 2.17%. (See figure 2) Currently, the music programs in Thailand are classified by the College/School/Faculty/ or Conservatory of Music.

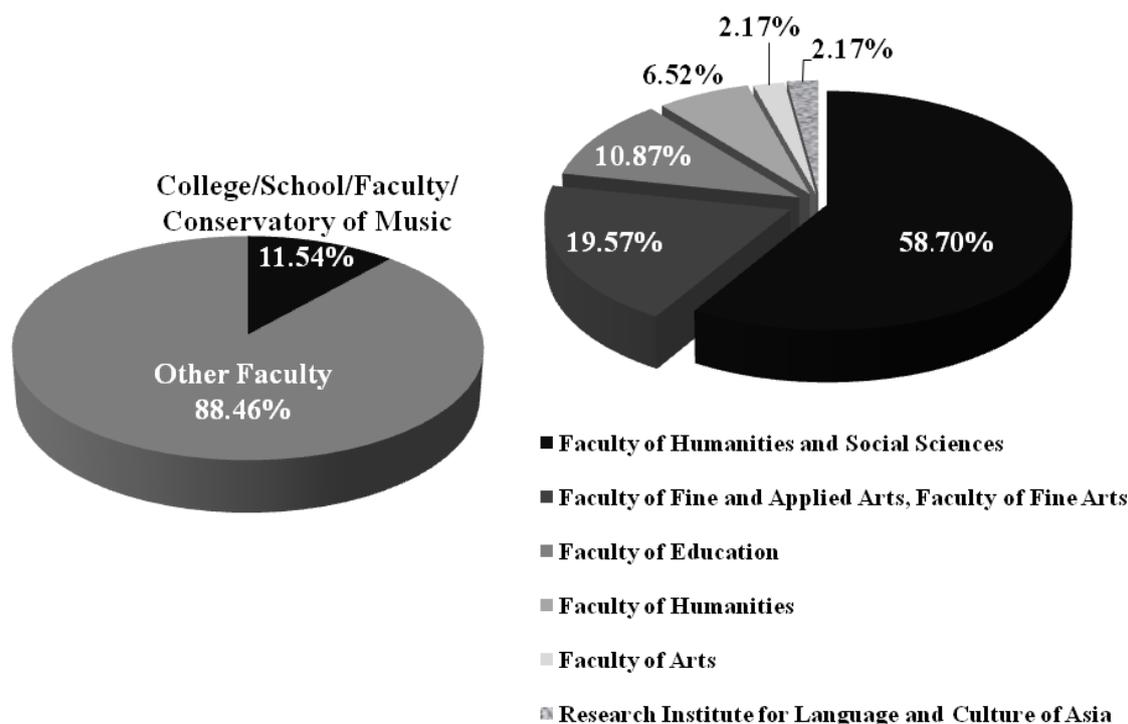


Figure 2. Higher education units offering music programs

Program Offerings and Curriculum Profiles

Throughout the past period (from 1998 – 2007) music education in Thai higher education has been able to offer curricula for bachelor’s degrees, master’s degrees, and doctorate degrees with a variety of specialized programs. A Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), which is equivalent to 100% (available in two institutions, see figure 3). As for the master’s degree level, there are three curricula available including Master of Arts (MA), equivalent to 58.34% (available in seven institutions), Master of Fine and Applied Arts / Master of Fine Arts (M.F.A.), 33.33% (available in 4 institutions), and Master of Education (M.Ed.), 8.33% (available in one institution). At the bachelor degree level, there are four curricula available including Bachelor of Arts (BA), which is equivalent to 47.62% (available in 30 institutions), Bachelor of Education (BEd), 28.57% (available in 18 institutions), Bachelor of Fine and Applied Arts or Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA), 19.05% (available in 12 institutions), and Bachelor of Music (BM), 4.76% (available in three institutions). (See figure 3) There is a tendency for more curricula development at the bachelor’s, masters and doctoral levels, i.e., Bachelor of Music, Master’s of Music, and Doctor of Music.

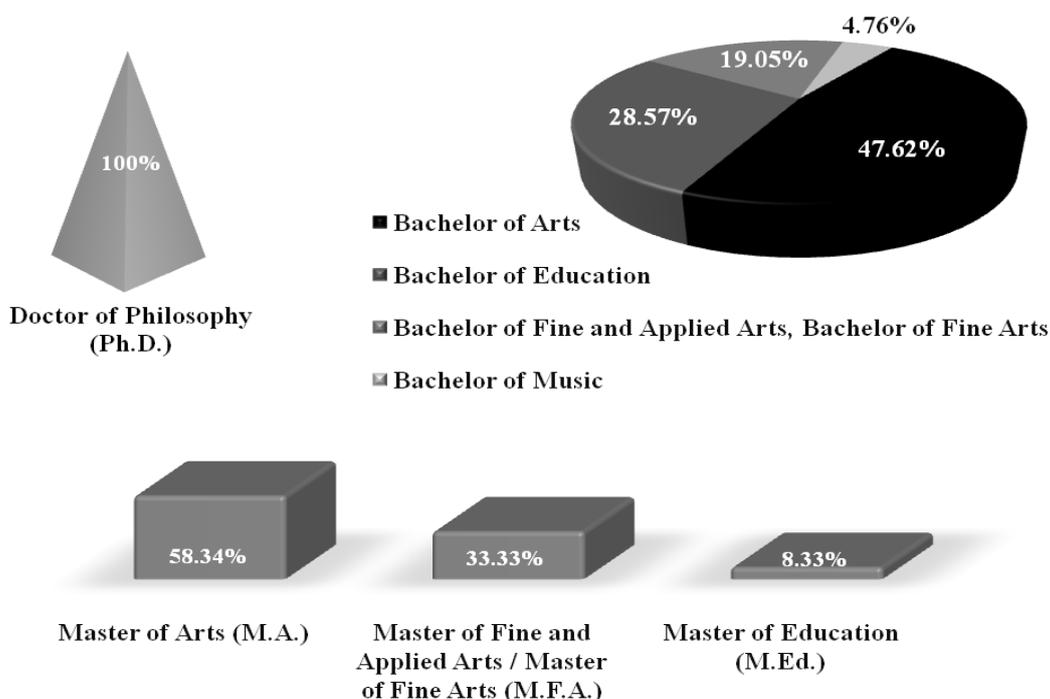


Figure 3. Music degree programs in Thailand (as of academic year 2009 - 2010)

Staffing Profiles

According to the 2009 - 2010 statistics collected in terms of the number of music instructors in higher education institutions throughout Thailand, there are 575 Thai-national instructors teaching at the university level. The number of foreign instructors teaching music in higher education institutions in Thailand totals about 60-70. Most of them are hired on a yearly contract basis. According to the records, around 50 foreign instructors are teaching at Mahidol University (as of 2010 report). Thai music instructors can be sorted by educational qualification. There are 46 instructors with doctoral degrees (including 14 instructors holding doctoral degrees in programs other than music, but giving lectures in music programs. Most of them hold the doctoral degrees in education), 367 with master's degrees, and 154 with bachelor's degrees (See Table 1). By academic designation, there are three Professors, 23 Associate Professors, one Assistant Professor, and 463 instructors working for a music program (See Table 2).

Table 1. *Number of Music Program Instructors by Level of Educational Attainment*

Degree	Doctoral	Master	Bachelor	Other	Total
No. of Staff	46	367	154	8	575

Table 2. *Number of Music Program Instructors by Academic Rank*

Designation	Professor	Associate Professor	Assistant Professor	Instructor	Total
No. of Staff	3	23	86	463	575

Graduating Student Profiles

In the past period, the number of music program graduates has increased. All over Thailand, there are 7,349 graduates with a Bachelor of Music and 425 graduates with a Masters of Music.

Even though the number of music programs, curricula, institutes, graduates, and instructors has been increasing, there are still limitations in music education, especially the gap between music education at basic and higher levels of education. The study of music in basic education still has limitations. For example, there is lack of equipment due to insufficient budget, and lack of support from school administrators and policy makers. Some music teachers at schools do not have sufficient skills to teach or even to play music. It was found that 50% of music teachers at schools do not have degrees in music. Due to these reasons, the quality of music education at schools varies significantly. As a result, the ability level of music students also varies in different schools because music skills of children are developed to the maximum level when they have good teachers and good opportunities to learn (Amornwich Nakornthap, personal communication, 13 July, 2010). It was also found that students acquire music skills from private music schools with parental support as most regular schools cannot provide music education at a satisfactory level, especially for children with musical gifts. They either learn music at private schools or at the homes of famous music teachers.

There is also a problem in recruiting students into music colleges or universities. Currently, there are several methods of recruitment. Some music colleges have a reliable recruiting system while some colleges accept all applicants due to their own policies or the policies of the universities to which they belong, because of financial factors, or the administrative system of such institutes (Suchat Saengthong, personal communication, 17 July, 2010). While music education in Thailand is continuously expanding, there is little

direction to such expansion. Many institutes provide similar educational programs in music. Some institutes provide programs in Western music even though the objectives of the institutes are to provide education for the local community. Nowadays, most music institutes develop educational programs by prioritizing the supply rather than the demand. They open new programs with little concern for the quality of the education and the graduates or the demand of the labor market.

Review of Future Trends: Present Impact and Moving into the Next Period (2008-2017)

Various tendencies impacting humanity, the world, society, and education

Trend of population change. Global society, including Thailand, is moving toward a senior society. On the other hand, the percentage of people under 18 has declined. The population at the higher education age will peak in the next 3-4 years, and from 2012 onward, the number of students going to higher education will constantly decrease (Kiritikorn, 2009). The size of the working age population will also drop. This will affect music education due to the shrinking size of the higher education student group.

Trend of future careers and the labor market. The professional world for Thailand will change with globalization and the free capitalist economy, particularly in terms of a knowledge-based economy and the creative industry. The music industry is a part of the creative industry including such areas as music editing, film & TV, electronics, instrument design, instrument repair/restoration, music publishing, as well as service sector businesses like event organizing, services involving performance arts, music production, organizing musical performances, touring, etc. These industries will require a higher degree of knowledge from their workers (Masatieanwong, 2006). Therefore the future labor market will require more personnel in the field of music with both specializations and well-rounded skills, not only knowledge in music, but also the knowledge and ability to work in the modern

world.

Trend of information technologies and advancement of various fields of knowledge.

The world will be divided into technologically literate and illiterate countries. The technologically illiterate countries will get poorer, whereas the technologically literate countries will become more secure and stable (Enriquez, 2000-2001). Technology will be used to propel the music industry by creating new innovations in both production and services. Technology will help music production in various forms of media such as music production for radio, television, the newly emerging media in various formats. Moreover, in the future, the world will be connected through wireless-network communication. Knowledge is no longer limited to the classroom. Learners can seek knowledge from various sources autonomously. The new generations should acquire information literacy, ICT literacy, media literacy, visual literacy, critical literacy, and consumer literacy (Masatieanwong, 2006). These requirements apply to the production well-rounded music personnel literate in the information age.

Trends of a Pluralist Society and the Multi-Cultural Context. The diverse conditions of society and calls for multiculturalism have resulted in several new trends including a new way of living together in the borderless world due to globalization. These movements have resulted in changes in people's lifestyles. People worldwide now have more opportunities to observe different cultures through advances in communication technology. The cultural diversity concept has been accepted. The concept of a culturally based economy where the productions and services rely on the foundation of cultural richness of each society has emerged with the presence of cultural entrepreneurs. In the future, social orientation will change from "think globally, act locally" to "think locally, act globally" (Torrington, 1994). This is because people in society are more intellectual and capable. They can adapt global knowledge to fulfill their personal and local needs. In this regard, the music personnel in the

new generation should acquire more cultural knowledge at an international level while maintaining the awareness of the value of their own cultural identity.

Trend of changes among youth, students, and graduates in the future. All societies now require citizens with the capability to take part in national development. The new generations should acquire civic literacy skill and some broad knowledge and basic skills in subjects concerning development such as economics and management, particularly knowledge in financial management.

Trend of spiritual well-being. The society now lacks a spiritual dimension as the life style dominated by the capitalist economy has shifted social values toward modern materialism and individualism so much that it directly affects the social values regarding spiritual concepts and social relations, particularly among young people. Consequently, this leads to various social problems including crime, materialistic behavior, selfishness, and a lack of public consciousness. Finally, there are some new concepts as that provide solutions to those problems such as humanism and vitalism which counter capitalism by addressing the question of how to live happily in the capitalist world (Chumpol Poolpatarachewin, personal communication, 13 July, 2010).

Tendencies of Changes in Higher Education in Thailand

In the next decade, the structure of higher education in Thailand will change in accordance with the *Second Higher Education Development Plan for 15 Years (2008-2023)* developed by the Office of Higher Education Commission and the National Education Plan, revised version (2009-2016), as well as the second phase of Educational Reform (2009-2018). In these plans, guidelines on higher education development are provided, i.e., the standards and quality control system of higher education in Thailand to produce efficient graduates to meet the needs of labor market and to compete with other countries by creating new knowledge and

innovations to meet global trends. Higher education development should also promote sustainable development of local communities based on good governance, good financial systems, quality control, and higher education networks with emphasis on academic freedom and diversity as well as systematic unity (The Office of the Higher Education Commission, 2008).

Tendencies in Thai Music Education

Economic development in Thailand has included the concept of creative economics as a main factor of economic restoration. Strategic plans for economic restoration have been made focusing on the export of creative products which include music, as current thought suggests that music is considered a purchasable commodity (Sumate Yamnoon, personal communication, 22 September, 2008). Advanced technology has made music available through all kinds of media. This is very important for the music industry (Suwannapas, 2008). It is believed that products of creative economics will be prioritized by the Thai government so the growth of the music industry in Thailand will continue. This will lead to an increased demand for human resources in the music industry, which shall lead to intellectual works that have high economic value.

There is another trend of the labor market regarding human resources in music. Music institutes in the world, especially in Europe, need well-rounded music personnel, meaning those who have not only music skills but also skills to meet the needs of the labor market. Therefore, many music institutes have revised their curricula so that they can produce graduates who can work in different areas of the music industry in any part of the world (Chandransu, 2008). The global trend of music education will focus on multiculturalism and cultural diversity so that graduates will work with people from different backgrounds and address human diversity.

Key Trends Affecting Music Education Policies and Implementation

In the next period (2008-2017), there will be few changes even though there is continuous progress due to changes in many dimensions. There are two key trends as follows:

The mainstream tendency – society dominated by the free capitalist economy. The future trend is a capitalist economy with a focus on creative economics which includes the music business, which is a creative industry (Weerasak Kowsurat, personal communication, 13 July, 2010). Music education institutes need to keep this trend in mind and prepare graduates to meet the needs of the labor market in music. Public and private universities and all sectors should cooperate with one another with the goal of promoting creative works in music which can be a main source of income for the country.

The alternative tendency – spiritual well-being and the cultural dimension. Spiritual well-being and the cultural dimension are important factors that music institutes need to be aware of when developing curricula or managing music education. These two trends need to be well balanced in music education so that institutes can promote music which enhances spiritual well being and improves quality of life. Music educational institutes should include these two trends in the institutes' philosophy, administration, and curriculum development (Chumpol Poolpatarachewin, personal communication, 13 July, 2010). Regarding Thai music, there is concern about how Thai music can survive and develop with regard to the current trends.

The results from the study have led to the design of philosophical and conceptual goals on the directions of music education policies and their implementation in higher education as follows:

The key trends	Philosophical and conceptual goal
<p>The mainstream tendency Capitalist/Economy/Consumerism/Materialism <i>Career Dimension/Business Dimension</i></p>	<p>Music is an honorable profession that is economically viable</p>
<p>The alternative tendency Humanism/Idealism/Spiritualism <i>Spiritual/Cultural Dimension</i></p>	<p>Music is a cure for social ills. Music education is a social asset of mankind. It can improve our lives through various ways, e.g., music therapy, music appreciation, music for all, music preservation, music for expression</p>

Directions of Music Education in the Future Derived from the Study

Movement towards the Goals

Transition from basic education to higher education – catalyst for quality improvement. In music education, there should be a better transition from basic education to higher education through the following elements: policies of music education, academic support system for music students, and the support system for music teachers (such as fringe benefits, bonuses, and training). In the future, there should be certifications for music teachers so that the career becomes standardized and more recognized by society. Development of music students is equally important. Music should be available for all children. Children with musical gifts or talents should be supported, and there should be scouts who look for talented children. The recruitment system of music students should be revised and standardized.

Music for the Public/Music for All. Music education should be promoted as an academic alternative. Due to global trends, education management in Thailand should equally promote all sciences so that students can have more options. Music should be regarded as a science and an asset of mankind, a part of life, etc. Music education should be available for Thai children at an early age. They should be able to know, learn, play and appreciate music. Music should be available for all groups of people. It can be provided as a program of study or as a self-directed learning method. People should have more opportunities to learn music

so that music becomes part of their lives. An important mission of music education institutes is to provide music education as a profession and to make it recognized by society under the context of the capitalist economy.

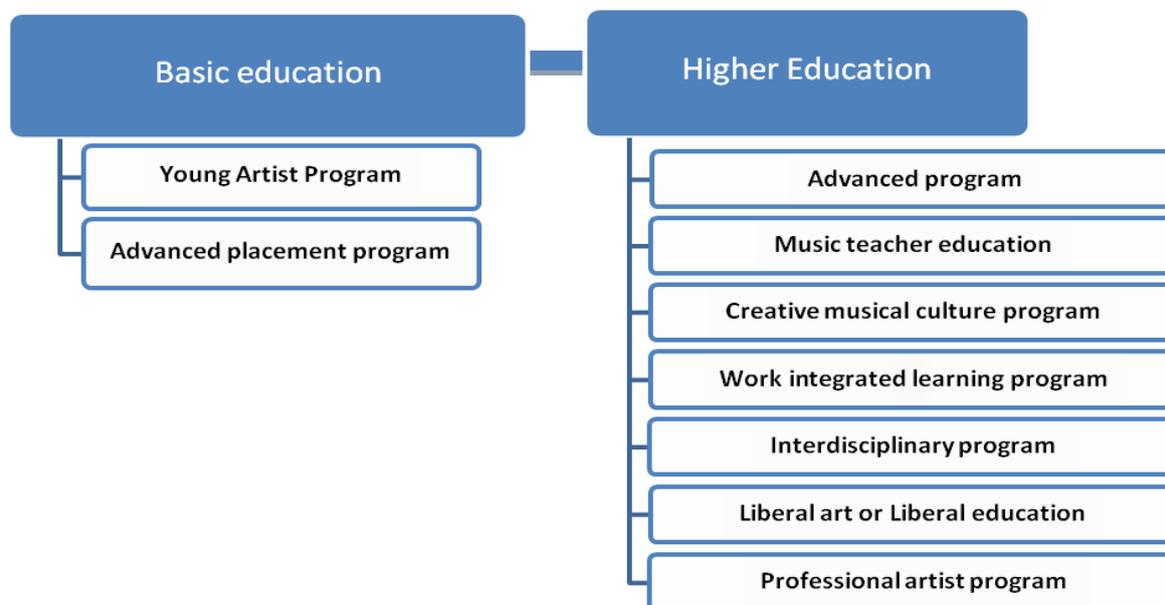


Figure 4. Curricular Alternatives in the Future

Environments for music learning and creativity. In order to promote self-directed learning (SDL), there should be designated areas or places where people can learn and create music. More space means more music. In this way, music can be part of society and, as a result, regarded as a social asset. More space for music should be allocated in the following places: cultural centers, auditoriums, cultural squares, and music museums. There should also be more music programs on television, radio, and the Internet. Thailand is expected to be an important center of music education and cultural heritage in Asia.

Career development for music teachers, musicians, music scholars, and music instructors in universities. Music instructors and music professionals that teach in universities should be able to acquire academic titles, e.g., Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, and

Professor as part of their career development. Currently, there is no clear system or criteria on how to acquire academic titles for music instructors and music professionals that teach in universities. As a result, there are problems in developing or expanding the curricula, raising the standards of this profession, supporting graduate students in doing research, evaluation, and quality assurance. In order to promote career development of music instructors in universities, new criteria should be developed including indicators, types of work, and nature of work, because musical academic works are different from those in other fields. In addition, there should be support systems for music teachers who teach at schools or other institutes so that music education in Thailand can develop.

Changes in Management

In order to bring changes to music education management in higher education, stakeholders in Thailand (Ministry of Education, Office of Higher Education Commission, Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment) need to be flexible and aware of the uniqueness of music when addressing the administration, policies, standards, and quality assurance. More cooperation from private sectors should also be promoted for the changes in the following directions:

Cooperation with private sectors, independent funding agencies, social sectors at all levels, and national organizations. Working with the above mentioned organizations will be a catalyst for change. Cooperation can be in the form of financial support, implementation, public relations, or curricular development with the private sector, e.g., co-programs of music study, internship, and other forms of cooperation so that students will have more job opportunities in the private sector after they graduate. More cooperation with the organizations at the national level should also be promoted such as scholarships in different

areas of music study, career development programs, educational technology development, and visiting scholars exchange programs.

The innovative university (or innovative organization) – source of knowledge – a model of music education in Thai society. The College of Music, Mahidol University, is an example of an innovative music program. It is an autonomous college which has an independent administrative system. This type of academic institute can be a model for other institutes in the future due to the following characteristics: (1) human resource development by supporting music programs and activities, providing scholarships for musicians, music teachers and students, singers, sound engineers, music businessmen, and other music-related careers so that they can be competitive at the international level. (2) career development of music professionals (skill development and quality of life development) as well as development of the music profession.

Propositions for Development

All of the above mentioned functions of an innovative organization should be integrated for the development of music education, music knowledge, and human resources. The government should prioritize music education at the policy and strategic levels when making a national plan for music education in higher education institutes in Thailand. When drafting a national plan or strategy, the organization in charge should organize brainstorming activities with music institutes and organizations on the following strategies: (1) empowering music teachers at all levels by giving incentives including career development and fringe benefits for the development of music teachers at all levels. (2) making music available for all children. Music should be part of their lives. Children should have opportunities to learn, play, appreciate, and love music. They should have access to music education through a life-long learning process. As for children with musical talent, they should be empowered and

supported so that they can realize their potential. (3) music education for future music professionals: An objective of music education is to produce music professionals in the areas of music business and industry as part of the creative industry. These graduates shall enter the labor market and work as professionals in different areas of music. If they are empowered, they can become professionals at the international level and Thailand can be more competitive in terms of the music industry. (4) music for the general public: Music should be available for all people. Anybody interested in music should have access to learning, playing, and appreciating music as music can improve their quality of life.

All of the above mentioned strategies should include the following two components: (1) investment in different social sectors such as private sectors, independent organizations, government sectors, and national organizations (2) networking with other organizations and institutes for music education and activities. However, in terms of cooperation, the duties and responsibilities of each sector should be clearly determined for the systematic development of music education in Thailand.

Another key point to the success of the above mentioned strategies is the cooperation among academic institutes that provide music study programs at the higher education level including private music schools, informal education networks, parents' associations and networks, entrepreneurs, etc. People in all sectors should participate in music education, especially at the policy level as wider networks will result in more cooperation from all sectors in policy making and strategy implementation for the development of music professionals as part of human resource development.

About the Author

Nantida Chandransu has a scholarship from the H.M. King Rama 2 (PhraBuddhalertlaNaphalai) Foundation (under the Royal Patronage), Thailand, from year 7 as a student at the Dramatic Arts College until the completion of her Master Degree in Music Education from Mahidol University. Her academic success has garnered her further scholarships from the University Development Commission (UDC) Scholarship Commission on Higher Education, Bureau of International Cooperation Strategy, Ministry of Education,

Thailand, which have allowed her to pursue her PhD in Music Education at Mahidol University.

Nantida Chandransu has over seven years' experience in music education research. She served as Head of the Research Management Office at College of Music, Mahidol University, Thailand from 2008 - 2010. She is a co-researcher of the "Research for Development of New Knowledge in Music" project which was funded by The Thailand Research Fund (TRF). She was also the Head of research project in "Research Project for Development of the Music Research System Innovation: College of Music, Mahidol University". This research project has been granted by The Thailand Research Fund (TRF), 2008. Nantida Chandransu has published more than 15 articles on music education, published in Mahidol Music Journal.

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