

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background and Significance of the Study

Theatre arts has been considered one of the ancient arts which men created by imitating way of life, in order to present their feelings and imaginations as well as to search for the understanding in life that they expected from absorbing each pace of theatre arts as stated by Williams Shakespeare that “theatre arts were the mirrors of life”. Therefore, the objective of theatre arts is to reflect and enlarge the perspective of life as well as to represent the challenging concepts which could enlighten people’s attitude towards real life.

Theatre arts in Thailand has been a vital part in the life stream of the Thai people. It is from their simple folk and religious origins to the most refined, sophisticated, and ritualistic presentations at the royal court. In the Sixth Reign, King Vajiravudh, who deserved the title, “father of modern Thai theatre”, introduced western dramatic literature and new theatre techniques in acting, directing, script writing, and set and costume design to the modern generation. Under his leadership and personal effort, modern Thai theatre arts evolved and took a new educational, social, and political role.

In the modern era, technologies and innovation have influenced upon Thai theatre arts. The behavior of local audiences has been changed since the period of King Rama VI and VII, when new technologies from western wisdom were brought into the production of Thai theatre arts such as movies, soundtrack movies and radio broadcasting. Local people, therefore, were interested in new forms of performing arts; theatres became less popular. At present, the period of globalization, new

media channels became the main competitors of Thai theatres. People preferred seating in front of the television screen rather than going out to watch live performance at the theatres. However, those new media also create the positive aspects of Thai theatres to the audiences. They help promoting theatres event to the audiences.

In terms of education, Thai theatre arts had been conserved exclusively for court members since the establishment of Thai Kingdom. Also, public theatre educated their artists among their troupes. The first so-called theatre arts college (*Ronglakhon Ton Son or Pine Tree Theatre*) had been established under the reign of King Rama II as a venue to train traditional format of Thai theatre arts to court ladies. However, it still reflected that the opportunity to study Thai theatre arts was limited in small groups. Krom Mahorasop, then, granted policy to let citizen, such as noblemen's children, middle class, or common people, have opportunity to study Thai performing arts. The opportunity was broadened when the College of Dramatic Arts was formally established in 1972 under the supervision of The Ministry of Educations. For bachelor degrees, the opportunities could be firstly found at Chulalongkorn University, Thammasat University and Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University.

Theatre arts curriculum in universities in Thailand provides both theoretical and practical activities. Most of those universities have their own theatres to fulfill effectiveness of practical learning process. However, university theatres still cannot extremely achieve their academic objective because each university theatre has been facing many particular problems which restrain providing theatrical experiences for students. Those problems, such as funding support, small audiences, and lacking of workers, affect development of students' learning. In addition, the current internal

administrative policy of each theatre arts department does not support the management of university theatre effectively. To be a good role model for students and to produce ideal theatre arts graduates for society, strategic management plan is needed for running university theatre. In the same time, university theatres in Thailand are now looking for the suitable strategy to solve these problems. Therefore, the researcher is interested in the study of this issue to establish appropriate guideline of strategic management plan. This can lead theatre arts departments find out key success to operate their own theatres effectively. Finally, each university theatre can be one of major organizations to develop and promote theatre arts in Thailand to be more prosperous in the future.

#### 1.2 Statement of the Problem

According to the background and significance of the study, university theatres do not have good environment for healthy growth because there is no continuity to the productions and no chance to learn. The main problems are lacking of support, small audiences, and lacking of professional dramatists. (Alongkorn Pirivudhiphongs, 2005: Outlook p.1)

Vital forces behind the staging of theatrical productions are sponsorship and patronage. But due to its current nature as an alternative art form, it is difficult to find funding either from the government or the private sector to support theatre productions. All kind of supports contribute to theatre arts to help developing especially theatre productions for educational purpose such as productions from university theatres. "Although some theatre arts departments receive budget from their universities, it is still inadequate to accomplish their productions. Consequently, dramatic teachers and their students could not extremely express their potential in each production," said

Chutima Maneewattana Plengkhom, Deputy Dean for Academic Affairs, Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University.

Small audience is one of main problems. Not only do university theatres generally have a limited number of productions, but also the productions are not popular or financially successful, compared to mainstream entertainment forms like films and concerts. People has different tastes, in the same time, they have many choices to consume entertainment. Many audience comment that experiencing theatre is less convenient than going to cinema, in which they can choose any movie they like at any time and any place, and most importantly, at a much cheaper price. This might be the result of poor appreciation for art. "Art appreciation is an acquired taste that takes time to culture. Since our education does not support classes like art appreciation at school level, people don't like how to value art and acknowledge how it upholds the human spirit. So they don't go to art functions," said Pawit Mahasarinand, drama lecturer/director at Chulalongkorn University.

Lastly, lacking professional dramatists affects the development of university theatres in terms of both management and arts. Success should not rely on ticket revenue, audience numbers, and sponsorship, but also on the development of personnel resources and networking for future shows. At present time, there are still not many amounts of professional dramatists and lecturers especially in universities, which are the main force to encourage development of theatre arts and management.

### 1.3 Purposes of the Study

1) To study the problems occurred in the current management of university theatres in Thailand.

2) To develop the model of strategic management plan for university theatres in Thailand.

#### 1.4 Research Questions

1) How do university theatres in Thailand establish the guideline of strategic management plan?

2) How to develop the appropriate strategic management plan for university theatres in Thailand?

3) What is the key success of integrating the strategic management plan for the university in Thailand?

#### 1.5 Benefits of the Study

1) University theatres in Thailand have a guideline of strategic management plan to manage their theatres effectively.

2) University theatres in Thailand could have ability to establish strategic management plan suitable for their theatres.

3) University theatres in Thailand could have ability to implement the strategic management with their theatres according to the developed guideline.

#### 1.6 Scope of the Study

The scope of the study will be to focus on the following aspects:

1) The researcher will collect information from Thai and international textbooks, journals, and other useful sources that relate to the purposes of the study.

2) The analysis of the study will be focused on theatre arts departments, which have their own theatres for academic activity.



3) The study will lead to the establishment of the guideline of strategic management plan for university theatres in Thailand.

4) The establishment of the guideline of strategic management plan will be focused on theatre management theory.

## 1.7 Research Methodology

This study is a descriptive exploratory research with primary and secondary data. The main objective is to establish the guideline of strategic management plan for university theatres in Thailand focusing on theatre management by those collateral materials.

The information is gathered from each university theatre and documentary references relating to their theatres. Also, the advisor of this research is asked to criticize and answer the questions about the theatre management concepts that are useful for this study. Mostly, the open-ended questions are made to gain the information. Before applying the research instrument with the respondents, the questions were verified by the advisor.

The research is described in two sections of data; sources of data, and data collection. The difference between them is that sources of data are explained where the data come from; meanwhile, data collection is about the ways to collect data.

### 1.7.1 Sources of Data

The sources of data give the detail about whom or what the researcher took the information from. It could be divided into two groups of data, which are primary and secondary data.

The primary sources, which are opinion and knowledge from interviewing and observation, could give the data that could not be found in any document. In the other hand, the secondary sources are concepts, principles, and theories from textbooks, journals, and websites so the researcher is able to apply in the process of analysis. The primary and secondary sources could support each other so these are the reasons why both of them will have to be gathered.

#### 1.7.1.1 Sources of Primary Data

For this research, the primary data relates to lecturers who are working at the theatre arts departments in universities in Thailand. The selected lecturers must directly have responsibilities in their university theatres, in terms of production and management.

In addition, the on-site observation at university theatres is also required for this study, in order to compare with the information given by the lecturers. Therefore, the researcher can understand the current strategic management and its implementation developed among university theatres in Thailand.

Finally, the researcher will be able to develop the rationale strategic management module for university theatres in Thailand according to the information gathered from these primary sources.

##### 1.7.1.1.1 Lecturers from the university theatres in Thailand

As this topic is about the management of university theatres in Thailand; therefore, the researcher selected the key persons who have knowledge and direct experience in this field, which must be the lecturers who

currently involve in the management and production of university theatres in Thailand. The target lecturers should present the criteria below:

- 1) The lecturers from the universities possessing university theatres.
- 2) The permanent lecturers being responsible for the production management at least 3 years.
- 3) The lecturers graduated directly from performing arts field.
- 4) The lecturers who are being considered as experts or specialists in performing arts management from well-known universities in Thailand.

#### 1.7.1.1.2 Observation

As one of the purposes of this research is to establish the guideline of strategic management plan for university theatres in Thailand, the understanding of the management theories and its implementation are required. Therefore, the researcher conducted the observation in the universities where their own theatres are operated.

The observation was conducted at each university theatre during the rehearsal of its production, for the researcher could compare the implementation of theatre management with the information gathered from the lecturers. Also, the researcher visited each site when the production had been launched to the public, so that the researcher could verify the whole process of theatre management occurred in each site. Finally, the researcher could synthesize all information into the current management applied among university theatres in Thailand.



In addition, the researcher could verify the strengths and weaknesses of each site, which were the significant tools to develop the appropriate strategic management for university theatre in Thailand.

During the observation, the researcher could collect more details that were not mentioned by the lecturers, i.e. the production process, capacity, and potential of each theatre. In addition, the observation is a tool to understand information derived from documentary research, which will make the analysis and conclusion more reliable.

#### 1.7.1.2 Sources of Secondary Data

For this research, the secondary data is documentary research. The researcher will gather the data from various sources such as international textbooks, journals, and websites. The criteria of selecting supported documents are:

- 1) It should relate to the topic of the research i.e. art of theatre, strategic management process (especially marketing and fundraising), characteristic of university theatre, and principle of theatre management.
- 2) The content must be related to performing arts and production management.
- 3) The selected document must link the researcher to further information required for this research.

#### 1.7.2 Data Collection

In this part, the researcher will explain the ways to collect data in two stages:

### 1.7.2.1 Primary Data Collection

#### 1.7.2.1.1 The primary data from lecturers in theatre management filed

It will be received from talking with the concerned persons by using in-depth interview. The reason that the researcher uses this method is expectation of specific detail about background of management system, problems that often occur, solutions, and expectation of each theatre arts department which lead to the suggestion of strategic management plan for university theatres in Thailand.

#### 1.7.2.1.2 The observation

Also, the researcher needs to apply observation to fulfill comprehension of the studying terms. This method is non-structured way that would lead more understanding in the information so that the researcher can develop the verification of the suggestion finally.

The on-site observation occurred at the universities operating their own theatres. The researcher selected four from total seven university theatres in Thailand. The lists below are the universities theatre that the researcher has been visited:

- 1) Chulalongkorn University
- 2) Bangkok University
- 3) Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University
- 4) Dhurakij Pundit University

### 1.7.2.2 Secondary Data Collection

The ways of working the documentary research is explained in two parts. They are:

### 1) Textbooks and Researches

They are related to the topic and useful for data analysis. For this research, they must be concerned theatre arts, production management theories, university theatre, marketing, fundraising, and theatre arts in Thailand.

### 2) Chosen Collateral Materials

For this research, they will be historical records, and other useful records from journals, websites, or documents that refer to each university theatre, which the researcher is focusing on.

## 1.7.3 Research Instruments

In this part, the researcher will employ the instruments that help gathering the data easily and systematically. They are:

### 1.7.3.1 Semi-Structured Questions

The researcher employed this type of question in the in-depth interview with lecturer of each university theatre. The questions were about general information of management especially marketing, and fundraising for theatre. These questions were not too limited so that the researcher received freely expressions from the respondents.

To present examples of the questions posted, and whether the senders touch upon the purposes of this study in the first chapter, the following questions are the semi-structured questions that the researcher applied to the study.

- 1) How did the department establish?
- 2) - What are its objectives?

3) How is the department managed in terms of organization management and production management?

4) In your organization, who has crucial influence and makes the most decisions?

#### 1.7.3.2 Open-Ended Questions

The questions were employed with the lecturers in order to get information from them as much as possible. The researcher expected the respondents to give ideas regarding profound details of marketing, and fundraising for theatre management.

Table 1 Comparison between open-ended questions and purposes of the study

Objective of the study	Questions
1. To study the problems occurred in the current management of university theatres in Thailand.	1. What are the problems of managing and strategizing the department? 2. What have been the main factors to drive the department into management trouble? 3. What are the solutions to the problems?
2. To develop the model of strategic management plan for university theatres in Thailand.	1. What is a guideline to the current management plan? 2. What is the expectation of managing the department in the future?

#### 1.7.4 Analysis of Data

All of analyzed data were divided into three parts: management part, marketing part, and fundraising part. Each part supported each other so that the researcher could establish the suggestion of strategic management plan for university theatres in Thailand at the end of Chapter 4.

The researcher gathered the comments from each sampling in the same group and analyzed them together. Then, they were analyzed together with data from specialist lecturers in order to find out whether their views were similar to or different from what the specialist lecturers stated.

For the finding it was from those selected lecturers, gathered by interviewing using semi-structured and open-ended questions. The researcher could summarize current management of each university theatre in terms of marketing, and fundraising.

For the finding from historical records, statistic records and other useful records from each university theatre will gather the document's part. These will support reliability of data from managers about the management of their theatres in current.

In expert's part, the researcher will consult with experts; gather data by using open-ended question. Then, the researcher received some more ideas about theories of theatre management and strategic management process.

After all, the researcher brought those three parts together, analyzed and integrated the data in terms of management, marketing, and fundraising. Finally, they could be synthesized, developed and concluded to verify the guideline of theatre management for university theatre in Thailand.

### 1.7.5 Presentation of Research Results

The research results will be presented in the form of descriptive information. The comparison of the research result will be summarized into the table to be easily understood.

## 1.8 Definitions

### Theatre

It means (1) a building designed for the performance or exhibition of plays, operas, or film (2) the art of producing plays (3) the institution of theatre in general.

### Theatre Manager

It is the person responsible for organizing the practical necessities of bringing a theatrical performance into being, including the choice of play, the selection and/or hiring of personnel, the procurement of an appropriate venue, and the controlling of finances.

### University Theatre Arts Department

For this thesis, it means university department where drama, performing arts, or theatre arts degree is available, especially the departments which have their own theatre for academic activities.

They are:

- 1) The Department of Performing Arts, School of Communication Arts, Bangkok University



- 2) The Department of Dramatic Arts, Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University
- 3) The Department of Applied Performing Arts, Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts, Dhurakij Pundit University
- 4) The Division of Performing Arts, Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts, Mahasarakham University.
- 5) The Department of Performing Arts, Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University
- 6) The Department of Thai Dance and Drama, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Phuket Rajabhat University