



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the research

Dance is one of the oldest arts, which developed in prehistoric times as a natural expression of human feeling and action. Development of dance overtime and in different place has produced many forms, such as ballet which began in the Renaissance Italian courts but later developments took place in France. Contemporary dance is a much newer art form which does not refer to any particular style. It just means that there is a range of dances that are supposed to fit in with the aim in developing the creative ability and cultural awareness. Thailand has been familiar with ballet, contemporary dance and Thai dance as much as another Asian country has known the dance genres. There are many dance schools - ballet in particular - that have opened in all territories across Asia, including Thailand. Dance schools in Thailand do a good business with Western style in dances, especially among the new generation. Some of the dance schools produce qualified students, whereas others concentrate on making profit, regardless of proficiency results. Yet, there is no permanent dance company for talented dancers to perform in Thailand.

Without a professional standard dance company in Thailand, talented dancers tend to go out of the country for a promising career abroad. If this problem is not solved, dance companies in Thailand may run out of qualified dancers. Thailand will not have enough contemporary dance works, and perhaps there will be no works of art that reflect the creativity and the dance development in the country. This raises the question, "Does the Thai government really support the arts?" Nowadays contemporary dance has been accepted all over the world because of its role in developing culture and community. Contemporary dance can develop not only dance skills but also creativity that has long been needed in society. To develop a contemporary dance company of high standard, performers need sufficient time, and ample places where they can work and grow artistically.

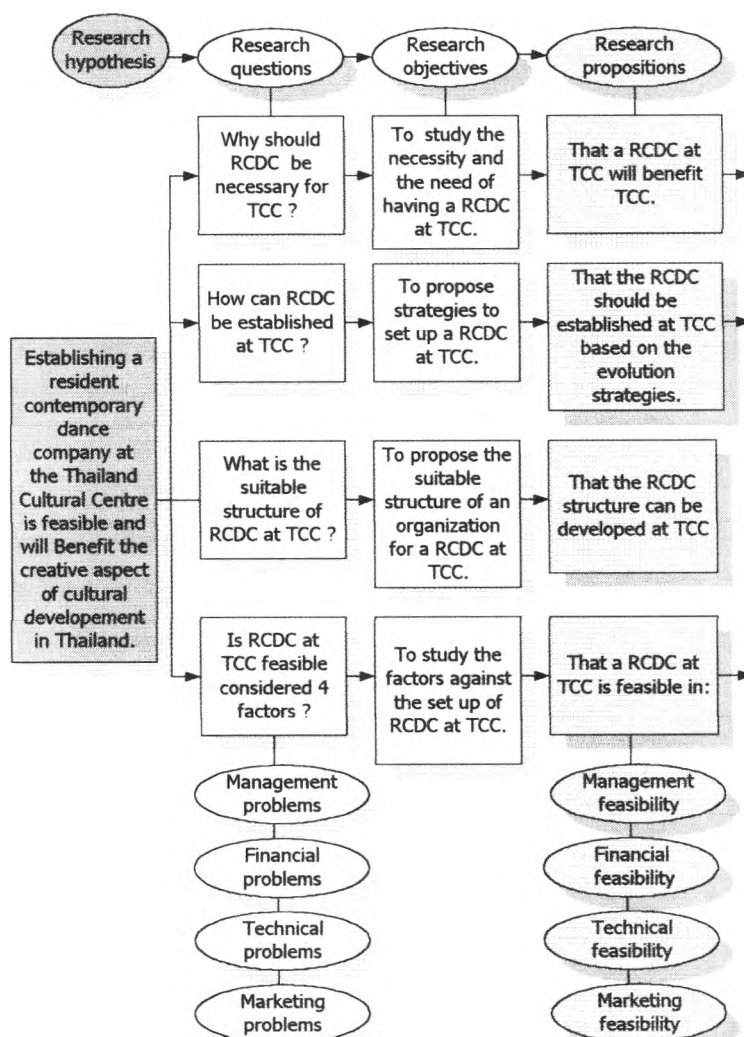
A Thai contemporary dance company can be a representative for Thai culture. The members of the Thai contemporary dance company can create, adapt and develop the program to benefit Thai society such as the dance within the social context such as AIDS understanding, drug abuse, and social order etc. The technologically well equipped and professional theatre spaces at the Thailand Cultural Centre is one of the few suitable ideal places for professional dance development in Thailand.

This thesis studies the factors that lead to the need for establishing a resident contemporary dance company which will further the role of the Thailand Cultural Centre in supporting the artistic and cultural development of the country. The research examines the feasibility of establishing a resident contemporary dance company at Thailand Cultural Centre. (Thailand Cultural Centre is a cultural organization that gives services in culture for the benefit of the general public.) So the feasibility in this sense should be mainly regarded to general public advantage that is relevant to culture. This thesis will also propose appropriate strategies for setting up a resident contemporary dance company at Thailand Cultural Centre. The general management plans, organizes, directs and controls to implement the proposed resident contemporary dance company are derived by using a wide range of management techniques. The feasibility of establishing a resident contemporary dance company will put Thailand on the world's creative and cultural map.

1.2 Research problem and propositions

This thesis comprises 1 research problem and four research propositions. As in Figure 1.1, the research question is whether establishing RCDC at the TCC will be feasible and beneficial to the TCC. This is developed into four questions and four research objectives that lead to the research propositions. The thesis proposes (1) that RCDC at the TCC will benefit the TCC, (2) that the RCDC should be established at TCC based upon evolution strategies, (3) that the structure can be developed for RCDC to be established at TCC and (4) that the establishment of RCDC at TCC is feasible.

Figure 1.1: Research problem and research propositions of this thesis



Source: Prepared for this thesis

1.2.1 Research hypothesis

“Establishing a resident contemporary dance company at the Thailand Cultural Centre is feasible and will benefit the creative aspect of cultural development in Thailand.”

2.2.2 Research objectives

1. To study the necessity and the need of having a resident contemporary dance company (RCDC) at Thailand Cultural Centre (TCC).
2. To propose strategies to set up a resident contemporary dance company (RCDC) at Thailand Cultural Centre (TCC).
3. To propose the suitable structure of an organization for a resident contemporary dance company (RCDC) at Thailand Cultural Centre (TCC).
4. To study the feasibility of establishing a resident contemporary dance company (RCDC) at Thailand Cultural Centre (TCC).

2.2.3 Research questions

1. Why should RCDC be necessary for TCC ?
2. How can RCDC be established at TCC ?
3. What is the suitable structure of RCDC at TCC ?
4. Is RCDC at TCC feasible? Feasibility is defined in terms of 4 criteria: (1) management conditions, (2) financial conditions, (3) technology conditions, (4) marketing conditions.

2.2.4 The research propositions

1. That the RCDC at the TCC will benefit TCC.
2. That the RCDC should be established at TCC based upon the evolution strategies.
3. That the RCDC structure can be developed at TCC.
4. That the proposed RCDC at TCC is feasible in terms of: (1) management feasibility, (2) financial feasibility, (3) technical feasibility, (4) marketing feasibility.

1.3 Methodology

This thesis is conducted on the basis of qualitative research methods.

Four basic techniques were used to collect data for the study:

1. Detailed analysis of relevant literature, official documents memorandums, letters, and other written file materials.
2. Intensive interviews with relevant participants.
3. Observation of relevant issues from participants.
4. Questionnaires for general public.

Pertinent documents in the Thailand Cultural Centre performing arts written information were examined; including documents background, organization, program planning, income and budget.

The interviews with international scholars provide the information on domestic and international dance companies from Europe, the USA, South East Asia and the international sources of additional information. The interviews were loosely structured to allow respondents to answer in their own words. Key members of the TCC organization were also interviewed repeatedly, especially in the field of performing arts, to find out about relevant problems among the staffs and artists, and the thinking background of program planning. These provided excellent data for analyzing the need of RCDC at TCC and TCC human resources which could be shared with a contemporary dance organization.

Since some sections can be surprisingly restrictive, some questions of details cannot be answered. Nevertheless, some documents are based on substantial information both direct and indirect.

Non-participant observation was used for obtaining information on the Thailand Cultural Centre organization. Empirical research on site was used to assess the available theatre facilities and spaces for performances, rehearsals and the technical feasibility. Thailand Cultural Centre funding and educational activities was examined to determine the feasibility of managing and financial support for a Resident Contemporary Dance Company.

Interviews were carried out with 4 target groups in order to study social and economic issues including demand, supply, social situation and public's opinion on RCDC at TCC. that are relevant to the marketing feasibility.

1. People who gives service: administrative staffs and staffs of Thailand Cultural Centre, artists and performers.
2. People who use service: target audiences, students and parents.
3. Focus groups who uses the service such as: target audiences, students, parents. Questionnaires were used to solicit:
 - a. opinions of the target groups regarding image satisfaction of TCC services.
 - b. expectations and demands of performance groups in Thailand as well as their attributes and style.
 - c. target groups' preference and opinions about the concept and style of a performance group that will be established at TCC.
 - d. attitudes of various types of people on the different styles of the performing arts.
4. Other groups of people concerned with the issues: International scholars, other cultural offices.

1.4 Terminology.

Contemporary dance (CD)

Richard A. Long: Dance Writer and Atticus Haygood Professor, emeritus Emory University (Atlanta, USA) remarked, contemporary just means now, the current, anything that going on now is contemporary. All the art that is being produced today is contemporary art. It doesn't mean a certain style or anything, just mean today. "Contemporary dance is so called because it is always 'up-to-date'. It takes many forms, each teacher or choreographer evolving their own individual way of moving by experimenting with current ideas." (Wilks. 1981: 10)

Contemporary dance company (CDC)

As described by Jukka Miettinen: art and cultural writer and guesstimated lecturer for many universities in Thailand; a contemporary dance company is "an organization that generally comprises of performance artists from the dance genres who perform new productions or new creations which may or may not relate to traditional dance form."

Feasibility study

Getting all the information you need to find out if your designated project will work is called a feasibility study. It will help you to find out exactly what your project involves, how much it will cost and if it will work in the long run. Feasibility studies are not a way of proving your idea is right, but about exploring the options available to you and suggesting the best course of action. A feasibility study may show that your project will succeed, but it may equally well make you realize that your project won't work. Feasibility is considered against 4 criteria: management, financial, technical and marketing(http://www.voluntaryarts.org/publications/briefings/bf9_feasibilitystudies.HTM 7/10/2544)

A resident dance company (RCDC)

A dance company that works in particular venue for a certain period of time, is a resident dance company.

Richard A. Long: Dance Writer and Atticus Haygood Professor, emeritus Emory University (Atlanta, USA) described in his interviews,

"A resident dance company is a dance company that has a regular place to rehearse and perform for a certain time to benefit that place and the company itself. A Thai resident contemporary dance company (RCDC) can be the representative for Thais. The member of RCDC can create, adapt and develop the program to benefit Thai society such as the dance with the context of understanding such drug abuse, AIDS, and social order etc".

Thailand Cultural Centre (TCC)

The Thailand Cultural Center is a national organization for the promotion of arts and culture. Thailand Cultural Centre activities fall into three main categories: those which are organized by the TCC, those which are presented jointly with others, and those which are presented by others using the Center as venue.

1.5 Scope of Thesis

1. Study attitudes of the dance artists and audiences toward the establishment of a resident contemporary dance company and Thailand Cultural Centre.
2. Study the possible strategies to launch a RCDC.
3. Study the organizational structure of resident contemporary dance company at Thailand Cultural Centre.
4. Study the feasibility of establishing resident contemporary dance company at Thailand Cultural Centre in managing, financial, technology and marketing aspect.

1.6 Assumptions

The TCC is responsible for developing arts and culture in Thailand. Anything that benefits the creative aspect of cultural development at the TCC will be a channel to reach general public as well as artists, performers, choreographers, entrepreneurs and anyone who is in the pool of art and cultural devotees.

Thailand Cultural Centre is well recognized as the best theatre facility equipped with ready to use theatre facilities such as lighting and sound systems, rehearsal spaces, out door and indoor theatres, and other spaces that can be used for various kind of activities.

1.7 Conclusions

The overall scope of the thesis was described in the this chapter. Background to the research was explained, research problem and propositions including research hypothesis, and objectives were presented. The thesis methodology was briefly

described. Finally, terminology, scope of thesis and assumptions were presented. The next chapter will present the literature review.