

The Attitude and Behavior of Morlum Audience towards watching Isan Folk Performance (Morlum)

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Abstract--Isan folk performance (Morlum) is a beautiful folk performance in the Northeastern region of Thailand (Isan). It is a dramatic work created by Isan local people's wisdom. Metaphorically, this particular performance functions as a medicine that heals people and makes them happy. Therefore, this performance attracts a lot of people to attend it joyfully.

This article aims at studying the attitude and behavior of Morlum audience towards watching Isan folk performance (Morlum) in terms of the process of creation and art consumption. For this study, the in-depth interview is proposed as a qualitative method of analysis. As for the interviewees, they can be classified into two main groups as the old generation and the new generation of Morlum audiences. There are totally 20 interviewees in each group. Ban Dorn-Doo in Khon Kaen province is selected as the site of doing research. The findings reveal that Morlum audiences can be classified into three main groups as follows: the audiences who just attend and watch the show for a relaxing day, the audiences who enjoy and participate in the show for entertainment, and the audiences who annoy other people and disturb the show rather than attending for enjoyment. For the attitudes of Morlum audience, it has been found that they vary differently depending upon a group of the audiences. The old generation of Morlum audiences is happy to attend just the big Morlum bands. They are bored with a long waiting for a *lumruengtorklorn* or 'storytelling' with special rhythmic and melodious music where as the young generation of Morlum audience enjoys dancing with a *luk thung* performance. And it has been also found that the attitudes of Morlum audience comparable between the past and the present time are changed due to the social and cultural change. As for the behavior of the Morlum audience, the young generation always dances along with Morlum performers. They love watching Morlum with their friends and families. This study reveals that Isan folk performance plays a key role in having people sharing a good relationship together with family members while watching this particular performance.

Keywords--Attitude, Morlum Audience, Behavior, Isan Folk Performance

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I. INTRODUCTION

IN the Northeastern region of Thailand (Isan), there is one of the most beautiful and entertained folk performance called Isan folk performance (Morlum). It is a dramatic work created by Isan local people's wisdom that was developed step by step until it became powerful and well known as a symbol of enjoyment and happiness of Isan. This performance attracts a lot of people to attend it happily. For this reason, anytime when there is a show, they will try to go and enjoy it. For example; some people try to be the first one who comes to select the best seat. In the past, the show mostly played until 10 pm. and did not take a long time for a show. So people in every age can enjoy it. But now that social and culture have changed, the show mostly play until midnight or the next day because they have to advertise all stuffs for giving them some credits. After that, the show called *Perdwong* or the first show of dancers before a *lumruengtorklorn* or 'storytelling' with special rhythmic and melodious music starts. In this point makes an old generation feel bored for waiting. But some people such as a young generation may enjoy with it. It shows that they like to wait and enjoy dancing with a *luk thung* performance. In this case shows the interesting issue between the old generation and young generation about their attitude towards watching Isan Folk Performance (Morlum).

This paper aims to study a behavior of Morlum audience towards watching Isan Folk Performance (Morlum) to show how people act towards the show that affect the show and may cause some problems. And also study the attitude of Isan Folk Performance (Morlum) between the old generation and young generation to show their attitude of it that useful to learn about Isan people or the future study among social and culture changing.

II. INFORMANTS

This study data were collected from the observation and in-depth interview of Morlum audiences towards watching Isan folk performance (Morlum) at Ban Dorn-Doo in Khon Kaen province, Thailand. As for the interviewees, they can be classified into two main groups as the old generation (age over 50 years old) and the new generation (age 10-23 years old) of Morlum audience. There are totally 20 interviewees in each group.

III. THE MEANING OF MORLUM

According to the meaning of Morlum [1] means the master of singing (Mor means master or expert; Lum means singing) originated from Isan folk traditions such as lullaby and storytelling with special rhythmic and melodious music [2] The show will begin with *Perdwong* or the first show of dancers. And then *luk thung* performance that shows the singer and dancer in Isan songs. After that, the comedian will show with the funny joke and sometime they play the dirty joke. The next one is a *lumruengtorklorn* or storytelling with special rhythmic and melodious music that well known as the best part of the show. And the last is *Toeyla* that all dancers and actors come in front of state and sing a long together with a special tempo of Isan.

IV. BAN DORN-DOO, THAILAND

As a data from the Department of Local Administration [3] Ban Dorn-Doo is a small village in Dorn-Doo sub-district where is located in the district of Nong Song Hong in Khon Kaen province, Thailand. The general area is field and also people are farmers or workers. People in this place are called Isan people who mostly create and enjoy with Isan folk performance (Morlum). So this place always has Isan folk performance (Morlum) at least twice a month to make people relax and happy. Therefore, Ban-Dorn-Doo is the place that was selected for this study because of the location and population in the place.

V. THE BEHAVIOR OF THE AUDIENCE TOWARDS WATCHING ISAN FOLK PERFORMANCE (MORLUM)



Fig. 1 (a) People bring a mat from home; (b) They select the place.

From the observation, people have to come to select the best place about 2 or 3 hours before the show starts because they want to watch the show clearly and enjoy it as well. The old generation mostly comes with a mat that they bring from home as fig. 1 (a). After that lay it on the ground as fig.1 (b), sit down and wait.



Fig. 2 A man lie down and sleep for a long waiting.

In case that the show takes too long to start, some people lay down and sleep for the long waiting as fig. 2.



Fig. 3 A women and her child.

Fig 3. Presents that some of old generation comes with their children and family. They have to take care of children carefully because this place is so crowded. Anyway, to bring children into this place is good for them because they can learn about Morlum and be in the process of preservation of Isan folk performance that is one of Thai traditional culture.

For the new generations, they generally come on time or after the show starts because they don't want to wait for a long time. Most of new generation comes with their couples or large group of friends. Minority of them come with family. In this case shows that new generation likes to enjoy dancing with a *luk thung* performance and laugh with dirty joke while watching a comedy show with one who can understand them like couple and friends.

The findings reveal that Morlum audiences can be classified into three main groups as follows: the audiences who just attend and watch the show for a relaxing day, the audiences who enjoy and participate in the show for entertainment, and the audiences who annoy other people and disturb the show rather than attending for enjoyment.

A. The audiences who just attend and watch the show for a relaxing day

People in this group mostly just watch the show and do not disturb others. They will sit or lie down on the mat and eat some snacks or fruit while watching the show. They can enjoy with the show by just watching.

B. The audiences who enjoy and participate in the show for entertainment



Fig. 4 people dance.

Fig. 4 presents that people in this group always enjoy with the show by dancing. Some people just dance around their place with their friends but some people will move to the front and dance with others. In Isan language called *Muan-Na-Han* means enjoy dancing in the front of the state.

In case of the show called *luk thung* performance, people may request the song from the singer. After that, the singer will receive money or bouquet as a reward. Currently, people mostly upgrade their prize into a worth gift, for example; necklace made by money or Essence of Chicken baskets. The value of prize that they give to the singer makes them happy and good with their health. But moreover, it can show the love of people towards singer and the wealth of providers. In any case, some people who get drunk want to join with the singer. They give a beer or alcohol to the singer. The singer has to accept and drink it directly. If not, they will get angry and disturb the show and other people.

C. The audiences who annoy other people and disturb the show rather than attending for enjoyment



Fig. 5 Beer and alcohol.

People in this group always get drunk because they drink a lot of beer or alcohol as fig. 5. Then, they cannot control themselves and disturb other people. Some people scream or make noises but in badly case people get into a fight. In that case, some group of Morlum learns to take advantage of it by given a job to some people to make a fake fight. Then the show must be stopped early. It is not good for the audiences but good for the players because they receive money that audiences have to pay before they get in the show. But this

kind of thing will no longer use to take advantage of people because they will find the truth and people will not trust in that band of Morlum anymore.

The attitude of the audience towards watching Isan folk performance (Morlum)

As a result, the attitude of the audience can be classified into three points as follows:

A. A period of a show

In the past, Morlum would start showing faster than the present. And normally showed in short time, around 10 PM the show finished so people in every age could enjoy the show and the show did not bother people's resting time. But in the present, the show is longer than before, it starts late (start at 10 PM) and the show is held until midnight or the morning of next day. Some audiences could not stand watching such a long show, some people watch only some shows and then they go back home, and some people do not come to see Morlum at all.

From the interview, it is found that the new generation has a positive attitude towards to the period of the show because they can spend time talking with friends or families. Moreover, nowadays there is dancer shows, the dancers will dance with country songs, that makes people in the new generation enjoy and relax with it. Besides, the show finishes late is not the problem for them because they are happy and they have more energy for this entertainment. But there are some people in the new generation do not agree that Morlum show finishes late because it bothers their resting time.

For old generation, they have a negative attitude about Morlum in the present because it is boring to wait for long time. Besides, people in this group like a *Lumruengtorklorn* or 'storytelling' very much, but this show is in the last in raw so they have to wait so long. Some people in the old generation come only when a *lumruengtorklorn* or 'storytelling' begins, but some of them do not come to watch the whole show because they are tired of waiting. Only small group of people in this generation like the show before a *lumruengtorklorn* or 'storytelling' because it is gorgeous. All of this, the old generation does not agree that Morlum show finishes late or even in the morning because it bothers their resting time.

B. Fighting problem

Due to some people drink alcohol while the show is holding, then those people get drunk and cause a trouble then fight with other people.

According to the interview, both old generation and new generation are agreed that fighting problem is not good and no one would like it happen. The old generation people expressed that this problem has been occurred since the past until nowadays and getting more dangerous. The new generation noticed that there should be supervision about alcohol, the alcohol should be forbidden in the show area. In the present people place the importance in this more. Some place there is police or guards to prevent chaos or an emergency situation, including an ambulant. But all of those are just like lock the stable door after the horse is stolen. The best way to solve the problem is depend on people; people should not drink too much until they get drunk.

C. Modernization and Technology



Fig. 6 The gorgeous costumed.

In the past, Morlum show had no sling or gorgeous modern props, and the performers stuck to the local Folk Performance. But in the present Fig. 6 presents, when the social and the customs change, modernization and technology are used in Morlum more than before, Morlum performers adopted it to the show and it helps the show more interesting.

From both attitudes of the old generation and the new generation, it is found that the technology which is used in Morlum helps Morlum more interesting, but small group of people from old generation see that Morlum at present is too gorgeous, they prefer Morlum in the past more. Besides, the new generation said that when technology comes, "the media is more interesting than watching the show and if you really want to watch it, just search in the internet". And for the old generation, they watch morlum most from CDs. However, some of old generation thought that it was a great experience for watching the performance in live because it reminded them of the happiness in their past. And seeing the light and spectacularly sounds, it makes them happy with it as well.

Summary, the attitudes of audiences towards Morlum affect to the survival of Morlum. As a result from the change of society and customs, and the audiences' behaviors are important parts that make Morlum needs to adapt itself follow the age. The new generation is more energetic so they like dancing with their friends and families in country songs. For the old generation is tending to be bored of a long wait. For the fighting problem, this problem has occurred since the past until nowadays. Both new and old generations do not like this problem and they worry about it as well. Moreover, modernization and technology affect to the attitudes of the audiences from old and new generations. Both generations like the gorgeous of the show but some of them see that technology helps them access easily to the show via the media such as internet and CDs.

VI. CONCLUSION

In the past, Isan folk performance (Morlum) attracts a lot of people in every age. Everyone can enjoy with the show and it's safe. But now some people deny going to the place because of timing and fighting. It shows that people behaviors and attitudes are changed due to the social and cultural change.

As the result of this study, Morlum audiences can be classified into three main groups as follows: the audiences who just attend and watch the show for a relaxing day, the

audiences who enjoy and participate in the show for entertainment, and the audiences who annoy other people and disturb the show rather than attending for enjoyment. The audience's behaviors in the group of new generation prefer to enjoy and dance with *luk thung* performance. Because of the sounds and dancers are attractive to their feeling. Meanwhile, just the minority of the old generation still enjoy with it because they are bored with a long waiting for a *lumruengtorklorn* or 'storytelling' with special rhythmic and melodious music. Then they decided to watch only the big Morlum bands which more famous and interesting than the small bands. For the attitude of the audiences, both groups thought that it was good to come with friends or family because they can have fun and relax together. So, Morlum plays a key role in having people sharing a good relationship together with family members while watching this particular performance. But both of them thought that the fighting is dangerous and it disturbs the show very much. If people just watch and enjoy with the show in a good way, it will be great for other people and for a survival of Morlum.

For this reason, the study of the attitude and behavior of Morlum audience towards watching Isan folk performance (Morlum) is the important thing that could not be ignored. People behavior is the thing that should be focused. Moreover, self-discipline of the audience is a treasure thing that has to retain every time people are in public to keep this beautiful show with Thai social and culture as ever.

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