



## The Curriculum Development of Morlum Folk Song of Thatpanom High School in Nakhon Phanom Province

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**Abstract:-** *The objective of this research was to study Thai folk songs or dramas and factors as well as aesthetics in northeastern Thailand to make learning plans to develop and evaluate the curriculum of the Morlum folk songs as well as to build temporary innovations in the school. The research is a qualitative study through the documents and the interviews of 40 informants: 10 experts, specialists, authors and singers, 10 curricular experts, and 20 artists of singers from the Morlum Folk Song Association. The 6 learning plans were tested with 97 students of 3<sup>rd</sup> level secondary classrooms 3/1, 3/2, 3/9 of That Phanom High School in Nakhon Phanom Province.*

*The study found that the Morlum learning system was an oral system called Mukhaphatha, starting with the word "Oh-La-Nor" to adjust the voice to the sound of a musical instrument, a reed mouth organ, called "Caen" together with proper physical postures and dances as guided and taught by the instructors. Having finished and completed their courses of trains and practices, the students perform the ceremony of paying homage to the instructors by presenting them something such as flowers and other valuable things.*

*The types of Morlum folk songs are classified according to the styles of rhythm as follows: 1) Short style called Lum Thang Sun, 2) Long style called Lum Thang Yao or Lum Long, 3) Lum Teoy styles such as Teoy Khong and Teoy Phama, and 4) Lum Phleon style with different funny manners. As for aesthetics, various emotional expressions are available in the Morlum folk songs as follows: Rati (Love), Hassa (Happiness), Krodha (Anger), Usaha (Bravery), Bhaya (Fear), Yugupsa (Hate), Vismaya (Confusion), and Soka (Grief).*

*The curricular development of Morlum folk songs in educational institutions is regarded as the conversation of the cultural heritage of the nation. Because the Morlum folk songs reflect arts, culture, economy, society, traditions as well as ways of life of the people in the society. The interested people can use the internet to develop the Morlum learning system such as teaching online to improve and conserve the Morlum folk songs as cultural heritage of the nation forever.*

**Keywords:** Curriculum Development, Morlum Folk Song

### Introduction

Morlum refers to the people who can sing or play native songs or plays in the rhythm of the northeastern style with the lyrics about the ideas and environmental situations. They get well trained and practiced and display and transmit the ideas beautifully to the audience together with the sound of a musical instrument of reed mouth organ called Caen (Chonphairot, C.1983).

Morlum play is the art of edutainment native plays that record and transmit behaviors, cultures, customs and beliefs of people in society. It is a sub-culture that has influenced the northeasterners for a long. Morlum players are regarded as social scholars who succeed and transmit several kinds of knowledge and wisdom. They are intelligent to respond and tackle fronting problems. The Morlum plays have been related to the ways of life of the people in the northeastern region for many generations just as inscribed on the gongs or the drums of the ancient Tai-Lao tribe as traced in the tribes in the Southeast Asian region of China and the basins of Black River and Red River (Udom Buasri.2003; Jaruwan Thamwat.1997).

Morlum is a prominent and popular native song or play that can be used as a profession. Those who will be folk singers have to be competent and intelligent, possess science and art, and have good remembrance able to remember several lyrics. The singers are considered scholars who are very skillful



in singing and playing the Morlum folk songs and plays, literary works, drama, and artworks which are classified in different periods (Phudla, N.1997).

Morlum play is a traditional play of Thai-Lao people. The Morlum singing is the produce of lyrics with various rhythms, played in response by male and female players just as seen in the pieces of literature of the early Ayutthaya period, that said the traditions “Khab Sor and Lum Caen” were very popular in the royal household. Today, Khab is used in the culture of northern Thailand while Lum is very popular in the Lao culture of Laos and Northeastern Thailand. The people who sing or Lum are called Morlum and those who play the instruments of reed mouth organs are called Mor Caen or Caen musicians (Wongthes, S.1989).

The Morlum artist has long been a profession of the northeastern people. The Morlum plays can be classified into different periods in the following: Lum Phuen (Basic style), Lum Joth-Lum Kae (Question & Answer style), Lum Chingchu (Debate for lover style), Lum Klon (General Lyric style), Lum Mu (Band Play), Lum Phleon (Funny style) and Lum Sing (Modern style) respectively. The artists of the Lum Klon style are very popular in all periods because the contents of this style include several edutainment types with different kinds of lyrics and rhythm (Khaengraeng, K.1992). In the past, the parents or the children themselves liked to choose the profession of the Morlum players. The parents took their children to learn and stay with their favorite artists and serve them as well. The teacher artists instructed and trained the students in all courses step by step till the highest professional level. The beautiful contents of the Morlum play impress and attract the audience so much that the songs or plays are asked to often play and they can be remembered in general. Some Morlum players are very popular all over the northeastern region. The factors of the Morlum artists' popularity are as follows: attractive personality, intelligence, kindly speech, good nature, good knowledge, good remember, nice tone, good playing, and good content of lyrics (Thonpao, S.1994).

The Morlum players are of five groups: Lum Phuen player (Basic style), Lum Klon player (General or Reading style), Lum Phifa player (Curing play), Lum Moo player (Band play), and Lum Phleon player (Funny style). There are four types of the basic style: Short type, Long type, Teoy type, and Phleon type with different contents of lyrics (Chonphairot, C.1982).

The Morlum song or play reflects the ways of life of the northeastern people in different localities through singing and playing by the Morlum artists showing to the public clearly in several festivals. The Morlum play, therefore, not only consists of the Morlum artists, Caen musicians, dancers, musical instruments, beautiful sciences, colorful lighting but also shows and promotes impressively and joyfully the ways of life and customs of the local people. It clearly displays the social situations and anthropology and is a sub-culture that influences the northeastern people from the past up to the present. The Morlum play is a traditional, informal play of the grassroots people. It can be adjusted to time and place (Nesusin, S. 2007).

The Morlum song or play is the science of valuable native drama full of knowledge and entertainment together with politics, economics, society, religion, ideas, ethics, morals, beliefs, traditions, customs as well as the social standard. It also conserves literary works and folk arts, transmits and expands the public ideas, community wisdom, and several kinds of knowledge. In ancient times the Morlum song or play was a kind of social media used to propagate Buddhism that was regarded as an instrument and a technique of teaching and training in the northeastern society. The stories in Buddhism such as the Buddha's previous lives and the stories in Dhammapada are displayed and transmitted to the audience through the Morlum plays. The people can learn and know Buddhist ideas and principles from the stories and the supposed characters in the Morlum plays. They can analyze good and evil, merit and sin, advantage and disadvantage, have charity, and adhere to good customs and traditions for refining social behaviors (Sunon, P.1999).

The Morlum players help preserve, follow, succeed and relay very prominent and popular arts of the northeastern plays. They have wit and intelligence in playing very fascinatingly. They sometimes tease the audience to make them participate in their playing. The Morlum play, therefore, gives entertainment, fun, relaxation, knowledge, moral ideas, and as well business-entertainment to people in society (Khieosaku, P.1993). Culture is accumulated to be a social heritage, changed and improved following the environments, and transmitted to next generations. The people automatically first get the



heritage of society in which they were born and after that, the heritage develops and changes according to time and place, and the changing environments (Wechphithak, S.2010).

The Morlum play has been a funny entertainment very popular all over the northeastern region and some parts of other regions, starting in 2321 – 2322 B.E., the reign of King Taksin the Great of the Dhonnburi period when the Emerald Buddha was brought from Vientiane to install in Bangkok. Later on in 2371 B.E., during the reign of King Rama III, after the suppression of the Anuwong rebel of Vientiane, so many Lao people were brought to Lopburi and Nakhornchaisri in Thailand. At that time the Morlum plays of Lao culture were introduced and played widely and popularly. Then many styles of the Morlum plays were adjusted and applied to play in several festivals such as Lum Sing (Modern style), Lum Moo (Band play), Lum Klon (General or Narrating style), Lum Phleon (Funny style). In the past, the Morlum plays were played together with the reed mouth organ called Caen, but at present many musical instruments are used to play with the Morlum plays (Fine Arts Department.1978).

In the period of globalization, the Morlum plays have to be adjusted and applied to meet the cultural change, causing the beliefs and values to change according to the social change. Several types of media have more influence on the Morlum plays. For example, movies, TV dramas, and Internet are easily accessible with knowledge and entertainment. The Morlum plays, therefore, have to apply their roles to the social changes by focusing on the audience. Many players and bands have to stop their businesses because they are out of popularity and are not hired to play. Thus, the Morlum players must adjust themselves, develop their potential, and have good management for their survival.

From the study, it is concluded that the Morlum native art is a cultural heritage of Thai society, which should be preserved to be still alive in the nation timelessly. Hence, it should be promoted and developed to be a learning curriculum in educational institutions. The purpose of the study is to encourage youths to participate in preserving and displaying the fine culture correctly according to an academic process to improve the Morlum players' potentials and eliminate the affront "Dancing and singing to eat" because the Morlum players have more knowledge and intelligence.

The researcher as an owner of the Morlum playing business is interested in studying to develop a course of the Morlum play in the process of learning management in educational institutions with the case study of high school level of Thatphanom school in Nakornphanam province to succeed and conserve the heritage of Morlum play of the northeastern region and adjust it to time and place and the changing environment. To make Thai people love and appreciate their own native culture of the Morlum play and conserve it, the Morlum plays have to be developed to be a learning course to integrate the aesthetics and the learning potential to transmit from generation to generation and remain in Thai society as a philosophical saying "Do the best, Dig to find and Know elaborately".

### **The Importance of Research**

1. To know several kinds of the Morlum plays, components, and aesthetics of the Morlum plays,
2. To get a learning unit in developing the curriculum of the Morlum learning,
3. To assess the curriculum of the Morlum learning and get contemporary innovations in developing the curriculum in educational institutions,

### **Objectives**

1. To study several kinds of Morlum plays, components, and aesthetics of the Morlum plays.
2. To set a learning unit in developing the curriculum of the Morlum learning.
3. To assess the curriculum of Morlum learning and get contemporary innovations in developing the curricula in educational institutions.



## Research Scope

The study of types of the Morlum plays and the aesthetics in the Morlum playing from the related documents and the research works both in Thai and Lao languages can be classified into five aspects as follows: (1) The transmission of the Morlum plays. (2) The components of the Morlum plays. (3) The aesthetics of the Morlum plays. (4). The display of the Morlum plays., and (5) The steps of the Morlum plays.

## Methodology

The research entitled “The Curricular Development of Morlum Folk Song of Thatphanom High School in Nakhon Phanom Province” is qualitative. The data collection was made by in-depth interviews. The objective was to develop the curriculum of the Morlum play in Thatphanom High School, Nakhon Phanom Province. The research method was done by qualitative research consisting of the learning process, analysis by data survey, and in-depth interview. The reason for using the research methodology or research process mentioned above in this research is as follows:

**Population and Samples:** The population and samples in the research are 97 students of the 3<sup>rd</sup> level secondary classrooms 3/1, 3/2, 3/9 of Thatphanom high school in Nakhon Phanom Province.

**Research Instruments:** The standardized or structural interview was formed to be the same scope of questions in the interview. The interviewer used the same questions for all the informants (Rabob, C., et al.1982). This type of interview is rather inelastic by asking formal questions but it is easy to group the data and convenient to analyze. The interview of this type may be performed in person or sub-group, which is the participatory action research (Kerlinger, Fred. N., and Lee, H.B. 2000; Kaiwan, Y. 2007)

**In-depth Interview:** This interview is an unofficial type with open questions leading to the conversation. The informants participate in forming the conversation concept with the interviewer to get the joint points of questions. The interviewer not only reads or explains the questions and records the answers but also converses with the informants about the related matters to relax the situation and get more and wider information (Nopkesorn, T. 2005).

**The Data Collection:** Fieldwork is the collection of qualitative information through a focus group which is the in-depth interview through the structured interview with the outstanding informants as follows: (Sitthitrai, W., and Sawaengdi, Y. 1993; Bloor, M., Frankland, F., Thomas, M. & Robson, K. 2001).

**Key Informants:** 10 competent composers, writers, and authors.

**Casual Informants:** 10 curricular specialists.

**General Informants:** 40 Morlum artists from 20 northeastern provinces by purposive selection.

## Results

The researcher tried teaching 97 students of the 3<sup>rd</sup> level secondary classrooms 3/1, 3/2, 3/9 of Thatphanom School in Nakhon Phanaom Province and built 6 learning plans of the Morlum play according to the research plan of the learning group of social study, religion, and culture in the 3<sup>rd</sup> group concerning dramatics according to learning standard of S. 3.1 referring to understanding and creative dramatic display, analysis, criticism of dramatic value, free expression of feeling and idea, appreciation and application to daily life, and Standard of S. 3.2 referring to understanding the relations of dramatics, history, and culture, the realization of dramatic value as cultural heritage, local wisdom, Thai and international wisdom. They are displayed in five steps as follows:

1. The transmission of the Morlum plays.
2. The components of the contents of lyrics.
3. The aesthetics of the Morlum plays.
4. The art of the Morlum plays.
5. The steps of the Morlum play.

The result of the research found that 80 % of total students passed the test with 80 % of the desirable characteristics. The total 97 students of the 3 classrooms are 39 boys and 58 girls divided as follows:



Classroom 3/1 : boys 10 and girls 17 = 27

Classroom 3/2 : boys 12 and girls 23 = 35

Classroom 3/9 : boys 17 and girls 18 = 35

The students had knowledge and understanding with 80 % of them passing the tests of the learning plan process. It is concluded that 6 plans of the Morlum plays are in accord with the research theories as follows: *The Theory of Learning, The Theory of Aesthetics, The Theory of Cultural Expansion, and The Theory of Development.*

**The Theory of Learning:** The Learning Theory of the art of Morlum play can be classified into two types: (Thewarak, P. 1997; De Vries, R. Vygotsky, Piaget, and Education 2008)

1. Learning by transmitting from generation to generation.
2. Learning by experiences happening automatically

**The Theory of Aesthetics or Rasa Theory:** The aesthetic theory of the Morlum plays refers to beauty or sweetness in the players' emotions transmitted to the audience through the supposed roles in the 8 manners: *Rati – Love, Hasya – Entertainment, Soka – Grief, Krotha – Anger, Utsaha – Force, Bhayya – Fear, Chugupsa – Hate, and Vismaya – Confusion.* (Venkataraman, Kalpakam. 2003; Susan Schwartz, 2004; Thampi, G.B. Mohan. 1965; Phongphaiboon, S. 2009 ; Santasombat, Y. 1997)

**The Theory of Cultural Expansion:** The cultural expansion of the Morlum plays is caused by communication among societies of different cultures, social changes, and interchanges of cultures (Photisarn, S. 2009; Utranan, S. 2007).

**The Theory of Curricular Development:** The art of the Morlum plays is used to draft a curriculum to develop the contents in the learning group of social study, religion, and culture through the consideration of agreement and suitability for the measure of evaluation and the purpose of the research. After that, the curriculum is tried to get revised, improved, and then assessed to reach the fixed goal (Wongyai, W. 2011; Good, C.V. 1973; Taba, H. 1962).

**Theory of Development:** Development is the change and improvement to get better, which is the development principle in accord with the art of the Morlum plays as follows: *Motivation Phase, Acquisition Phase, Retention Phase, Retention Phase, Recall Phase, Generalization Phase, Performance Phase, and Feedback Phase* (Phonsri, S. 2002; Wuthimethi, Y. 1991).

In short, the development of the Morlum plays is divided into three types:

1. The development of costumes, clothes, faces, and hair first impresses and attracts the audience. This is the self-development and self-management of the Morlum players.
2. The development of performing styles: there are an improvement, adjustment, change, and integration of the Morlum plays. Though the same stories and same performances are presented, they may be played with different styles so that the audience has different feelings.
3. The development of playing roles by making up interesting points or stories to entertain the audience. There are always practices and trains to respond in various situations, exciting introduction, time management, and always controlling performances. These are self-management and organization administration at the same time.

## Discussions

From the study of the curricular development of the Morlum learning of Thatphanom School, Nakhon Phanom Province the researcher set the research scope by making 6 study plans of the Morlum plays according to the group of social study, religion, and culture in the 3<sup>rd</sup> contents concerning dramatics according to the learning standard of S. 3.1 referring to understanding and creatively dramatic expression, analysis, criticism of dramatic value, free expression of feeling and Idea, appreciation and application to daily life, and the standard of S. 3.2 referring to understanding the relations among dramatics, history, and culture, the realization of dramatic value as cultural heritage, local wisdom, and Thai and international wisdom with 5 steps of transmission as follows: *The transmission of the Morlum plays, The components of the contents of lyrics, The aesthetics of the Morlum plays, The Art of the Morlum performances, and The steps of the Morlum performances.*

As for the transmission of the Morlum plays, the learning of the Morlum plays begins with the practice of uttering the word "O-La-Nor" as the teachers advise. The practice process starts with



adjusting the word utterance to the sound of the musical instrument “Caen” and training the tunes and styles together with physical postures, personality, and dances.

The Morlum players can tackle confronting problems with their wit, have performing skills, and have participated with the audience to make an enjoyable atmosphere. The teachers take their students to practice in fieldwork or real situations. When the students complete and finish their trains and course studies, they perform the ceremony of paying homage to the teachers.

**The Components of Lyrics:** The lyrics or contents are very important components of the Morlum plays, indicating stories, moods, knowledge as well as rhythm. The lyrics of the Morlum plays are divided into four styles according to the rhythm as follows:

1. Lum Sun or Short style: It is a style of full lyrics without the sound glide.
2. Lum Yao or Long style: It is called the reading style or Long Khong style.
3. Lum Teoy style: It is the style of medium-speed rhythm with four kinds of rhythm, namely, Teoy Khong, Teoy Phama, Teoy Dhammada, and Teoy Huanontarn.
4. Lum Phleon style: It is a style of funny and joyful rhythm, a modern style influenced from the West, divided into four sub-styles: 1) Ubon style, 2) Khon Kaen style, 3) Phudthaisong style, and 4) Phu Khieo style.

The contents of the lyrics of the Morlum plays are divided into five kinds: 1) Klon Kieo (Romantic), 2) Klon Nithan (Stories), 3) Klon Siladham (Moral), 4) Klon Vichakarn (Academic), and 5) Klon Phanrana Thammachart (Natural).

**Important Qualities of Composers:** (1) Having knowledge and understanding the languages and prosody, (2) Knowing very well about the rhythms of Lum singing or playing, (3) Loving to learn and seek all kinds of knowledge, and (4) Having intelligence and wit in transmitting ideas and feelings through letters.

**Aesthetics of the Morlum Plays:** Through the information from the related documents, the research, and the in-depth interviews, it is found that aesthetics are the sciences of beauty and sweetness of the fine arts while the appreciation of the arts is the condition of beauty and sweetness within the fine arts of several branches. Emotions or Rasa within the human mind is of 8 types: Rati (Love), Hasa (Entertainment), Krotha (Anger), Utsaha (Bravery), Phaya (Fear), Yukupsa (Hate), Vismaya (Confusion), and Soka (Grief). These kinds of emotions are naturally within the people. Any emotion may be roused to happen by the factors mentioned in this theory.

The study of the information from this research found that those who want to be popular Morlum players have to get much trained, have experiences and skills in performances, and can play well with the musical instrument, Caen. The players’ qualities are the following: nice tone, good personality, intelligence, much knowledge, good memory, love learning, performing techniques, psychology to notice the audience, good manner, and good human relationship.

The factors that make the Morlum plays interesting and attractive are the following: Meeting the audience’s eyes to signal the emotions to the audience, Looking at the audience’s faces to indicate the communication with the audience, Dancing to display several emotions with the playing stories, Dressing the costumes suitable for the plays and the roles, Expressing emotions by lyrics, and Having the feeling with the playing roles.

**The Steps of the Morlum Plays:** The study of the information from the related documents and research works and the in-depth interview indicated that the step of performances is called “Yok” of each section of the Morlum performances. The steps are not fixed for the performances but they depend on each player. Generally, the section of paying homage to teachers is the first step of the performances and the next step depending on the players. The performing steps are classified as follows:

1. The first step: Paying homage to teachers or Wai Kru.
2. The second step: Thanking the host.
3. The third step: Greeting and Asking.
4. The fourth step: Discuss how to perform.
5. The next step: Performing in detail.
6. The last step: Farewell and wishing.



The contemporary innovations are used to develop a curriculum of the Morlum plays. The innovations are the plans of Morlum learning management and the teaching trial with 97 students of the 3<sup>rd</sup> level secondary classrooms 3/1, 3/2, 3/9 of Thatphanom School, in Nakhon Phanom Province.

From the evaluation of the curriculum of the Morlum learning by the contemporary innovations to develop the curriculum in the school where the researcher tried with 97 students of the 3<sup>rd</sup> level secondary classrooms 3/1, 3/2, 3/9 of Thatphanom School, Nakhon Phanom Province the result indicated that the students got the total points 80 % and 80 % of the indicator for the desirable characteristics. The total 97 students are 39 boys and 58 girls divided into the classrooms as follows:

Classroom 3/1 : 10 boys and 17 girls = 27

Classroom 3/2 : 12 boys and 23 girls = 35

Classroom 3/9 : 17 boys and 18 girls = 35

The students had the knowledge and understood the development of the Morlum learning curriculum and 80 % of them passed the test. It can be concluded that the 6 plans of the Morlum learning management accord with the research theories: the learning theory resulting from learning, transmitting from generation to generation, storing experiences, and with the aesthetic theory: the emotional beauty and sweetness of the audience, the expansion of cultures among the societies of different cultures and exchanges of cultures, changing and improving to get better. The plans of the Morlum play learning and the teaching documents are the contemporary innovations used to develop the curriculum of Morlum learning in schools.

### **General Recommendation**

However, During the global crisis in the Covid-19 era, or the lockdown, various performing arts must adapt, Mo Lam folk performing arts should also create content to promote cultural heritage management. Sustainable folk Morlum to children, youth, and people. In particular, training to educate about the local Morlum culture and sustainability in practice increases sustainability in the concept. To achieve development, add value, and sustainable progress of conservation and inheritance of Isan folklore arts and culture to persist and be an heirloom from generation to generation. In addition, to reach viewers and to gain popularity again after the Covid-19 situation has passed, which is spending time at home according to lockdown and social distancing measures, Folk performing arts have adapted and created opportunities for growth through Facebook, LINE, Youtube, or even TIKTOK, channel platforms. These have emerged as promising alternatives to growing viral success and reaching existing customers, as well as expanding a new customer base who work at home according to the measures of the country. Therefore, to facilitate future viewing following the conclusions of the discussions of UNESCO Bangkok, There was an online discussion on the creative industries in Thailand and COVID-19 on the subject of performing arts on Tuesday, May 26, 2020, from 19:00 – 21:00 that “We have to maintain the audience base by solving immediate problems first, and after 18 months, plans must continue to be more concise and consistent with the situation. This is because the performing arts in the theatrical form have more time and emotional dimensions than other disciplines and requires audience participation emotionally in the same space which is difficult to adapt in the future but needs to be adjusted. However, whichever way it will go next, we must continue to learn.” Therefore, folk performing arts have to adjust from offline to online more to promote sales to existing customers and expand new customer bases. It creates the Next New Normal after the end of this Covid-19 crisis.

### **Finding using recommendation**

From the study of the development of the Morlum learning curriculum of Thatphanom School, Nakhon Phanom Province, the researcher suggested for further research that the art and culture of this branch should be promoted to the learning process in schools because it is regarded as an ancient heritage, custom and cultural heritage of the nation, used to transmit several types of art and culture, economy, society and politics, and living together with ways of life of the people in the society. The art of Morlum plays can inspire and bend the will of the northeastern people. Thus, the Morlum play is very important and should be brought into the learning process in schools. The general suggestion is



that the Morlum players should be modern, dress properly and timely, and honor the host and the audience.

### Further research recommendation

An additional suggestion is that as for making innovations of learning in the development of the Morlum learning curriculum, those interested in this matter should build instruments for transmitting by electronic media such as teaching online and forming groups by phase or line.

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