Developing Potential for Excellence in Language, Music, Art, and Culture for Upper Secondary School Students in Maha Sarakham Province for Social and Local Development

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Abstract

Background and Aim. The objectives of this research are as follows: 1. To study the problems and potential of high school students in the Maha Sarakham provincial area regarding language, music, art, and culture.2.To develop students' potential towards excellence in language, music, art, and culture, to integrate with social and local development.2.To evaluate and summarize the results of the development of students' potential towards excellence in language, music, art, and culture.

Materials and Methods: This study used a participatory action research approach divided into three phases: 1. Problem and Potential Study Qualitative research involving literature review and fieldwork, including interviews with 200 high school students in Maha Sarakham to explore issues and potentials in language, music, art, and culture. 2: Capacity Development Qualitative methods with brainstorming, focus groups, and expert-led participatory activities to develop students' excellence in the targeted 3: Evaluation and Conclusion Mixed-methods approach to evaluate development outcomes through pre- and post-assessments of 200 students, lesson learned extraction, and post-development knowledge training. This approach ensured active participation and comprehensive understanding to enhance students' capabilities effectively.

Results: The research findings are as follows: Research Findings 1. Current Issues and Potential: Students showed strong foundations in the Isan dialect and traditional music, with notable potential in local handicrafts and cultural preservation. However, challenges included a lack of foreign language resources and teachers, shortages of musical instruments, limited art materials, and the impact of modern influences on local culture.2.Capacity Development: Development activities tailored to the local context—such as practical Chinese language learning, music camps, collaborative concerts, and cultural performance training—led to improved language skills, creation of local-identity artworks, stronger school-community networks, and income generation from student performances. 3. Evaluation: Students demonstrated significant skill growth and practical application: 80% of Chinese learners improved communication, music students enhanced individual and group performance, and art and culture students generated income through performances.

Conclusion: This study successfully investigated the current issues and potential of upper secondary students in Maha Sarakham Province in language, music, art, and culture. Through a participatory action research approach, the researcher developed and enhanced students' capacities using locally tailored activities. The evaluation showed significant improvements in language proficiency, artistic skills, cultural engagement, and practical application, including income generation from performances. The findings highlight the importance of community collaboration and contextualized capacity development to foster excellence and contribute to local cultural preservation and societal advancement. Future efforts should continue to support resource development, expert involvement, and sustainable networks to maintain and expand these achievements.

Keywords: Developing Potential for Excellence; Language; Music, Art and Culture; Upper Secondary School Student; Social and Local Development

Introduction

The development of excellence in language, music, art, and culture for upper secondary students in schools within Maha Sarakham Province is a highly important issue for promoting and enhancing student quality across multiple dimensions, including knowledge, skills, and desirable attributes in the 21st century, as well as integration with sustainable social and local development.

Maha Sarakham Province is a culturally diverse area rich in valuable local wisdom, reflected through its language, music, art, and local traditions. The changes in Thai society and the global community have

advanced toward leapfrog learning by creating new curricula and innovations to facilitate easier and more effective learning. Educational development is a key priority that administrators and educational organizations must emphasize. Learning and education are the starting points for generating new knowledge and innovations that align precisely with the needs of daily life. Developing students' potential in these areas is a way to preserve and sustainably promote local wisdom. Moreover, fostering artistic and cultural potential is an essential tool for building local identity and pride, as well as a foundation for cultural tourism development and community economic growth.

In the context of secondary education, developing students' abilities in language, music, art, and culture equips them with diverse knowledge and skills, enabling creative communication and artistic expression. It also encourages youth to develop awareness and responsibility for conserving and advancing local culture alongside life skills and learning competencies essential for the 21st century.

The importance of developing language, music, art, and cultural potential among upper secondary students in Maha Sarakham can be summarized as follows:

1. Promoting Conservation and Continuity of Local Culture: Learning and practicing arts and culture help students recognize the value and significance of local wisdom and enable them to pass this knowledge on to their communities and future generations.

2. Developing Students' Skills and Abilities: Training in language, music, and art enhances a variety of skills, including communication, creative thinking, and expressive abilities—qualities essential in the 21st century.

3. Integrating with Social and Local Development: Promoting arts and culture links to community development, such as cultural tourism, income generation, and strengthening community resilience through youth and public participation.

4. Supporting Quality Education and Learning: Organizing learning activities that integrate arts and culture into school curricula creates meaningful learning experiences and fosters love for one's own culture.

Regarding integration with social and local development, arts and music projects have produced several important outcomes:

1. Improving Quality of Life and Cultural Strength of Communities: These projects support the conservation and continuation of local culture, raising community awareness and pride in their cultural heritage, while sustainably adding value to cultural resources and learning sites.

2. Promoting Cultural Tourism and Community Economy: Using arts and music as mechanisms to boost cultural tourism creates attractions for visitors, enhances aesthetic experiences, and increases community income, driving sustainable local economic growth.

3. Developing Skills and Awareness Among Children and Youth: Arts and music projects help youth develop artistic and musical expression skills, build self-confidence, and instill positive values such as awareness of people with disabilities and productive use of free time, thereby reducing social problems.

4. Preserving and Integrating Local Wisdom: Integrated learning using local wisdom in traditional music fosters the youth's love and pride for their locality and helps preserve and pass on traditional musical culture.

4. Creating Innovation and Academic Services for Local Development: Educational institutions play a key role in transferring knowledge and innovations in arts and music to communities, developing local personnel, and encouraging community participation in the continuous preservation and development of arts and culture.

Given these challenges and importance, Maha Sarakham Rajabhat University and the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences have implemented initiatives aligned with royal policies and local development strategies. These efforts focus on researching and developing excellence in language, music, art, and culture for upper secondary students in Maha Sarakham schools to integrate with social and local development.

Research Objectives

1. To study the problems and potential of upper secondary school students in the school districts of Maha Sarakham Province in the areas of language, music, art, and culture.

2. To develop the potential toward excellence in language, music, art, and culture of upper secondary school students in the school districts of Maha Sarakham Province, integrating with social and local development.

3. To summarize the outcomes of the capacity development toward excellence in language, music, art, and culture of upper secondary school students in the school districts of Maha Sarakham Province.

Literature review

Toscher (2020) conducted a study on the development of entrepreneurial skills for music students in higher education. The research highlights that entrepreneurial skills and knowledge play a critical role in musicians' careers (Bennett, 2016). However, alumni from Higher Music Education (HME) institutions reported a gap between the perceived importance of these skills and the level of training they received (Miller et al, 2017, p. 11), reflecting the need to develop curricula that effectively address student and labor market demands. To address this, HME institutions have begun integrating Arts Entrepreneurship Education into their programs to equip music students with career-essential skills (Beckman, 2005, 2007). However, there remains a lack of clear empirical evidence on which specific dimensions of entrepreneurial skills are fostered through such education (Lackéus, 2015). This study, therefore, explores and analyzes descriptive data using a questionnaire designed to assess the perspectives of HME faculty and students in Norway, focusing on skills and knowledge relevant to students' future careers. Students also provided insights into how much they felt they had learned about entrepreneurship through their coursework.

The findings align with prior research, confirming a gap between the level of skills acquired and their perceived importance in musicians' careers (Miller et al., 2017). The most significant gaps were identified in sales and marketing, market and industry understanding, financial management, social media use, and business planning. However, new data from this study revealed that as entrepreneurial education increases, these skill gaps diminish. This suggests that students exposed to more entrepreneurial training perceive themselves as better equipped with business-related skills and knowledge. These results hold critical implications for arts entrepreneurship educators, offering insights into weaknesses in current educational systems and pathways to improve curricula for effective skill development. The study also proposes future research directions to deepen the understanding of this issue.

Manfredi Latilla et al. (2018) conducted a comprehensive literature review on the relationship between Knowledge Management (KM), Knowledge Transfer (KT), and Organizational Performance in creative industries, particularly arts and crafts organizations. The study emphasizes that KM and KT in these organizations are vital to their competitiveness. Although this topic is relatively new in academia, findings reveal that artisans play a key role as knowledge transmitters and strategic resources. The research marks a significant step toward understanding and developing systematic approaches to KM in arts and crafts organizations, ensuring their sustainability and value creation in the modern era.

Bequette (2007) explored the integration of Indigenous arts into art education curricula, focusing on how teaching Indigenous art in schools serves to transmit Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) while contextualizing the impact of colonialism on traditional and contemporary Indigenous art. The study highlights collaborative approaches between schools and American Indian communities, inviting traditional artists and cultural experts to co-develop curricula that bridge art and science. Case studies, such as those involving Native Basketmakers, demonstrate how integrating traditional knowledge into classrooms preserves cultural heritage and fosters interdisciplinary understanding. This approach enriches culturally responsive pedagogy, strengthening learners' cultural identities and advancing socially meaningful curriculum development.

Bakhshi et al. (2015) examined the economic impact of creative industries through a systematic literature review and meta-analysis. Findings indicate that creative industries positively influence regional

economies, particularly in employment and economic growth. However, impacts vary depending on regional socioeconomic contexts, such as economic development levels, government policies, and cultural promotion. The study provides empirical support for creative industries as drivers of regional growth but stresses the need for context-specific policies. Researchers advocate for tailored strategies that align with regional characteristics to maximize benefits.

Castaldi (2018) investigated trademark use by innovation-driven firms, highlighting a research gap in understanding trademarks beyond manufacturing and specialized services. Focusing on Creative and Cultural Industries (CCIs), the study proposes CCIs as key case studies for trademark research. After reviewing CCI characteristics, the authors developed a conceptual framework to classify firms' motivations for trademark registration (or non-registration). Empirical evidence from a survey of 486 European firms across five CCIs was analyzed using Principal Component Analysis (PCA), revealing distinct corporate attitudes and strategies. The findings inform new economic indicators for product diversity and innovation.

Siliutina et al. (2024) researched Cultural Preservation and Digital Heritage: Challenges and Opportunities, examining the complexities of digitizing cultural heritage. Through a literature review and case studies, the study identifies challenges such as digital obsolescence, accessibility, copyright, data security, and limited resources. Conversely, digital tools offer opportunities to efficiently document, store, and promote cultural artifacts, traditions, and languages. In the context of the Russia-Ukraine war, digital projects have proven vital in mitigating risks and preserving diverse cultural heritage. The study underscores the interplay between geopolitical events and digital strategies in safeguarding global cultural heritage, advocating for technology-integrated preservation as a forward-looking approach to ensure resilience and accessibility in a dynamic world.

Conceptual framework

This research is a study on the development of students' potential for excellence in language, music, art, and culture among high school students in schools within Maha Sarakham Province. The aim is to integrate these areas with social and local community development. The research framework is as follows:
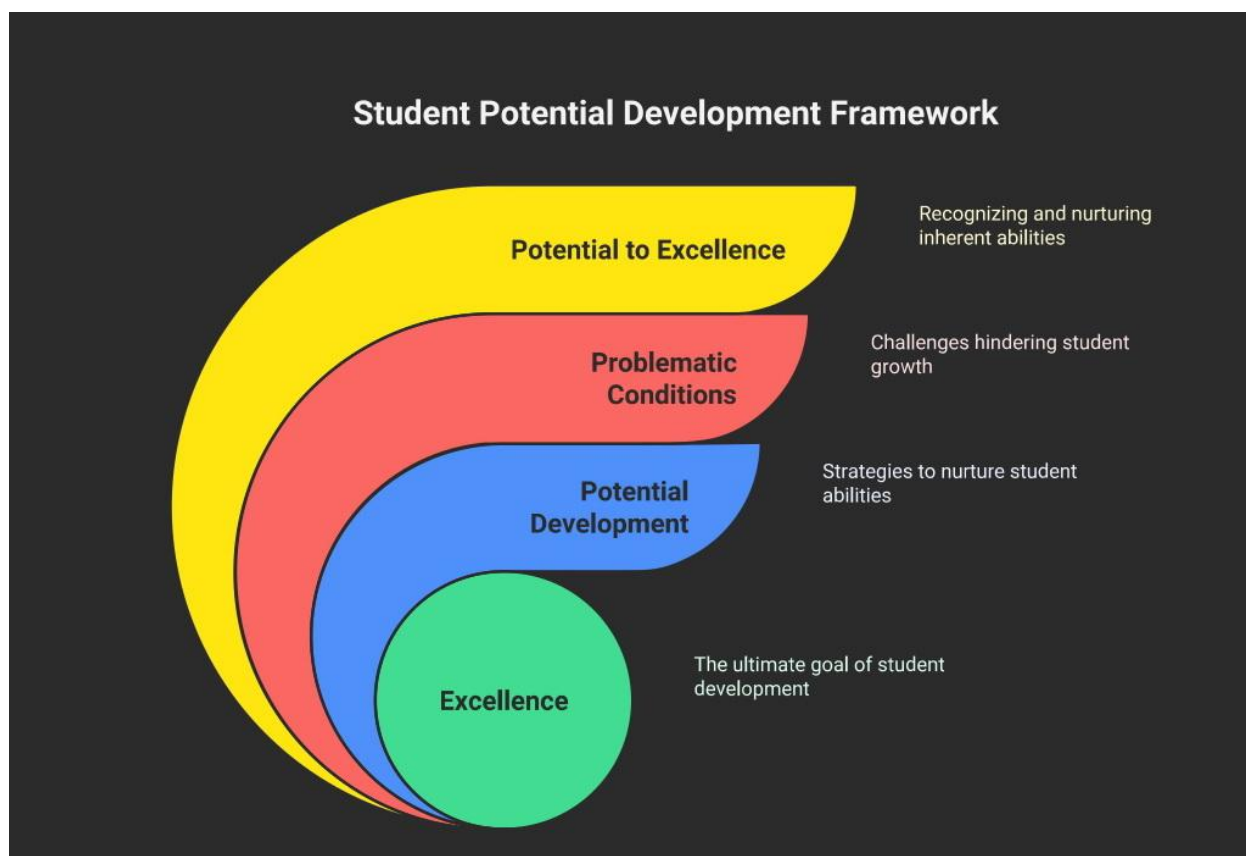
Figure 1 Conceptual framework

Research Methodology

This study employed a participatory action research approach divided into three phases: 1. Problem and Potential Study: A qualitative study involving literature review and fieldwork, including interviews with 200 upper secondary students from four schools in Maha Sarakham Province (50 students per school) to explore issues and potentials in language, music, art, and culture. 2. Capacity Development: A qualitative approach using brainstorming sessions, focus group discussions, and participatory activities led by experts in language, music, and cultural arts from community sages and university lecturers to develop students' excellence in the targeted areas.3.Evaluation and Conclusion: A mixed-methods approach to evaluate development outcomes through pre- and post-assessments of the 200 students, extraction of lessons learned, and post-development knowledge training. This approach ensured active participation and comprehensive understanding to effectively enhance students' capabilities.

Data Collection

Primary data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and workshops. Secondary data were obtained from sources such as theses, research papers, and related documents. Data collection instruments included observation checklists, in-depth interview guides, focus group discussion protocols, and workshop facilitation guidelines.

Analysis Methods

Observed patterns or phenomena were used inductively to conclude. The data were presented descriptively and included: current problems and potentials of upper secondary students in Maha Sarakham Province in the areas of language, music, art, and culture; a model for developing excellence in these areas among students to integrate with social and local development; and the evaluation and summary of the outcomes of this capacity development.

Results

This research studied and analyzed the problems and potential of upper secondary students in Maha Sarakham Province across three main areas: language, music, art, and culture. The findings revealed that, in terms of language, most students primarily use the Isan dialect, which is a strength that provides a solid linguistic foundation. However, there is a shortage of foreign language teachers and appropriate teaching materials, limiting the development of foreign language skills. Nevertheless, students effectively use technology as a tool to support language learning.

Regarding music, students showed interest and a good foundation in traditional music, such as playing the khaen and pong lang instruments. Yet, there is a lack of modern musical instruments and expert teachers, as well as limited opportunities for performance, which hinders the advancement of Western music skills. In the field of art, teaching still emphasizes theory over practice, and there is a shortage of sufficient materials. However, students demonstrate potential in local handicrafts, such as silk weaving and carving, which are significant strengths in the region. Concerning culture, despite the encroachment of modern influences, local traditions and cultural activities—such as the Rocket Festival (Bun Bang Fai) and traditional dances—remain vibrant, with students playing a crucial role in preserving and continuing these practices.

For capacity development toward excellence, the research implemented activities closely linked to the local context. The language group learned Chinese through real-life scenarios, including role-playing and virtual exchanges, which enhanced their Chinese communication skills and established networks with community members and language experts. The music group organized music camps and joint concerts with network schools, enabling students to create musical works reflecting local identity and strengthen school-community connections. The art and culture group practiced contemporary long drum performances and participated in various cultural festivals, which not only developed their artistic and cultural skills but also generated income through community-supported performances.

Evaluation results indicated that among 50 students in the Chinese language group, communication skills improved by 80%. One hundred students in the music group successfully organized concerts to showcase their talents and exchange knowledge within the network. Additionally, 50 students in the art and culture group generated tangible income from community performance engagements.

This research demonstrates that developing students' potential in Maha Sarakham requires a combination of specialized skill learning and deep integration with local culture, alongside the use of technology as a learning support tool. Students not only enhanced their abilities in language, music, art, and culture but also contributed to sustainable income generation and community pride. This foundation is vital for driving stable and sustainable growth in society and the local community in the future.

Discussion

The problems and potential of upper secondary students in Maha Sarakham Province were examined in three main areas: language, music, art, and culture. It was found that, in terms of language, most students primarily use the Isan dialect, which serves as a strength by providing a solid linguistic foundation. However, there is a shortage of foreign language teachers and appropriate teaching materials, limiting the full development of foreign language skills. Nevertheless, students effectively use technology as a tool to support language learning.

In the field of music, students showed interest and a good foundation in traditional music, such as playing the khaen and pong lang instruments. However, there is a lack of modern musical instruments and expert teachers, as well as limited opportunities for performance, which hinders the advancement of Western music skills. Regarding art, teaching still emphasizes theory over practice, and there is insufficient material support. Despite this, students demonstrate potential in local handicrafts, such as silk weaving and carving, which are important strengths of students in this area. Concerning culture, although local culture is increasingly influenced by modern trends, there remain diverse traditions and cultural activities, such as the Rocket Festival (Bun Bang Fai) and traditional dances, in which students play a crucial role in preserving and continuing these customs.

Regarding capacity development toward excellence, the research implemented activities appropriately linked to the local context. The language group learned Chinese through real-life situations, including role-playing and virtual exchanges, which improved their Chinese communication skills and helped establish networks with the community and language experts. The music group organized music camps and knowledge exchange concerts with network schools, enabling students to create musical works

reflecting local identity and strengthening school-community networks. The art and culture group practiced contemporary long drum performances and participated in various cultural festivals, which not only developed their artistic and cultural skills but also generated income from community-supported performances.

These findings align with the research by Yosuttamada and Nuansri (2021), who studied the development of Chinese language learning through "Learning by Doing." They found that learning activities designed to provide real experiences inside and outside the classroom effectively build language skills and integrate Chinese language knowledge with other fields, while also providing opportunities to learn from native speakers.

Similarly, Toscher (2020) examined the development of entrepreneurial skills for music students in higher education. The study highlighted the importance of entrepreneurial skills and knowledge for musicians' careers (Bennett, 2016). However, graduates reported a gap between the importance of these skills and the level of training received (Miller et al,2017). This underscores the need to develop curricula that effectively meet student and labor market demands. Consequently, higher music education institutions have begun integrating arts entrepreneurship education into their programs to help students develop necessary professional skills (Beckman, 2005, 2007). Nevertheless, empirical evidence on which entrepreneurial skills are effectively acquired remains limited (Lackeus, 2015). This study explored and analyzed descriptive data from questionnaires assessing the perceptions of faculty and students in Norwegian higher music education institutions regarding skills relevant to their future careers and their self-reported learning of entrepreneurship.

Regarding the outcomes of capacity development toward excellence in language, music, art, and culture among upper secondary students in Maha Sarakham, the results showed that 50 students in the Chinese language group improved their communication skills by 80%. One hundred students in the music group successfully organized concerts to showcase their talents and exchange knowledge within the network. Additionally, 50 students in the art and culture group generated tangible income from community performance engagements.

These results correspond with Bequette's (2007) study on integrating Indigenous art into art education curricula. Bequette emphasized the role of teaching Indigenous art in transmitting Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) alongside contextualizing the impact of colonialism on both traditional and contemporary Indigenous art. The study highlighted ways schools can collaborate with American Indian communities by involving experts in traditional art and culture to develop curricula that integrate art and science. Recent research demonstrates that culturally contextualized curriculum design enhances meaningful learning and strengthens student identity connection.

Conclusion

This study successfully investigated the current issues and potential of upper secondary students in Maha Sarakham Province in language, music, art, and culture. Through a participatory action research approach, the researcher developed and enhanced students' capacities using locally tailored activities. The evaluation showed significant improvements in language proficiency, artistic skills, cultural engagement, and practical application, including income generation from performances. The findings highlight the importance of community collaboration and contextualized capacity development to foster excellence and contribute to local cultural preservation and societal advancement. Future efforts should continue to support resource development, expert involvement, and sustainable networks to maintain and expand these achievements.

Recommendation

The development of excellence in language, music, arts, and culture for upper secondary school students in Maha Sarakham Province should emphasize the integration of specialized skills learning with a deep connection to local culture. The following recommendations are proposed:

1. Promote Specialized Skills Learning Alongside Local Culture

Schools and related agencies should design curricula and learning activities that integrate language, music, arts, and local cultural skills. This approach enables students to truly understand their cultural roots while developing practical, specialized skills that can be applied in real life. Integrating these elements fosters creativity, imagination, and appreciation for the value of art and culture, which are essential for students' quality of life and future careers

2. Support Income Generation from Skills and Culture

Students should be encouraged to utilize the skills and knowledge they acquire to create income opportunities, such as producing local artworks, performing traditional music, or organizing cultural promotion activities. This not only fosters self- and community pride but also supports sustainable grassroots economic development by leveraging local wisdom and cultural heritage.

3. Encourage Collaboration Between Schools, Communities, and Various Sectors

The development of student potential should be supported by all sectors, including local communities, government agencies, and the private sector. Collaborative efforts are essential in creating a learning environment that holistically nurtures students' skills and promotes the preservation and creative transmission of local arts and culture.

Recommendations for Future Research

The key recommendations from this study are as follows: Schools should develop curricula that integrate local culture with academic instruction to promote knowledge alongside cultural preservation. Communities should support the provision of equipment and platforms to allow students to fully demonstrate their potential. Additionally, government agencies should increase funding and provide teacher training to enhance the quality of teaching.

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