

Cultural Heritage Innovation Through Performing Arts: The Creation of Pa Sin Tin Chok Isan Dance Performance to Promote Traditional Silk Weaving

นวัตกรรมมรดกทางวัฒนธรรมผ่านศิลปะการแสดง:

การสร้างสรรค์การแสดงรำ “ผ้าขึ้นตีนจกอีสาน” เพื่อส่งเสริมการทอผ้าไหมแบบดั้งเดิม

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Received 14-10-2025

Revised 23-03-2026

Accepted 27-03-2026

Doi: 10.69598/artssu.2026.5868.

How to Cite:

Potisansuk, S., & Others. (2026). Cultural Heritage Innovation Through Performing Arts: The Creation of Pa Sin Tin Chok Isan Dance Performance to Promote Traditional Silk Weaving. *Journal of Arts and Thai Studies*, 48(2), E5868 (1-18).

Keywords: choreography, cultural diffusion, intangible cultural heritage, Isan dance, knowledge transmission, silk weaving

คำสำคัญ: การออกแบบท่ารำ, การแพร่กระจายทางวัฒนธรรม, มรดกภูมิปัญญาทางวัฒนธรรม ที่จับต้องไม่ได้, รำอีสาน, การถ่ายทอดความรู้, การทอผ้าไหม

Abstract

Background and Objectives: There has been a decline in the interest of traditional Thai weaving practices that necessitates the implementation of promotion mechanisms to encourage the preservation of these traditions. This study examines the integration of traditional silk weaving techniques into Northeastern Thai (Isan) folk culture through the creation of Pa Sin Tin Chok of Isan, a choreographed performance inspired by weaving practices in Nong Bua, Mahasarakham Province. The objective of this research is to revive and preserve the cultural wisdom heritage of silk weaving by providing opportunities for younger generations to participate through performing arts, while respecting the interpretive authority, meanings, and aesthetic values of the local community. The interpretation and creative development of this work are grounded in several theoretical frameworks, including body movement theory, aesthetic theory, performance success theory, and cultural diffusion theory.

Methods: Using a creative practice-based methodology, the research combined documentary analysis, field observations participant and non-participant, and expert/performance interviews. Co-creation workshops with master weavers in Ban Nong Bua mapped weaving gestures and narratives, which were translated into movement phrases, music, costume motifs, and stagecraft. The resulting work integrates traditional Isan dance vocabularies with weaving actions, and employs both traditional and modern musical instruments. All activities conducted in this study received ethical approval, and voluntary informed consent was obtained from all participants.

Results: The performance successfully translated weaving gestures into dance, generating a narrative that highlights the cultural significance of Isan silk traditions and demonstrating that performance can function as both a medium of knowledge transmission and a mechanism for cultural innovation. Co-creative processes foregrounded local interpretive authority and produced movement idioms legible to community audiences. The project also reflected the structural challenges—labor intensity, market pressures, and environmental problems—relevant to long-term sustainability of the craft.

Application of this study: The model offers a replicable approach for performance-based heritage work: 1) embed co-creation with artisans, 2) convert craft processes into movement pedagogy, 3) integrate workshops (basic loom setup, thread/dye practice) into rehearsal, and 4) disseminate via festivals, curricula, and digital media to reach youth and broader publics. It is adaptable to other crafts and cultural contexts.

Conclusions: This study demonstrates that performing arts can serve as an innovative means of preserving and transmitting cultural heritage. Its key contribution lies in transforming the traditional silk-weaving process of Ban Nong Bua community into a language of dance through the creative integration of choreography, music, costumes, and performance structure that reflect the stages and cultural meanings of silk weaving in the Isan context. Unlike conventional forms of knowledge transmission that occur within families or among artisans, this approach converts traditional craft knowledge into a performance-based learning medium accessible to a wider

audience. The creative performance Pa Sin Tin Chok Isan functions as both a platform for cultural communication and a means of engaging younger generations, while enhancing the cultural visibility and value of the community. Strategically, this approach can be applied in conjunction with cultural activities, creative tourism, and learning activities in educational institutions to support the sustainable preservation and development of local wisdom heritage in the future.

บทคัดย่อ

ที่มาและวัตถุประสงค์: ความสนใจในวิถีการทอผ้าไทยแบบดั้งเดิมในปัจจุบันมีแนวโน้มลดลง จึงจำเป็นต้องพัฒนากลไกในการส่งเสริมและอนุรักษ์องค์ความรู้ทางวัฒนธรรมที่เกี่ยวข้อง การศึกษาค้นคว้าครั้งนี้มุ่งวิเคราะห์การบูรณาการเทคนิคการทอผ้าไหมแบบดั้งเดิมเข้ากับวัฒนธรรมพื้นบ้านภาคตะวันออกเฉียงเหนือ (อีสาน) ผ่านการสร้างสรรคการแสดงรำ “ผ้าซิ่นตีนจกอีสาน” ซึ่งได้รับแรงบันดาลใจจากกระบวนการทอผ้าไหมของชุมชนบ้านหนองบัว จังหวัดมหาสารคาม วัตถุประสงค์ของการวิจัยคือเพื่อฟื้นฟูและอนุรักษ์มรดกภูมิปัญญาทางวัฒนธรรมด้านการทอผ้าไหม โดยเปิดโอกาสให้คนรุ่นใหม่ได้มีส่วนร่วมผ่านศิลปะการแสดง ขณะเดียวกันยังคงเคารพอำนาจการตีความ ความหมาย และสุนทรียภาพของชุมชนท้องถิ่น กระบวนการตีความและการสร้างสรรค์ผลงานนี้อาศัยกรอบแนวคิดทางทฤษฎี ได้แก่ ทฤษฎีการเคลื่อนไหวของร่างกาย ทฤษฎีสุนทรียศาสตร์ ทฤษฎีความสำเร็จของการแสดง และทฤษฎีการแพร่กระจายทางวัฒนธรรม

วิธีการศึกษา: ด้วยระเบียบวิธีแบบการปฏิบัติสร้างสรรค์ การวิจัยครั้งนี้ได้ผสมผสานการวิเคราะห์เอกสาร การสังเกตภาคสนามทั้งแบบมีส่วนร่วมและไม่มีส่วนร่วม และการสัมภาษณ์ผู้เชี่ยวชาญ/นักแสดง การประชุมเชิงปฏิบัติการสร้างสรรค์ร่วมกับครูช่างทอผ้าผู้เชี่ยวชาญในบ้านหนองบัวได้ทำการทำแผนที่ทำทอผ้าและเรื่องเล่าที่เกี่ยวข้อง ก่อนจะแปลความออกมา เป็นวลีการเคลื่อนไหว ดนตรี ลวดลายเครื่องแต่งกาย และองค์ประกอบบนเวที ผลงานที่ได้ผสมผสานคำศัพท์การรำอีสานแบบดั้งเดิมเข้ากับท่าทางการทอผ้า และใช้ทั้ง เครื่องดนตรีพื้นบ้านและเครื่องดนตรีสมัยใหม่ การดำเนินกิจกรรมทั้งหมด ได้รับการอนุมัติด้านจริยธรรมและความยินยอมโดยสมัครใจจากผู้เข้าร่วมทุกคน

ผลการศึกษา: การแสดงสามารถถ่ายทอดท่าทางการทอผ้าให้กลายเป็นท่ารำได้อย่างสำเร็จ สร้างสรรค์ เรื่องเล่าที่เน้นย้ำถึงความสำคัญทางวัฒนธรรมของประเพณีผ้าไหมอีสาน และแสดงให้เห็นว่า การแสดงสามารถทำหน้าที่ได้ทั้งในฐานะสื่อกลางในการถ่ายทอดองค์ความรู้และกลไกในการสร้างสรรค์นวัตกรรมทางวัฒนธรรม กระบวนการสร้างสรรค์ร่วมได้เน้นย้ำอำนาจการตีความของชุมชนท้องถิ่น และสร้างภาษาการเคลื่อนไหวที่ผู้ชมในชุมชนสามารถเข้าใจได้ โครงการนี้ยังสะท้อนให้เห็นถึง ความท้าทายในเชิงโครงสร้าง ได้แก่ ความเข้มข้นของแรงงานแรงกดดันทางการตลาด และปัญหาด้านสิ่งแวดล้อม ซึ่งมีความเกี่ยวข้องกับความยั่งยืนใน ระยะยาวของงานหัตถกรรมนี้

การประยุกต์ใช้: โมเดลนี้นำเสนอแนวทางที่สามารถประยุกต์ใช้ซ้ำได้สำหรับการทำงานด้านมรดกทางวัฒนธรรมผ่านการแสดง ได้แก่ 1) ผสานกระบวนการสร้างสรรค์ร่วมกับช่างฝีมือ 2) แปลงกระบวนการหัตถกรรมให้เป็นการสอน การเคลื่อนไหว 3) บูรณาการเวิร์กช็อป (การติดตั้งกี่ทอผ้าเบื้องต้น การฝึกใช้เส้นด้าย/การย้อมสี) เข้ากับการซ้อมการแสดง และ 4) เผยแพร่ผ่านเทศกาล หลักสูตรการเรียนการสอน และสื่อดิจิทัล เพื่อเข้าถึงเยาวชนและสาธารณชนในวงกว้าง ทั้งนี้ โมเดลสามารถปรับใช้กับงานหัตถกรรมและบริบททางวัฒนธรรมอื่น ๆ ได้

บทสรุป: การศึกษานี้แสดงให้เห็นว่าศิลปะการแสดงสามารถทำหน้าที่เป็นกลไกเชิงนวัตกรรมในการสืบสานมรดกภูมิปัญญาทางวัฒนธรรมได้ โดยนวัตกรรมสำคัญของงานวิจัยคือการนำกระบวนการทอผ้าไหมแบบดั้งเดิมของชุมชนบ้านหนองบัวมาถ่ายทอดเป็นภาษาการเคลื่อนไหวทางนาฏศิลป์ ผ่านการออกแบบท่ารำ ดนตรี เครื่องแต่งกาย และโครงสร้างการแสดงที่สะท้อนขั้นตอนและความหมายของการทอผ้าไหมในบริบทวัฒนธรรมอีสาน แนวทางดังกล่าวแตกต่างจากรูปแบบการถ่ายทอดความรู้แบบดั้งเดิมที่มักเกิดขึ้นภายในครอบครัวหรือกลุ่มช่างทอ โดยเปลี่ยนองค์ความรู้เชิงหัตถกรรมให้กลายเป็นสื่อการเรียนรู้เชิงการแสดงที่เข้าถึงสาธารณะได้กว้างขึ้น โมเดลการสร้างสรรคการแสดง “ผ้าซิ่นตีนจกอีสาน” จึงทำหน้าที่เป็นทั้งพื้นที่การสื่อสารวัฒนธรรมและเครื่องมือในการสร้างการมีส่วนร่วมของคนรุ่นใหม่ ขณะเดียวกันยังช่วยเพิ่มการมองเห็นและคุณค่าทางวัฒนธรรมของชุมชนในระดับสังคมที่กว้างขึ้น ในเชิงยุทธศาสตร์ แนวทางนี้สามารถนำไปประยุกต์ใช้ร่วมกับกิจกรรมทางวัฒนธรรม การท่องเที่ยวเชิงสร้างสรรค์ และการเรียนรู้ในสถานศึกษา เพื่อสนับสนุนการอนุรักษ์และพัฒนาการมรดกภูมิปัญญาท้องถิ่นอย่างยั่งยืนในอนาคต

Introduction

Silk, often heralded as the ‘Queen of Fabrics’, is a refined craft art produced from silk threads and is renowned for its versatility in daily life (Sangkhachantharanan & Singyabuth, 2022). Beyond its practical uses, silk holds a sacred place in traditions, being woven for temple offerings and annual merit-making ceremonies like the *Kathin* Festival (Sae-Wang, 2015). In Northeastern Thailand (Isan), weaving is an art form closely associated with women, embodying a cultural heritage that has been transmitted through generations (Thepboriruk, 2020). This craft underscores the unique identity and rich history of the Isan people.

The distinction of Isan silk is evident in its diversity. For example, Thai-Lao ethnic groups are known for their Tie-dye silk, whereas Thai and Thai-Khmer communities prefer specific weaves such as Hol and Amprom, showcasing unique brocade and tie-dye patterns only found in Thailand (Charungkiattikul & Joneurairatana, 2021). Each silk variant embodies the wisdom of local artisans passed down from their ancestors. This intricate weaving process is a tradition maintained within families for generations. It fosters a sense of meticulousness, discipline, and an appreciation for art, ensuring the preservation of techniques and the promotion of local culture. The practice plays a crucial role in the social and cultural fabric of local communities, highlighting the distinct identities of ethnic groups across different provinces (Photisan, 2013). Notable examples include *saket* silk from Roi Et, tie-dye silk from Khon Kaen, *phrae wa* silk from Kalasin, and tie-dye silk with areca flower patterns from Maha Sarakham.

Isan has long occupied an ambiguous position between Lao ethnolinguistic heritage and Thai national identity, a dynamic that the Bangkok state has actively “choreographed” through administrative centralization, education policies, and cultural programming for tourism and nation-building (McCargo & Hongladarom, 2004). These state-driven efforts have homogenized diverse Lao-speaking communities under a single regional banner and instrumentalized their folk traditions for broader national narratives, often prioritizing unity and economic gain over the nuanced preservation of local autonomy and knowledge.

Given the profound value and significance of local wisdom in the craft of silk weaving, there is a growing concern about the diminishing interest among younger generations. This decline necessitates the implementation of promotion mechanisms to encourage the preservation of these traditions. Concurrently, the revival of traditional Thai performing arts presents an opportunity to integrate and rejuvenate these cultural practices. In this study, innovation is understood as a process through which artisanal knowledge is translated into performative structures. The choreography functions as a mechanism of cultural transmission, transforming weaving gestures, spatial rhythms, and textile symbolism into a movement vocabulary capable of communicating craft knowledge to broader audiences.

Research Objectives

The primary objective of this study is to demonstrate the innovative application of the Northeastern Thai Sin Pattern set within traditional Northeastern Thai folk performing arts. The study aims to preserve and celebrate the legacy of Isan silk weaving, making it relevant for a global audience while fostering renewed interest among younger generations.

Literature Review

1. Current Transmission Methods of Weaving Knowledge

In northeastern Thai communities, the transmission of weaving knowledge is facilitated through both interpersonal and intra-organizational communication (Namjaidee, 2017). Interpersonal communication is highly valued, with community members frequently using the local dialect to foster a sense of closeness and mutual understanding. This form of transmission is particularly effective during face-to-face interactions and group communication sessions, where feedback and knowledge exchange are encouraged (Ungsitipoonporn, 2020). Culture centers serve as hubs for learning and transferring silk-related knowledge through presentations and exhibitions, especially focusing on natural dyeing methods. This aligns with the findings of Chantamool et al. (2023) and Dameri & Demartini (2020), who highlighted the importance of cultural heritage and the role of traditional knowledge transmission in preserving silk weaving practices. Additionally,

local leaders play a crucial role in motivating and educating the community, often using word-of-mouth and small group discussions to disseminate information effectively (Watthanachanobon & Chantaranamchoo, 2020). This method is supported by the work of Katz, Lazarsfeld, & Roper (2017), who emphasized the significance of interpersonal communication in fostering acceptance and understanding within communities.

Intra-organizational communication is also a significant method for knowledge transmission in this community. The Nakhon Ratchasima Thai Silk Association, founded by the local community, coordinates activities among silk producers and sellers, providing information on business, industry, trading, and marketing. This organization promotes economic empowerment by supporting the livelihoods of silk weavers (Phochanthilath, 2015). Regular meetings and collaborative efforts between all stakeholders help maintain traditional crafts while integrating them into the modern economy, reflecting the dynamic nature of Thai silk weaving as it adapts to contemporary demands (Watthanachanobon & Chantaranamchoo, 2020). These meetings often involve members from outside the community, necessitating the use of formal Thai language (Namjaidee, 2017). This aligns with Rogers' (2003) insights on the role of leaders in accessing and disseminating information to influence attitudes and behaviors within the community. The organized approach ensures the sustainability and relevance of silk weaving practices, addressing both the economic and cultural dimensions of the craft.

Studies on the cultural heritage of silk weaving emphasize its role in expressing community identity and the challenges of maintaining these traditions in the face of modernization (Dalferro, 2021; Graham, 2011; Patichol, Wongsurawat & Johri, 2014). The integration of traditional weaving techniques, such as *mudmee* and *phrae wa* silk, into contemporary contexts highlights the ongoing evolution of this craft. The economic empowerment of women through weaving groups and the support of private and royal initiatives have been crucial in preserving these traditional crafts, enabling artisans to contribute significantly to their families and communities (Charungkiattikul & Joneurairatana, 2021). However, the rapid commercialization and environmental impacts of silk production present challenges that require sustainable practices and innovative solutions (Wongsawangsiri & Wechk, 2024). The efforts to market traditional silk products domestically and internationally, supported by prominent figures and provincial declarations, underscore the importance of silk weaving in modern Thai society and its contribution to national identity. The interplay between preserving traditional crafts and adapting them to contemporary economic and environmental contexts reflects the resilience and vibrancy of Thai silk weaving as a living tradition. Yet, despite these efforts, current transmission methods have proven less effective in engaging younger generations, who often find traditional approaches less relatable (Chai-Arayalert, Suttapong & Kong-Rithi, 2021). This ineffectiveness necessitates exploring alternative mediums that can bridge the generational gap.

2. Dance as a Medium for the Transmission of Cultural Heritage

Dance has long been recognized as a medium for the transmission of cultural heritage, embodying historical narratives, values, and traditions (Roos, 2016). In the context of Northeastern Thai folk performing arts, dance serves as an effective vehicle for preserving and communicating the intricate craft of silk weaving. The integration of traditional dance with the cultural practices of silk weaving creates a dynamic form of cultural expression that engages both performers and audiences in a shared heritage experience (Bleeker, 2016). This approach aligns with the concept of interconnected individualism, as articulated by Wakpa (2016), where individual and communal identities are celebrated through dance, promoting cultural continuity and communal bonds. Moreover, dance's kinetic and performative nature makes it particularly appealing to younger generations, who are often more engaged by interactive and dynamic forms of cultural expression (Myrvold, 2022).

The use of dance to transmit cultural heritage is particularly relevant in addressing the challenges faced by traditional practices in contemporary society. As Rulan Tangen and Anne Pesata's basket weaving dance demonstrates, dance can preserve and nurture relationships with cultural practices that might otherwise be overlooked or deemed obsolete (Wakpa, 2016). It is hoped that the performance created in this investigation can highlight the relevance and contemporary significance of the traditional silk-weaving craft. This method is intended to revitalize interest in silk weaving among younger generations and educate audiences about the cultural and historical contexts of the craft. In this way, dance becomes a holistic praxis that recognizes and honors the ancestral, communal, and lived experiences of the dancers, fostering a deep connection to their cultural roots while encouraging responsible and sustained action towards cultural preservation (Fink et al., 2021).

According to Leach (2016), dance can serve as a knowledge-producing enterprise. Choreographic practices are forms of intelligence that convey complex cultural narratives and skilled actions as embodied knowledge (Marchand, 2010). This perspective aligns with the notion of choreographic intelligence and physical thinking, emphasizing the intellectual rigor and cultural value inherent in dance (Delahunta, 2013). By presenting dance as a medium of knowledge, the performance contributes to the broader cultural and economic development, demonstrating the relevance and worth of traditional arts in modern contexts. This transformation is crucial for younger audiences who seek meaningful and relatable connections to their heritage. The validation of dance as a form of knowledge production underscores the need to develop appropriate modes for transmitting this art form, ensuring its continued vitality and resonance within the community and beyond (Strathern, 2006).

This investigation is intended to exemplify how traditional arts can be revitalized and preserved through innovative cultural expressions. By fostering a deep connection to cultural heritage and promoting communal engagement, this approach enhances their relevance in contemporary society. The theoretical frameworks of interconnected individualism and holistic praxis provide valuable insights into how dance can serve as a powerful medium for cultural transmission, ensuring that the traditions of Isan silk weaving continue to thrive and inspire future generations.

Research Methods

In this research, co-creation with master weavers was treated as an epistemological process through which craft knowledge informed choreographic decision-making. Observations, demonstrations, and discussions with artisans shaped the selection of weaving gestures, movement dynamics, and symbolic motifs, allowing embodied knowledge from the weaving practice to guide the development of the choreographic vocabulary. The study employed an integrated creative-practice methodology in Ban Nong Bua, Kud Rang district. We first conducted a documentary analysis of scholarly literature, local records, and weaving manuals before entering the field to observe silk production both as participant and non-participant. We then collaborated directly with 7–10 master weavers from Ban Nong Bua first mapping their own ritual and economic narratives of silk production, then co-designing movement phrases in hands-on choreography labs in order to ensure that local voices and embodied expertise formed the primary drivers of our movement vocabulary, musical arrangements, costume motifs, and stagecraft. Under the advisory of Dr. Pornsawan Porndonkor these diverse data streams were synthesized into the *Pa Sin Tin Chok of Isan* performance, which integrates traditional Isan, Western, and modern instruments, adapts ancestral weaving gestures into nuanced body movements, and presents a tripartite structure to revitalize the intangible heritage of Isan silk weaving.

There were five key phases to the research:

1. Analysis of documentary information and observations to derive concepts for creating a dance performance inspired by *pa sin tin chok*.
2. Organization of interviews with experts in Thai traditional and Northeastern folk dance, with a focus on choreography to align with the lyrics.
3. Organization of interviews with performers about their communication and expression during performances.
4. Analysis of data to create an innovative work in Northeastern traditional dance, entitled *Pa Sin Tin Chok of Isan*.
5. Creation of the Northeastern Traditional Dance, *Pa Sin Tin Chok of Isan*.

This paper presents the results of the final phase of the research process (Phase 5: creative production). All research was conducted following ethical guidelines to ensure respect for all participants involved, with approval from the ethics committee of Maha Sarakham Rajabhat University. Full informed consent was obtained from all individuals participating in the study, including experts, performers, and evaluators, ensuring their voluntary participation and confidentiality of the information provided. This approach ensured the integrity of the research process and enriched the creative work with diverse insights and perspectives, contributing significantly to the promotion and preservation of traditional Isan dance and silk weaving craftsmanship.

Twelve individuals were selected by the researchers to perform the dance, based on the following criteria and characteristics for the performers:

1. Having a proportional physical stature and height.
2. Having basic dance skills with an understanding of movement techniques.
3. Being responsible, disciplined, punctual, and capable of sacrificing personal time for the group, able to work well with others.
4. Having quick thinking and problem-solving abilities to address issues during rehearsals and live performances, capable of adapting to situations effectively.

This meticulous selection ensured the performance's quality and the effective portrayal of the cultural narrative. The performance was showcased at a national art festival and will be further disseminated through academic journals, electronic media, and documentation. This wide dissemination aims to preserve and promote the cultural heritage represented by the performance.

Research Results

1. The Creation: Pa Sin Tin Chok of Isan

The choreography for the set was designed based on traditional dance moves or master movements, which were creatively adapted to convey meanings that align with the lyrics and melodies. The choreography aimed to facilitate easy understanding of the narrative for the audience, with the researcher intending to present through lyrics, melodies, and designed movements. Emotions were conveyed through facial expressions, eye movements, and the body language of the performers. The researcher invented new dance movements based on the principles of Eastern Thai and Thai master movements to match the accompanying songs that reflect the unique identity of this performance set.

Segment 1 introduced a *phaya* verse, inviting viewers to admire the *mudmee* silk with the Areca flower pattern. Segment 2 led into a traditional Isan dance performance, with female performers in traditional Isan attire dancing to music. The design of the dance movements for the performance integrated traditional Isan dance elements with the silk weaving

processes of Nong Bua, Kud Rang district, Maha Sarakham. This fusion serves to preserve the cultural heritage of the region and reinterprets it for contemporary audiences. In designing the choreography, the researchers first documented key gestures from the weaving process—such as threading the loom, aligning silk threads, and rhythmic weaving motions—and then translated these actions into stylized dance movements by adapting traditional Isan master dance positions, hand gestures, and spatial formations. The theoretical foundation for this dance creation rests on several pillars: the theories of body movement, performance success, aesthetics, and cultural diffusion, combined with the practical elements of traditional Isan dance and silk weaving.

1.1 Theoretical Foundations for the Choreography

The Body Movement Theory, grounded in the biomechanics of dance, underscores the study of human motion and the expressive capabilities of the human body. According to Laban's movement analysis, which dissects body movement into categories such as body, effort, shape, and space, dance can be viewed as an intricate language that communicates through these physical dimensions (Hodgson, 2016). In the context of the performance, this theory provides a framework for dancers to use their bodies as expressive tools, emulating the intricate and precise movements involved in the silk weaving process. The fluidity and precision required in weaving are translated into graceful, controlled dance movements that replicate the coordination of hands and feet seen in traditional weaving techniques (Imus et al., 2022). Using Laban's movement analysis—particularly the dimensions of body, effort, shape, and space—the researchers transformed weaving gestures into stylized choreographic motifs, such as circular arm patterns representing thread looping, alternating weight shifts reflecting loom rhythm, and spatial formations that mirror the linear structure of warp and weft threads. This process enabled the creation of new movement vocabulary grounded in traditional weaving actions while remaining consistent with Isan dance aesthetics. This approach highlights the aesthetic qualities of the dance and serves to narrate the cultural significance of the weaving process through physical embodiment.

Building on this foundation, the Theory of Performance Success involves understanding the multifaceted elements that contribute to a successful performance, including audience engagement, emotional impact, and narrative clarity. According to McCarthy et al. (2004), successful performances captivate the audience through a combination of emotional resonance and clear, compelling storytelling. In the context of the performance, incorporating recognizable elements of silk weaving into the dance leverages the concept of cultural memory, where familiar cultural symbols evoke a sense of identity and pride within the local audience (Assmann, 2011). This approach ensures that the choreography is aesthetically pleasing and rich in cultural significance. Evidence from the co-creation workshops and post-performance discussions with master weavers and local audience members indicated that the weaving-derived gestures and costume motifs were immediately recognizable as representations of the local silk-making tradition, particularly the movements depicting thread alignment and loom operation. Participants noted that these visual references allowed them to connect the performance with everyday weaving practices in Ban Nong Bua, reinforcing the cultural relevance of the choreography. The structured choreography clearly communicates the narrative of the silk creation process, thereby enhancing the audience's appreciation and connection to the performance through a blend of visual artistry and cultural storytelling (Reason, 2006).

Aesthetics theory, which deals with the principles of beauty and artistic taste, provides a critical framework for understanding how art forms elicit sensory and emotional responses. According to Dewey's theory of aesthetics, art is an experience that unifies elements of perception and emotion, creating a harmonious interaction between the observer and the artwork (Dewey, 2008). In the context of the performance, this theory is employed by meticulously focusing on visual harmony and cultural symbolism. The choreography, costumes, and stage design are all crafted to produce a visually cohesive and aesthetically pleasing performance. For example, the costume design incorporates *mudmee* silk featuring

the Areca flower motif, while the dancers' formations are arranged in linear and grid-like patterns to visually evoke the structure of warp and weft threads in the weaving process. Lighting and stage positioning further emphasize these patterns by highlighting synchronized hand gestures and symmetrical spatial arrangements among the performers. These elements work together to highlight the elegance of *mudmee* silk and the intricate beauty of traditional dance forms (Beardsley, 1981). The careful integration of traditional patterns and motifs into the dance movements and costumes imbues the performance with deep cultural significance, aligning with Eco's semiotic approach to aesthetics, which emphasizes the role of cultural symbols in creating meaning (Eco, 1976).

Building on the principles of aesthetics, theories of cultural diffusion explore how cultural elements spread and are adapted across different contexts, providing a framework for understanding the dynamic evolution of cultural practices. According to Rogers (2003), cultural diffusion involves the process by which an innovation is communicated over time among the participants in a social system, leading to the adaptation and integration of new elements with traditional practices. The performance leverages this theory by blending traditional Isan dance movements with contemporary choreography, making the cultural heritage both accessible and appealing to modern audiences. This synthesis also incorporates innovative aspects, ensuring that the performance remains relevant in a contemporary context (Shils, 1981). By doing so, the performance honors the past and embraces the present, creating a living tradition that evolves with the times (Appadurai, 1996). This theoretical foundation sets the stage for exploring the practical elements that bring the performance to life. The following section delves into the choreography, costume design, and stagecraft, illustrating how these components are crafted to embody both traditional and innovative elements of Isan culture.

1.2 Practical Elements

The movements described below should be understood as newly created choreographic motifs derived from the transformation of weaving gestures through theoretical frameworks. Drawing on Laban Movement Analysis and principles of contemporary choreographic design, the researchers analyzed the physical actions involved in silk weaving—such as thread alignment, loom operation, and rhythmic shuttle movement—and translated these actions into stylized movement vocabulary suitable for Isan dance performance. Through the application of Laban's dimensions of body, effort, shape, and space, everyday craft gestures were expanded, stylized, and reorganized into choreographic phrases. For example, the circular hand formations represent the looping motion of silk threads, while alternating weight transfers and directional turns mirror the repetitive rhythm of loom operation. Spatial formations were further designed to evoke the structural relationships of warp and weft threads within the weaving frame. These transformations constitute the creative innovation of the choreography, as traditional weaving practices were not simply imitated but reinterpreted into a new performative language that integrates local craft knowledge with contemporary movement design.

One example of this choreographic transformation appears in the opening movement, where the dancer steps sideways while drawing both hands inward toward the chest. This motif was developed from the observed gesture of carefully gathering silk threads before weaving. Using Laban's concept of shape and effort, the original craft movement was expanded into a stylized gesture emphasizing controlled inward motion and suspended energy, creating a visual metaphor for the preparatory stage of weaving (Figure 1).



Figure 1 Dance Posture Still From Pa Sin Tin Chok of Isan Symbolizing the Gathering of Silk Threads Before Weaving
(Source: Potisansuk et al., 2026a)

The right foot touching forward, with both hands placed in front of the right thigh and the head tilted right, represents the careful placement of the silk threads. This gesture highlights the meticulous nature of the weaving process, where each thread must be perfectly aligned (Figure 2).



Figure 2 Dance Posture Still From Pa Sin Tin Chok of Isan Symbolizing Placement of the Silk Threads
(Source: Potisansuk et al., 2026b)

The left foot touching with the right hand forming a circle and the left hand forming a circle at waist level, with the head straightforward, mimics the weaver's movements as they adjust the loom and prepare the threads for weaving. This stance signifies the preparation stage, where everything must be in order before the actual weaving begins (Figure 3).



Figure 3 Dance Posture Still From Pa Sin Tin Chok of Isan Symbolizing Preparation of the Threads for Weaving
(Source: Potisansuk et al., 2026c)

The right foot stepping across and turning left, with the right hand forming a lower circle and the left hand a high circle above the head, with the head tilted right, illustrates the dynamic movement of weaving intricate patterns. This movement conveys the complexity and skill involved in creating the *Lai Soi Dok Mak* patterns (Figure 4).



Figure 4 Dance Posture Still From Pa Sin Tin Chok of Isan Symbolizing Creation of Lai Soi Dok Mai Patterns
(Source: Potisansuk et al., 2026d)

The left foot stepping forward with the right hand on the left chest and the left hand on the right waist, with the head tilted right, represents the integration of modern design elements into traditional weaving. This position shows how contemporary influences are blended with traditional techniques (Figure 5).



Figure 5 Dance Posture Still From Pa Sin Tin Chok of Isan Symbolizing Integration of Modern Design Elements into Traditional Weaving
(Source: Potisansuk et al., 2026e)

Walking to the rhythm with the left foot starting, both hands forming crossed circles at chest level, and the head tilted left, showcases the final stages of weaving where the pattern comes together. This movement emphasizes the coordination and rhythm required in the weaving process (Figure 6).



Figure 6 Dance Posture Still From Pa Sin Tin Chok of Isan Symbolizing the Rhythm of the Weaving Process
(Source: Potisansuk et al., 2026f)

The dance postures illustrate various stages of the weaving process, from dyeing and bleaching the silk to the final weaving and presentation of the finished fabric. Each movement is carefully designed to reflect the specific actions and skills involved in these stages, providing a comprehensive narrative of the silk weaving process. The *Pa Sin Tin Chok of Isan* performance is a testament to the rich cultural heritage of Isan and the intricate art of silk weaving. By integrating

traditional dance movements with the detailed processes of silk production, the performance not only preserves these cultural practices but also revitalizes them for contemporary audiences. The theoretical foundations of body movement, performance success, aesthetics, and cultural diffusion, combined with practical elements of traditional dance and weaving, create a compelling and educational narrative that highlights the beauty and skill of Isan's cultural arts. This innovative approach ensures that the traditional practices are both preserved and appreciated in a modern context, fostering a deeper understanding and respect for the cultural heritage of Maha Sarakham.

Conclusion and Discussion

The final creative dance was inspired by the heritage and widespread practice of silk weaving in various regions, including Maha Sarakham, known for its distinctive patterns. The uniqueness and beauty of the silk weaving process in Nong Bua, Kud Rang, particularly the *pa sin tin chok* pattern, sparked the idea to integrate this craftsmanship into the creation of contemporary Northeastern traditional dance. Dr. Pornsawan Porndonkor, an expert in Northeastern traditional dance and music, was consulted to advise on the creative process officially on November 8, 2021.

The final composition included traditional Isan instruments, Western instruments, and modern or 21st-century instruments, categorized into two main groups: rhythm and melody instruments. *Klong haang*, big drums, small cymbals, large cymbals, *ching*, *grab*, long drum, bell chimes, bass drum, cow bells, and electronic drums were selected as the rhythm instruments for the performance. In addition, the electric *phin*, acoustic *phin*, bass *phin*, electric bass, *khaen* (a bamboo mouth organ), *sor* (a traditional fiddle), *sor Isan* (a traditional fiddle from the Northeast), piano, Western string instruments and synthesizers were selected as the melody instruments for the performance.

The design of costumes was deemed crucial as it embodied the main concept and inspiration for this creative work. The researcher adapted traditional attire with contemporary elements, reflecting customs, traditions, and the current fashion trends. This approach aimed to determine the direction of creative costume design based on the values and traditions of the present era. Figure 7 depicts costume designs from front and back views. The makeup design for the performers was clearly outlined, adopting the traditional Thai performing arts makeup style for female performers in dance, ballet, and folk dance.



Figure 7 Costumes Worn by Performers in the Pa Sin Tin Chok of Isan Dance

(Source: Potisansuk et al., 2026g)

The choreography for the *Pa Sin Tin Chok of Isan* performance was crafted by blending traditional Isan dance moves with the weaving processes or patterns from Nong Bua, Kud Rang, Mahasarakham. This methodology aimed to innovate by rearranging dance moves and styles for educational purposes and further inheritance. There were two types of formation patterns: 1) traditional and 2) modernized. The formation patterns in the performance were structured into several rows, each with its unique arrangement and role within the overall choreography. The design included specific placements and movements of performers on stage, emphasizing the importance of lighting to highlight these elements effectively, enhancing the visual and emotional impact of the performance.

The performance was divided into three segments for ease of inheritance:

1. Introduction with *phaya* poetry.
2. Transition to traditional Isan performance.
3. Fusion of traditional Isan with contemporary global performance styles.

This structure facilitated a comprehensive presentation from inviting audiences with traditional poetry, showcasing the beauty of traditional Isan dance and attire, to merging these elements with modern influences for a broader appeal.

The integration of traditional Isan silk weaving techniques into the creative set of *Pa Sin Tin Chok of Isan* highlights the potential for innovative approaches in cultural preservation. While these theoretical perspectives were introduced earlier as part of the conceptual framework for choreography, the discussion here briefly revisits them to interpret how the creative process and performance outcomes observed in the field reflect these principles in practice. The current transmission methods, while effective in maintaining community identity and economic empowerment, face significant challenges in engaging younger generations (Chai-Arayalert, Suttapong, & Kong-Rithi, 2021). This underscores the need for alternative mediums that can bridge the generational gap. Dance, as an interactive and dynamic form of cultural expression, offers a compelling solution. By leveraging dance as a medium, the traditional practices of silk weaving can be revitalized, making them more relatable and engaging for younger audiences (Myrvold, 2022). Future iterations of this model could incorporate hands-on weaving workshops in which performers learn basic loom setup, thread selection, and *pha sin* motifs, thereby embedding artisanal skills directly into rehearsal and creating embodied pathways for knowledge transmission. This approach preserves the cultural heritage and ensures its transmission to future generations. More broadly, this study offers a model for how performance-based media can serve as adaptive platforms for the revitalization of intangible heritage, providing a template for similar interventions across diverse cultural contexts. Yet, it is important to situate this within Thailand's historical practice of state-sponsored cultural orchestration, where local dances and crafts have been selectively appropriated into national repertoires to cement central authority and serve tourism agendas (Keyes, 2004; Hayami, 2019; McCargo & Hongladarom, 2004). In practical terms, this differed from many state-directed cultural productions in that key creative decisions were discussed and approved through workshops with local weavers and community elders. The choreography remained anchored in locally recognized weaving practices and community interpretations of their cultural meaning.

The theoretical foundations for the choreography in the performance draw on body movement theory, performance success, aesthetics, and cultural diffusion. These theories provide a comprehensive framework for understanding how traditional and contemporary elements can be integrated into a cohesive performance. The body movement theory, as articulated by Laban's movement analysis, emphasizes the expressive capabilities of the human body and its ability to communicate complex cultural narratives through dance (Hodgson, 2016). By translating the precise movements of silk weaving into dance, the performance not only highlights the aesthetic qualities of the craft but also serves to narrate its cultural significance (Imus et al., 2022). This approach aligns with the notion of choreographic intelligence, which views

dance as a form of knowledge production, conveying intricate cultural stories through embodied practice (Leach, 2016; Marchand, 2010). Consequently, the study contributes to a growing body of interdisciplinary literature that regards performance as a method of cultural inquiry and transmission.

The theory of performance success further enhances this framework by emphasizing the importance of audience engagement, emotional impact, and narrative clarity (McCarthy et al., 2004). The performance incorporates recognizable elements of silk weaving into the dance, leveraging the concept of cultural memory to evoke a sense of identity and pride within the local audience (Assmann, 2011). This structured choreography ensures that the narrative of the silk creation process is clearly communicated, enhancing the audience's appreciation and connection to the performance (Reason, 2006). Observations from rehearsals and post-performance discussions with community members indicated that audiences were able to immediately recognize weaving gestures and textile motifs embedded in the choreography, particularly movements derived from thread alignment and loom operation. These responses suggest that the performative translation of craft practices functioned as an accessible cultural narrative for local viewers. By combining emotional resonance with compelling storytelling, the performance bridges the gap between traditional practices and contemporary audiences, making the cultural heritage both accessible and engaging.

The theory of cultural diffusion provides a framework for understanding how the performance can adapt and evolve in contemporary contexts. Rogers' model of cultural diffusion involves the process by which an innovation is communicated and integrated over time within a social system (Rogers, 2003). By blending traditional Isan dance movements with contemporary choreography, the performance makes cultural heritage accessible and appealing to modern audiences, ensuring its relevance and sustainability (Shils, 1981; Appadurai, 1996). This synthesis of traditional and innovative elements creates a living tradition that honors the past while embracing the present, exemplifying how cultural practices can be revitalized and preserved through innovative expressions. The findings offer a theoretical contribution to cultural diffusion studies by demonstrating that artistic hybridity - in this case, the fusion of weaving practices with performative arts - can be a vital mechanism of cultural adaptation and intergenerational transfer, especially in societies facing heritage disengagement.

Beyond this specific case, the study proposes a conceptual model of performance-based heritage transmission in which traditional craft practices are translated into choreographic structures through observation, theoretical interpretation, and collaborative creation. In this model, performance functions as a mechanism through which embodied knowledge can be reorganized, communicated, and sustained across generations. From this perspective, the reinterpretation of weaving practices through performance may also be understood in relation to the notion of cultural capital, where traditional knowledge and artistic practices function as valuable cultural resources that contribute to both social identity and cultural sustainability.

1. Structural and Sustainability Challenges

Despite the creative successes of the performance, our participatory workshops revealed that silk weaving in Ban Nong Bua remains a highly labor-intensive livelihood, with artisans working 8–10 hours per day at looms and spending significant funds on dye imports and energy for vat heating. Several weavers described distress over erratic cotton prices and competition from mass-produced textiles, which undercuts the market for hand-woven silks. Environmentally, our field observations confirmed heavy water consumption and the use of chemical mordants issues that echo concerns raised in Wongsawangsiri & Wechk (2024). Finally, participants repeatedly cited a generational gulf: youth are drawn to urban jobs and view weaving as back-breaking and low-paying, threatening the craft's continuity. We acknowledge these structural

pressures as an important concern when considering the aesthetic dimension of traditional weaving practices, and stress that promoting intangible heritage must engage both creative innovation and economic sustainability, environmental stewardship, and targeted youth-engagement strategies. These are themes we will continue to explore in the next stages of this research interest. In addition to its aesthetic significance, creative reinterpretations of traditional crafts through performance can contribute to the cultural and economic vitality of local communities by increasing public awareness, strengthening cultural identity, and supporting the broader creative economy.

Despite the innovative approach and comprehensive analysis presented in this study, several additional limitations must be acknowledged. First, the study primarily focuses on the integration of silk weaving with dance within the specific context of Northeastern Thai folk performing arts, potentially limiting the generalizability of the findings to other cultural contexts or art forms. Additionally, the reliance on qualitative methods, while providing deep insights into the cultural significance and transmission processes, may not capture the full scope of the economic and environmental impacts of silk weaving. Another limitation is the relatively small sample size of performers and community members involved in the research, which may affect the broader applicability of the findings. Moreover, while Pa Sin Tin Chok foregrounds women's embodied performance of weaving gestures and women are the predominant actors in both the weaving and performing arts traditions of Thailand, it is important to recognize that silk culture in Isan is co-shaped by men as well. Male artisans act as pattern innovators, business promoters, and cultural advocates (for example, Ajarn Weeratham in Surin and Meechai Taesujariya at the Ministry of Culture). Future adaptations of this work should more visibly integrate men into the choreography and narrative, both onstage and behind the scenes, to reflect the true, gender-diverse ecology of Isan silk heritage. Lastly, while the study emphasizes the engagement of younger generations through dance, the long-term effectiveness of this approach in sustaining interest and participation in traditional crafts remains to be fully evaluated.

2. Recommendations

In light of these limitations, the researchers recommend several areas for future research and application. For practical application, it is crucial to promote and publicize the *sroi dok mak* silk, thereby preventing its disappearance and increasing awareness of its cultural value in broader society. This could involve collaborations with educational institutions, cultural organizations, and media platforms to showcase the significance of this craft. Furthermore, future research should expand to include a comparative analysis of the production processes of traditional crafts in silk and cotton weaving across different districts in Maha Sarakham Province. Such studies could identify unique patterns and techniques that are characteristic of each region, thereby enhancing efforts to preserve and sustainably continue these traditions. By addressing these recommendations, future work can build on the unique contributions of this study, ensuring the continued relevance and vitality of Northeastern Thai cultural heritage in the modern world.

Acknowledgements

Generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools were used during the preparation of this manuscript to support English-language editing, improve clarity and readability, and assist with the refinement of academic expression. AI tools were not used to generate or analyse research data, determine the study methodology, or formulate the research findings. All AI-assisted content was critically reviewed and revised by the authors, who take full responsibility for the accuracy, integrity, and final content of the manuscript.

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