

COURSE TEACHING MATERIAL · FACULTY OF FINE AND APPLIED ARTS, SSRU

Monetising Thai Classical Dance Content on TikTok

When cultural space migrates from stage to short-form video — how artists convert “cultural capital” into income

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PER 2508 · Creative Dance for Performing Arts Industries

หลักสูตรสร้างสรรค์เพื่ออุตสาหกรรมการแสดง · B.F.A. Performing Arts (Thai Dance)

About this teaching material

Course code	PER 2508
Course title	Creative Dance for Performing Arts Industries
Thai title	นาฏกรรมสร้างสรรค์เพื่ออุตสาหกรรมการแสดง
Credits	3 (3-4-4) · Required course
Program	B.F.A. · Performing Arts (Thai Dance)
Faculty	Fine and Applied Arts, SSRU
Offered	Semester 1 · Year 3
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How this material supports the course

Course description: "Direction of the performing arts industry, body of knowledge and management of creative dance for the performing arts industry, organizing performance based on customer's need."

- **Industry direction** — cultural space migrating from stage to short-video platforms
- **Creative-dance management** — monetisation models that turn dance skill into income
- **Customer / audience needs** — analysing what audiences want and the content that resonates
- **New-media literacy** — understanding TikTok as a new medium for the profession

Why this matters

1

Heritage that must adapt

Thai classical dance is national cultural heritage — Khon was inscribed by UNESCO in 2018 — yet “culture survives by moving forward,” not by standing still.

2

Precarious livelihoods

Artistic labour is intermittent and reliant on occasional commissions and personal networks; artists must broker their own opportunities like entrepreneurs.

3

A new stage for visibility

Thailand has one of the world's highest TikTok engagement rates, making short-form video a new infrastructure for building a career.

Knowledge gap & objectives

How is dance knowledge converted into economic value on the platform, and what content makes that conversion possible? — still under-examined in the Thai context.



OBJECTIVE 1

Study the monetisation models

Analyse the channels and mechanisms creators use to generate income from Thai classical dance content on TikTok.



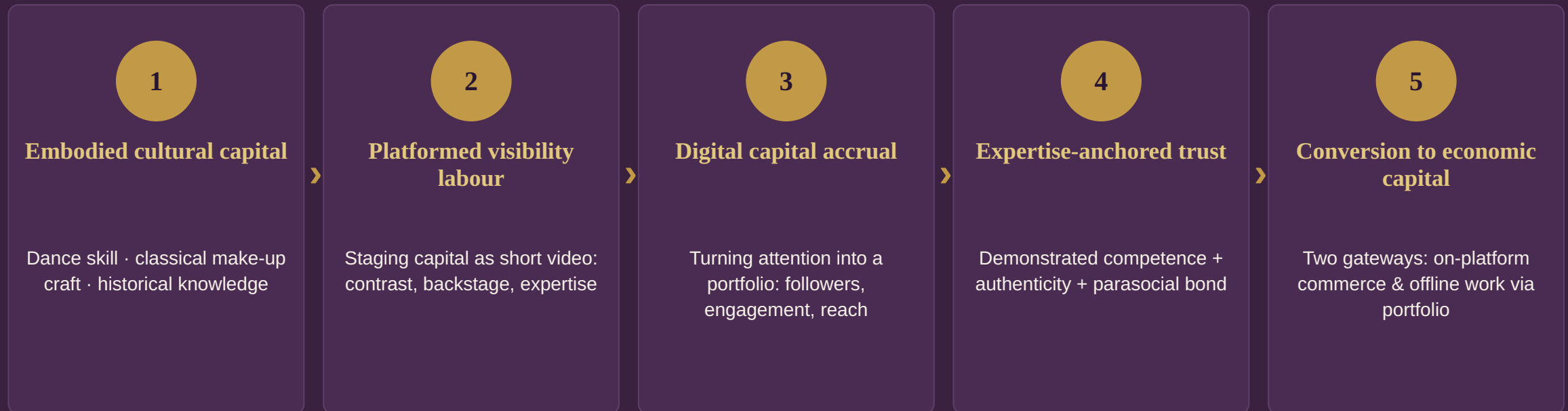
OBJECTIVE 2

Analyse content characteristics

Identify the features of Thai classical dance content that generate income — which content “sells,” and why.

Cultural-Capital-to-Livelihood (CCL) Loop

Integrating capital theory · micro-celebrity · creator-economy research



🔄 **Economic capital is reinvested in practice and new content — closing the loop and transmitting tradition to new audiences.**

A qualitative, multiple-case design

160

short videos

4

creator accounts

3

data sources (triangulation)

- **Non-participant observation**

160 clips (40 per account = 20 top-viewed + 20 most recent); recorded views, likes, comments, shares, saves and coded content type / revenue channel.

- **Semi-structured interviews**

All four account owners, 45–60 minutes each (exact income figures were not probed).

- **Documentary review + triangulation**

National Library, research articles and databases, with cross-source verification and member checking.

Four accounts, four occupational profiles

Aom-Om-Ok	Miss May Sorn Ram	Renowned make-up artist	Phusaarphorn
Fine Arts Dept dancer	Dance-school owner	Freelance make-up artist	Costume-rental owner
Followers	Followers	Followers	Followers
127,600	76,500	38,200	3,600
Total likes	Total likes	Total likes	Total likes
6.7M	2.5M	980,400	107,200
Peak views	Peak views	Peak views	Peak views
2.5M	4.0M	4.1M	212,800

A layered, hybrid monetisation architecture

Creators rely not on a single revenue line but blend four channels to reduce volatility.

Affiliate commission

1

Through in-video product baskets

Sponsored reviews & brand deals

2

For creators with an established following

Offline employment

3

Teaching · performing · make-up · costume rental — the clearest & largest

Extending an existing profession

4

Using TikTok to publicise work and grow the customer base

TikTok as a professional portfolio

55.63%

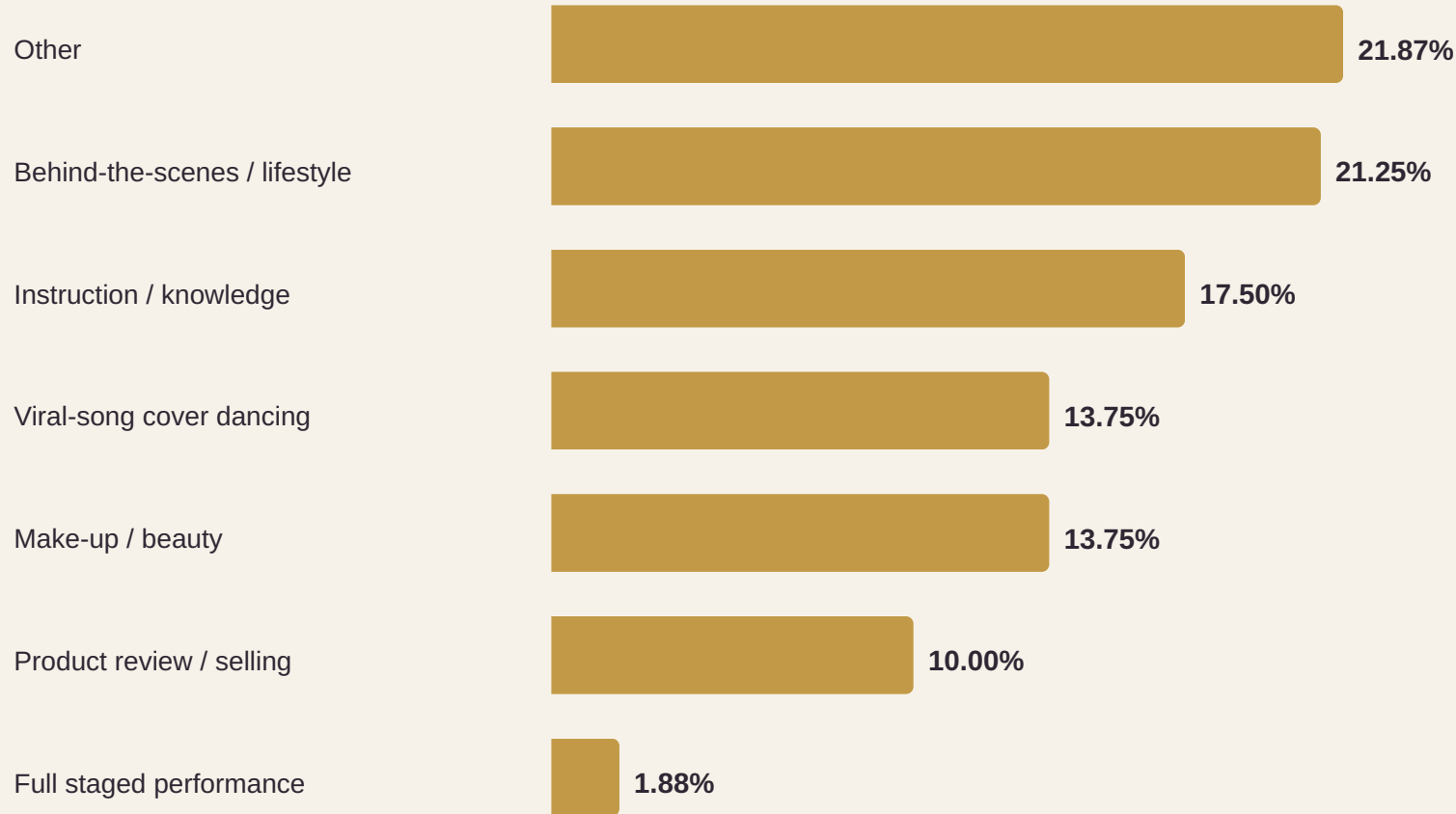
of clips (89 of 160) carried a commercial element

66 clips were self-promotion of the creator's own services — the most frequent on-screen channel

Visibility → offline work, not direct platform pay

- All four interviewees agreed the most significant income came when viewers contacted them for offline work — not from views or virtual gifts.
- Miss May: TikTok visibly increased class enrolment because prospective students could see her teaching before committing.
- Phusaarphorn: TikTok drove more bookings/rentals than Facebook or Instagram, becoming her principal sales channel.
- None earned meaningfully from virtual gifting or live-stream gifts.

Content that works — performance is not the product



1.88%

is the share of full staged performances
among high-performing clips

Audiences favour content that feels close,
accessible and identity-expressive over stage
performance — backstage, instruction and
trend-aligned dance dominate.

Three elements that build trust

Income-generating content rarely sells directly; it shows the audience “genuine use.”



An interesting contrast

A civil servant or high-art performer presented in a relaxed, approachable register — a positive surprise.



Revealing the backstage

Showing preparation before a performance, rarely seen in mainstream media, inviting admiration for the effort.



Embedded expertise

Weaving in knowledge, dance technique or make-up method — building demonstrated competence and trust in the products.

Four income profiles · dynamism · risk



Salaried institutional artist

Platform income is a supplement



Dance teacher

Converts reach into enrolment



Make-up artist

Converts visibility into bookings & basket sales



Entrepreneur

Uses the platform as a primary storefront

Cultural dynamism: creators use TikTok trends and techniques (viral tracks, hashtags) while keeping the art's substance — Miss May refused to alter choreography even in short clips.

Risk: all treat platform income as too insecure to rely on alone; when a clip fails to reach, orders drop sharply — continuous production and quality are the hedge.

Lessons for students and emerging artists

1

Build a continuously updated portfolio

Backstage and knowledge content that shows real competence wins more work than full performances or hard selling.

2

Embed expertise in real working contexts

Show “genuine use” to build trust, rather than advertising like a salesperson.

3

Blend multiple revenue channels

Diversify risk across affiliate · sponsorship · teaching/performing/services.

4

Digital self-presentation is a professional skill

Personal branding and a digital portfolio belong in the modern dance curriculum.

Contributions · policy · limitations

Theoretical contributions

- CCL loop unites capital theory + micro-celebrity + creator economy
- Extends Bourdieu from one-way transfer → a cycle
- “Expertise-anchored authenticity” as the trust mechanism
- Preservation through monetisation of heritage

Practical & policy

- Practitioners: consistent, expertise-rich content wins work over hard selling
- Education: embed digital-portfolio skills in curricula
- Policy: supporting digital capability strengthens ICH

Limitations & future work

- Small sample of 4 accounts · single platform · no exact income figures
- Findings are analytical, not statistical
- Future: quantitative/mixed methods · test CCL at scale · cross-platform

FOR DISCUSSION

**“TikTok functions as a professional portfolio
that stabilises a precarious artistic profession.”**

Monetising high classical art — where is the balance between value creation and the integrity of the traditional form?

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