Examining International Students' Perspectives on Choosing the Music and Dance Program at Rajapark Institute

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Abstract

This study aimed to (1) investigate the academic structure and pedagogical strategies of the Music and Dance program at Rajapark Institute, (2) the experiences and challenges faced by international students in a cross-cultural educational environment, and (3) the extent to which the curriculum aligns with students' career development goals in the performing arts sector. The participants included three faculty members, three administrative staff, and ten prospective international students, selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using semi-structured interviews in Thai or Chinese and translated into English. Descriptive statistics and content analysis analyzed approximately 120,000 words of qualitative data. Computational techniques, including word frequency analysis, keyword network analysis, and sentiment analysis, were employed to deepen the interpretation of findings. The results indicate that the program emphasizes academic excellence, cultural integration, and career preparedness through interdisciplinary teaching and research-led pedagogy. International students expressed enthusiasm for cultural learning but encountered challenges such as language barriers, academic adaptation, and uncertainties about professional transitions. Although the curriculum provides solid foundational training, there is a need for stronger industry linkages, internship placements, and professional mentorship to bridge the education-to-employment gap. The discussion highlights the importance of integrating interdisciplinary content, enhancing support systems for international students, and aligning the curriculum with labor market demands. Moreover, the study underscores the value of technological innovation and intercultural collaboration in performing arts education. In conclusion, the Music and Dance program at Rajapark Institute holds considerable promise in delivering cross-cultural, career-oriented education. However, continued improvements in curriculum design,

cultural support, and career alignment are essential for maximizing its impact. The findings offer practical implications for institutional policy and contribute to the broader discourse on international performing arts education.

Keywords: music education; dance education; Thailand education; International program; International education

Introduction

With the rapid globalization of education, Thailand has become an increasingly popular destination for international students seeking higher education (Pongsin et al., 2023). As a world-class tourist destination, Thailand attracts over 39 million visitors annually. In recent years, its higher education sector has experienced a 22% increase in international student enrollment, particularly in cultural and creative disciplines (Pongruengkiat et al., 2023).

Among the many institutions offering quality education, Rajapark Institute stands out, particularly for students interested in music and dance programs (Stephens, 2021). Founded in 1993 by Dr. Rajwikrom Arthiticharoenratpark, Rajapark Institute is a comprehensive university located in Bangkok, Thailand (Chan, 2020). It encompasses multiple faculties, including engineering, humanities, arts, and a graduate school, with a strong commitment to academic excellence and international collaboration. The institute maintains active partnerships with foreign universities, and its degrees are officially recognized by the Chinese Ministry of Education, making it a viable option for international students, especially from China (Jiang et al., 2024).

Thailand's performing arts sector has flourished, achieving regional prominence in music and dance education (Boonno et al., 2023). Rajapark Institute, embedded in Thailand's rich cultural heritage, offers an inspiring environment where students can engage with traditional and contemporary artistic practices. However, despite these advantages, limited research has examined how international students experience and evaluate such programs, particularly in curriculum relevance, cultural adaptation, and career preparedness. This gap in the literature highlights the need for an in-depth exploration of international student perspectives.

Therefore, this study investigates the academic, cultural, and professional dimensions of the Music and Dance program at Rajapark Institute from the viewpoint of international students. The findings will improve program design and enhance support systems in cross-cultural performing arts education.

Research objectives

This study aimed to (1) investigate the academic structure and pedagogical strategies of the Music and Dance program at Rajapark Institute, (2) the experiences and challenges faced by international students in a cross-cultural educational environment, (3) and the extent to which the curriculum aligns with students' career development goals in the performing arts sector.

Literature review

Thailand has a long history of excellence in music and dance education, particularly in classical Thai performing arts (Boonno et al., 2023). Over time, Thai universities have integrated both traditional and contemporary music and dance studies, attracting a growing number of international students (Praditsilp & Pongsakornrungsilp, 2024). Institutions such as Rajapark Institute and other Thai universities play a vital role in providing cross-cultural education, blending Western and Eastern artistic traditions.

According to Saibunmi and Thuntawech (2024), Thai classical music teaching in university settings emphasizes interpersonal relationships between students and instructors, which enhances learning experiences. The study suggests that Thai universities foster strong mentorship and a personalized approach to teaching music and dance, making them attractive destinations for international students (Onlamul, 2024). One of the significant aspects of international education in Thailand is the influence of external cultures on music and dance programs. Kencana (2022) explored how ASEAN and non-ASEAN cultural interactions affect music and dance education in Thailand and Praditsilp and Pongsakornrungsilp (2024) found that international students contribute to cultural exchange, blending traditional Thai performing arts with global influences.

Similarly, Camlin and Lisboa (2021) investigated how music education students adapt to different cultural elements in their studies. Their findings highlight that students learn traditional Thai music and bring their own cultural backgrounds, leading to hybridized music and dance styles. Intercultural learning is a key driver for international students choosing Thailand as a study destination. Chao et al. (2021) examined how music-based intercultural lessons enhance students' confidence and cultural competence. His research found that integrating music and dance into language education improves students' ability to communicate and adapt in a foreign cultural environment. Additionally, Garzoli and Hin-on (2023) analyzed how oral transmission of Thai classical music supports transnational identity formation among students. This study highlights that

many international students view Thai music education as an opportunity to connect artistic learning with cultural identity.

Thailand has strategically used music and dance education as a soft power tool, attracting international students and promoting cultural diplomacy. Praditsilp and Pongsakornrungsilp (2024) examined how the Thai government utilizes dance performances abroad to enhance cultural influence. This study provides insights into how Thailand's performing arts programs are positioned as globally competitive disciplines that appeal to students worldwide. In addition, Ferguson and Thanyodom (2024) studied how globalization has shaped the status of music education in Thailand, highlighting that both Thai and Western classical music are actively promoted in Thai universities. This trend attracts students who seek a blend of traditional and contemporary music education.

Despite the numerous advantages of studying music and dance in Thailand, international students face challenges such as language barriers, cultural adaptation, and academic expectations. Crooke et al. (2023) explored these difficulties and suggested that multicultural music education programs are crucial for creating an inclusive learning environment. Conversely, Boonno et al. (2023) studied how Thai music course design can be adapted to Chinese university curricula, offering a model for transnational education in performing arts. This study underscores the importance of curriculum flexibility in addressing the diverse needs of international students.

Hence, Thailand is an ideal destination for international students pursuing music and dance education due to its strong cultural heritage, diverse learning approaches, and international collaborations. Universities such as Rajapark Institute are crucial in bridging traditional Thai arts with modern global influences, fostering an environment where students can develop artistic skills while engaging in intercultural exchange. However, continued efforts in curriculum development and student support services are essential to further enhance Thailand's appeal as a hub for international performing arts education.

Despite these valuable contributions, several gaps remain in the current literature. Most existing studies have focused on either the preservation of Thai cultural identity (Onlamul, 2024; Garzoli & Hin-on, 2023) or the broader role of performing arts in intercultural education (Chao et al., 2021; Camlin & Lisboa, 2021), but few have explored how curriculum structure, teaching practices, and institutional support mechanisms specifically influence international students' experiences within a Thai music and dance program. Moreover, while research acknowledges the challenges of cultural adaptation, limited empirical analysis combines student perceptions,

pedagogical perspectives, and administrative strategies to understand how these factors jointly shape learning outcomes and career readiness.

This study seeks to address these gaps by adopting a multidimensional qualitative approach that integrates stakeholder perspectives—students, faculty, and administrators—through semi-structured interviews and computational text analysis. Grounded in the concepts of intercultural learning, curriculum relevance, and career alignment, this research builds on existing scholarship while contributing new insights into the lived experiences of international students in Thailand's performing arts education. The thematic framework developed in this study reflects the intersection of academic, cultural, and professional factors, providing a structured model to guide future curriculum design and student support strategies in cross-cultural educational contexts.

Research Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research design, employing semi-structured interviews to explore the perspectives of faculty members, administrative staff, and international students on the Music and Dance program at Rajapark Institute. This approach is well-suited for capturing experiential, pedagogical, and institutional insights, allowing for both guided inquiry and open-ended discussion while ensuring comparability across participant responses.

Participants were recruited through purposive sampling based on the following inclusion criteria: (1) having confirmed their intention to enroll or having received a conditional admission to the Music and Dance program at Rajapark Institute, (2) willingness to participate in the study voluntarily, and (3) ability to communicate in Thai, Chinese, or English. Faculty and administrative staff were identified through institutional referrals, while international student participants were contacted via the institute's international affairs office and peer recommendations.
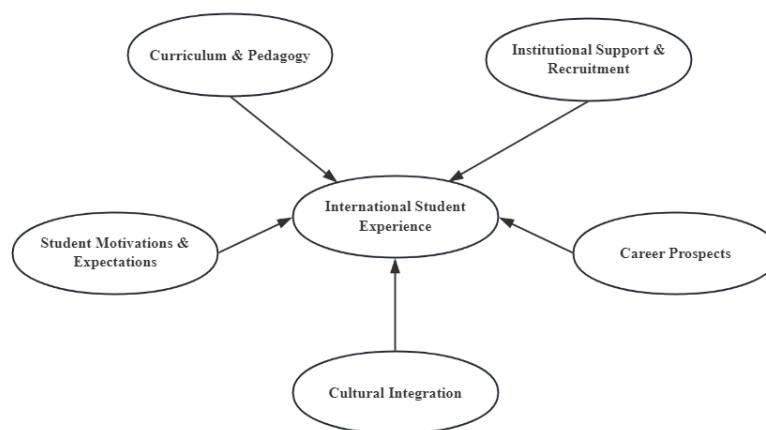
Sixteen individuals participated in the study: three faculty members, three administrative staff, and ten international students. Faculty members provided insights into curriculum content and pedagogical strategies; staff members discussed institutional policies, international student services, and program development; and international students shared their motivations, learning experiences, and expectations. All participants were informed about the research's purpose, confidentiality, and voluntary nature. Verbal consent was obtained before each interview, and participants were allowed to withdraw at any time without penalty. To ensure accuracy and

transparency, key analytical findings were later shared with the participants for confirmation and feedback.

Interviews were conducted in Thai or Chinese and subsequently translated into English. Each session lasted no less than 30 minutes. Key discussion areas included curriculum relevance, teaching methods, institutional support mechanisms, cultural adaptation experiences, and career preparation. This triangulated approach ensured a comprehensive understanding across academic, administrative, and student perspectives.

Thematic analysis guided the interpretation of qualitative data, following a three-phase coding process: open coding to identify core ideas, axial coding to explore thematic relationships, and selective coding to refine overarching narratives. To support the data management and categorization process, NVivo 12.0 software was employed. This enabled efficient organization and retrieval of interview segments aligned with emerging themes.

The study also incorporated a conceptual framework to ensure coherence between research objectives, data collection, and analysis. Figure 1 illustrates five independent dimensions that could potentially influence the dependent variable—international students' decision to study and participate in the Music and Dance program. These dimensions include: (1) curriculum and pedagogy, (2) institutional support and recruitment, (3) student motivations and expectations, (4) cultural integration, and (5) career prospects. Derived from existing literature, these variables served as analytical lenses during the coding process and informed both the interview protocol and thematic interpretation across multiple stakeholder groups.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study

This study offers a multi-layered understanding of international performing arts education by integrating qualitative inquiry with systematic thematic analysis, supported by digital tools. It reveals the strengths and challenges of the Rajapark Institute's Music and Dance program. It provides actionable insights for curriculum enhancement, cultural inclusivity, and student engagement in cross-cultural education.

Research Results

Thematic analysis

The thematic analysis presented in Table 1 systematically categorizes the qualitative data collected from interviews with faculty members, administrative staff, and prospective students. The table is structured using three levels of coding: Selective Coding (Core Themes), Axial Coding (Subcategories), and Open Coding (Initial Data Segments). This structured approach ensures a comprehensive exploration of key aspects of the Music and Dance program at Rajapark Institute.

The core themes (Selective Coding) represent the fundamental dimensions of the study, encompassing curriculum and pedagogy, institutional support, student motivations, cultural integration, and career prospects. These overarching themes encapsulate the primary areas of inquiry and allow for a focused analysis of the factors influencing international students' experiences and decisions.

The Axial Coding (Subcategories) refines these broader themes by linking them to specific academic, administrative, and experiential aspects. For instance, the curriculum theme is further detailed through teaching methodologies, course structure, and the balance between Thai and international performing arts styles. Similarly, the theme of institutional support includes subcategories like faculty mentorship, financial aid, and student recruitment strategies, which are crucial in understanding the policies shaping the international student experience.

The Open Coding (Initial Data Segments) represents the first step of analysis, capturing participants' granular details and direct expressions. These include specific pedagogical approaches, student testimonials, institutional reputation, and music and dance industry employment trends. This level of coding provides empirical grounding to the emerging themes and subcategories, ensuring that the analysis remains data-driven and reflects participant experiences.

By integrating these three levels of thematic coding, the analysis identifies key factors affecting international student engagement in the Music and Dance program at Rajapark Institute

and provides structured insights for institutional improvements. This framework is a foundation for further research and policy recommendations, highlighting the significance of curriculum innovation, cultural exchange, and professional development opportunities in attracting and supporting international students in performing arts education.

Overall, the thematic coding results shed light on how Rajapark Institute's music and dance curriculum is not only shaped by interdisciplinary and tradition-informed pedagogy but also embedded within a broader institutional ecosystem that supports international student engagement. The data also illuminate the multifaceted nature of students' intercultural experiences, including both their enthusiasm for artistic immersion and the obstacles posed by linguistic and academic adjustment. Moreover, the recurring emphasis on employment relevance, mentorship, and industry connection reflects a growing consciousness of the need to translate educational input into viable professional outcomes. These insights offer a comprehensive perspective on how academic design, intercultural adaptation, and career trajectories intersect in a transnational performing arts context.

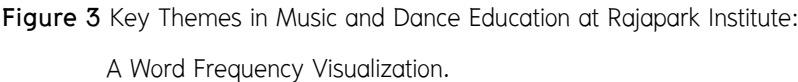**Table 1** Thematic Analysis Framework for Studying Music and Dance at Rajapark Institute

Selective Coding (Core Themes)	Axial Coding (Subcategories)	Open Coding (Initial Data Segments)
Curriculum and Pedagogy	Teaching methodologies, course structure, Thai vs. international music/dance styles	Traditional music instruction, interdisciplinary courses, and student-centered learning
Institutional Support and Recruitment	Scholarships, faculty support, international student policies, and recruitment strategies	International student funding, faculty mentorship, and language support services
Student Motivations and Expectations	Reasons for choosing Rajapark, concerns about adaptation, and expectations of education quality.	Student testimonials, affordability, study environment, and institutional reputation
Cultural Integration in Music and Dance	Blending Thai and global music styles, cultural exposure, and cross-cultural learning	Cultural immersion, collaboration with Thai artists, exposure to international performances
Career Prospects and Industry Relevance	Job market opportunities, alumni success, industry connections, and internship programs	Employment trends, networking events, music, and dance industry collaborations

Analysis of Word Frequency and Word Cloud Results

The word frequency analysis provides critical insights into the thematic focus of the Music and Dance program at Rajapark Institute. The highest frequency term, "Rajapark Institute," reflects the central role of the institution in the dataset, reaffirming its prominence as the research subject. High-frequency words such as "art," "education," "music," and "dance" highlight the core academic and creative disciplines that define the program. The presence of "international students," "curriculum," and "cross-culture" suggests that global engagement and interdisciplinary learning are integral components of the program. Additionally, words such as "teachers," "teaching," and "performance" emphasize the pedagogical and practical aspects of music and dance education, while "employment" and "career" point to concerns regarding professional outcomes and industry relevance. The frequency distribution further suggests a balance between academic instruction, artistic development, and career preparation, revealing key priorities in the institution's approach to performing arts education (Li & Qi, 2025).

The word cloud visualization complements this analysis by visually representing the key themes, where larger words indicate higher relevance. The dominance of "Rajapark Institute" confirms the institution's strong academic identity, while the emphasis on "education," "training," and "research" suggests a structured and rigorous curriculum. The inclusion of "innovation" and "development" implies ongoing efforts to modernize the program and integrate contemporary artistic trends. Additionally, the visibility of "culture," "tradition," and "exchange" indicates a strong intercultural learning environment, reinforcing the role of Thai and global artistic influences in shaping student experiences. These findings suggest that Rajapark Institute's Music and Dance program is rooted in tradition and seeks to adapt to international standards and career demands (Stephens, 2021). This research highlights the need for institutions to align their curriculum with global career pathways further, enhance cultural exchange opportunities, and strengthen practical industry linkages to better support international students in their academic and professional journeys.
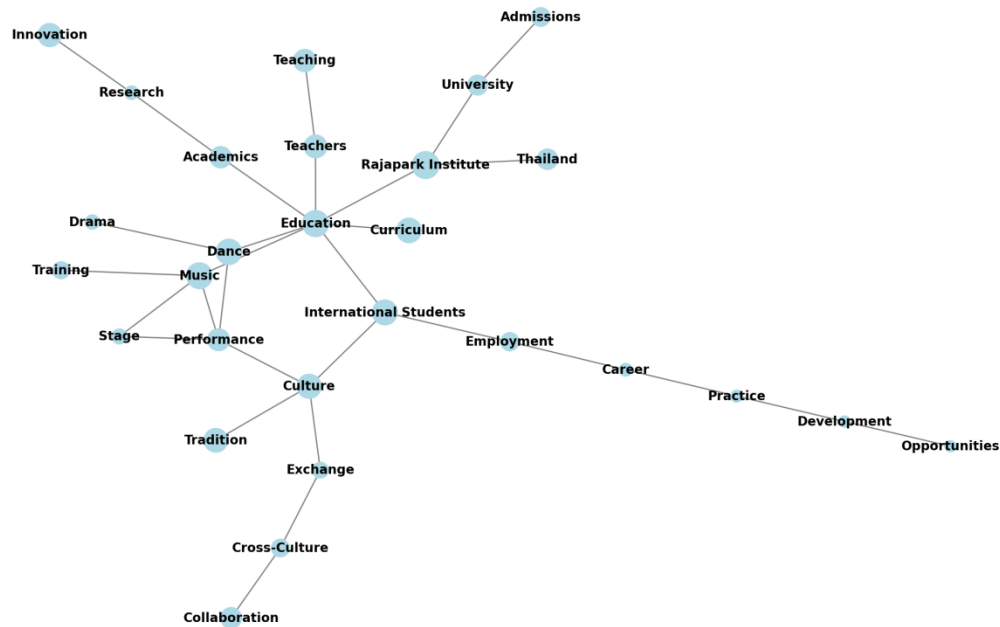
Figure 2 *Word frequency analysis*

Figure 3 Key Themes in Music and Dance Education at Rajapark Institute:

A Word Frequency Visualization.

The keyword network analysis provides a comprehensive visualization of the interdisciplinary relationships and cultural dynamics within the Music and Dance program at Rajapark Institute. The network structure highlights key thematic areas, including institutional identity, academic curriculum, performing arts, cultural exchange, and career development. At the core of the network, "Education" serves as a central hub, connecting essential academic concepts such as "Curriculum," "Teachers," "Academics," and "Research", emphasizing the program's focus on structured learning and scholarly engagement. The strong connection between "Music" and

"Dance" with "Performance," "Stage," and "Drama" reflects the practical and experiential nature of the program, showcasing how theoretical knowledge is applied in real-world artistic settings.

Beyond the academic framework, the network reveals significant cultural and internationalization dimensions. The presence of "International Students," "Culture," "Tradition," and "Cross-Culture" indicates that Rajapark Institute integrates global perspectives into its performing arts education. This cultural exchange is further reinforced by "Collaboration" and "Exchange", suggesting institutional efforts to foster a diverse and inclusive learning environment. Additionally, the network underscores the professional applicability of the program, as seen in the connections between "Employment," "Career," "Practice," and "Development", which highlight the institution's commitment to preparing students for global career opportunities in the performing arts industry.

The refined network analysis offers insights into how different academic, artistic, and cultural elements interact to shape music and dance education (Tao & Tao, 2024). This study contributes to a broader understanding of curriculum design, international student experiences, and career pathways in performing arts education, providing a foundation for future improvements in interdisciplinary learning and global engagement strategies at Rajapark Institute.

The lexical prominence of terms such as "education," "curriculum," "performance," and "career" reveals an integrated emphasis on structured learning, artistic practice, and vocational relevance within the program. Simultaneously, the strong visibility of "culture," "international students," and "cross-culture" signals the centrality of transnational interaction and identity negotiation in students' educational experiences. These patterns suggest that the program is positioned not merely as a site of technical training, but as a space where artistic, cultural, and professional aspirations are cultivated in tandem.

Figure 4 Keyword Network Analysis of Music and Dance Education at Rajapark Institute:
Interdisciplinary and Cultural Connections

The relational structure of the keyword network highlights the dynamic interplay between academic components and cultural discourse, suggesting that pedagogical practices are deeply embedded within a context of global exchange. While the clustering of educational and artistic concepts reflects the curricular backbone of the program, the connective strands to themes such as "collaboration," "tradition," and "career" illustrate how students' learning is mediated through cultural hybridity and professional ambition. This interplay underscores the program's potential as a cultural bridge and a preparatory platform for the global performing arts sector.

Sentiment analysis

Table 2 highlights a predominantly positive perception of the academic environment, cultural exchange, and career opportunities available to students. Most keywords are associated with growth, innovation, and professional development, reflecting an institution that fosters artistic and academic excellence. Key terms such as "Innovation," "Development," and "Opportunities" suggest that students and faculty view the program as progressive and adaptable to modern performing arts trends. Similarly, "Education," "Curriculum," and "Teachers" indicate strong academic foundations, emphasizing structured learning and professional mentorship.

The positive sentiment also extends to cultural aspects, with words like "Culture," "Tradition," and "Exchange" reinforcing the importance of cross-cultural learning and international

student integration. This aligns with the keyword network analysis, which strongly emphasizes collaborative experiences and global engagement. The presence of "Performance," "Stage," and "Training" further suggests that students recognize the practical, hands–on learning opportunities embedded in the curriculum, which is essential for artistic disciplines like music and dance.

While most sentiment indicators are positive or neutral, some challenges remain. The occurrence of "Language Barrier," "Cultural Differences," and "Adjustment" under neutral and negative sentiment categories highlights the need for additional support systems to help international students adapt to the learning environment. These insights suggest that while Rajapark Institute excels in fostering innovation, artistic training, and career pathways, further attention is needed in enhancing multicultural inclusivity and support mechanisms for international students (Jiang et al., 2024). Addressing these concerns will help the institution further solidify its position as a leading hub for global performing arts education.

The predominantly affirmative sentiment toward academic structure, faculty engagement, and intercultural collaboration suggests a favorable perception of the program's educational design and global orientation. However, more ambivalent or negative emotional tones, particularly around language adjustment and future employment, highlight latent tensions in the transition from academic life to professional practice. This polarity reinforces the importance of holistic curriculum planning that celebrates cultural plurality and academic rigor and offers tangible scaffolding for students' long–term career development within and beyond the Thai cultural context.

Table 2 Sentiment Analysis of Music and Dance Education at Rajapark Institute: A Positive Perspective on Learning, Culture, and Career Development"

Sentiment	Related Keywords
Positive	Innovation, Development, Opportunities, Education, Curriculum, Teachers Performance, Stage, Training, Culture, Tradition, Exchange, International Students, Collaboration, Cross–Culture, Career, Employment, Practice, Music, Dance, Drama, Academics, Research, Teaching, Rajapark Institute, University, Admissions, Support, Experience, Mentorship
Neutral	Learning, Adaptation, Adjustment, Technology, Digital Arts, Multimedia Industry, Partnerships, Internships, Networking, Global Engagement, Internationalization
Negative	Challenges, Language Barrier, Cultural Differences

Discussion

This study highlights key thematic areas such as academic curriculum, cultural exchange, and career readiness. To effectively achieve the research objectives, improvements should be made in four key areas: curriculum development, international student integration, career alignment, and technological innovation. These four dimensions were not arbitrarily chosen; they correspond closely to the conceptual framework guiding this study, which emphasized curriculum and pedagogy, institutional support, student motivation, cultural integration, and career preparedness. These dimensions were derived from a synthesis of prior theoretical literature on intercultural education, performance-based curriculum design, and arts-related professional development (Camlin & Lisboa, 2021; Praditsilp & Pongsakornrungsilp, 2024). As such, the following discussion maintains conceptual fidelity to the study's analytical scaffolding while contextualizing the empirical findings.

Strengthening Curriculum and Pedagogical Approaches

The high frequency of words like "Education," "Curriculum," "Teachers," and "Research" emphasizes the importance of academic quality. However, the network analysis reveals a weaker connection between research, innovation, and practical performance training. To address this, the program should integrate interdisciplinary coursework combining music, dance, and cultural studies, enhancing theoretical and practical learning. Technology-assisted teaching methods, such as digital music production and motion analysis for dance, can be incorporated. Finally, expanding research opportunities through student-led projects, industry collaborations, and academic conferences will further enrich the academic experience. These proposals align with the broader discourse on curriculum internationalization and interdisciplinary arts education, underscoring the importance of integrating practical performance skills with theoretical inquiry (Li & Qi, 2025). They also reflect the pedagogical principle of constructive alignment, ensuring that teaching methods, course content, and assessment strategies are coherently structured to support learning outcomes and employability in global artistic contexts.

Enhancing International Student Experience and Cultural Integration

The presence of "International Students," "Culture," "Tradition," and "Cross-Culture" in the network highlights the importance of global engagement in the program. However, the weaker connection between cultural elements and career-related keywords suggests that students may not fully leverage cultural experiences for professional growth. The institute should establish

exchange partnerships with global performing arts institutions to bridge this gap to expose students to diverse artistic traditions. Strengthening bilingual and multicultural support systems, such as mentorship programs and cross-cultural workshops, can improve student adaptation. More collaborative projects between local and international students will further foster cultural exchange and networking.

From a theoretical standpoint, these findings reinforce existing models of intercultural competence development, which highlight the role of immersive learning environments, peer engagement, and reflective practices in shaping students' adaptive capacities (Chao et al., 2021; Gutiérrez et al., 2022). The nuanced tension between cultural enthusiasm and adjustment difficulties underscores the need for what Crooke et al. (2023) term "intentional intercultural scaffolding" in program design and student support services.

Aligning the Program with Career Development and Industry Needs

The keyword network analysis shows that "Employment," "Career," "Practice," and "Development" are present but lack strong connections to "Performance" and "Education", indicating a need for better alignment between academic training and industry requirements. The program should form industry partnerships to enhance career opportunities by inviting professional musicians, choreographers, and artists to collaborate on coursework and provide hands-on training. Establishing internship programs with music production companies, theater groups, and the entertainment industry will also help students gain real-world experience. Moreover, creating a career mentorship program that connects students with alumni and industry professionals will guide them in portfolio development, audition preparation, and entrepreneurship in the performing arts.

These recommendations correspond with global trends in arts education that emphasize the integration of career-readiness modules and creative entrepreneurship training into curriculum design (Parmentier et al., 2021). The relatively weak conceptual linkage between "education" and "career" in the keyword network analysis also echoes findings from Ferguson and Thanyodom (2024), who noted a misalignment between artistic training and labor market expectations in Asian higher education contexts. Bridging this gap requires a paradigmatic shift from traditional conservatory models to more fluid, industry-responsive structures.

Leveraging Technological and Innovative Learning Methods

With "Innovation" and "Research" present in the network analysis, there is an opportunity to modernize music and dance education through technology integration. This can be achieved by incorporating virtual reality (VR) and motion capture technology to refine dance techniques and enhance performance analysis. Additionally, AI-driven music composition tools can be used to encourage students to experiment with digital sound design and interdisciplinary artistic projects (Winters, 2025). The university should also support multimedia performances that blend traditional Thai arts with contemporary digital storytelling, allowing students to develop innovative artistic expressions.

The combined analysis of word frequency, word cloud, keyword network, and sentiment analysis reveals that Rajapark Institute's Music and Dance program is centered on academic excellence, cultural exchange, career development, and technological innovation. The positive sentiments associated with themes such as education, curriculum, innovation, and career opportunities indicate that the program is well-structured and meets the expectations of students and faculty. However, the analysis also highlights challenges related to cultural adaptation, language barriers, and the practical transition from education to employment, suggesting areas for improvement.

To strengthen the curriculum and pedagogical approaches, the program should expand interdisciplinary coursework, integrating music, dance, and cultural studies to enhance theoretical knowledge and practical application. Additionally, research and innovation in performing arts should be further emphasized by incorporating student-led projects, academic conferences, and technology-enhanced learning, such as AI-driven music composition and motion capture for dance analysis. (Alexander et al., 2023). This will ensure students develop a strong academic foundation while keeping up with contemporary artistic and technological advancements.

International student integration is another crucial aspect of the program, as indicated by keywords like "International Students," "Culture," and "Cross-Culture." While students express positive feelings toward cultural exchange and collaboration, some struggle with language barriers and adjustment challenges (Gutiérrez et al., 2022). To address this, the institute should enhance bilingual support systems, mentorship programs, and collaborative learning projects, encouraging interaction between local and international students. Strengthening global exchange partnerships with performing arts institutions worldwide will further expose students to diverse artistic traditions, enriching their learning experience.

Finally, aligning the program with career development and industry expectations is essential. Although sentiment analysis shows optimism about employment prospects, students may face uncertainty about transitioning from academic training to professional careers. (Parmentier et al., 2021). Strengthening internship programs, industry collaborations, and mentorship networks will provide students with practical experience and guidance for career advancement. Additionally, establishing structured feedback mechanisms and student support services can help the institute address ongoing challenges and continuously improve the learning experience. (Sajja et al., 2024) By implementing these strategies, Rajapark Institute can further enhance its Music and Dance program and position itself as a global leader in performing arts education.

The data-driven analysis reveals that Rajapark Institute's Music and Dance program is well-structured and globally focused. However, improvements in curriculum integration, cultural engagement, career readiness, and technological advancement are necessary to realize the research objectives fully. By strategically implementing these enhancements, the program can become a leading center for international performing arts education, providing students with artistic excellence, cross-cultural experiences, and global career opportunities. (Largou & El Guermat, 2024).

New Knowledge from Research

This study contributes to international understanding of music and dance education, specifically at Rajapark Institute, by employing a data-driven approach through word frequency analysis, word cloud visualization, keyword network analysis, and sentiment analysis. The research findings generate new knowledge in several key areas, offering insights into academic structure, cultural exchange, career alignment, and student experiences.
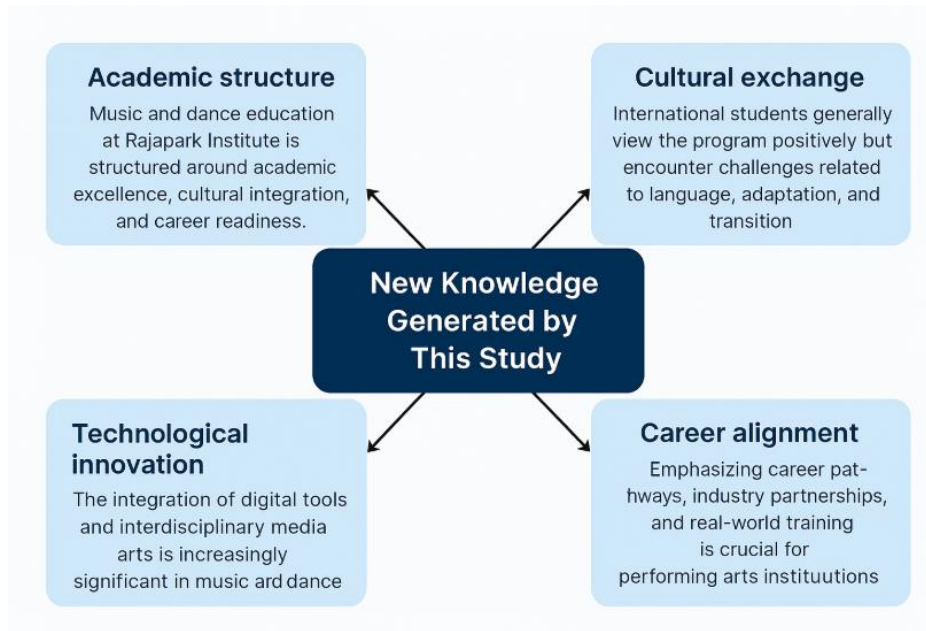
By systematically analyzing frequently occurring concepts, this study reveals that music and dance education at Rajapark Institute is structured around three core dimensions: academic excellence, cultural integration, and career readiness. Unlike traditional studies that focus solely on curriculum content, this research highlights how teaching methodologies, cultural influences, and professional training interact to shape student experiences. The keyword network analysis further provides a novel perspective on the interdisciplinary nature of performing arts education, showing how performance, research, and innovation are interconnected.

This research deepens how international students experience and perceive performing arts education in a cross-cultural setting. The sentiment analysis indicates that students generally have a positive outlook toward education quality, training, and career prospects, but face language barriers, cultural adaptation, and industry transition challenges. By uncovering these emotional and experiential factors, this study contributes to the broader discourse on international education and the importance of tailored support systems for global learners.

This study presents new insights into the growing role of technological innovation in music and dance education. The presence of keywords such as "Innovation," "Research," and "Development" suggests that performing arts institutions must integrate digital tools, AI-driven composition, VR-based dance analysis, and interdisciplinary media arts to remain competitive in a rapidly evolving creative industry. By mapping these concepts within the keyword network, this research underscores the emerging necessity of technological literacy as a fundamental skill for modern performing artists.

This study's significant contribution is examining the link between academic training and career development. While previous research on performing arts education has focused heavily on artistic skill-building, this study highlights the importance of career-oriented education, industry partnerships, and real-world training. The keyword analysis confirms that students desire practical career pathways, reinforcing the need for internships, mentorship programs, and entrepreneurship training in performing arts curricula. This research thus provides new recommendations on how performing arts institutions can adapt their programs to global industry expectations.

This study generates new knowledge by combining data-driven analysis with qualitative educational research, offering a multidimensional perspective on music and dance education at Rajapark Institute. The findings contribute to international education, performing arts training, and career development, providing a comprehensive framework for improving curriculum design, student experiences, and institutional strategies. By addressing cultural, academic, and professional challenges, this research presents actionable insights that can be applied to Rajapark Institute and other performing arts institutions worldwide.

Figure 5: A Conceptual Visualization of the New Knowledge Contributions in International Music and Dance Education at Rajapark Institute

To synthesize the multidimensional insights derived from this study, Figure 5 provides a conceptual visualization of the key areas of new knowledge generated through the research. Grounded in qualitative data and supported by computational text analysis, the diagram illustrates how five interrelated domains—academic–cultural–professional alignment, intercultural student experience, technological innovation, career–oriented curriculum design, and multidimensional theoretical contribution—jointly characterize the unique value of Rajapark Institute's Music and Dance program in an international context. Each thematic branch reflects the interplay between pedagogical practices, cultural dynamics, and institutional strategies, as revealed through keyword network analysis and sentiment evaluation. This framework offers a concise yet comprehensive representation of the study's original contributions to international education, performing arts pedagogy, and cross–cultural student development.

Conclusion

This study comprehensively analyzes the Music and Dance program at Rajapark Institute, utilizing word frequency analysis, word cloud visualization, keyword network analysis, and sentiment analysis to uncover key thematic areas. The findings indicate that the program is academically strong, culturally rich, and career–oriented, with positive perceptions toward

education quality, innovation, and professional opportunities. However, challenges such as language barriers, cultural adaptation, and the transition from academic learning to professional careers highlight areas for further improvement. To fully achieve the research objectives, the program should enhance interdisciplinary curriculum integration, strengthen cultural exchange initiatives, and align educational content with industry expectations. Expanding technological applications in performing arts education and improving student support systems will also ensure that students receive a holistic, inclusive, and forward-thinking education. Addressing these factors will allow Rajapark Institute to elevate its status as a global leader in performing arts education, attracting diverse international talent and fostering a dynamic learning environment.

In conclusion, while the Music and Dance program at Rajapark Institute already demonstrates strong academic foundations and cultural diversity, continuous improvements in teaching methodologies, career alignment, and student experience will enhance its long-term impact and global competitiveness. By implementing data-driven enhancements, the institute can ensure that its graduates are well-prepared for successful careers in the international performing arts industry, solidifying its reputation as a premier institution for music and dance education.

Suggestions

This study proposes targeted recommendations categorized as practical implications and future research directions to enhance the relevance, inclusivity, and effectiveness of the Music and Dance program at Rajapark Institute.

1. Practical Implications

These suggestions are directed at institutional administrators, curriculum designers, academic staff, and policymakers in higher arts education.

Curriculum Integration and Pedagogical Innovation

The institute should develop interdisciplinary modules integrating music, dance, cultural studies, and creative technologies. Digital music software, motion capture for dance training, and AI-assisted creative tools can be systematically embedded into coursework. This would benefit both students by fostering contemporary artistic competencies and instructors by equipping them with diverse instructional resources.

Academic Support for International Students

Building on the positive sentiment toward cultural learning, the institute should establish structured bilingual academic support, including Thai-English language courses, mentoring schemes, and peer learning communities. International students will benefit through improved adaptation and academic success, while local students and staff can engage more meaningfully in intercultural collaboration.

Enhancing Industry Linkages and Career Readiness

Rajapark Institute should expand strategic partnerships with performing arts organizations, entertainment industries, and creative enterprises to bridge the gap between education and employment. Internship placements, career coaching, and portfolio-building workshops would benefit students preparing for professional careers. Alumni and employers may benefit from a more skilled and globally competent graduate pool.

Technology-Driven Artistic Development

In response to the increasing relevance of digital performance, the program could introduce immersive technologies such as VR, AR, and interactive digital storytelling into coursework. Students can experiment with hybrid art forms, while faculty can engage in innovative pedagogy that responds to global creative trends.

Feedback and Student-Centered Quality Enhancement

Rajapark Institute should implement regular feedback channels (surveys, focus groups, advisory boards) to ensure continuous program improvement. This would support evidence-based decision-making for faculty and administrators, while offering students a sense of ownership and participation in shaping their educational journey.

2. Future Research Directions

Building upon the findings of this study, future research can explore the following areas to support program development and policy formulation further:

Longitudinal Study of Career Outcomes

A follow-up investigation on the post-graduation career trajectories of international students would offer insights into the long-term effectiveness of the program's industry alignment. Comparative Studies Across Institutions

Cross-institutional comparisons between Rajapark Institute and other Thai or regional performing arts institutions could help identify transferable best practice models in cross-cultural curriculum design.

Digital Pedagogy in Performing Arts

Future work could empirically examine the impact of VR/AR integration on student learning, engagement, and creative expression in music and dance disciplines.

Intercultural Mentorship Models

Further qualitative research could explore how peer and faculty-led mentorship mediates international students' cultural adjustment and academic integration in performing arts contexts.

By implementing these suggestions, Rajapark Institute has the opportunity to further distinguish its Music and Dance program as a globally relevant, student-centered, and innovation-driven academic environment. These improvements would serve its international student body and the broader academic and professional communities engaged in global performing arts education.

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