

Live Music Performance Business in the Wind of Change: *A Case of Popular Music in Thailand*

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Abstract

The objectives of this research were to study the factors affecting both the support and hindrance of the live performance business in popular music in Thailand during 2007 - 2017; to classify Thai consumer groups for popular music concerts, and to investigate the adjustment strategies of business operators in Thailand during that period. This research was conducted using mixed methods. The data was collected from three sources, which are in-depth interviews with five executives from Thailand's most reputable concert promoters, synthesis of news content during 2007 - 2017 and survey techniques using a questionnaire with the audience of 241 Thai concert participants. The results showed that the live popular music performance business in Thailand was complicated because of four important business factors, which are politics, economics, technology, and consumers. These factors motivated Thailand's concert promoters to find ways to adapt themselves to a competitive business environment. There are three adaptation strategies for survival in the business. This study provides knowledge for sociologists about the crucial situations that other developing countries may be facing in organizing concerts. Furthermore, it aims to be helpful for entrepreneurs, especially concert producers and event organizers, to apply the various strategies stated in the study for future use.

Keywords: *Live Music, Live Performance, Popular Music, Concert, Thailand*

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Introduction

In urban cultures, popular music concerts are one of the vital elements (Hoeven & Hitters, 2019:263) which are understood as a valuable asset because they not only fulfil the intrinsic value, such as joy, pleasure, emotional stimulation and meaning (Hoeven & Hitters, 2019:264), but also provide an economic impact on the music industry. There has been a consistent increase in the concert organization business in Thailand. It can be noticed from the first half of 2020 that concerts from both Thai and international artists are occurring at a rate of up to 24 (Thaiticket Major, 2020). Although all of them were cancelled due to the COVID-19 outbreak, it still reflected the growth of concert organization which resulted from changes in the music business for many years. IFPI (2019:13) reports that since 2004, there has been a weak signal of decreasing income from physical purchases and that signal has been stronger from 2007 until 2018, affecting many record labels trying to produce more live concerts in order to substitute the income at this moment (Rondán-Cataluña & Martín-Ruiz, 2010). Additionally, it is found that the growth of foreign artists' live music performances is obviously increasing, which might result from the economic recession around the world. Consequently, foreign artists have to expand their customer base and search for more income outside the country, together with the growth of technology that gives consumers access to international music easily and affordably. For instance, in the case of YouTube growth, it provides the ease of music consuming, creating, and sharing to people (Cayari, 2011:2). Those do not include digital music downloading that gives an impact on the music industry in positive and negative ways. This shows that concert performance is one of the main means that generates income to artists at all levels, regardless their level of fame.

The years 1983 to 1997 were considered the golden era of Thai music business. Conversely, it became the opposite from the year 2007, resulting in the business having income from live music performance since then (Pichaipat, 2010:162-163), as also happened in western countries. Meanwhile, PWC (2017:24) indicated that in 2017, the music business in Thailand would turn out better, especially in the field of live music. It was a sign of the end of the aforementioned business struggle. Therefore, this research focuses on studying the movement and adaptability of entrepreneurs during 2007- 2017.

As mentioned above, live music performance is a major way to create income, it influences the increasing competitions in this business consistently. During that decade, many unexpected incidents occurred, starting from the global great recession in 2008 from the matter of the subprime mortgage market in the United States (US); in Thailand, the great flood crisis in 2011, the political issues in 2014, and to the change of Thai reign which adheres with the old tradition and culture, which only is found in some Asian countries. To understand the situations in the live music performance business in Thailand is not only to provide knowledge to the entrepreneurs in the country, but also to explain the uncertainty of this business as well. To learn all the business supports and barriers from the past is to learn how to cope with those factors. It could be essential knowledge to people who are associated with live music performance production business

in every area, and it can be said that learning the past can predict the future (Döhrn, 2006:17). Especially, popular music; that is mass produced, mass marketed (Kuhn, 1999:754), generally treated as a commodity (Kulczynski, Baxter & Young, 2016:240), a favorite music genre in Thailand (Leesa-nguansuk, 2019), which contains a variety of sub-categories, including rock and roll, pop, rap, bebop, jazz, blues and many other genres (Connolly & Krueger, 2005:2), and changes according to the time period (Borthwick & Moy, 2004). It means that being aware of the market situation is absolutely necessary.

The previous research studies in live music performance business found that the study about concert performance or live music performance has been popular for a long time (such as Schultz, 2009; Westgate, 2020; Kruger & Saayman, 2012; Mhiripiri, 2012). However, the studies which reflect the holistic management of live music performance business during the business crisis period were not found, especially in countries located in Southeast Asia, which is a rising star in the global market (Hicks, 2019). This research aims to answer the three significant questions: 1) in the period of 2007 to 2017, exploring the supporting and hindering factors that the live music performance production business in Thai popular music encountered and their effects; 2) determining whether Thai consumers who attend popular music concerts can be classified into a group or not, and 3) determining how entrepreneurs in the live music business, popular music genre, adapted with strategic terms during the past period.

Literature Review

Chaos Theory

Chaos theory is developed from the study of Lorenz (1963) which focuses on the study of the changing, complex and nonlinear system. The study reflects that when any actions happen repetitively, the results will be slightly different. Finally the chaotic system happens. As same as Doherty and Delener (2001:69), they identified the attributes of Chaos theory as mentioned above. It includes behaviors and interactions of the agents who are in the system. Additionally, it presents the sensitivity of a complex system, which means if there is any change in the internal or external conditions, it might greatly affect the particular organization. Change happens all the time. It is hard to predict and control. Especially, in the field of social science, various social factors are found to interact with each other, which makes the results greatly different (Levy, 1994:168). As a result, it drives even more the occurrence of business adaptation in order to survive (Burgelman, 1991:239). Chaos theory plays an important role presenting the alternatives, in which the executives understand that in complicated situations, the occurred result might not be the only one. Furthermore, the executives need to have information that is important, relevant, and sufficient (Mina, 2012:32).

Levy (1994:170 - 171) viewed the connection between chaos theory and organizational strategies utilized in the situations in a chaotic system that can be numerous due to the following facts. First, long-term planning is extremely difficult, because it is necessary to predict the future situation and all possible scenarios must be presented. Second, it is hard for the industry to reach stable equilibrium because any decision would bring about changes anyway. Third, dramatic change can happen unexpectedly, and organizations sometimes underestimate the actual

impact of change that might occur in the industry. Fourth, short-term prediction can be done since the chaos systems might contain the repeated actions which are still predicted.

Owing to the rapidly changing environment, the existence of long-term competitive advantage is impossible which Cooke, Appel-Meulenbroek & Arentze (2019:171) called a transient competitive advantage. In order to maintain the advantage in the competitions, organizations must adapt consistently.

Organizational Adaptability

Business adaptation is the heart of business operations in this present world, which is complicated, fluctuating, and unstable. According to the world's rapid change, entrepreneurs have to either adapt or die, either eat or be eaten (Denton, 1998:83; Burgelman, 1991:253). Although changes always occur, no one can accurately predict the impact of change, so resilience is essential for survival (Denton, 1998:83).

There are a few clearly given definitions of the word 'adaptability.' Boylan and Turner (2017:186) concluded that 'adaptability' is a change in the behavioral attribute with the innovative or creative methods for predicting or responding to the environmental change in order to solve the problems appropriately. Additionally, it can be seen that adaptability is found in all levels of individual, team, or even organization (Nkurunziza, Ntayi, Munene & Kaberuka, 2018:64; PiÓrkowska, 2016:256). The final goal of the adaptation at whatever level is to overcome the occurring obstacles and challenges as well as to improve the organization in order to reach an achievement (Boylan & Turner, 2017:194).

Even though business adaptation is extremely necessary, the music business responses to the technology change very slowly. There were signs of change that had occurred since the beginning of the 1980s, the collaboration between Philips and Sony for opening the business of compact discs (Ulrich, 2011:7) to replace vinyl, followed by the era of the drop-off in the sales of physical music entering the age of digital music files that heavily caused piracy problems. Until 2018, the first time that the growth rate of the global music market reached its highest, up to 9.7%, since 1997 which the IFPI has started to follow the market up to now (IFPI, 2019:12). It takes 20 years for people who are in the music business to adapt and accept the changing world, while the changes often occur from the fringe or out of the music industry, such as with Apple's iPhone or Amazon's e-commerce business model, instead of happening from within the music industry itself (Ulrich, 2011:19).

Methods

In-depth Interviews

This research uses in-depth interviews with five executives from famous companies who are promoters of popular music concerts of Thai and foreign artists in Thailand. The interviewed executives are between 25 - 45 years old, with their experience in the business between 5 - 15 years. The interviews were arranged and conducted from February to April 2018.

Documentary Research

This research uses content synthesis from the news appearing in Thai news databases during 2007 to 2017, using both Thai and English keywords which are 'concert,' 'live concert,' and 'live music'; also, 162 selected news articles were used.

Survey Instrument

The data were taken from a survey conducted between January to March 2018 among the 241 respondents who were more than 18 years old and purchased at least one concert ticket in the past year. Only popular concerts in any popular music genre were investigated, meaning small places like pubs and bars are excluded. This questionnaire comprised questions about the demographic characteristics: the participants' behaviors of live music performance visiting; the customers' needs in visiting live music performance in the period of next one year; the tendency of behavior occurrence in the future, and their responses to the marketing strategies referring to the marketing mix concept.

Results and Discussion

According to the study results, the combination of data from both qualitative and quantitative research techniques were analyzed. The qualitative data gave the picture of the business situations of Thai concert performance production as well as the adaptation used by the entrepreneurs in order to survive during the period. The quantitative data, collected from consumers, will be presented in order to reflect their needs and behaviors towards the business. The study results are presented below.

Figure 1 presents the timeline of popular music concert business situations in Thailand during 2007 - 2017, which combine both the synthesis of news and the interviews of five executives in this business directly. It can be said that the concert performance production business in Thailand rarely has a sweet moment throughout those 11 years. Competitions in this industry, in Thailand, have been consistently intense, having new players entering and exiting all the time.

Apart from that, Thailand encountered economic recession from 2007 to 2017. There was only a short time that the economy appeared to recover during 2010 - 2013. Furthermore, Thailand experienced sensitive political issues for so long from 2007, and faced the Thai coup d'état in 2014. For 11 years, Thailand has encountered various events occurred in each year. The K-Pop trend continuously took a long time from 2007 to 2011, and gradually decreased until 2017. Although Korean artist concerts are still organized, they do not seem to be as popular as they once were. Meanwhile, sponsors have changed their behavior from constantly supporting concert promoters to limiting their budget; until eventually, big sponsors have changed their role to become concert promoters themselves in order to secure their business. Finally, concert promoters have to shift the market target from their consumer or B2C (business to customer) to organization market or B2B (business to business).

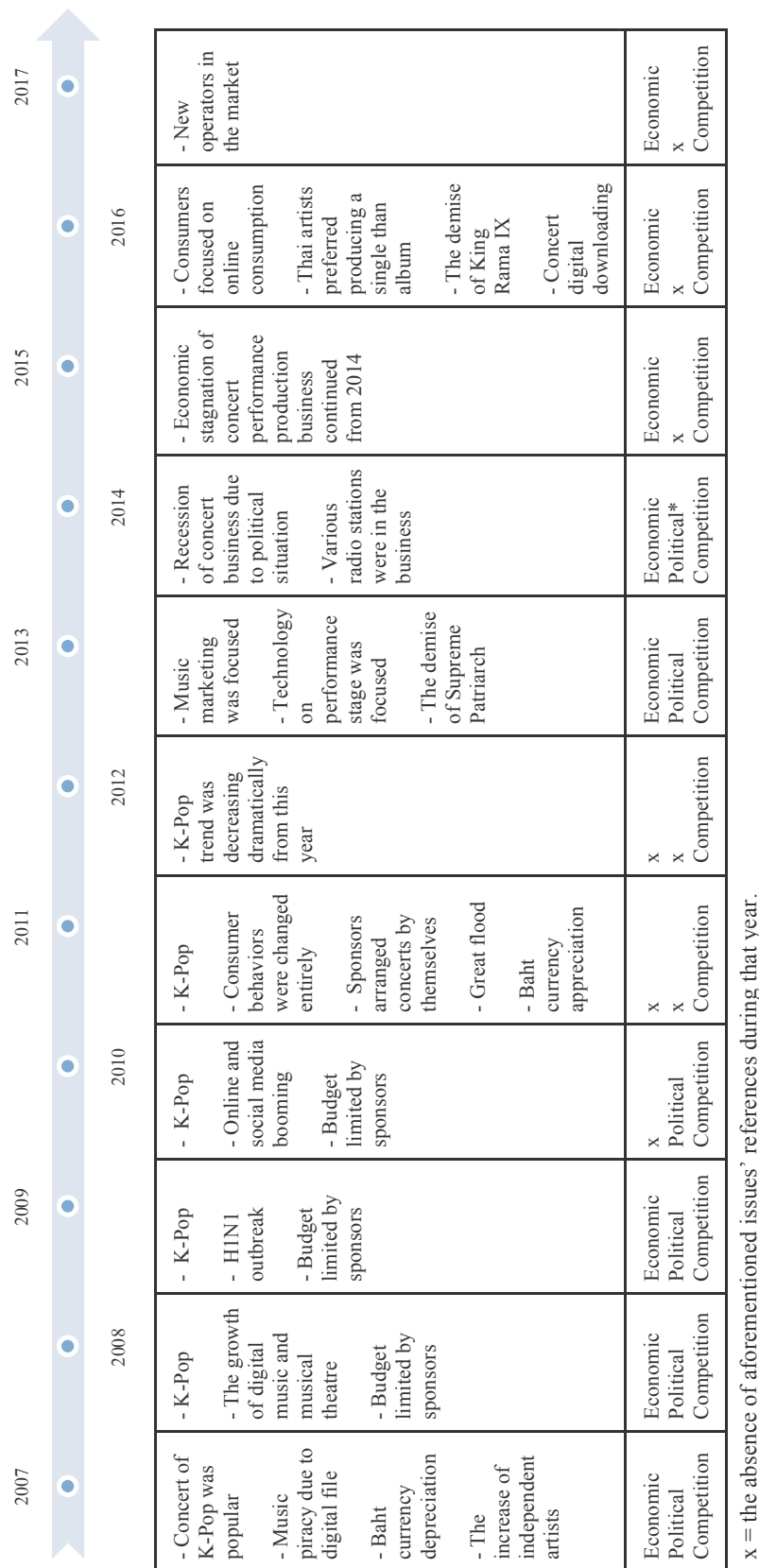


Figure 1. Timeline of the business situation of popular music concert in Thailand during 2007 – 2017 (Source: Author). Note: x = the absence of aforementioned issues' references during that year.

According to entrepreneurs' views, the concert organizing business is not easy. One of the key informants pointed out that the success rate in concert production can be classified into 2:2:6. The first 2 means the concert is successful; the second 2 means the concert makes neither profit nor loss, and 6 means the concert is at a loss. Moreover, some promoters have to stop the concert before it happens. This response was similar to a key informant explaining that people who actually arrange concerts and gain profits are counted as not more than 5% of the total concert promoters. However, though the business is risky, the entrepreneurs see that it is a valuable business if they move in the right direction.

The overall growth of the industry tends to be better when the market revenue approximately reaches 100 - 130 million USD during the periods. It was found that the growth rate, evaluated from the total number of live music concerts in Thailand, increased around 20% each year, but the received profits did not increase accordingly. Even though there are concerts with new contents and styles that should be able to push the market to grow, it is not growing enough as expected because of the limitation of customers' purchasing power. It might be an effect of having more big concerts, including concerts of worldwide popular artists. Therefore, the average number of concerts per year has sharply increased, but the profits of each concert have decreased due to customers' scramble among concerts. Part of this might have occurred due to the loss of revenue in which the physical music product is a pusher to create an increase in the number of live performances of the artists. This situation had been happening in the United States as a result of sites like Napster, and the overall entertainment industry piracy phenomenon, which caused massive damage to music business revenue (Mortimer, Nosko & Sorensen, 2010:3).

In 2017, the trend of electronic music in Thailand has increased significantly. The key informant stated that it is because going to clubs and bars is not fun as it used to be. The law requirements, for example, determining the opening and closing time strictly, or limiting the age of night entertainment places' visitors, caused the change. This information has been confirmed with the study of Waevsamana (2017). It found that Thai Gen-Y consumers, who loved to attend EDM (electronic dance music) music festivals, spent 125 - 172 USD per event. They loved dancing, dining and drinking. This reflected the replacement of the nightlife with the attendance of music festivals. Although EDM sounded popular in Thailand, it was still less popular than it was in the neighboring country markets, such as Vietnam and China. They held EDM music festivals with a greatly higher number of visitors than Thailand.

The Factors Affecting the Popular Music Concert Business in Thailand

Figure 1 shows that there are numerous environmental factors associated with the concert business. But only four major factors have a strong impact on the business. The first factor is the economic recession; the second is the political conditions that lack steadiness and stability, and the third is technology shift. The first three factors play an important role in changing consumer behaviors, which is the fourth factor, significantly. Mulins and Walker, Jr. (2013) reflected those four

factors as the macro-environment of the business used for measuring the interest of the market and business. However, if the marketers can analyze and predict the tendency of the macro-environment well, it can be acknowledged whether the particular business is still interesting or not. The four factors still affect all people who are involved in the business, including sponsors, music record labels, artists, operators, and entrepreneurs who finally will be pushed to learn to adapt in order to survive. Ulrich (2011:17) claimed that the technology factor is important in the business. It is a factor that entirely changes institutes and socio-economic situations. Apart from the aforementioned four factors, another phenomenon in Thailand that other countries might never encounter is the pause of the entertainment activities during the demise of important people in the country. In this case, the absence of the concert would be extended from a month to a year. As a result, promoters had to adapt properly in this situation. For example, as other types of music were not allowed, arranging concerts with royal music composition could be carried out for the particular time.

According to the chaos theory, it identifies the complicated forecasting in business due to various variables or related factors. The interactions among them may happen infrequently. Entrepreneurs have to solve specific problems instead of planning, which is called “Nonprogrammed decision” (Mina, 2012:29). The situations throughout 11 years change the landscape of the business and the associated people that will be mentioned in the next topic.

The Major Associated People in Popular Music Concert Business in Thailand
The facts about concert business in Thailand can be presented by classifying the main relevant people in the industry: consumer groups; promoters; sponsors, music record labels; artists, and operators. Although the general live music network might consist of venue, audience, promoters, artists, managers, and agents (Brennan & Webster, 2011:4), the study results showed that the key partners, who are involved in Thai concert production, are identified as follows:

Consumer Groups

Consumers play an important role in the business as the main blood vessel of an organization (Hadi, Abdullah, & Sajilan, 2015:252). The tendency of Thai consumers is to willingly pay for their tickets with the increasing price. Meanwhile they have to plan to save their money in advance because the purchasing power of Thai people is limited. Thai consumers are still more likely to visit Thai artist concerts than foreign artist concerts. The consumers are also difficult to please. They care about visiting trendy concerts. But if there are more arising, they would lose interest. The fact is that they want to make a difference by avoiding trendy events in order to be admired as special. Additionally, consumers choose more wisely than before. They would visit concerts that they feel most worthwhile, most favorable, or never been to before. Among concert varieties, the consumers would select the most appropriate choice for themselves.

Referring to a survey of Thai consumers, it is found that they are interested in many genres of music. The first top three ranks are Pop-music (26.2%), R&B

(19.3%), and Rock (12.9%), respectively. Most customers that go to popular concerts are from the Bangkok area. A key informant stated that concert touring in some major up-country provinces, such as Had-Yai and Chiang-Mai, is an attempt, because it is not successful. Exceptionally, adults, about 35 years old, are the prospect target. Although they live in up-country provinces, they have high purchasing power.

The data collected from the questionnaire shown that most participants were female, 147 people (60.7%), aged between 21 - 26 years old (43%), earned monthly average income around 562.5 USD (56.5%) (\$1 = 32baht), and visited concerts once a year (43.4%) in average. Moreover, the median of ticket price was around 46.88 USD; the average is around 67 USD (S.D. = 44.26). The results discovered that 41% of the sample preferred buying tickets for Western artist concerts because foreign artist concerts were increasing from the last few years, followed by 39% of Thai artists, while Asian artists were 20.1%. In the consumers' views, visiting concerts is a reward for themselves after a period of hard-work. It was also an activity that they could join with friends or family members. According to this, it is agreeable with the questionnaire's results that the consumers visit concerts for three major reasons: 1) the need to support their favorite artists (39.3%); 2) the need to be relaxed (27.3%), and 3) the need to do activity with friends and family (16.5%). Concisely, it reflects that the consumers literally do not want to only consume music, yet they want to acquire their emotional benefits from visiting concerts as well (Westgate, 2020).

In the past, Thai consumers went to concerts to meet artists because it was very difficult to see them in real life. Currently, they expect more from the shows. The survey results showed that the consumers' desire to visit a concert with modern technology is 31.5%; they can joyfully dance is 17.8%. Apart from those, they tend to go to the ones that provide them a better social status, for instance, posting the activity in Facebook while seeing Bruno Mars concert makes them feel like they are in the upper class of the society. This perspective reflects how much the consumers increasingly pay attention to the perception of the society and surrounding people. According to Kotler, Kartajaya, & Setiawan (2017), consumers currently give more importance to F-Factors, which include Friends, Families, Facebook Fans, and Twitter Followers, than any other marketing communications. They care about others' opinions toward what they do.

For the market segmentation in the concert market, it can be considered from the artists on stage, since the artists are the ones determining who should be the market target in the particular music performance. The key informants presented an interesting concept. Here are some examples. When choosing Korean artists, they want to get diverse customers who mostly are female, between 15-50 years old, and mainly are in secondary school. When choosing Japanese artists, the customers, called 'Otaku,' are usually male from secondary school to working age. If choosing indie artists, the target group will often be university students. If choosing Western artists, such as Justin Bieber and Ariana Grande, the target group will be teenagers, between 15 - 25 years old; if choosing Madonna or Britney Spears,

the target group will be LGBTQ. If choosing EDM concerts, the target group will be first jobbers or over the age of 20 years old.

In regards to quantitative data, it is found that Thai consumers can be classified by their favorite artists. The K-means Cluster Analysis, an unsupervised method, was used to find a relation between examples under any determined variables (UC Business Analytics R Programming Guide, 2018) using five categorical variables, which are concert ticket price and four aspects of marketing mix. As a result, Thai concert consumers are categorized in three groups with the details of the test displayed in Figure 2's table.

Variables	Cluster			F (Brown-Forsythe)
	1 (n = 91)	2 (n = 57)	3 (n = 93)	
Cost (mean score)	0.563 (86.2)	-0.31 (47.57)	-0.36 (45.31)	(29.789)
Product (mean score)	-0.08 (4.25)	-1.13 (3.45)	0.79 (4.93)	(108.641)
Price (mean score)	-0.15 (4.06)	-1.00 (3.14)	0.77 (5.06)	109.97
Place (mean score)	-0.11 (4.38)	-0.97 (3.52)	0.71 (5.21)	87.297
Promotion (mean score)	-0.06 (4.31)	-1.09 (3.39)	0.74 (5.02)	119.131

Figure 2. Table of the mean group differences between variables (score comparison).

When analyzing the difference between groups in non-continuous measured variables with Chi-Square and Monte Carlo, it showed that the first consumer group, 91 people, are willing to pay for the most expensive concert ticket, average 93.75USD per time. They admire Asian artists, purchase tickets on the first day of sale with a desire to visit concerts and to support the artists at a level of .05 statistical significance.

Meanwhile, the second group, 57 people, pay an average of concert ticket price around 51.86 USD. This group gives less priority to the four aspects of marketing mix compared to the other two groups. They prefer Western artists, and go to trendy popular concerts.

The third group, 93 people, prefer to pay for the lowest price of concert tickets, or around 48.75 USD on average. Additionally, this group gives the most priority to the four aspects of marketing mix compared to the other two groups. They prefer Thai artists, and attend concerts for relaxation.

The clarity of the aforementioned customer groups perceptibly reflects the types of artists they are interested in, which agrees with the research of Van Eijck (2001), who found that popular music consumers are usually young. However, the difference in genders, careers, or interests in legitimate culture are not found. While the marketing mix was used to study the factors that motivate consumers to watch live music performance statistically, appeared in the work of Manners, Saay-

man and Kruger (2014), showing that general management venue, event technology, convenience, marketing promotion, and easy access to concerts are the core reasons that consumers use to decide to visit a concert. Furthermore, from that research at the time, it was also found that the marketing factors played an important role with the popular music consumers more than consumers of other music genres, especially classical, rock, and blues music.

Promoters

In Thailand, there are few major players in the popular music concert business. They can be classified into four categories: 1) indoor showbiz, dominated by A-Time media group; 2) outdoor festival, dominated by Gan 555 Company Ltd.; 3) EDM concert, dominated by Zapp Entertainment, and 4) Imported concert, dominated by BEC-TERO Entertainment.

The revenue of concerts is from sponsors and ticket selling. Therefore, the selection of artists affects the purchasing decision of sponsors and consumers. In the current situation, promoters have increasingly imported foreign concerts that customers want to see most. Nowadays, importing concerts can be done easily. Meanwhile, BEC-TERO Entertainment, a long-established famous promoter company, has formed a partnership with Live Nation Entertainment Company, based in Los Angeles. Thereby, the negotiating power in famous international concerts has increased. Artists are able to perform within a region or for many countries at a time, which also saves the overall expense as it will be divided.

Concert productions in Thailand often use the same operators of the same associated partners and suppliers, up to 80%. Entrepreneurs or promoters usually choose people they are familiar with. One of the key informants, a new generation in this business, viewed that this kind of issue obstructs new young people to grow and limits opportunity for other people who might gain knowledge and ability to create concerts in Thailand. However, working with people in their connections makes promoters feel confident in the quality of work. They can spend their time on finding ways to create revenue. For business networking, it is important for the organization's success, especially in small and medium enterprises (Murwatining-sih, Oktarina, Wahyuningsih, & Murniawaty, 2019:36).

The competitive situation since 2007 has still been increasing. There are plenty of promoters as well as the influx of foreign artists to perform concerts in the country. The key informant pointed out two causes of the increase in players in the business: 1) the music and entertainment business is attractive, and 2) the current technology can easily operate and arrange small-sized concerts with extremely lower cost. Because of the abundance of players in the concert production business, the chance to lose is growing, and a lot of promoters are leaving. Another dangerous problem from having many competitors is the use of a pricing strategy that destroys the market. Especially the distribution of free tickets, which causes long-term disadvantage to the market. Also, when customers have too many choices with the same purchasing power, they become sensitive and concentrate on the availability, attractiveness of alternative brands, and substitute prod-

ucts (Mullins & Walker, Jr., 2013). Nonetheless, the positive effect is that it helps stimulate the market to stay alert and keep provoking the old players to be more creative. This can make customers understand the culture of attending concerts more by having a variety of concerts.

Sponsorships

It is a very difficult time to seek sponsors due to the effects from economic recession and the increasing number of concerts. In addition, seeking sponsors in Thailand mainly depends on their connections. At the same time, major sponsors have changed their role to be concert producers themselves, such as large alcoholic beverage manufacturers. They have learned that producing concerts by themselves requires the same budget they used to spend to sponsor concert promoters. Since they do not aim for revenue from producing concerts, they only would like to establish experience to consumers under the same budget. The key informants indicated that in the past, major sponsors would contribute approximately 70 - 100% of the concert cost. In the present, 10 - 30% of financial support is difficult to find; in the worst case, some concerts do not even have a sponsor, which means the revenue is from ticket sales only. The aforementioned situation has been consistently happening since 2016.

Music Record Labels and Artists

The change and adaptation in the concert industry has partly been affected by the actions of music record labels and artists. For years many artists have left the music record labels to become independent artists to create the opportunity to be on stage with other artists from the main music record labels, unlike the past when a concert would be performed by artists from one music record label only. Apart from those, new-faced artists can easily be known via social media networking. Although they can popularize themselves as an artist in their channel, it is not easy to be a superstar. Without superstars, there are no concerts that can attract customers to attend as they did in the past. Moreover, artists currently prefer to produce a single rather than make an album. The results are that artists do not have enough songs to be solo on stage. Thus, gathering a number of formerly popular artists has grown in popularity, this style is commonly called 'reunion concert.' On top of that, Thai music record labels also push their artists to perform live music in pubs, bars, and restaurants, which causes the ease to approach Thai artists for consumers without having to pay for concerts. As a result, the motivation to attend paid concerts is reduced. At the same time, foreign artists with a large fanbase will help establish the advantage to promoters since there are foreign customers, who travel to Thailand in order to visit the concert. Many countries in Asia might reject performances of some international artists, providing the opportunity to support Bangkok as a music city, especially in case of Bangkok has been picked as one of the world's most popular tourist destination for many years (Boonpen, 2019).

Operators

During this particular period, there is only one major ticket operator in Thailand, Thai Ticket Master. There are few competitors in the market but not very famous.

Promoters who present small concerts, around 1,500 – 5,000 seats, turn to direct ticket sales through websites or online social media. However, if it is a large concert, with 10,000 seats or more, or an event that requires seat number identification, the operator would run the ticket sales system. The heart of choosing operators is to consider their operation system that should be stable and difficult to go down. Regarding this, it is because the key informant has had the lessons of having non-expert operators who offer lower compensation, but their ability of running the system is not excellent, compared to the major operator.

Following the theory of chaos, entrepreneurs should leverage the information for generating bold solutions (Mina, 2012:28) that may differ from their knowledge and experience. Their solutions are demonstrated in the form of various business adaptations.

The Business Adaptation of Popular Music Concert Promoters in Thailand

This article aims at studying the adaptability of popular music concert promoters because they are directly affected by changes in the business. According to the study, it showed that promoters have adapted themselves to go along with various situations by utilizing the below principles.

Understanding consumers & meeting their needs rapidly by using the following methods:

1. Concert development – emphasis is placed on presenting concerts that meet the needs of the target audience with purchasing power. Trying to take action no matter the results would turn out right or wrong. For example, trying to reach a niche market like what happened in the United States in 2000 is to organise more small concerts (Mortimer, Nosko & Sorensen, 2010:10) but hard to gain profit. Promoters found that customers' demand is in accord with concert artists. For Thai artists, the concert concept and theme should be focused; for foreign artists, the reputation of the artist should be considered first, and for every concert, the fanbase of the artist is important.
2. Communication via online – the communication channels have changed from using the mainstream media to online media to save the expense, and specifically, to approach consumers. It is also possible to reach foreign customer groups as well. Moreover, the use of social network CRM is one of the processes that motivates customers to purchase and advocate products in this present world (Kotler, Kartajaya & Setiawan, 2017).
3. Community building – trying to build a community of customers for reaching the target group in the long-term are focused. To collect accurate customer databases, the more customer databases are reached, the more they can present 'tailor-made' products to customers (Guichardaz, Bach, & Penin, 2019:20-21). Building customer community also creates brand engagement for consumers even more (Kaur, Paruthi, Islam & Hollebeek, 2020:3). Finally, good relationships between consumers, companies, and artists will be reached, providing greater ease in purchasing decisions (Guichardaz, Bach & Penin, 2019:14).
4. Make a new trend – a creation of a trend is built in order to promote the sales volume, using excellent communication strategies to popularize the trend before the concert happens through social media. This concept presents the

important principle that human beings are social animals who desire to live together or talk about the same issues in a social group (Kotler, Kartajaya & Setiawan, 2017). Therefore, the utilisation or creation of trends will approach the target customers, especially Thai people who mainly follow trends. As one key informant put it:

It [is] only a trend, if it is popular, they (customer) have to be in a hurry to take it.
Thai people wait for the trend, wait for friends, they won't decide it by themselves.

Marketing strategies to solve problems using the following techniques:

1. The countering of pricing strategies – promoters try to solve these problems by limiting the distribution of free tickets to sponsors and business partners. In the case of the medium-price tickets that are hard to sell, promoters would set up a new zone in order to offer a new price to customers.
2. The expansion of the concert life cycle – arranging more concerts for many consecutive years, promoters need to find younger customers to replace older ones. In other words, promoters are required to understand that people who attend a concert today might not be interested in attending the same one in the next ten years since their ages and favorite music styles would have changed. Furthermore, this method will influence new customers to fill concerts continuously. This life expansion product has been discovered to be used to extend a trendy age of Lady Gaga, a famous artist. The utilisation from understanding product life cycle will continue the product to be sold, though it is decreasing in popularity (Simões, Gonçalves, Gonçalves, Silva and Melo, 2019:388-389). It will also help support the efficacy of sales and organisation achievement (Dragnic, 2014:125).
3. Other methods – if sales are not successful or do not achieve the targets, entrepreneurs may consider two significant plans: 1) considering possible cost reduction, considered an ordinary solution in other countries (Frith, 2013:297), and 2) seeking ways to change the unsold tickets to create business networking opportunities instead.

Business survival strategies include the following:

1. Joint venture and Alliance – there is a merger between Thai promoters and foreign companies for many years, including the creation of business alliances to increase established negotiating power and financial strength.
2. Diversification – when concert performance alone is unable to create enough revenue for an organization, promoters turn to another business in order to sustain the old business. For example, one promoter became a broadcast content provider, some promoters became corporate event organizers. In this case, it happens with world-class music record labels as well (Guichardaz, Bach & Penin, 2019).

The three management strategies of concert promoters are all the methods to respond to the market competitions, especially when there are more competitors in the market. Edmondson (2008) indicated that companies normally respond with four types of reactions: 1) doing nothing and operating the business as usual; 2)

developing strategies and countering by using marketing mix; 3) seeking cooperation with competitors in the market, and 4) leaving the market. The best reaction is seeking cooperation among competitors. But promoters need the skills of seeking a compatible partner, called transactional capability (Guichardaz, Bach & Penin, 2019:18-19). Gnjidic (2018) stated that the environment has affected organizational strategies; likewise, organizational strategies have influenced environmental change as well. With all that stated, one business strategy may have a different impact on the entire market and create even more chaos.

Conclusion

Throughout the past 11 years, 2007 - 2017, popular music live performances have served the public as a stress reliever. They are a gathering place for fans and people who have the same interest; a trace of unforgettable nostalgia; a symbol of social class of urban life, and a symbol of differentiation of generations' identity. But for entrepreneurs in this business, especially concert promoters who create concerts, this moment was once again the time of the wind of change. From the era of physical music to digital music, live concerts have become an unprecedented mainstream income.

At the same time, the four main factors, namely: economic recession, political conditions, technological shift, and consumer behavior together play a role in the business. Concert promoters offer a wide range of solutions for solving problems due to business difficulties. If there were more factors involved, there would be more chaos in the system. In a chaotic system, an entrepreneur's response to problems is likely to be more of a failure than success. Because a lack of knowledge about those factors limits an entrepreneur's ability to predict the impact of a solution accurately (Mina, 2012:30).

A literature review found that a study of Pichaipat (2010) on the music industry in Thailand during 1983 - 2007 found that entrepreneurs in the industry managed their business by solving immediate problems rather than managing them with a good plan. They were unable to keep up with change in consumer behavior. Even in the years between 2007 and 2017, the situation remained unchanged. Therefore, knowledge of each factor is very important.

In many media, they forecasted a booming trend in live music business from 2013 onwards, with an average growth rate of 6.2% (PWC, 2014:2). In fact, the results of this study showed that this business was growing but at a low rate. This illusion of business growth has attracted many entrepreneurs to the market and made it a highly competitive market. They fought for consumers and sponsors with limited budgets for their entertainment consumption because of the economic recession. With the aforementioned situations, concert promoters had to adapt themselves and be flexible to change by creating a number of possible scenarios (Levy, 1994:170). They should present them as business adaptation methods such as, understanding the needs of consumers, marketing plans for solving the problems, and business survival strategies.

Regarding this study, it does not only provide lessons and guidelines for running a business in the chaotic period of popular music concert production business in Thailand, but also to investigate experiences of concert business during this period. The research could be useful for implementation in other countries.

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