

An Education in Entertainment – Possible Trends in Southeast Asia

Benny Lim¹

ARTICLE INFO

Available Online February 2014

Key words:

Creative Industries;
Entertainment;
Entertainment Arts;
Entertainment Industry;
Entertainment Education;
Entertainment Management;
Education in Southeast Asia.

ABSTRACT

The term Entertainment Industry has been used interchangeably with the term Creative Industries and also has been suggested to be part of the creative industries. The creative industries seek to provide commercially viable artistic and creative products, known as intellectual property, and in the process of such provision, contribute to the nation's creative economy. From an education perspective in Southeast Asia, two observations can be made. Firstly, the focus of education in relation to the entertainment industry has always been technical. Secondly, the introduction of the concepts of the creative industries in Southeast Asia has spurred new trends in the education of the entertainment industry. Outside of Southeast Asia, there have been a growing number of academic programs in the field of Entertainment. From within Southeast Asia, Malaysia has taken the lead to introduce two new trends in the entertainment education – entertainment management and entertainment arts.

Introduction

Stuart Moss (2010), in *The Entertainment Industry: An Introduction*, defines the Entertainment Industry as “The collection of bodies that exist globally, which provide products (both tangible and intangible) that have a primary purpose of engaging or captivating an audience.”

The term *Entertainment Industry* has been used interchangeably with the term *Creative Industries* (Varbanova, 2013) and also has been suggested to be part of the creative industries (Birch, 2008). In any case, it is exciting times for Asia from an entertainment industry viewpoint. In 2007, Research and Markets announced that the entertainment industry is expected to hit US\$1.8 Trillion. Furthermore, there would be a noticeable shift towards Asia. This, however, does not suggest that the existence of the entertainment industry in Southeast Asia only begins after 2007. In fact, the industry has been around for quite some time, mainly with the rise of television in the 1950s and 1960s (Waterson, 2007). For instance, Singapore, at the point of independence in 1965, has already got in place, some form of an entertainment industry. Both the radio and television networks were established prior to the independence. When Singapore was still part of Malaysia, *Television Malaysia (Singapore)* was already functioning (Tan, 2008). After independence, *Television Malaysia* was renamed to *Radio and Television Singapore* (McMillin, 2009).

From an education perspective in Southeast Asia, two observations can be made. Firstly, the focus of education in relation to the entertainment industry has always been technical. For instance, students are trained to handle the filming equipment, to edit reels, to manage the sound board, to write for both broadcast and print journalism so that they can work in the television, radio, film, and print sectors within the entertainment industries. An education in *Mass Communication* or *Communication and Media Studies*, developed actively in 1980s and 1990s in this region (Hamelink, Linné, & Halloran, 1994), is the closest students can undertake if they want to work in the entertainment industry. Secondly, the introduction of the concepts of the creative industries (CI), which is an industry much more recent, yet related, to the entertainment industry, in Southeast Asia has spurred new trends in the education of the entertainment industry. This paper seeks to provide an overview of the development of the CI in Southeast Asia and its impact on the education of entertainment.

¹ Department of Cultural and Religious Studies, Faculty of Arts, Chinese University of Hong Kong, Email: bennylin@cuhk.edu.hk

Overview of the Creative Industries in Southeast Asia

There is no one formal definition for the CI (Ferreira, 2008). In general, the CI seeks to provide commercially viable artistic and creative products, known as intellectual property (Karataş-Özkan & Chell, 2010), and in the process of such provision, contributes to the nation's creative economy (Potts, 2011). There are three broad sectors within the CI. The Arts and Culture covers areas such as the performing, visual, and literary arts, heritage development, museums and galleries, arts and cultural festivals, and auctions. The Design sector includes advertising, graphic, interior, fashion, web, product, and industrial design. Finally, the Media sector covers broadcast media, digital media, and software development (ERC, 2002). As mentioned in the earlier section, the introduction of the CI is rather recent in the case of Southeast Asia.

Singapore first discussed the positive impact of the CI to the economy in 2002, when a report was presented by the ERC sub-committee on the creative industries to the Ministry of Information and the Arts (currently split into two ministries – Ministry of Communications and Information and Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth). The report also discussed some key visions and recommendations for Singapore in the development of its CI (ERC, 2002). The rest of Southeast Asian nations joined in this trend much later. In 2009, as part of the nation's *11th National Development Plan*, Thailand set new targets with regards to the CI and the economy. Firstly, it has put in place some plan to establish Thailand as a *Creative Industrial Hub of ASEAN* (Association of Southeast Asian Nations). Secondly, Thailand aimed to increase the share of GDP contributed by creativity from 12% to 20% by the end of 2012 (Montesano & Lee, 2011). In Indonesia, a new *Ministry in Tourism and Creative Economy* (note the term 'Creative Economy' is part of the Ministry's name) was introduced by the President back in 2010. *Indonesia Creative* was officially formed under the new Ministry as an agent, a facilitator and an outreach body to develop Indonesia's creative economy (Setiadi, Boediprasetya & Wahdiani, 2012).

In May 2010, the 6th World Islamic Economic Forum hosted the *Marketplace of Creative Arts* in Malaysia². A plenary session, *Identity in the 21st Century – Investing in the Future of Creative Arts*, was held in the presence and attendance of artists from different disciplines and different countries. This forum in 2010 was one of the first few landmark events in Malaysia that relates creative arts as a contributing factor to the economy. Even in Brunei, a rich nation from its oil and gas resources, there has been efforts to diversify the economy. In the recent 2012 national strategy *Wawasan 2035*, Brunei has put in place some initiatives in developing its CI. The *Creative Industries Research Cluster* (CIRC) at the University of Brunei Darussalam was established in May 2011 (Oxford Business Group, 2011). In the same year, the Aquino government of the Philippines also launched several initiatives to develop the nation's CI via the *Creative Economies Council* of the Philippines (ECCP, 2011). Even in war-torn nations such as Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, there have been initiatives to develop the CI. Vietnam, through its *Investment & Trade Promotion Center* in Ho Chi Minh City has identified 4 sectors to develop as a spearheading effort in the CI. These 4 sectors include, Packaging Design, Interior Design, Advertising and Media, and ICT and Software Development (Le, 2012). In March 2013, Laos conducted the *Validation Workshop for 2012 Baseline Study*. During the workshop, Deputy Minister of Information, Culture and Tourism, Mr. Bouangeun Saphouong, stated that Laos intended to be out of the least developed nation status and there was a need to focus on the nation's Cultural and Creative Industries (Vinnaly, 2013).

An Education in Entertainment – Possible Trends

Outside of Southeast Asia, there has been a growing number of academic programs in the field of Entertainment. Interestingly, The Queensland University of Technology (QUT) in Brisbane houses a *Faculty of Creative Industries* and within the faculty, there is a Bachelor of Entertainment Industries program. The Dean of the faculty, Professor Wissler, on the faculty's introduction page, states "*Creativity is no longer seen as a luxury. It's an economic and cultural imperative valued by individuals, society and employers. The arts, media and design are vital components of local and global communities and are central to the development of fulfilling citizenship and social innovation. This makes it an exciting time to embark on or further a creative career or build creative business ideas.*"³

² The 6th World Islamic Economic conference was held in KL Convention Centre between 18 and 20 May 2010. The event was chaired by Tun Musa Hitam.

³ For the full message of the Dean: <http://www.qut.edu.au/creative-industries/about/about-the-faculty>

This statement further reiterates the connection between the CI and the nation's economy. So it comes as no surprise that economic terms and figures are mentioned in the introduction of the Bachelor of Entertainment Industries program on the QUT's website⁴. It is stated on the website that the global entertainment industry is recession-proof and will be worth AUD\$2.1 trillion by 2015. This program seeks to train their students as entertainment producers, who will originate, design and run entertainment projects. Based on Moss's (2010) definition of the entertainment industry highlighted in the beginning of this paper, it can be deduced that a program in *Entertainment Industries* involves the study of the provision of entertainment products, from a variety of perspectives – political, economic, social, technological, and legal. The concept is rather similar to the studies of *Entertainment Management*, which focuses mainly on the theories and practices, such as the planning, organizing, leading and controlling functions (Brynes, 2009) of managing the entertainment industry. The University of Miami in the United States also offers a Bachelor of Music in Music Business and Entertainment Industries. This program, as the name suggests, focuses on the music entertainment scene, and seeks to train future producers, marketers and administrators with sound legal and distribution knowledge of the music industry⁵.

It is worthy to note at this point that there are two main education hubs in Southeast Asia, Singapore and Malaysia (Mok & Yu, 2013). Many students from Southeast Asia travel to Singapore or Malaysia in their pursuit of higher education. Therefore, it is surmise to say that a new academic program in Malaysia does not only affect Malaysians but a greater hinterland of students. This is also one reason why I choose to look at Southeast Asia as one collective in the discussion of education in this paper. In recent years within the Southeast Asia, there has also been the development of new academic programs in relation to entertainment, particularly in Malaysia. In 2011, the Management and Science University introduced the Diploma in Public Relations and Entertainment Management program. This is the first entertainment management program in Malaysia that prepares the students to be booking agents and artist's managers within the entertainment industry. According to its website⁶, this program "*integrates knowledge and abilities with the talents of students in public relations and in entertainment. The both talents are necessary because they are required to manage artists through the production of press release, video clips, contracts and event booking schedules.*"

KDU University College launched a Diploma in Entertainment Arts program in 2012, which aims to train performing talents for the entertainment industry. As the Chairperson of the academic taskforce of this program, I was involved in the conceptualization, development, and provisional accreditation of the program. Unlike entertainment management, *Entertainment Arts* is a completely new term within the context of Southeast Asia and is rarely used as a program name anywhere. To understand the term, I shall define these two words separately. Firstly, let's look at the term, *Entertainment*.

Entertainment, in our view, involves communication featuring external stimuli; it provides pleasure to some people, though not of course to everyone; and it reaches a generally passive audience." (Bates and Ferri, 2000)

The quote above suggests the importance of an external stimuli and/ or pleasure in understanding the term *Entertainment*. Moss (2010) highlighted that entertainment engages audience through sensory stimulation and in the process, invokes an emotional response from the audience. Moving on the term, *Arts*. Oxford Dictionary defines the *Arts* as *subjects of study primarily concerned with human creativity and social life*. If we combine the two definitions together, *Entertainment Arts* can be understood as a study of human creativity in communicating external stimuli to, and invoking emotional responses from an audience. Entertainment Arts generates enjoyment, amusement and recreation (Chartrand, 2000). In order to study and train the human creativity in entertainment, this program focuses on the development of creative talents for the field of entertainment, in this case, the *artiste*. Although the word *artiste* is the French translation of the word of *artist*, these two words are not used interchangeably in practical situations. Merriam-Webster Dictionary has clearly defined and divided the two. According to the dictionary, an *artiste* is a performer of entertainment activities whereby an *artist* is one who creates art.

⁴Refer to Queensland University of Technology's Bachelor of Entertainment Industries: <http://www.qut.edu.au/study/courses/bachelor-of-entertainment-industries>.

⁵ Refer to University of Miami's Bachelor of Music in Music Business and Entertainment Industries: http://www.miami.edu/index.php/academicbulletin/undergraduate_academic_programs/music/music_media_industry/

⁶Refer to Management and Science University's (MSU) Diploma in Public Relations and Entertainment Management: <http://www.msu.edu.my/v8/fbmp/dprem.php>

What are the attributes of *artistes* that should be taught in an entertainment arts program that cannot be found in a performing arts program? The main difference between performing arts, which includes theatre, music, opera, and dance, from traditional 'high arts' to 'popular arts', including live arts performed in all venues and non-live arts through all forms of mass media, and entertainment arts lies in the concept of demand. According Chartrand (2000), the primary demand of entertainment arts is to generate entertainment, whereas for the performing arts, the primary demand is for enlightenment. The secondary demand for entertainment arts includes enjoyment, amusement and recreation, whereas for the performing arts, the secondary demand focuses more on the freedom of expression and the insights of the human condition. The difference in the tertiary demand is the most vivid. Entertainment arts have a focus on profit, whereby the performing arts is slanted towards the non-profit and public. To respond to such a different, the Diploma in Entertainment Arts program in KDU has incorporated content such as law, self-branding and marketing, social media presence, as well as grooming and fashion sense. At the end of the program, these creative talents (*artistes*) will learn how to market, brand and position themselves in this competitive industry.⁷

CONCLUSION

The paper establishes some basic relationships between the entertainment industry and the CI. Looking from the perspective of education in Southeast Asia, the paper further discusses the impact of the CI and the new trends in entertainment education – from a focus on technical skills to new areas such as entertainment management and entertainment arts. Having gone through the research process for this paper, I have identified some possibilities in future research. Firstly, the relationships between the entertainment industry and the CI can be better defined. Next, the launch of the Diploma program in entertainment arts in KDU University College spearheaded a new trend of entertainment education in Southeast Asia. Future research can be carried out to analyze the impact of this program in the development of entertainment education and the entertainment industry in the region.

References

- Bates, S., & Ferri, J. (2000). *What's Entertainment? Notes Toward a Definition*. *Studies in Popular Culture*, 33 (1), 15.
- Birch, S. (2008). *The Political Promotion of the Experience Economy and Creative Industries*. Samfundslit teratur.
- Byrnes, W. (2009). *Management and the Arts*. Elsevier Focal Press.
- Chartrand, H. (2000). *Towards an American Arts Industry* in *The Public Life of the Arts in America*. Rutgers University Press.
- ECCP. (2011, April 12). *'Arangkada' Gains Noted But Much Still Has To Be Done -- Joint Foreign Chambers*. Retrieved from the European Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines website: http://www.eccp.com/articles-page.php?category=2&article_id=171
- ERC. (2002). *Creative Industries Development Strategy*. Ministry of Communications and Information, Singapore.
- Ferreira, F.A. (2008). *Cities, the Information Society and the Creative Industries: An Analysis of the Core Media Related Creative Industries in Salvador, Bahia*. ProQuest.
- Hamelink, C.J., Linné, O., & Halloran, J.D. (1994). *Mass Communication Research: On Problems and Policies: the Art of Asking the Right Questions*. Greenwood Publishing Group.
- Karataş-Özkan, M., & Chell, E. (2010). *Nascent Entrepreneurship and Learning*. Edward Elgar Publishing.

⁷Refer to KDU University College's Diploma in Entertainment Arts: <http://www.kdu.edu.my/diploma-in-entertainment-arts>

- Le, Q.V. (2012, Oct 18 & 19). *Understand the Gap Between Vietnam's Creative Industry Demands and Higher Education Provision*. Retrieved from the British Council website: http://ihe.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/GEDSG_D2_0900_Le_Quoc_Vinh.pdf
- McCarthy, K. (2001). *The Performing Arts in a New Era*. Rand Corporation.
- McMillin, D. (2009). *International Media Studies*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Mok, K.H., & Yu, K.M. (2013). *Internationalization of Higher Education in East Asia: Trends of Student Mobility and Impact on Education Governance*. Routledge.
- Montesano, M.J., & Lee, P.O. (2011). *Regional Outlook: Southeast Asia 2011-2012*. Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.
- Moss, S. (2009). *The Entertainment Industry: An Introduction*. CAB International.
- Oxford Business Group. (2012, August 23). *Brunei Darussalam: Creative industry*. Retrieved from the Oxford Business Group website: http://www.oxfordbusinessgroup.com/economic_updates/brunei-darussalam-creative-industry
- Potts, J. (2011). *Creative Industries and Economic Evolution*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Research and Markets. (2007, Feb 4). *The Global Entertainment Industry is Expected to Touch \$1.8 Trillion with a Noticeable Shift Towards the Asian Region*. Retrieved from the Business Wire website: <http://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20070202005164/en/Global-Entertainment-Industry-Expected-Touch-1.8-Trillion#.Us0-IhwW2vw>
- Setiadi N.J., Boediprasetya A., & Wahdianan (2012). *Boosting Indonesia's creative industries: Identification of people's characteristics and creative behaviour*. *Quaestiones Geographicae* 31(4), Bogucki Wydawnictwo Naukowe, Poznań, 53-62. DOI 10.2478/v10117-012-0035-3.
- Tan, K. (2008). *Cinema and Television in Singapore: Resistance in One Dimension*. BRILL.
- Vinnaly. (2013, Mar 14) *Laos shows of rise in national Cultural, Creative Industries*. Retrieved from the Laos News Agency website: <http://www.kpl.net.la/english/news/newsrecord/2013/Mach/14.3.2013/edn1.htm>
- Varbanova, L. (2013). *Strategic Management in the Arts*. Routledge.
- Waterson, R. (2007). *Southeast Asian Lives: Personal Narratives and Historical Experience*. NUS Press.