

## Abstract

The main objective of this thesis aims to account for the meaning in practicing ballet, a western performing art that exists in Thai society, through the use of body capital in modernity. The body in modernity is created to reflect the identity of its owner, group, and uniqueness that distinguish itself from others.

In the early days ballet in Thailand was considered an activity practiced by the elites in Thai society. The knowledge and practice were not accessible by ordinary people. In later period when there were some teachers and Thai ballet dancers who seriously studied this art form and began to set up private schools, ballet was increasingly taught to other classes in the society. However, the image of ballet, though not so strong as in the early days, has always been involved with those in the higher class. The distinctive form of the body of baler dancers is perceived as a desirable form of a feminine body. Middle-class parents encourage their daughters to take up ballet as a supplementary activity.

However, constructing the body under the rules of ballet is not an easy task but requires a lot of efforts and great patience. The success reflected on the learners' body is seen as a new identity in the modernity which values good health and beauty of the body as part of the never ending body building project.