

The Adaptation of the Luang Prabang Pinphat Ensemble in the World Heritage City Context

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Abstract

This qualitative research examines the transformation and adaptation of the Luang Prabang Pinphat Ensemble following the city's designation as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This study seeks to determine the current status of the Pinphat ensemble and the progress it has made since Luang Prabang became a World Heritage City. The study involved primary research in the form of documentary research, formal and informal interviews, and participatory and non-participant observation to study and analyze the main functions, nature, and adaptation of the Pinphat ensemble in the cultural and economic environment of Luang Prabang as a World Heritage City. The findings of this research would suggest that the ensemble was a meaningful element in local rituals, and that it went through a decline after the political revolution in 1975. Nevertheless, it regained that status in 1986 and applied to the tourism industry by transforming performances and instruments, creating an inventory of traditional Lao music mixed with Western music. Moreover, some economic changes involved the online distributing and creation of souvenirs to enable the ensemble to maintain his identity and at the same time react to the social and economic transformations.

Keywords: Adaptation, Luang Prabang Pinphat, Evolution, World Heritage, City Context..

INTRODUCTION

The Pinphat is a type of musical ensemble that consists of a variety of percussion instruments, such as the Ranat Ek (Xylophone), Khong Wong Yai (Large Circle Drum), Taphon (Two-Headed Barrel Drum), Klong Tat (Large Barrel Drum), and Pii (Woodwind Instrument) ¹. Moreover, deeply embedded in the cultural heritage of the Mekong Subregion, it is influenced by the cultures of Lanna, Lan Xang, Khmer, Burmese, and Thai. The ensemble is essential in religious and ritual practices, reflecting long-standing, enduring perspectives and spiritual traditions ².

Furthermore, social details have appeared in response to extension and technological advancements, which have increased interest in preserving cultural heritage and local wisdom ³. This interest has fueled the growth of cultural and community-based tourism, with online media in Thailand and Laos critical in promoting these aspects to attract tourists. The revival of traditional ceremonies has achieved increasing attention in contemporary society. Luang Prabang, the first capital of the Lan Xang Kingdom, was initially named Muang Swa and had a population of Mon-Khmer peoples, such as the Kamu and Hmong. Following the migration of the Lao people, the city was renamed Xiang Dong Xiang Thong, becoming the center of Lao culture along both sides of the Mekong River. In 1560, King Chaiyachetda Thirath moved the capital to Vientiane and renamed Xiang Dong Xiang Thong to “Luang Prabang” in honor of the Buddha statue brought from Xiang Kham during King Fa Ngum’s reign in 1496. Between 1807 and 1813, King Anouvong promoted Lan Xang culture by bringing Pinphat music to Phra That Phanom, which is now preserved in the museum of Wat Phra That Phanom. This highlights the relationship between Luang Prabang and the surrounding countries ⁴.

In 1995, UNESCO allocated Luang Prabang as a World Heritage Site, making it a protected area for preserving art, culture, and traditions, which later contributed to increasing tourism and exciting the local economy ⁵. Nevertheless, the long history of the city, rituals, and music were also a good cultural heritage in 1975 ⁶. The historical significance of Luang Prabang, which rose to be a UNESCO World Heritage Site, has transformed the city into a targeted tourism destination for historians, art, and culture lovers ⁷.

In the research, the researchers explored the effects of entity reversal in fulfilling tourist needs in the World Heritage City through commodifying it long ago ⁸. This rebranding led to physical, social, and ritual alterations in the city, involving the reconstruction and invention of traditions, consultation of identity, and the fight over cultural space in rituals, which have shaped new morality for the residents of Luang Prabang. Additionally, the importance of preserving the traditional musical instrumentation of the locals and popularizing their performing styles can be linked to the renewal of music bands in Luang Prabang in relation to the country’s tourism industry. This is especially relevant to the registration of world heritage by UNESCO, particularly those related to ritual music and performing arts ⁹. Therefore, the researchers selected to examine how the Pinphat ensemble applies in Luang Prabang, considering its status as a World Heritage Site. Historically, it is critical for its role in royal court ceremonies and religious traditions, the ensemble represents a musical heritage that connects Buddhism with the domain. However, still been preserved for generations, continues with an important role in rituals and performances, encouraged by the Luang Prabang World Heritage organization.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To assess the state of the Pinphat ensemble after Luang Prabang was designated a World Heritage Site.
2. To analyze how the Luang Prabang Pinphat ensemble has adapted within the framework of a World Heritage Site.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Target Group

The field research part was conducted to collect data in Luang Prabang and Ban Chiang Man, located in Chom Phet District, Luang Prabang Province, Lao PDR. The target group was divided into two categories: The first group consists of key informants directly associated with the Pinphat ensemble, including former court musicians from Luang Prabang, cultural entrepreneurs involved in promoting Luang Prabang’s artistic heritage, managers of the Luang Prabang Pinphat ensemble, and musicians engaged in contemporary musical innovation. The second group comprises individuals involved in Luang Prabang’s traditions and rituals, such as elders, cultural experts, village leaders, and local scholars who possess in-depth knowledge of customs and actively participate in various cultural activities within the city.

Data Collection

The information was analyzed from Lao historical literature, research documents, and relevant articles. Data sources included online databases and university libraries, which were used to analyze the field research data, and the collected data are as follows:

In the research part of the documentary, it involves the investigation of historical, social, and cultural data in Sales in terms of Luang Prabang as a World Heritage site. Books, documents, texts, and available research in libraries of Luang Prabang City, Phra Lak-Phra Ram Theater, and university libraries were consulted to find corroborative findings to the research hypothesis and to compare the historical evolution of the Pinphat ensemble. Main informants and persons recruited into the Pinphat ensemble were interviewed using a preset of questions to ensure that the data obtained is in line with the research objectives and that they represent the subjects of interest. In its fieldwork, unstructured interviews were used as informal conversations and were repeated to establish a relationship with the local community in Luang Prabang. These interviews covered general life, work practices, and perceptions towards traditions and rituals. They were also useful in investigating the music concepts incorporated in the various cultural and ritual activities of Luang Prabang. Participatory observation involved participating in regional rituals, assisting in possible preparations, and musical arrangements for these rituals. Non-participant observation involved recording various events through videos, photographs, and audio tapes. The data obtained was recorded and analyzed to fulfill the objectives of the study.

Data Analysis

The researchers examined the functions, phenomena, and adaptations of the Luang Prabang Pinphat ensemble in cultural rituals by categorizing the data according to the research objectives. The content and descriptive analysis were used to analyze and interpret the data with the aim of explaining the observed phenomena, focusing on major issues as determined by the research objectives.

Research on the Pinphat ensemble includes discussions of its application in rituals, the musical peculiarities of the Luang Prabang Pinphat ensemble, and the economic state of the ensemble. Exploring the World Heritage city in terms of adaptation involves examining the roles and functions of the Luang Prabang Pinphat ensemble, identifying adaptations of the musical nature of the ensemble, and understanding the economic status of the Pinphat ensemble within the World Heritage City.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Pinphat ensemble has received strong support from the local population for its rituals, entertainment, and performances since Luang Prabang was declared a UNESCO World Heritage City in 1995. This has led to its establishment as a Traditional Music Ensemble in the World Heritage City, playing a significant role in Luang Prabang's music scene. The ensemble has undergone restructuring over time, resulting in the loss of certain elements such as the Khong Wong Lek (which has a higher pitch and smaller gongs than the Khong Wong Yai) and Pii, which have been omitted.

The Pinphat ensemble played a crucial role in the royal rites of Luang Prabang during the time of the Lao Kingdom. It was widely used in various contexts, including royal ceremonies, performances in the theater, and ritual practices at the court. Additionally, the troupe used to perform as a tribute to the Buddha during Buddhist festivals at major temples in Luang Prabang. However, political changes in 1975 led to the abolition of the monarchy, which transformed the ensemble's role. The music was repurposed as a tool for promoting revolutionary ideology, with songs that supported the ruling party's ideals. In contrast, traditional court ritual music was banned because it was seen as feudalistic and fostering superstitious beliefs that contradicted state policies. As a result, the role of the Pinphat ensemble in rituals gradually diminished within Luang Prabang society, and many musicians were forced to pursue occupations unrelated to music.

Table 1 and Figure 1 show the chronological history of the activity and cultural value of the Pinphat Ensemble in Luang Prabang in 1750-2020. The prominence of the ensemble was in its highest form when the group was introduced as royal in 1750, implying its historic status in ceremonies. Nonetheless, there was a remarkable drop

around 1975 because of political turmoil, which diminished state support. It started to revive in 1986, which depicted a new interest in the culture due to changes in governmental policies. The ensemble developed further post-1995, after Luang Prabang was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site. As of the 2000s, the ensemble had remodeled its shows to tourists and embraced other musical arrangements. The transition of the ensemble to digital media and merchandise in 2020 ensured cultural continuity and adaptation to global obstacles in light of a global pandemic such as the COVID-19 crisis. The graph shows the strength as well as the adaptive transformation of the ensemble during at least 300 years.

Table 1: Evolution of the Pinphat Ensemble in Luang Prabang

Year	Event	Impact on the Ensemble
1750	Introduction of Pinphat to Luang Prabang by King Anouvong	Established the ensemble as a crucial part of royal ceremonies and religious events.
1975	Political Revolution	Significant decline in the ensemble’s performance due to decreased public and state support.
1986	Revival of interest in traditional culture following changes in government policies	The ensemble regained prominence, with performances beginning to adapt to new audiences and circumstances.
1995	Designation of Luang Prabang as a UNESCO World Heritage Site	Increased visibility and preservation efforts, leading to greater engagement in tourism and cultural revitalization.
2000s	Adaptation of performances for tourists, including fusion of traditional and Western music elements	Expansion of performance repertoire, enabling the ensemble to appeal to both local and international audiences.
2020	Shift to online distribution and merchandise production	Allowed for preservation of cultural identity while adapting to market changes and the impacts of global events like the pandemic.

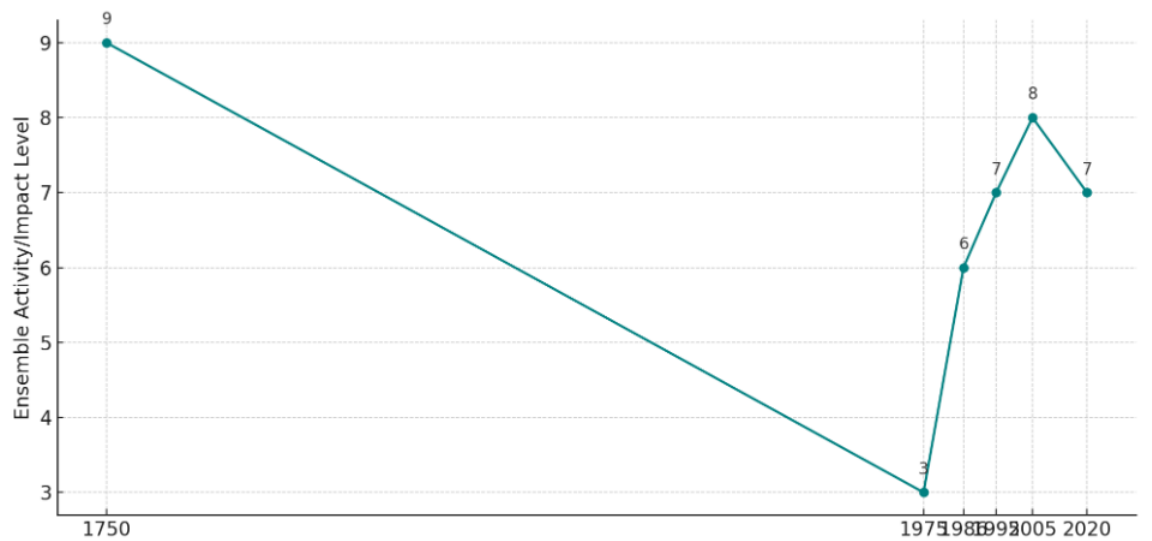


Figure 1: Evolution of the Pinphat Ensemble in Luang Prabang (1750–2020)

In 1986, the “New Imagination” policy aided in the reintegration of the Pinphat ensemble into the cultural life of the Luang Prabang community. This revival allowed the ensemble to gradually return to local rituals and traditions, thereby restoring performing arts as a vital part of the nation’s cultural heritage. In 1993, the committee for the restoration of the Lao Khon (Lakon Phra Lak-Phra Ram) was conducted under the supervision of the Department of Information, Culture, and Tourism of Luang Prabang Province. This combination of the knowledge and expertise of former court musicians and performers encourages collaboration in researching and restoring traditional performing arts in the region. UNESCO identified Luang Prabang as a World Heritage Site, stressing the Pinphat ensemble and its essence as a main element of the cultural heritage site in 1995. The ensemble reestablished its role in major ceremonies, such as the Lao New Year, Bun Maha Chat, the End of Buddhist Lent, the Phra Bang Buddha bathing ceremony, the Baci ritual, and housewarming ceremonies. Therefore, the Pinphat ensemble evolved as a main part of Luang Prabang’s performing arts, renewing traditional music and remembering the cultural identity of both Luang Prabang and the historic Lao Kingdom of Lan Xang (Figure 2).



Figure 2: Piphat Ensemble (Wong Noi) in Buddhist Rites at Major Temples

Table 2 and Figure 3 show the relative weights of the five most important instruments in the Luang Prabang Pinphat Ensemble. The Ranat Ek, as the melodic lead, is the most valued because it is an important part of giving voice to the ensemble. This was preceded by Khong Wong Yai, which further impregnated the rhythmic foundation with its round-shaped tuned ginds. The Taphon and Klong Tat drums add depth and bass layers, respectively, which

Table 2: Key Characteristics and Instruments of the Luang Prabang Pinphat Ensemble

Instrument Name	Type	Description	Role in Ensemble
Ranat Ek	Xylophone	A large wooden xylophone with a series of tuned keys, played with mallets.	Melodic lead instrument; essential for defining the ensemble's sound.
Khong Wong Yai	Circle Gong	A large circular gong set with multiple tuned gongs, played with sticks.	Provides rhythmic foundation and enhances the ensemble's percussive qualities.
Taphon	Two-Headed Barrel Drum	A traditional barrel drum that produces deep, resonant tones.	Adds depth to rhythms and engages in dynamic call-and-response patterns.
Klong Tat	Large Barrel Drum	A larger version of the Taphon, offering a more pronounced bass sound.	Emphasizes rhythm and adds a rich layer to the ensemble's sound.
Pii	Woodwind Instrument	A traditional wooden flute that brings a melodic line and a softer tone to the performance.	Complement the percussion with melodic interjections and lyrical expressions.

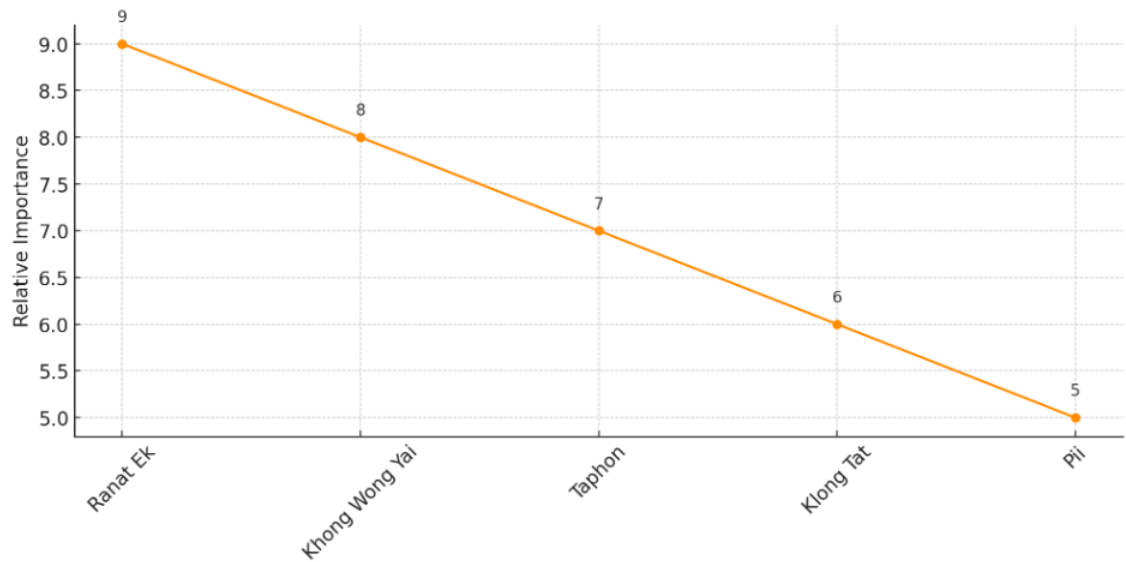


Figure 3: Relative Importance of Instruments in the Luang Prabang Pinphat Ensemble

The Musical Characteristics of the Luang Prabang Pinphat Ensemble

The musical instruments in the Pinphat ensemble, such as Ranat Ek, Ranat Thum (Bass Xylophone), Khong Wong Yai, Taphon, Klong Tat, and Ching (Small Cymbals), are a living testament to the continuous information and expansion of local musical craftsmanship and tradition. Moreover, local crafters influence the instruments' sizes and conditions, resulting in unique characteristics. For example, the Khong Wong Yai can have either a tamarind pod-shaped or a circular frame. The Taphon comes in varied sizes and shapes. The Klong Tat can correspond to a persimmon or a water basin. The Ranat Ek and Ranat Thum have convex or balanced keys. These deviations are part of our cultural heritage, making us part of a prosperous tradition that is still developing.

Historical development and instrumental makeup of the Pinphat ensemble allow the distinction of three major types of this ensemble. The former is the small Pinphat ensemble (Wong Noi) which is composed of Ranat Ek, Khong Wong Yai (large gong circle), Pii, Taphon, Klong Tat and Ching. The second one is the huge Pinphat ensemble (Wong Yai) that was preeminent throughout the exception of the Kingdom of Laos and especially in the period of King Sisavang Vong and King Sisavang Varthana. This larger ensemble included a Ranat Ek, Ranat Tum (bass xylophone), Khong Wong Yai, Khong Wong Noi (small gong circle), Pii, Taphon, Klong Tat, and Ching. However, the large Pinphat ensemble is no longer in use in Luang Prabang today; only the small Pinphat ensemble remains, sometimes including a Ranat Thum. In some cases, the Pii is substituted with the Sor Yi (a two-string fiddle). The third type is the traditional folk ensemble, which blends string instruments such as the Sor Yi, Sor Oh, and Khim (a hammered dulcimer) with Pinphat instruments, including the Ranat Ek, Khong Wong Yai, Taphon, Klong Tat, and Ching. The arrangement of this ensemble varies depending on the availability of musicians, performance objectives, and the accessibility of instruments (Figure 4).



Figure 4. Pinphat Ensemble (Wong Yai)

Source: Khana Fuenfu Baeb Fon Phra Lak Phra Ram Luang Prabang. (2013)

The musical repertoire can be categorized into three main groups:

- 1) Ceremonial Music: This type is used in religious rituals and is characterized by a steady rhythm that evokes feelings of calm, dignity, and sanctity. Examples include Hom Rong (prelude), Hea (processional), and music for the Wai Kru (teacher worship) ceremony. These pieces help structure the sequence of rituals, such as the Kraw Nok used in the procession of the Phra Bang image and Hom Rong, which signals the commencement of the ceremony.
- 2) Entertainment Music: This category can be instrumental or include lyrics that convey emotions such as love, sadness, or joy. Traditional folk songs like Khap Thum Luang Prabang, Khap Nak Sadung, and Khap Sam Sao typically fall into this category and are performed during festive occasions.
- 3) Performance Music: This type is divided into two subcategories:

Phalak-Pharam Music: This is linked with the Laotian masked dance-drama and can be likened to a Hom Rong that consists of several forms, including long song, lo (floating) and Oad (lament) that accompany the activities of the performers. **Fon Music:** This music is characterized as soft and graceful, and is followed by the dance movements, and is vocally or instrumentally performed. Each musical category serves distinct purposes and reflects the diverse contexts in which the music is performed.

Economic Situation of the Pinphat Ensemble

The economic landscape of the Pinphat ensemble in Luang Prabang has transformed in response to the social and political contexts of Laos. Before 1975, most musicians served as royal guards performing at the royal court and important ceremonies. However, following political changes between 1975 and 1985, many musicians were reassigned to the Department of Fine Arts to perform music aligned with communist ideologies, leading some groups to leave for other professions. The government eased restrictions on cultural activities, allowing musicians to participate again in religious ceremonies and rituals in 1986. The structure of the Phalak-Pharam committee in 1993 was an important point in the conservation of standard arts and culture, and its impact is still supposed now. The identification of Luang Prabang as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1995 also fueled development in the tourism sector, creating continuing engagement opportunities within the music industry. However, the Pinphat ensemble, critical in religious rituals, cultural heritage, and the local tourism industry, continues to be a living testament to the steady influence of the Phalak-Pharam commission.

Adaptation of the Pinphat Ensemble in a World Heritage City

The steady economic expansion, powered by tourism, has encouraged the growth of various service industries targeted at supporting this sector. The cultural heritage, particularly the arts and folk traditions of Luang Prabang, have been stimulated by government initiatives aimed at promoting tourism. Additionally, the Pinphat orchestra, which is a significant element of the local musical culture and tradition, has adapted to the changing social and economic framework by making performance adjustments, fulfilling various functions, and adopting knowledge-sharing approaches to meet the needs of travelers while maintaining its musical values.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Pinphat ensemble is now limited to only 5-6 individuals, which helps to clear up spacious space to deliver instruments by truck or hand cart. Modern sound amplification and contemporary music styles such as Lao and Thai folk songs have been incorporated to suitably fit the audience's taste of the contemporary times. Additionally, the growing tourism has influenced an increased demand for performances by Pinphat at communities and events, prompting bands to adjust their prices to fit the audience's budget and reduce the number of members to cater to the audience more effectively. The Pinphat tourist industry is essential, especially in hotels, restaurants, and cultural values. In addition, due to intense competition and the impacts of COVID-19, many bands have reduced their size to 2-4 members to reduce costs and increase flexibility. Despite these challenges, they strive to maintain the quality of their performances to attract tourists and preserve traditional music. These adaptations reflect the resilience of the Pinphat ensemble in maintaining its presence amid social and economic changes in this World Heritage city (Figures 5,6, and 7).



Figure 5: Pinphat Ensemble in its Traditional Ceremonial Procession Format

Source: Evans, G. (2009).



Figure 6: Pinphat Ensemble in the Current Procession



Figure 7: Pinphat Ensemble on a Truck Participating in a Procession

Musical characteristics

The development of musical instruments has become more refined with materials and patterns influenced by Lao art, such as floral and vine patterns, to align the instruments with the traditional art of Luang Prabang, such as the murals and stucco of important temples. Simultaneously, the ensemble structure has incorporated string instruments such as the Sor Yi, Sor Oh, and Khim. Occasionally, the “Klong Ping” is used instead of the “Taphon.”



Figure 8: Pinphat Ensemble in the World Heritage City Context

In addition, songs have been influenced by tourism and contemporary cultural trends ¹⁰, with compositions promoting tourism, such as Chern Thiao Luang Prabang song (Luang Prabang Invitation) and Sabai Dee Luang Prabang song (Luang Prabang Well-Being), which adapt local melodies. Traditional folk songs like “Khap Thum Luang Prabang” and “Khap Nak Sudung” have been arranged with contemporary melodies and gained immense popularity from 2020 to 2022. The performance of Lao and Thai folk songs in parades to create a lively atmosphere reflects the adaptation of the Pinphat orchestra, balancing the preservation of traditional identity with development in line with the increasing social and tourism context (Figure 8).

Economic condition

The tourism industry has become a significant source of income and has helped create jobs for musicians in the Pinphat ensemble. Previously, their role was limited to ceremonial music. Still, they have become essential to performances at hotels, tourist attractions, and entertainment venues, creating an authentic atmosphere and preserving local culture. Local musicians can perform and earn income through their musical services, especially during major festivals. However, when the COVID-19 pandemic occurred in 2019, tourism and group activities were severely disrupted, significantly impacting the bands by limiting their performance opportunities. As a result, new-generation musicians turned to online platforms to generate income. The “Ting Noi Noi” group gained popularity by sharing local songs on YouTube and quickly became a source of income. In 2021, as the pandemic began to subside, tourism in Luang Prabang recovered, with both domestic and international tourists flocking in, increasing performance opportunities for musicians. Despite ongoing economic challenges in Laos, including the depreciation of the kip, which forced some musicians to seek other jobs, the Pinphat band adapted by downsizing and selling cultural products, such as branded merchandise and miniature musical instruments, as supplementary income. They also take on music teaching jobs and perform at various events. These adaptive strategies allow musicians to make a living while preserving and promoting the local cultural heritage.

According to Figure 9 and Table 3, the following five stakeholder groups have presented their views on the Pinphat Ensemble on three scales: perception of cultural value, level of concern, and attitude toward future actions. Local musicians, cultural scholars, and community elders have always ranked the cultural value of the ensemble at the top, thus showing its rooted relevance to heritage and tradition. The issues slightly differ with higher cases found on Local Musicians, Scholars, and Government Officials, with issues about resource constraints, dilution of cultures, and inherent policy deficits. Future initiatives are most supported by Local Musicians and Government Officials and mostly propose systematic programs and investments, whereas the engagement is the lowest among Tourists. In general, an appreciation of the importance of the ensemble is provided in the graph, as well as varying concern and commitment to maintaining its future.

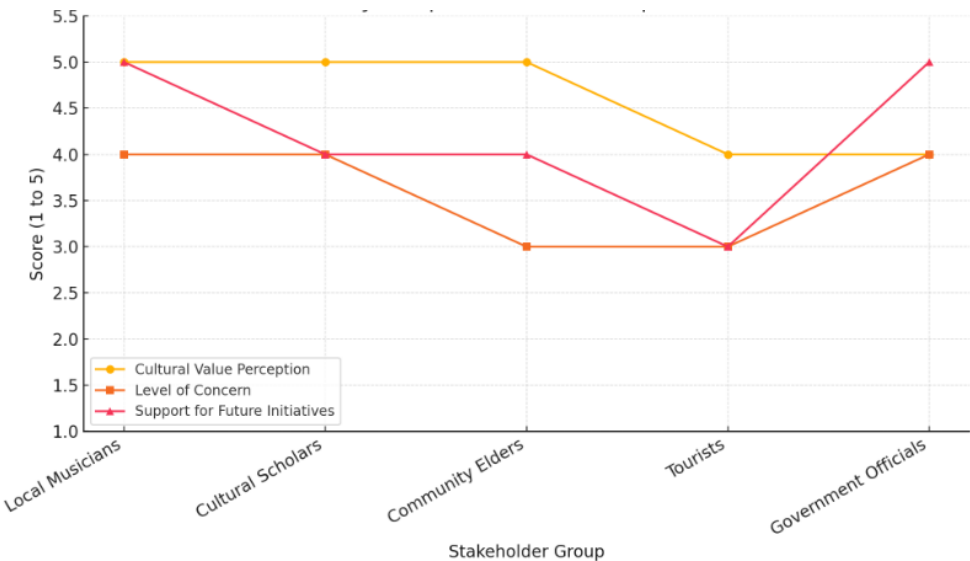


Figure 9: Different Perspectives on the Pinphat Ensemble

Table 3: Community Perspectives on the Pinphat Ensemble

Stakeholder Group	Perspective	Key Concerns	Suggestions for the Future
Local Musicians	View the ensemble as a vital part of cultural identity and heritage.	Lack of resources and training for younger generations.	Create workshops and training programs for youth engagement.
Cultural Scholars	Recognize the ensemble's critical role in preserving Lao cultural heritage.	Commercialization risks diluting traditional practices.	Encourage a balance between tradition and adaptation for cultural growth.
Community Elders	Emphasize the importance of the ensemble in local rituals and ceremonies.	Concerns about diminishing local participation in performances.	Foster community events to encourage involvement and preservation.
Tourists	Appreciate the unique blend of traditional and contemporary elements.	Desire for authenticity in cultural experiences.	Encourage collaboration between local performers and knowledgeable tour guides.
Government Officials	Support the ensemble's potential to boost local tourism and the economy.	Need for better funding and policies to protect cultural expressions.	Advocate for grants and projects that promote and sustain traditional arts.

The interaction between tourism and cultural heritage is becoming more visible as new solutions are being developed, which are aimed at reshaping this relationship so that it can be more sustainable and interesting to visitors ¹¹. Such a model not only encourages the preservation of heritage but also boosts the local economy through a wide range of tourists who are willing to put more effort into having an in-depth experience of the culture or people. Nevertheless, the issue of preserving realness and changing to respond to modern expectations is high on the agenda, as noted by Khalaf¹², who writes about the rejection of past authenticity testing to suit the realities of the 21st century. This relationship can be found in urban development projects such as those studied by Ripp, and Clifford¹³, who sought to incorporate heritage elements into the design of the urban environment and simultaneously fulfill the needs of the people in the community at the same time. The incorporation of sustainability on heritage sites is important, as has been shown by Murillo Camacho, *et al.*¹⁴, stated that and it is important to note that there is a need to ensure energy efficiency within the historic Center of Mexico City to not only ensure that the cultural heritage of the places is maintained, but also to ensure working solutions to the problems relating to the environment. There are other complexities that affect cultural tourism due to the politicization of UNESCO World Heritage Sites ¹⁵. Boland, *et al.*¹⁶ have proven their case criticized the process of city planning, which lacks adequate consideration of mechanisms concerning the preservation of the architectural legacy under the convoluting effects of prejudice toward locals and communities. In addition, Birendra¹⁷ enumerated the diverse threats that plague UNESCO World Heritage Sites and explained why effective management strategies should be adopted. Even the world heritage list in itself is questionable, as Frey, and Steiner¹⁸ contend that its requirements could be considered to possibly exclude a review aimed at reflecting the current level of conservation enterprises. Economic competitiveness may have the same effect as it did on Liverpool One. Thus, regeneration in the city center can introduce such situations. However, because of the implications it entails regarding heritage development, a heritage impact assessment should be conducted to support the legitimacy of the development projects of the initiative, as stated by Patiwaël, *et al.*¹⁹. This sophisticated discourse is one of the indicators of how significant the hand squaring on growth, sustainability and authentic cultural interaction is in trying to keep the world heritage.

A combination of heritage conservation practice and urban development has been commonly investigated, with a particular focus on the urban historical landscape. The ability to see urban ideas in a historical context has been an important factor in coping with heritage, and Rodwell²⁰ notes that heritage preservation is rather complex in terms of geography. This thread is similar to the one Ningrum, and Abdullah²¹ researched in the example of village tourism, where they claim that there is a probability of coexisting moderately between modernization and cultural conservation through practicing caution in handling the negotiating process. Sacco, *et al.*²² also submit that culture-driven growth must be carefully assessed to prevent corrupting the concept of goodness and the definition of local products or goods in the urban setting. Communication measures across the board the need to escalate the understanding and recognition of such built heritage assets are much needed regarding lessening the clashes occurring in the process of effects of urban alterations, especially at UNESCO World Heritage Sites ²³. Lijiang Old Town is an illustration of how sustainable development practice can potentially not just preserve the nature and the life of the community but also contribute to the preservation of the heritage places being occupied by people with reasonable knowledge towards the preservation of the place being used ²⁴. In addition, Luang Prabang, Laos, described by Liu, *et al.*²⁵, demonstrated how preservation works in such a situation and what cultural issues can be attributed to this process. Although Inaba²⁶ focuses on the European heritage domain in most of his contributions, the critical point regarding the authenticity of heritage preservation as seen through the Asian lens welcomes further contribution to the discussion, especially concerning the role of local contexts in shaping heritage management

practices. Wolfram, *et al.*²⁷ presented a wider perspective on urban dynamics, implying that sustainability entails comprehending complex systems in cities. Francini, and Rozochkina²⁸ promote the strategy of including the historic urban landscape framework to improve the level of cultural heritage and urban development integration. Issues experienced in heritage conservation, referred to as witnessed in the North Shoa Zone, Ethiopia, highlight the problems that hinder the preservation of historical and religious sites because of socio-political influences²⁹. Finally, Berhanu, and Raj³⁰ shed light on the influence of social media in creating ideas about cultural heritage tourism. The availability of reliable sources of information is crucial in the development of responsible tourism, which, in turn, will positively impact both the preservation of historical heritage and the local population.

CONCLUSION

Following the inscription of making Luang Prabang was designated a World Heritage Site in 1995, the Piphat Ensemble of Luang Prabang experienced revitalization and growth in the realms of ritual, cultural preservation, and tourism. The identity of the ensemble evolved as social and economic trends altered, particularly after 1975, when its status in society was reduced and it was used to advance political ideologies. Nevertheless, in 1986, when community-based cultural heritage was recovered, there was a resurgence in the Piphat Ensemble, which became a significant element of the local cultural background. As part of the tourism sector, Luang Prabang justifies its purchase of marks as a World Heritage State, making the ensemble even more remarkable regarding revival. In addition, the adaptations made were the decline of the ensemble size to cut expenses, enhanced musical instruments to enhance achievement, and the development of new inventories to attract diverse audiences. Live performances were reduced due to the decline in the economy and the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, to keep up with their art, the ensemble modified it by employing online platforms to keep their art and generate new sources of revenue. These alterations demonstrate how the ensemble can preserve the musical character and at the same time adapt effectively to the changing social and economic conditions.

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