Barriers to Thai Doctoral Music Students'Socialisation

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Abstract

A doctoral music degree is a new degree in Thailand. Although the first PhD programme in music was established in 2005, there are only four universities that provide doctoral programmes in music in 2016. However, there are a couple of universities that plan to launch doctoral music programmes in the near future. If the number of doctoral programmes in music and the number of graduates has started to grow, it is important to consider the barriers to doctoral music student socialisation because they relate to the completion of the degree. This paper aims to investigate barriers that Thai doctoral music students encounter in doctoral socialisation. This leads to the main question: What are the barriers that Thai doctoral music students encounter in doctoral socialisation? The key instrument used for this research was in-depth interviews with 12 doctoral students and graduates during four different stages of doctoral education across four Thai universities that have launched PhD programmes in music. The results indicated that barriers to Thai doctoral music student socialisation emerge from three segments: 1) student-related barriers (backgrounds, predispositions, investment, personal communities, self-concept and psychological issues); 2) barriers of integrating into the doctoral programme (learning, peer climate, relationships with faculty and friends and dissertation phases); and 3) institutional barriers (admissions, academic programme curriculums and requirements).

Keywords barriers in doctoral socialisation, doctoral education, doctoral socialisation, doctoral music student, Thai PhD music

INTRODUCTION

The doctorate has held much prestige and has been claimed as the highest university degree across the world for centuries. The term 'doctor' was originally derived from the Latin word *docere,* which means to show or to teach, and the word *doctorem*, meaning teacher (Slevin & Hanucharurnkul, 2005). The purpose of pursuing doctoral education has changed overtime. Nowadays, attaining a doctoral degree not only offers a license to teach within a university setting, but also prepares leaders who will work to improve works in many areas and train students to do research and become independent scholars (Bargar & Duncan, 1982; Council of Graduate Schools, 1990; Callejo-Perez, Fain, & Slater, 2011). As doctoral students move

through different phases of their education, they are also involved in socialisation where they encounter different barriers that affect their learning while in the programme.

Music is still a new area in Thailand's higher education system. Ethnomusicology was launched in 1989 by the Institute of Language and Culture for Rural Development with Mahidol University as the first master's degree n the field of music in Thailand. The first doctoral degree was not established until 2005 by College of Music, Mahidol University, offering courses in musicology and music education. The first PhD in music was awarded five years later in the discipline of music education. Since then, doctoral programmes in music have now begun to expand. After the first doctoral degree in music was launched, Mahasarakam University established another doctoral degree in music in 2008. In 2013, two new PhD degrees in music were launched at Bangkokthonburi University and Khon Kaen University. Since the establishment of doctoral degree in music in 2005, there have been 191 doctoral students enrolled in PhD music programmes and 81 PhDs that have been awarded across four universities in Thailand.

As both the number of doctoral programmes in music and the number of graduates start to grow, there is a need to realise the barriers to doctoral music student socialisation in a Thai cultural context. It is important to investigate the barriers for Thai doctoral music students because they relate to the completion of the degree. If students encounter barriers and can overcome them, the rate of PhD completion will be high. Additionally, there is a lot of research focused on doctoral student socialisation in many disciplines in other countries, but there is no Thailand-focused research regarding barriers to doctoral student socialisation in any field.

This study investigates the barriers that Thai doctoral music students confront. An investigation of the barriers to Thai doctoral music student socialisation provides qualified information necessary for doctoral students who are currently in doctoral programmes as well as those who are planning to apply for doctoral programmes in music in Thailand. In addition, the study also provides an advantage to any institution that wants to adjust its programmes to help students overcome any barriers while completing the degree.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Doctoral Student Socialisation

Many educators use socialisation as their principle lens to view the complexity of doctoral student life and understand its unique experiences. It is also claimed as the most important ingredient for doctoral students' success (Mendoza & Gardner, 2010). Socialisation is defined as the processes through which individuals develop the values, norms, skills, attitudes, beliefs, roles and knowledge necessary for becoming members of a given society, group, or organisation (Mendoza & Gardner, 2010; Weidman, Twale, & Stein, 2001).

The framework of doctoral education. The candidates of any doctoral programme pass through three phases: *admission*, *integration* and *candidacy* (Gardner, 2008). *Admission* is also referred to as *Entry* and *Adjustment*. It takes place in the first year of studying where the students make a transition to a more independent culture of graduate education and adjust themselves to something new. Doctoral students are adults; the average age of doctoral students is 34 years old (Choy, Geis, & Malizio, 2002). When they are in an academic community, "they face disjunctions between their sense of self as an adult, their placement as a novice in an expert scholar community, and their development of this new identity as scholar and knowledge creator" (Kasworm & Bowles, 2010, p. 225). In Gardner's research (2008), many doctoral students expressed that the most difficult part of studying in the doctoral programme occurred during this phase where they were faced with various transitions; they needed to shift the expectations to be more independent, they needed to encounter new environments, and the socialisation that they faced in graduate school was different from their experiences. *Integration* is the stage for developing competence. In this phase, doctoral students form new relationships with their peers, which is the most important part of the socialisation process in graduate education (Gardner, 2008). In addition, doctoral students also develop relationships with their faculty, advisors and committees. The last phase, *Candidacy*, includes the period after the students have passed examinations or candidacy status. It is the research phase that students contribute to knowledge and become skilled researchers through the dissertation process (Sims & Cassidy, 2016), preparing for the job search or post-doctoral appointments and concluding with graduation.

Core elements of socialisation. To identify and commit to a professional role, Stein (1992) and Thornton and Nardi (1975) suggest three elements: knowledge acquisition, investment and involvement.

Knowledge acquisition. Knowledge in doctoral education is developed through learning communities (Spaulding & Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2012). Knowledge also deepens and becomes more complex during socialisation. Doctoral students estimate their abilities in order to join a professional culture, as they get to know the culture (Weidman et al., 2001).

Investment. Doctoral students invest and sacrifice not only time but also money, energy, alternative career choices, self-esteem, social status, etc. (Spaulding & Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2012; Weidman et al., 2001). In the study conducted by McAlpine, Jazvac-Martek and Hopwood (2009), more than half of the participants mentioned time issues in their difficulties. Time issues are broken down as a general reference to a lack of time, time management, choosing priorities, work taking a long time or slowly progressing, having a paid job or non-PhD commitments, a number of tasks or activities as part of the doctorate education and time lost due to the influence of other people. Doctoral work itself can be a dilemma; it helps students to improve as well as challenges students in terms of the time needed in order to do their work. Moreover, the time issues mentioned by doctoral students

are not only related to their doctoral work but also involve other commitments beyond the academic context.

According to the Higher Education Funding Council for England or HEFCE (Green & Powell, 2005), 71% of full-time doctoral students had completed the degree, while only 34% of part-time doctoral students had completed the degree while38% were no longer active, and 4% had left with a MPhil degree. In addition, approximately 80% of full-time students had completed after five years. Regarding part-time students, 30% had completed by seven years, 30% were no longer active and 40% were still active.

Involvement. Involvement is the level of participation of students in the doctoral programme. The level of intensity deepens as students move further through stages of their programme. As doctoral students move through their programme, they actively extract clues that they encounter to their behaviour and "evaluate themselves in the context of peers, faculty mentors, programme expectations and personal goals" (Weidman et al., 2001, p.31).

Psychological Aspects

On the way to a PhD, psychological issues present emotional effects that are a significant part of the socialisation processes in graduate education (Gardner, 2008; Phillips & Pugh, 2005).

Isolation. As doctoral students move on to their candidacy phase, many encounter isolation (Perry, 2007; Gardner, 2008). This feeling occurs due to a lack of interaction with their advisors, peers and other people whom they used to interact with after finishing coursework and examinations. In addition, failing to exchange ideas with peers or advisors can lead to a loss of interest in the topic that can bring work to a standstill.

Doubt. As doctoral students go through different stages of the PhD programme, the feeling that always accompanies them is doubt in their own abilities. They question whether they are clever or able to finish the degree. As students progress they go through periods of higher to lower levels of doubt, but they are never completely free from it (Phillips & Pugh, 2005).

Relationships with Faculty, Advisors and Peers

Doctoral students socialise with faculty members and peers the most during their studies in the programme, which has a significant effect. Regarding faculty members, doctoral students tend to acquire more knowledge and become more effective when they find a faculty member with whom they can discuss their research interests (Felder & Stevenson, 2014). Furthermore, Millett and Nettles (2010) noted learning in doctoral communities not only occurs in structured classes through seminars or discussions, but also emerges from attending meetings, discussions over coffee, attending department parties, etc. In this way doctoral

students are socialised into their profession. In the words of Noonan, Ballinger and Black (2007),

> While coursework can provide critical content and skills for leadership roles in special education, coursework alone may not be sufficient to motivate and retain doctoral students, provide them with the necessary experiences associated with future job responsibilities, or socialise them to their new leadership positions. (p.251)

Peers are also important in students' studying lives. It cannot be denied that students are more likely to interact with peers rather than faculty members. When students are with their peers, they feel safe to give and receive feedback on everything (Bonilla, Pickron, & Tatum, 1994). They feel comfortable to reveal their feelings and it is a good time to receive guidance regarding programme requirements, as well as to receive "encouragement and empathy for personal hardship, which was described as valuable for survival in this new environment" (Li & Collins, 2014, p.43).

The doctoral advisor can be defined as assigned faculty members who help doctoral students through the programmes and to meet the requirements (Hawley, 2003). The advisor is one of the most important persons with whom doctoral students will develop relationships (Baird, 1995). Choosing an advisor and interacting with faculty members is an important part of the socialisation process in doctoral education because it can result in either retention or attrition of the degree programme; the right choice of advisor can lead to retention, satisfaction in the programme, and successful career, while the wrong choice is vice versa (Lovitts, 2001;Spaulding & Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2012).

METHODOLOGY

The central question addressed in this study is: What are barriers that Thai doctoral music students encounter in doctoral socialisation? The findings presented in this paper come from in-depth interviews. The participants were drawn using random sampling from Thai graduates who had received doctoral degrees in music and doctoral students who were pursuing a PhD in music at a Thai university during the 2015 academic year. In this study, there were 12 interview participants in total with four participants in four different stages of doctoral education amongst four universities that have launched PhD programmes in music were selected. The four different stages include: 1) the first year of studying; 2) finishing coursework; 3) completing the qualification exam and a dissertation; and 4) finishing the degree. The number of participants in this study may be attributed to the fact that there are two universities that have no PhD graduates, one university has no PhD students in the second year and one university has no PhD students in the research stage. The interviews took place in the interviewees' schools, homes and other locations of their choice. The Thai language was used for convenience in communication

between the researcher and the participants. The interviews were recorded and the important points during the interview were noted.

To gather information regarding barriers to doctoral socialisation, literature review was conducted related to doctoral education and doctoral socialisation. Since there are no music journals, other publications and research studies in Thailand that focus on doctoral socialisation most of the literature was drawn from the United States. From the study of related literature, research questions were designed for Thai graduates and doctoral music students to determine barriers to doctoral music socialisation. The pilot study was employed to determine whether the prepared interview questions were effective and suitable for participant selection. The interview questions included 70 items that were categorised into six categories: background of the participants, admission phase, integration phase, candidacy phase, completion of the degree and additional questions.

After the data was collected, the recording was transcribed. Subsequently, each participant was sent the transcription to check for accuracy. After the data had been verified and approved, the pertinent parts of the interviews were translated into English. Then, the data was analysed by reading through, marking and dividing the data into parts by hand. The next process was content analysis. During this process, specific themes each interviewee had in common were marked. After that, the raw data was encoded into categories that had similarities with the contents of the document. To better understand the findings, the transcriptions and literature were reread.

FINDINGS

The 12 doctoral students and graduates in the music discipline discussed their experiences across three themes: (a) student-related barriers; (b) barriers to integration into the doctoral programme; and (c) institutional barriers.

Student-Related Barriers

Studying and moving through different stages of doctoral education relies on students themselves. The students are affected by and are involved with everything around them.

Background and predispositions. The different areas of previous education affect and become a barrier in current doctoral education. Participants who finished their previous degree in music performance are not familiar with reading many books, writing papers and doing research because the nature of music performance is to perform or to play an instrument. In addition to educational backgrounds, predispositions such as pre-existing careers were barriers that obstructed students' learning. A participant mentioned, "I am responsible for teaching music theory and music education at my university. I didn't play any Thai musical instruments, so studying some subjects, like World Music, for example, is difficult for me".

Investment (time, money and energy). Many participants had problems investing their time and energy into their doctoral studies because of the amount of time required to travel to the university. Most of the participants claimed, "Travelling makes me exhausted". Many participants also noted that they spent a lot of time travelling to study every weekend and it was a waste of time.

In addition to travelling, balancing and managing time are critical barriers to studying in a doctoral programme because most of the participants in this study are full-time instructors who are funded by their universities; they need to work and study at the same time. Many participants remarked that they have difficulty managing their time to study, do homework, reading, etc. Furthermore, working while studying for the PhD causes students to become exhausted.

Studying in a PhD programme is costly so that money is another serious barrier. One participant mentioned, "The cost of studying is quite high. If I hadn't been funded by my university, I wouldn't have studied here". Some doctoral students are responsible for their own tuition fees, so money is a big problem for them. On the other hand, many doctoral music students in Thailand are sponsored by their universities. However, money is still a barrier because the subsidy only covers tuition fees but not other expenses such as textbooks, photocopying, travel expenses, accommodations, academic trips and so on.

Personal communities. The communities that surround doctoral students are important in terms of supporting or distracting students, for example, family members' health and the responsibility of taking care of family members. One participant noted, "I had a hard time during my studying; my mother's health was an obstacle for me. I chose this as my first priority and dropped my course for a while". Another student added, "Learning in my doctoral programme is quite tough because I need to take care of my two babies as well. At the time of my first year in the course, my second child was just born".

Self-concept. Many participants insisted that studying in a doctoral programme requires self-reliance. A lack of self-determination or a lack of self-motivation can block doctoral students from moving through the stages of their studying. Some participants mentioned, "Because of my regular routine in teaching, sometimes I feel too lazy and depressed to do any homework". Another self-concept that can be a barrier is self-doubt or the lack of self-efficacy. Nearly all participants claimed that during the first year of their PhD programme they encountered self-doubt—wondering what they were doing, not sure whether they were on the right path or whether they could accomplish the degree. Many participants mentioned, "When I was first in the programme, I was not confident and I wondered whether I was in the right place. I thought,' What am I doing?' or 'Could I do it?' It was tough for me".

Psychological issues. Some participants revealed that they were worried about many things while studying in the programme. Their concerns included contacting advisors and research participants and uncertainty about future events among other issues. Moreover, isolation is another issue that can be found in

students' socialisation. One participant stated, "After the QE exam, I was suddenly free, empty and aimless. I tried to follow my friends". This feeling occurs because doctoral students spend a lot of time away from friends and environments they used to engage with.

Barriers to Integrating into the Doctoral Programme

Students' integration into the university programme is the core of doctoral education. Students learn a lot in this environment. However, students face many obstructions in their integration as well.

Mastering English. Many participants claimed that the English language is a problem for musicians because the nature of musicians is to perform an instrument. One of the most difficult obstacles for Thai doctoral music students is the English proficiency test. Many participants noted, "I'm really worried about the English proficiency test; it's the biggest barrier. If I don't pass the test, I need to study an extra English course which I don't want to". Furthermore, music resources are mostly in English adding to students' problems. Many participants claimed, "My instructor assigned students to translate a lot of papers, it's tough for me" and "my only trouble is that I needed to read a lot of English textbooks because I was not familiar with it".

Peer Climate. This was mentioned by every participant as the most important aspect of the PhD programme. Peers in a doctoral programme "help each other with homework, learning, discussing, advising, exchanging ideas and reminding each other of important events" and "is the factor that makes me decide whether I'll stay in the programme". On the other hand, differences among students can cause problems. Some participants mentioned, "Some friends come from different cultures which cause difficulty in connecting and interacting" and "there are some peers who are a lot younger than me as well as some who are older than me. I'm in the middle, so I need to adjust myself a lot in order to interact with both groups".

Relationships with friends are another significant aspect of doctoral students' lives. Many participants interact with friends both inside and outside the classroom. Nonetheless, some participants have problems interacting with friends. Because each student comes from a different place, distance is a barrier that obstructs doctoral students in socialising with each other. One participant noted, "We haven't met each other often after classes because we come from different places and live far away from each other. When finishing the class, we separate from each other". Many participants advised the solution for this, saying, "Since I haven't met my friends quite often after classes, I communicated with others via social network applications such as LINE or Facebook. We can talk and consult there".

Relationships with Faculty. All the participants in this study mentioned that they had good relationships with faculty. The faculty is important in terms of

helping students with their learning, motivating them to think, giving them some advice, guiding them to different stages, etc. Conversely, there are a few participants who had problems interacting with faculty. "I think language is a problem because some faculty members are foreigners. I need to communicate with them by using a language that I'm not familiar with".

Dissertation phase. The biggest barrier in doing a dissertation is finding an appropriate topic. Sometimes students already have an area that they are interested in but cannot narrow it down to one aspect. Many participants mentioned, "The problem is that even after reviewing the literature, I couldn't find a specific topic. Instead, I'd get about a hundred topics" and "the topic that I finally chose was not on my list at the first stage. I changed it many times". Another critical problem during the dissertation phase is changing advisors and committees, which leads to disorder. As one participant noted, "I had a problem with the committees of my dissertation; they were changed many times. As a result, they did not concentrate on my work".

A feeling that occurs during the dissertation phase is discouragement, which many students claimed as a barrier. As one participant revealed, "I feel discouraged, sometimes I really have no idea at all". In addition, the aspect about which many participants were worried about was how to convey the musical character to the reader because music is creative work that is difficult to explain in words. Some participants noted, "I'm worried in concluding the result. Since my topic is about local music, it's difficult to explain in academic words" and "I have everything in mind but I don't know how to explain and make other people understand my work".

Institutional Barriers

Many barriers of doctoral student socialisation also emerge from the institution where students enrol.

Admission. This is the first step of entering the doctoral programme. Some participants do not have the appropriate information about the programme and its requirements for admission. They commented, "I was not sure about what I needed to prepare because I didn't have much information about the admission process here. I wondered whether what I'd prepared would be useful or if it was what the institution wanted".

Academic programme and curriculum. Elective subjects are also obstacles for doctoral students. Although the subjects are electives, nearly all the PhD programmes in music in Thailand do not allow students to select elective subjects for themselves. Instead, the elective subjects are set for students. The management of elective subjects has both advantages and disadvantages. Some participants had no problem with the assigned elective courses and felt that it was convenient for them to study whatever was recommended. In contrast, some students indicated that these compulsory elective courses were problematic; they needed to choose the subjects that fit their needs.

Publication Requirements. One of the challenging requirements for Thai doctoral music students is dissertation publishing. The Thai PhD music programmes require doctoral students to submit a paper to an international journal before graduation. Many participants were concerned about this, mentioning, "I'm worried about the publishing because the requirement here is quite high and many PhD candidates here still struggle with publishing" and "I'm worried about publishing because I have no idea to which journals I will submit. As I know, some journals are full for many years".

From the findings, all barriers were concluded and presented in the following framework (Figure 1).
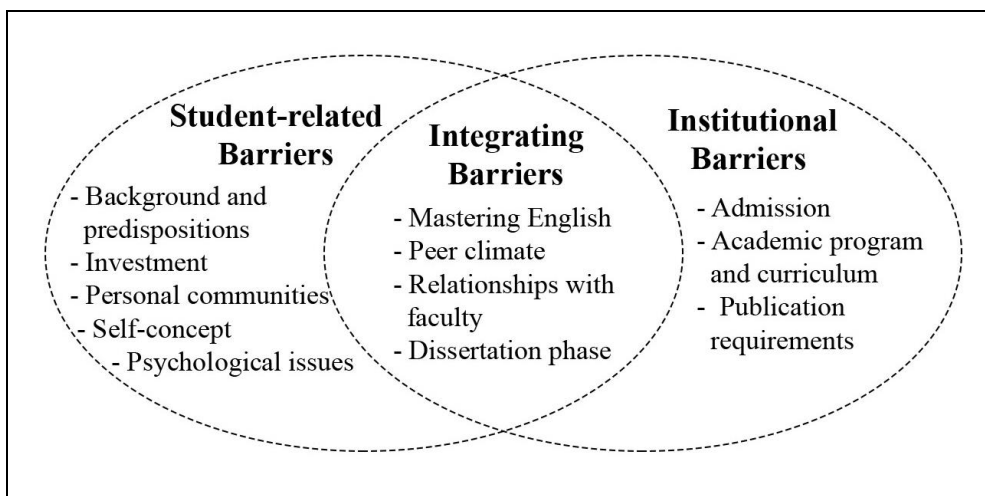

Figure 1 Barriers in Thai doctoral music student socialisation conceptual framework.

All barriers were categorised into three segments: student-related barriers, integrating barriers and institutional barriers. The two circles on the left and right represent independent barriers arising from students and institutions. Many barriers first emerge from these two components because both students and institutions have their own problems. The middle component displays the barriers after doctoral students enter and integrate themselves into a doctoral programme. These barriers not only occur because of the students' integration but are also due to the independent barriers from students and institutions. The broken lines in Figure 1are used to represent the effect that each barrier has on each other.

DISCUSSION

Socialisation is claimed as the lens through which to view the complexity of doctoral student life and as the most important ingredient for doctoral students' success (Mendoza & Gardner, 2010).From the data collected, there are many interesting issues for discussion. The results of the study of barriers to Thai doctoral

music student socialisation were discussed through three themes: (a) student-related barriers, (b) barriers to integration into the doctoral programme; and (c) institutional barriers.

Student-Related Barriers

Doctoral students come into a programme with a variety of backgrounds and predispositions. These backgrounds and predispositions shape their experiences in the programme and form their identity. Most of the barriers occur during the admission stage of socialisation which conforms to Gardner's opinion (2008) that the most difficult part of studying in the doctoral programme occurs in this phase where students face various transitions. Since the PhD music programme is a research-oriented degree that focuses mainly on advanced scholarship and research, it involves scholarly activities, such as dealing with paperwork, reading textbooks (especially in English), conducting research and so on. Although all participants chose to study in each of their PhD programmes, many of them graduated from or oversee teaching in a performance discipline. What results is that they may not be familiar with scholarly activities. Therefore, students studying in a scholarly discipline face obstructions. Many participants mentioned that they had problems with doing research, writing papers and performing other required activities.

Another critical barrier for Thai doctoral music student socialisation in this study is the investment of time, energy and money. As Spaulding & Rockinson-Szapkiw (2012) and Weidman et al. (2001) noted, doctoral students invest and sacrifice not only time but also money, energy, alternative career choices, self-esteem, social status, etc. Most of the participants were university instructors who all needed to work and study at the same time. This is critical because working does not allow students to fully invest their time and energy in studying; they need to balance studies with their work routines. Because of work commitments, they always have problems managing and balancing their time. They cannot do their homework effectively, they encounter an overload of homework, they cannot make an appointment with their advisor smoothly or they cannot spend time with their friends after class among other challenges. Even doctoral students who have planned and scheduled everything efficiently can become exhausted and frustrated at some points. These time issues conform to McAlpine, et al. (2009) who noted that these issues were mentioned by more than half of the participants in their study as serious difficulties. They included lack of time, time management problems, choosing priorities, work taking a long time or slow progress, paid job or non-PhD commitments, many tasks or activities within the doctorate and time lost due to other people.

A unique set of problems arises because doctoral students are in their adulthood and are responsible for taking care of their families and children. This conforms to the study of Choy, Geis and Malizio (2002), who mentioned that the average age of doctoral students is 34 years old who are thus in their adulthood (as cited in Kasworm & Bowles, 2010). As mentioned above, attending a PhD

programme requires a huge investment of time, energy and money, all of which must be divided between the PhD work and the family responsibilities.

Another obstacle for Thai doctoral music students to overcome is psychological problems. Many doctoral music students in this study went through the feeling of worry that occurred because they experienced circumstances from their senior friends, and then underestimated themselves. Isolation is another concern for many doctoral students, conforming to Perry (2007) and Gardner (2008) who noted that when doctoral students move to the candidacy phase, the feeling that many students experience is isolation. The sense of isolation often happens in the transition to the dissertation phase after coursework is finished. As Phillips and Pugh (2005) stated, this feeling occurs due to lack of interaction with advisors, peers and other people they used to interact with.

Barriers of Integrating into the Doctoral Programme

During studying in the doctoral programme, the English language was claimed by almost all of the interviewees as their barrier. English as a subject was mentioned as difficult, unrelated to the discipline and overlapped with other English courses. These issues emerged because of a difference in students' background and the fact that the programme did not categorise students by their proficiency levels. Moreover, some subjects were taught by foreign instructors and sometimes there were foreign classmates. English is an international language used globally; however, it cannot be denied that English is still a barrier for Thai students at almost every level, even at the doctoral level as many participants commented in their interviews.

Participants in this study emphasised the importance of peers, that conforms to Bonilla et al. (1994), Gardner (2008) and Li and Collins (2014) who stated that doctoral students form new relationships with their peers during the integration phase and they feel safe to give and receive feedback as well as encouragement and support. All interviewees expressed that peer climate in the programme was important in helping and supporting each other along the path to degree completion. Many participants from the interviews revealed that meeting outside the classroom was more relaxed and resulted in more fruitful discussions. This conforms to Millett and Nettles (2010) and Noonan et al. (2007) who stated that learning in doctoral communities does not occur only in structured but also informal activities and these activities can motivate and retain doctoral students by providing them with the necessary experiences associated with future job responsibilities, or socialise them to their new leadership positions. However, some interviewees confronted a barrier regarding this issue, as they had no time to meet their friends after or outside classes. It was because they studied in a special or a part-time programme and most students came from different places. After classes, they needed to return to where they lived or leave right away to prepare for work.

At the last phase of socialisation, the candidacy phase, the dissertation was claimed as a core element of doctoral education, as Sims and Cassidy (2016) stated, that students contribute to knowledge and become skilled researchers through the dissertation process. The biggest challenge that the participants encountered was

selecting an appropriate and specific topic. Most of the study participants had an area in which they were interested, but they could not narrow their interests into a specific one. At the doctoral level, finding an appropriate topic takes some time because students need to consider in many aspects including whether or not the topic will be worthy enough for a PhD dissertation.

Doctoral advisors are the important individuals who help doctoral students through the programmes and meet the requirements as well as motivate students to be more effective (Baird, 1995; Felder & Stevenson, 2014; Hawley, 2003). However, some participants added that they encountered difficulties during their dissertation phase because of the change of advisors and committees. This led to disorder in students' working processes, conforming to the statement of Lovitts (2001) and Spaulding & Rockinson-Szapkiw (2012) that choosing an advisor is important because it can result in either retention or attrition in the degree programme. This issue is critical because students need to adjust what they have done with former advisors and committees to suit the new ones. It is also time-consuming and delays students from finishing their processes. This occurs due to an insufficient number of advisors and music specialists.

Institutional Barriers

Apart from the barriers that emerged from the students themselves, the institutions also had their own problems that affected students in the programme. Some participants noted that they had little information about the programme in which they planned to participate. Most of the participants from the interviews mentioned that they asked their friends who had already entered the programme and the instructors in that institution about the processes and requirements of the doctoral programme.

Regarding the curriculum, some participants mentioned that the elective courses were set for them, which they felt was a convenience. Some students had no problem to study whatever was provided, whereas others mentioned that they wanted to select their own elective courses in order to suit their needs. Some institutions have already packaged the elective courses for doctoral students for the convenience of management. Nevertheless, at the doctoral level elective courses should be selected by students based on their specialised goals and needs.

The top two barriers are English language and publication requirements. All universities in Thailand require graduate students to submit English proficiency test scores during the admission process. However, some universities allow students to enter the graduate programme and submit their English score later. Consequently, many doctoral students suffer from this requirement; they cannot pass the English test, which leads to an inability to take a final defence and finish the degree. This causes student anxiety and can lead to other problems. Furthermore, doctoral candidates are required to publish part of their dissertation in an international journal. This issue was stated as a barrier for many doctoral students. Due to the fact that the number of international music journals is not enough for all of the music papers awaiting publication, including journals in Thailand, the list of journals for

publishing is changing all the time creating confusion and stopping students from effectively planning for the submission of their publications.

IMPLICATIONS

Implications for Students

Students should be well-prepared by exploring the programme they want to study and then realise whether it suits their needs. For those who graduated in the music performance field, preparing themselves in a scholarly discipline and other doctoral requirements and tools is necessary. In addition, money is mentioned as one of the considerable barriers for Thai doctoral music students. Students who are responsible for their own tuition fees should explore the cost of studying in the doctoral programme, estimate financial flexibility and prepare themselves for all possible education and research costs. For those who are funded, since only tuition fees are subsidised, some amount of money should be allocated to cover unsupported expenses.

Since conflicts with family members can be an obstacle to studying, before entering into the doctoral programme, students should talk to their family members about the purpose of studying and try to make them understand what they are going to encounter during the doctoral programme. When family members fully understand, they can help to support the student in ways that can lessen stress and smoothen the process of studying.

Studying at the doctoral level requires a lot from students. The findings of this study indicate that many Thai doctoral music students suffer from a lack of self-efficacy, self-motivation, self-determination and isolation. Therefore, doctoral students should remain with high self-efficacy and self-determination throughout the programme. Being self-determined can help students move forward during the programme effectively and sustainably even though they experience so many obstacles. Moreover, they should continuously get in touch with friends and advisors in order to lower isolation.

Implications for Funder

One of the critical barriers for Thai doctoral music student socialisation in this study is the investment of time, energy and money. Most of the participants in this study were university instructors who all needed to work and study in the PhD programme at the same time. This situation may lead to other issues in students' socialisation as well as make students take a longer time to complete the degree. There is a study from the Higher Education Funding Council for England or HEFCE (Green & Powell, 2005) that found that the completion rate of full-time doctoral students is higher than that of part-time students. The best solution for this is that the institutions that sponsor these doctoral students must have a clear policy and should allow students to study full-time so that they can increase their potential efficiently. When students can fully invest their time and energy as well as focus only on their learning, the outcomes are always brilliant. After graduation, successful students

can return to their institutions and fully invest and focus on their work and thus be more beneficial to the institutions.

Lack of sufficient money was claimed as a barrier for those who were funded by their institutions because only the tuition fees were subsidised. To overcome this barrier, the subsidy provider should support all expenses related to doctoral studies in order to enable students to fully concentrate on their doctoral work. In addition, the institutions that offer funding should consider revising the funding process to better help doctoral students. Money issues may be resolved by asking students to send each semester's invoice, enabling sponsors to complete the payment without interrupting the students' flow of money for their studies.

Implications for Institution

Management. The PhD music programmes launched in Thailand are either full-time or part-time. Considering all of the participants' responses in this study, the PhD music programme should be a full-time programme in order for students to fully invest and involve themselves in doctoral studies. Regarding advisors, who are significant to the success or failure of doctoral candidates, affecting either retention or attrition, the programmes should recruit students by considering whether they can capably assign advisors to PhD candidates. This can help reduce the barrier of an insufficient number of advisors and changing of advisors. In addition, if there is no advisor available for students, the institutions should limit the number of new students. Recruiting too many doctoral students and the granting too many PhDs may lead to the dilution of quality. If the institution is not ready in terms of assigning an efficient number of faculty or advisors, that doctoral programme should not be launched.

Admission. At the present, for some institutions that require students to submit English proficiency test scores, the score can be submitted later. However, we suggest that allowing students to submit the score later causes problems not only for students but also institutions. The institutions need to invest money, facilities and faculty in launching English courses for these students. Submitting English proficiency test scores should be a strict requirement so that candidates who have not submitted their scores will not be considered to enter into the programme even if they have passed the other requirements.

Since doctoral students enter the programme with a variety of backgrounds and predispositions, the institutions should provide new doctoral students who have different backgrounds with the foundational courses that relate to the PhD programme they select. At this moment, there is only one institution that provides foundation courses. However, those courses are scheduled in the first semester of the first year, which means that some doctoral students need to study many more subjects apart from their normal coursework. So, the foundation courses must be arranged and finished prior to the starting of the new semester to lower the students' barriers in investing and managing time and money.

Curriculum. Most of the Thai institutions that have launched a PhD music programme do not allow their students to select their own elective courses. It can be understood that setting all elective subjects for students is convenient for management in terms of cost, facilities and staff conservation. However, a wide range of music elective courses should be provided to students so that they can choose the ones that suit their needs and can be adapted and applied to their working careers in the future.

Requirements for Graduation. Dissertation publishing was ranked highly as one of the barriers experienced by doctoral music students. Due to the low number of international music journals in Thailand, I recommend that all universities launching a music programme at any level should collaborate to establish international music journals to support the growing number of music publications in Thailand.

CONCLUSION

Studying in a doctoral programme is a long journey. A doctoral student experiences many joys and challenges on his or her way to degree completion. Good experiences motivate and encourage a student to move forward to different stages, while barriers and difficulties create an opposite effect as obstacles to moving ahead and can sometimes lead to leaving the programme. Obstacles that Thai PhD music students face include mastering the English language, conveying musical messages to audiences and not being familiar with academic papers. These problems arise due to the nature of musicians. The musician is artistic by nature and music is claimed as a language; musicians communicate through music. Consequently, they are not adept at using written and spoken language (especially using English for Thai musicians); they have problems with English and reading and writing academic papers. In addition, music sometimes cannot be described in words, so many doctoral music students encountered difficulties in writing about musical results in academic language. Furthermore, since music covers a wide range of areas, the number of people specialising in music in Thailand is still insufficient, which leads to the problems in doctoral music students choosing an advisor.

In order to help doctoral students move through the programme effectively, many stakeholders must take part in the doctoral music education process as stated in the Implications section of this article. The adjustment and improvement of current Thai doctoral music programmes as well as the consideration of launching new PhD music programmes are necessary to help the programmes grow effectively and sustainably and to produce efficient Thai music scholars.

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