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**FACTORS AFFECTING THE SUCCESS IN DOING A THESIS OF THE
POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS OF SUAN SUNANDHA RAJABHAT
UNIVERSITY, THAILAND**

Abstract:

The objectives of this research were to study the success level of doing a thesis of the postgraduate students of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University and to examine the factors affecting the success. This research utilized a quantitative research approach. The research sample was 256 graduates. Data were collected with the use of a questionnaire and analyzed with descriptive statistics including percentage, mean, standard deviation, and multiple linear regression. In terms of the sample's profile, it was found that most of them were female (58%), around 31-40 years old (46%), graduated from the Performing Arts Program (64%), and worked as a government employee (46%). The research findings also revealed that all the studied independent variables or the factors affecting the success in doing a thesis of the students were overall rated at the highest level. When considering at each factor, it was found that factors including thesis advisors, students' self-management, students' academic knowledge were rated at the highest level whereas academic service offered by the university was rated at a high level. This study also revealed that the factors affecting the success in doing a thesis included the thesis advisors and students' self-management, with a .05 level of statistical significance.

Keywords:

Factors; Success in Doing a Thesis, Postgraduate Students

JEL Classification: Y80

Background and Significance of the Research

At the present time, many public universities and private universities offer postgraduate programs. This provides an opportunity for people who seek to gain higher knowledge and experiences to fulfill their needs. Studying at the postgraduate level serves as a way to enhance one's academic abilities which will help them progress in their career. For the universities, offering postgraduate programs to the publics can be regarded as a way to respond to the society needs as it is a means to develop human resources for the country (Mudla, N., & Thubhiranrak, T., 2015).

Studying at the postgraduate level generally requires students to conduct self-study according to their own interest. This also aims to encourage the students to practice their analytical thinking skills so that the students can be developed in terms of knowledge and cognitive skills. The students are also encouraged to create new body of knowledge in a certain area of study or develop on existing knowledge so that that certain knowledge can be expanded. This is normally achieved through a process of research study.

Research is regarded as an important part of the post graduate study. This is evidenced by the fact that every postgraduate programs requires the students to conduct a research study as a part of the program. This research study is called differently according to the level of the postgraduate program and the scale of that research work. The research work at a PhD or a doctoral degree is called a thesis whereas that of a master's degree program that requires more than 6 units of study is called a dissertation, and that of a master's degree program that require around 3 units of study is known as an independent study. Whatever it is called, the research work at the postgraduate study level is required to be of quality, meet academic standards of the university, and most importantly have contribution to the knowledge in the field of study (Butsarapron, 2003).

Conducting a research study as a part of the postgraduate study aims to train students to search for or create new knowledge by using systematic approach. It is also a way of study that focuses on the development of analytical thinking skills for students. Through the research process, students will be trained to think, analyze, synthesize, and express knowledge in their field of study. Such knowledge can be useful for the students themselves or for a certain organization or community, or it can fill in a gap of knowledge in a certain field of study.

However, from the researcher' own experience as an academic support staff of the Graduate School of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, Thailand, she found that in each academic year, there are many students who cannot success in their postgraduate study. The main problem of these students is that they cannot complete their research work within a time frame. This situation is especially true in a case of the PhD students who has to do a thesis which requires more advanced research skills than a dissertation of the master's degree students. Many PhD students do not have an accurate and proper understanding of research methodology and research process whereas many

have a problem of managing time to conduct a thesis. Some students are discouraged or get bored when they encounter obstacles or problems involving a thesis. These problems affect the performance of the program and the Graduate School as they serve as the indicators of failure in the educational management.

With the above-mentioned reason, the researcher was interested to study on the factors affecting the success in doing a thesis of the postgraduate students of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. The findings of this study could provide useful information for the board of committee of the program, the Graduate School, and the university to improve the way for the students and their supervisors to conduct a thesis.

Research Objectives

This research aims to:

1. study the success level of doing a thesis of the postgraduate students of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University and
2. examine the factors affecting such success.

Scope of the Research

Scope on content

This study aimed to study on two main issues. The first issue was the success level of doing a thesis of the postgraduate students and the second issue focused on factors influencing the success of doing a thesis including thesis advisors, students' self-management, students' academic knowledge, and academic service offered by the university.

Scope on population

Population of the study were graduated students in the postgraduate programs of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, Thailand.

Scope of a study site

This study was conducted at the Graduate School of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University.

Scope on variables

There were two groups of variables to be studied consisting of independent variables and dependent variables. The independent variables were factors influencing the success in doing a thesis of the postgraduate students including 4 main factors: thesis advisors, students' self-management, students' academic knowledge, and academic service offered by the university. The dependent variable was success of doing a thesis.

Scope on period of study

The period of collecting the data was between October 2017 and June 2018.

Research Methodology

This research employed a quantitative research methodology because its main aim was to measure the level of success in doing a thesis and factors affecting such success.

Population and sample

Population of this study were graduated students in the postgraduate programs of the Graduate School, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. The research sample was selected from these graduated students via simple random sampling. As a result, 256 graduated students.

Data collection tool and data collection

A self-administered questionnaire was used as a data collection tool. It contained two parts of questions. The first part consisted of questions on demographic background of the respondents. The second part aimed to examine the success level and factors affecting the success in doing a thesis of the postgraduate students. It was designed in a form of a five-rating scale ranging from the highest, high, moderate, low, and the lowest. The questionnaire was distributed by the researcher herself and posting on-line.

Data analysis

Data were collected with the use of a questionnaire and analyzed with descriptive statistics including percentage, mean, standard deviation, Pearson product moment correlation, and multiple linear regression.

Researching Findings and Discussion

In terms of the sample's profile, it was found that most of them were female (58%), around 31-40 years old (46%), graduated from the Performing Arts Program (64%), and worked as a government employee (46%).

The research findings revealed that all the studied independent variables or the factors affecting the success in doing a thesis of the postgraduate students were overall rated at the highest level. This means that the students were successful in completing their thesis. When considering at each factors affecting the success of doing a thesis, including thesis advisors, students' self-management, students' academic knowledge, and academic service offered by the university, it was found that thesis advisors, students' self-management, students' academic knowledge were rated at the highest level whereas academic service offered by the university was rated at a high level.

When analyzing the relationship between the success in doing a thesis of the postgraduate students and the four main independent variables. This study revealed that the factors affecting the success in doing a thesis were the thesis advisors and students' self-management, with a .05 level of statistical significance.

The finding of the importance of thesis advisors in the success of doing a thesis is consistent with the study of Sanongkun, (2005) which studied on the same topic but used Phranakhon Rajabhat University, Thailand as a case study. This study found that the factors affecting the success in doing a thesis of the postgraduate students were overall rated at a high level and the main factor affecting the success in doing a thesis of students was thesis advisors, with a .005 level of statistical significance. Another study which has similar findings to this study is the study of Chain, et al., (2012) who studied on the same topic but used a case of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Khon Kaen University, Thailand which found that thesis advisors are the main factor affecting the success in completing a thesis of the postgraduate students.

As for the significance of students' self-management in such success, this finding is in an agreement with that of Pratumwee, (2010) and Thanwisai, (2013) which found similar result. The latter study also revealed that perception and belief of students on their academic ability and stress faced by students during the time of doing a thesis played important roles in the student' progress in doing a thesis.

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