

# FACTORS AFFECTING THE SUCCESS IN DOING A THESIS OF STUDENTS IN THE MASTER'S DEGREE IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM, SUAN SUNANDHA RAJABHAT UNIVERSITY, THAILAND

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## ABSTRACT

This research aimed to examine factors which lead to the success in doing a thesis of students in the Master's degree in Business Administration Program of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, Thailand. A quantitative research approach was employed in this study. The data were gathered from 40 students studying in this program. A self-administered questionnaire was used to gather the data. The data were then analyzed using descriptive statistics including means and percentage. The findings showed that the majority of the respondents were female (25 persons), accounting for 62.5 percent, and the rest (15 persons) were male, accounting for 37.5 percent. Their ages ranged from 31-35 years old. In addition, it was found that the most important factor enabling the students to complete their thesis was supervisors (the mean score was 4.45), followed by supporting facilities provided by the Graduate School, students' academic knowledge and time management, respectively,

**Keywords:** Thesis, Success, Influencing factors.

## INTRODUCTION

The Master of Business Administration (MBA) program is considered the most popular graduate degree program, attracting the highest number of interested individuals. This is because it is a highly sought-after professional program designed to prepare individuals for future managerial positions. The program is tailored to equip professionals with the necessary skills and knowledge required to meet the demands of leadership roles in the future (Panuchanat Permpoon and Bundit Phrapratanporn, 2021) [1]. As a result, the MBA program is offered in almost every educational institution at the postgraduate level. As per the Ministry of Education Announcement on Standard Criteria for Graduate Studies Programs B.E. 2558, the duration of each level of study is determined as follows: Master's degree studies require a bachelor's degree and should not exceed 5 years, whereas doctoral studies require a master's degree and should be completed within 6 academic years. The education system in Thailand has expanded in recent years, with an increasing number of graduate-level programs in both public and private institutions. Students can pursue higher education to enhance their academic progress, which is fundamental for

national development, and serves as a source of knowledge for human resource development (Nopparat Madla and Thanasuwit Tabhiranrak, 2015) [2].

A thesis is a crucial academic work of graduate students, which reflects the quality and academic standards of graduate education management. It serves as a reliable reference for research and contributes to the development of academic knowledge (Graduate School Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, 2019) [3]. Completing a thesis requires adherence to specific components and procedures based on the study and thesis principles. Therefore, higher education institutions have provided guidelines and procedures for thesis writing. Some institutions have specific requirements or measures for controlling thesis work to expedite graduation. However, the dissertation remains a significant challenge for many graduate students in public and private higher education institutions. It is considered the most challenging step in graduate school, and a large number of students are unable to complete their studies due to thesis-related difficulties, resulting in an increasing number of residual students. This problem affects the management of graduate education throughout the university system (Songtham Teerakul, 2004) [4].

The Master of Business Administration (MBA) program at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University prioritizes the quality of education and operates according to the standards of higher education institutions, emphasizing quality and standards. Despite this, some students fail to complete their studies due to difficulties in thesis writing.

Given the various issues and impacts associated with thesis writing, the researcher, as a member of the department responsible for graduate studies, is interested in studying the factors affecting the success of MBA students' theses at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. The research aims to provide information for management planning related to thesis preparation for students in the MBA program.

## OBJECTIVE

To investigate the factors that influence the success of students' theses in the Master of Business Administration Program at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

In the research on the factors influencing the success of MBA students' theses at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, the researcher examined relevant documents and studies and presented the following topics: 1) the concept of a thesis, 2) the factors affecting the success of the thesis, and 3) related research results.

### 1. Thesis concept

The concept of a thesis is a fundamental element of graduate studies programs as it emphasizes the development of in-depth knowledge and the ability to apply research findings to create new knowledge. This concept is distinct from undergraduate studies and offers significant benefits to both students and society. Graduate programs require students to conduct research and present their findings in the form of a thesis, which is a systematic, written or literary document that differs from other academic writings. A thesis follows a universal writing style and includes strict guidelines for printing and citation. To ensure that students adhere to these guidelines, an independent study manual is necessary.

#### Definition of thesis

According to the Graduate School of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University (2019: 7-9) [3], a thesis is an academic work in which students systematically study and research using correct research

methodology, research models, or complex statistical methods to prove hypotheses or research problems. The goal is to discover new knowledge that is valuable for academic or professional development in their field of study. As part of their graduate studies, students must compile and present their work.

#### The importance of the thesis

The importance of a thesis in graduate studies cannot be overstated, as it holds great significance for students.

1. A thesis in graduate studies serves as a symbol of a student's knowledge and ability to pursue further learning independently.
2. It is evidence of their dedication to uncovering truth using scientific principles and methods.
3. A thesis showcases a student's proficiency in language, particularly in processing knowledge gained from their studies.
4. A thesis contributes to the broader or deeper knowledge in their field of study, facilitating continuous development of the science in that area.

#### Objectives of the thesis

The primary objectives of a dissertation in graduate studies, whether under a master's degree program or a doctoral degree program, are as follows:

1. To enable students to conduct extensive and in-depth research on specific topics or areas of special interest.
2. To facilitate self-directed learning and encourage intellectual curiosity.
3. To develop students' skills in systematic and rational thinking, as well as creative analysis and synthesis.
4. To enhance students' ability to collect, compose, and communicate ideas correctly and systematically.

#### Assessment of Thesis Quality

The quality of a thesis is initially evaluated based on its content and the research process, which includes four main components:

1. **Language:** A thesis is an academic document and must adhere to standardized language rules. The use of a dictionary reference is essential to validate the language quality. The communication must be clear, precise, and devoid of any slang. If specialized terminology is used in the field of study, academic terminology can be applied. The author should ensure that there are no typographical errors.
2. **Content:** A thesis should provide enough information to answer research questions clearly and directly, comprehensively, and accurately.
3. **Paper Quality:** The thesis must be printed on high-quality paper, including the cardboard or material used for the outer cover of the book, to ensure its durability and presentability.
4. **Balance of Components:** A thesis comprises at least five chapters, with some qualitative research thesis programs consisting of more than five chapters, but each chapter must have balanced content and length. Chapters other than the introduction should have similar lengths, although the scope and accuracy of each chapter must be taken into account.

## 2. The concept of factors affecting the success of the thesis

Songtham Teerakul (2004) [4] stated that having sufficient knowledge in conducting research is one of the important factors for the success of the thesis, which may be gained from studying in the graduate program. This curriculum has been carefully designed to ensure that students are competent enough to research and start doing research. However, in the early stages, students may face problems due to lack of research experience, which may cause them to select inappropriate research subjects based on their own knowledge, abilities, and aptitudes.

Arunsri Phumnuan (2009) [5] said that producing effective graduates depends on various factors, including:

### 1) Individual factors of learners:

At the graduate level, students need to be ready in terms of personal factors, expectations of success, and social support to study successfully and achieve academic success. In addition to depending on the instructor and the teaching and learning management, these factors contribute significantly to the success of students' education.

### 2) Curriculum factors and curriculum management:

The curriculum is an important tool for achieving the goals of education management and indicating the degree of educational management of each institution.

### 3) Resource factors:

Resources relevant to the success of the thesis include lecturers, thesis advisors, and staff who provide services for graduate studies. Each of them has different roles and responsibilities in teaching, advising, and mentoring, as well as providing assistance to learners.

### 4) Administrative factors in the thesis:

The management of the thesis involves procedures, practices, and regulations related to the thesis from the beginning until the end of the thesis process. Proper management can guide the operation in the right direction and ensure appropriateness.

## 3. Related research

Several studies have been conducted to investigate factors that affect the success of graduate students in thesis writing.

Sawangboon and Tangpakdee (2018) [6] conducted a study at the Faculty of Education, Mahasarakham University, which found that the degree of success in doing thesis of graduate students, overall, was at a moderate level. Ph.D. students had higher success levels than master's degree students. The study identified three factors that were statistically significant and correlated with thesis success: student characteristics, knowledge and research skills of students, and advisors. However, the correlation between these factors and thesis success was low.

Similarly, Kotsumat and Apipalkul (2012) [7] studied the factors affecting the completion time of graduate students at Khon Kaen University. The study revealed that five aspects were problematic in terms of affecting the completion time of graduate students. These were thesis advisors/independent studies, curriculum management, academic research resource services, thesis presentations, and thesis/independent study operations. The study recommended guidelines for managing education at the

graduate level, including continual improvement of the curriculum, use of modern curriculum content that corresponds to real problems, and adding online journal databases and computer programs to meet students' needs. Additionally, the study suggested the establishment of a mechanism to give advice and follow up on student performance and a system for stimulating progress in study and research strictly. Finally, universities were advised to increase channels for students to present their thesis work, which would provide students with valuable experience in presenting their work to the public.

Finally, Sanongkhun (2005) [8] conducted a study on the factors affecting the success of graduate students' theses at Phranakhon Rajabhat University. The study revealed that personal factors, such as age, research experience, and type of study, had a statistically significant effect on the thesis success of graduate students at the university. Additionally, academic and thesis-making factors, such as thesis advisors, were also found to significantly impact thesis-writing success.

## METHODOLOGY

This study employs a quantitative research design that employs a purposive random sampling method to collect data through a questionnaire.

### 1. Population and Sample:

The sample population in this study was comprised of 40 graduate students enrolled in the Master of Business Administration Program at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University.

### 2. Instrument:

The instrument employed in this study was a questionnaire consisting of two types of questions: closed-ended questions and questions that asked respondents to express their opinions. Specifically, the questionnaire pertained to the factors affecting the graduation of Master of Business Administration students at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. The questions are based on a rating scale, wherein respondents are asked to answer at five levels, namely, most, high, medium, low, and least.

### 3. Data Collection:

The researcher collected data from two distinct groups, namely graduate students and the general public, during the period of October 2022 to February 2023. To obtain the sample, the researcher employed the purposive sampling method and administered electronic questionnaires as the survey tool.

### 4. Data Analysis:

The data was analyzed using a computer program that employed percentage, mean, and standard deviation statistics.

## RESULTS

1. Personal Factors of the Respondents, the study revealed that a majority of the sample population comprised females, constituting 62.5 percent, with a count of 25 individuals. The male participants accounted for 37.5 percent of the sample, with 15 individuals. Most respondents were aged between 31 and 35 years. Furthermore, 23 respondents, representing 57.5 percent, were employed as civil servants or state enterprise employees.

2. The present study investigated the factors that influence the success of Master of Business Administration (MBA) students in their thesis completion at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. The results indicated that the overall level of perception regarding thesis success was the greatest, with an

average rating of 4.28. Upon further examination, it was discovered that the aspect that received the highest rating was the role of the advisor, with an average rating of 4.45. The other factors, such as support, academic knowledge, and student self-management, also received high ratings, with an average rating of 4.26, 4.25, and 4.15, respectively. These findings are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 The level of factors affecting the thesis success of students

| Factors affecting thesis success of students                                                                 | levels of opinions |             |                 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------|-----------------|
|                                                                                                              | $\bar{x}$          | S.D.        | level           |
| <b>Academic Knowledge:</b>                                                                                   |                    |             |                 |
| 1. Knowledge of research methods, data analysis, and statistical techniques.                                 | 4.23               | .768        | the most        |
| 2. Selecting a thesis topic that aligns with personal interests.                                             | 4.28               | .784        | the most        |
| 3. Conducting comprehensive literature searches and reviewing relevant research studies.                     | 4.28               | .816        | the most        |
| Total                                                                                                        | 4.25               | .760        | the most        |
| <b>Self-Management of Students:</b>                                                                          |                    |             |                 |
| 1. Systematic approach to planning and writing the thesis.                                                   | 4.13               | .757        | high            |
| 2. Efficient time management and communication with advisors.                                                | 4.25               | .670        | the most        |
| 3. Setting realistic goals and timelines for timely completion of the thesis.                                | 4.10               | .841        | high            |
| Total                                                                                                        | 4.15               | .723        | high            |
| <b>Advisor:</b>                                                                                              |                    |             |                 |
| 1. Specialized expertise in research methodology and thesis topics.                                          | 4.45               | .639        | the most        |
| 2. Providing insightful and constructive feedback and advisory recommendations.                              | 4.43               | .636        | the most        |
| 3. Timely and responsive approach to reviewing and providing feedback on student thesis work.                | 4.48               | .599        | the most        |
| Total                                                                                                        | 4.45               | .582        | the most        |
| <b>Support:</b>                                                                                              |                    |             |                 |
| 1. Access to relevant resources such as documents, textbooks, and online databases                           | 4.26               | .697        | the most        |
| 2. Consultation with faculty members and support staff for guidance on various aspects of the thesis process | 4.33               | .694        | the most        |
| Total                                                                                                        | 4.26               | .697        | the most        |
| <b>Factors affecting overall success</b>                                                                     | <b>4.28</b>        | <b>.567</b> | <b>the most</b> |

## CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

The study on Factors Affecting Thesis Success of Students in the Master of Business Administration Program at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University revealed that the overall level of thesis success among students was found to be at the highest level. Upon considering individual aspects, it was determined that the aspect with the highest level of opinion was that of advisors, followed by support and academic knowledge. Furthermore, the aspect of student self-management was found to have

opinions at a high level, which is consistent with the research conducted by Tassirin Sawangboon and Ratchaneewan Tangpakdee (2018) [6] on the factors affecting the success of graduate students in thesis writing at the Faculty of Education, Mahasarakham University.

The research findings also demonstrated that student characteristics significantly affected graduate students' thesis success at a statistical significance level of .05. This finding is consistent with the research conducted by Arunsri Poomnuan (2009) [5] on Master's thesis success at Hat Yai University. The results of the study revealed that the problems and obstacles to thesis success consisted of personal factors affecting learners, including issues with operational planning, time allocation in operations, and publishing document skills.

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