

# Motivation and Livelihood of Undergraduate Students Based On Sufficiency Economy Philosophy in Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University

Luedech Girdwichai, Suwaree Yordchim, Phusit Phukamchanoad

**Abstract**—This research aimed to study about motivation for students of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University to follow and happily live according to Sufficiency Economy Philosophy. Having collected 394 questionnaires, the result showed that most students had great motivation to follow this philosophy at a high level, especially in terms of righteousness in profession; besides, students' determination and intention to apply this philosophy in everyday lives was impressive though the students' families were not completely ready. Each of students, in fact, consulted their families for plans of any activities without tiredness and discouragement based on the saying, "Where there's a will, there's a way." On the part of universities life, students interacted with society and created projects that supported income to the community including exercises, sports, recreational activities, and community services.

**Keywords**—Livelihood, Motivation, Sufficiency Economy Philosophy, Undergraduate Students of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University.

## I. INTRODUCTION

THAILAND government had written "Sufficiency Economy" in the National Economic and Social Development Plans (11<sup>th</sup> National Economic and Social Development Plan 11(2012-2016)) largely for the reason that Thailand has learned and experienced economic effects both internally and internationally (through globalization). This has led to great changes in economics, politics, society, culture and natural resources. It is difficult to individually assess each aspect to find the root causes, because all the changes are systematically interwoven. In particular, negative changes seem to be ever-present. For example, as the central government expands into rural areas, weaknesses in many areas emerge such as dependence on middlemen for produce and marketing, the degradation of natural resources, and the breakdown of family relationships and traditional social groups. The formerly-abundant resources and bodies of knowledge are gradually forgotten and disappear. Ultimately, moderation as a foundational condition to honourable life under authority and independence in determining one's own life has been proved through the financial crisis resulting from the bubble economy, weaknesses in the rural areas and other problems [1]. The various problems that arise in the country

L.Girdwichai is with the Faculty of Education, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, Thailand (e-mail: luedech.gi@ssru.ac.th).

S.Yordchim and P. Phukamchanoad are with the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, Thailand (e-mail: suwaree.yo@ssru.ac.th, phusit.kh@ssru.ac.th).

and affect the people are ever in the eye of His Majesty the King. The first time that he warned and advised the public regarding a self-sufficient life was on 18 July, 1974, at the graduation ceremony at the Grand Hall of Kasetsart University. The main points of his speech were as follows [2]:

*"National development must be conducted step-by-step. First, there must be a foundation of adequacy for the majority of the people. This can be accomplished by economically using means and resources correctly. Once a solid foundation is in place, ready and suitable for action, then the level of development and economic status can be further elevated. If the focus is solely on rapid economic growth, without a plan that is compatible with the state of the nation and the people's situations, many matters will become unbalanced. This could ultimately lead to chaos and failure, as can be observed from many countries currently facing severe economic crisis."*

The Sufficiency Economy philosophy began to be applied in earnest in daily life and in numerous agencies after the economic crash of 1997. His Majesty the King gave a royal statement through the Chai Pattana Foundation, reflecting the importance of Sufficiency Economy to the nation [3].

*"...Sufficiency Economy is a foundation of life and a foundation of national security. It can be compared to the anchor piles supporting a house or building. Whether or not constructions can stand firmly depends on the anchor pile. However, most people don't see the anchor pile, and it even gets completely forgotten..."*

From 1974 – 2014, throughout a span of 40 years, groups of people from different professions were able to utilize principles of Sufficiency Economy Philosophy and achieve results. However, many have not been able to put to practice all aspects of the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy. The Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, as the number one Rajabhat University in the country, has integrated the principles of Sufficiency Economy Philosophy into its instructional processes. This is according to Article 7 of the Rajabhat University Act 2004 which states that, "The University shall be an educational institution for local development to strengthen the knowledge power of the land, revive learning, compliment local traditional wisdom, and create arts for sustainable and secure advancement of the people. There shall be participation in the management, maintenance, and use of natural resources and the environment in a balanced and sustainable manner. The goal is to educate, give academic and professional support, teach research and provide academic

services to society; improve, impart and develop technology; preserve arts and culture; produce teachers and enhance academic standing [4]. However, factors such as globalization, materialism, and consumerism of the urban life plays an important part in shaping one's lifestyle and is an important motivation for a university students and their education, especially for those studying at Universities located within the urban area where they come in constant contact with capitalism and materialism. The development of modern gadgets has also made teenagers and university students more careless, which have caused many to leave the university in the middle of their academic term. This, in turn, causes harm to the student themselves as well as their families as they will turn and live their lives in erroneous ways. Therefore, it is the purpose of this research to find the important motivation which will lead the students to practice the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy within the university as well as to provide guidance to teaching staff and lecturers in their role in advising the students to practice within the university to live sufficiently, be happy, and to continue on with completing their quality education.

## II. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

To study the motivation, understanding, activities of student base on Sufficiency Economy principles and livelihood on the campus of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University.

## III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study concerns data collected from a sample group from 27,868 bachelor degree students in every faculty. The sample size was determined by using the calculation formula of Taro Yamane [5], [6]; the resulting size was 394 students categorized by Stratified Random Sampling to gather data covering all 9 faculties and colleges; namely, 26 students from the Faculty of Education; 54 students from the Faculty of Science and Technology; 30 students from the Faculty of Engineering Technology; 73 students from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences; 25 students from the Faculty of Liberal Arts; 104 students from the Faculty of Management Sciences; 7 students from the College of Nursing and Health; 63 students from the College of Innovation and Management; and 12 students from the International College. Tools used were questionnaires. The collected data was subjected to Quantitative Analysis through Descriptive Statistics, consisting of Arithmetic Mean, Standard Deviation, and Inferential Statistics; T-test), in order to find motivation students' livelihood. Statistical significance was figured at .05. The standard for measuring motivation for application of Sufficiency Economy philosophy at a personal and livelihood in the students of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University was divided into 5 levels: mean of 4.21 - 5.00(greatest);mean of 3.41 - 4.20 (great); mean of 2.61 - 3.40 (intermediate); mean of 1.81 - 2.60 (low); and mean of 1.00 - 1.80 (least). The researcher tested the reliability of the tools (questionnaires) and found a reliability value of  $\alpha=0.9677$ .

## IV. RESULTS OF THE STUDY

A large number of students at the Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University hail from outside of Bangkok with only a few students who are residents of Bangkok. In analysing the demographic of the student body, it is necessary to create immunity for the purpose of buffering the sudden changes of materialism, modernism, and the advances of technology which is continually developing. As for the important foundational data of the students with academic achievement, 61.17% of the students has a grade point average of 2.01 - 3.00, which is figured at 61.17%. 55.58 % have more than 5 close friends; interestingly, 3 of whom are of the parent's occupation. From the highest to lowest percentage are: Business owner and trade 28.93%; General Employment 24.37%; Public Servants 17.51%. Largely [sic] 45.18% of the students take residence in dormitory or rental housing and 44.42% reside in their own house. In learning or attending seminars on the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy, it is found that the most of the students have attended seminars on the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy expressed as 72.34% in percentage.

The majority of students that possess high level of understanding on matters related to Sufficiency Economy Philosophy are over 90%. Moreover the level of understanding of 8 crucial principles from largest percentage is as followed:

- A) Any expenditure should reflect the necessity of life and not wasteful spending. (97.72)
- B) The participation of activities in the university or the community should not involve taking advantage of colleagues and other persons. (95.69%)
- C) All investments should not exceed the person or their own capacity. (94.42%)
- D) Knowing how to think, plan, analyze, and conclude whether or not one should or should not commit an action shows that one has reason. (93.91%)
- E) The participation of activities in the university or the community should not involve taking advantage of colleagues and other persons. Knowledge in savings and being economical is an important foundation of the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy. The ability to look to many sources of information and news to build knowledge as well as being prudent in any decision making process is a condition of knowledge. (93.15%)
- F) Motivating oneself to become a learner, seeking to self educate for the purpose of sustaining life as well as their education as well as respecting the familial, university, community, or organisational rules. (92.64%)
- G) Conducting one's occupation with diligence and perseverance in one's work duty is as a condition of virtue. (92.13%)
- H) Regarding activities involving investment, the information will have to be sought thoroughly as well as having careful planning involved. Additionally, one should know how to plan on a spending habit in every month, as well as planning for the future of members of the family and to know how to keep savings for the future (90.61 %)

However, upon considering different social groups, it is found that the Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University students participate in the following social groups: Online Social Group (33.50%); Environmental Conservation and Social Development Groups (5.84%); World Conservation and Arts / Music Groups (5.58%); Recreational Activities Groups (4.82%); Groups Promoting Learning Skills (3.81%); Health Groups (3.05%); and Political Groups (1.27%), respectively.

This correlates with the reception of information in relation to the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy through different mediums. Largely, the students received information regarding the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy from online sources (online media, email, Facebook, twitter), by receiving the information daily (7 days per week) (44.25%). This was followed by receiving information from television daily (7 days per week) (38.6 %).

As for the motivation of the students' desire to be successful in applying the principles of Sufficiency Economy Philosophy (survey respondents), the Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University found the following:

TABLE I

THE LEVEL OF MOTIVATION TO APPLY THE PRINCIPLES OF SUFFICIENCY ECONOMY PHILOSOPHY OVER ALL AND THE INDIVIDUAL ITEM

Item	Motivation to apply the principles of Sufficiency Economy Philosophy	Mean	S.D.	level
1	Has the intention and determination for regular application.	3.94	0.77	High
2	Strives to learn and seriously put into application the family's accounting in keeping records of income and expenses.	3.77	0.86	High
3	Shows enthusiasm in listening, watching, and conversing through/with television, radio, relatives, and friends.	3.67	0.86	High
4	Relentless the practice of moderation, and the belief of "Wherever effort is found, success is also there"	3.93	0.76	High
5	Savings of income on a regular basis	3.75	0.92	High
6	Considers the financial expenses with frugality in mind as well as giving only importance to things essential for maintain the basic necessity in life.	3.81	0.82	High
7	Knows endurance and restraint in borrowing from others or taking loans from any funds, forms good habit of moderate spending.	3.89	0.89	High
8	Adheres to the right and honest professions.	4.11	0.76	High
9	Plans and regularly consults with one's family before making an investment or any important personal financial expenditure.	3.94	0.82	High
10	Firmly decides to put an end to fierce academic competitions as well as severe university activities.	3.76	0.94	High
Total		3.86	0.53	high

As for the level of students' intention to achieve success in the application of the principles of Sufficiency Economy Philosophy, students at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University generally showed high level of intention (mean average of 3.86). Upon examining individual principle, the intentions level was found to be high. From the highest mean average to the lowest, the principles are ordered as follows:

- A) Adheres to the right and honest professions. (4.11)
- B) Has the intention and determination for regular application the principles of Sufficiency Economy

Philosophy and to plan and regularly consult with one's family before making an investment or any important personal financial expenditure. (3.94)

- C) Has the intention on daily application of the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy despite the hardship, and the belief in "Wherever effort is found, success is also there" (3.93)
- D) Despite the student not receiving a lot of income, they are ready to persevere, knows restraint in borrowing from others or taking loans from any funds for personal use. (3.89)
- E) Despite the living cost being high, students will consider their expenditure with frugality and attempts to only use their spending on things that are essential to the necessity of life. (3.81)
- F) Strives to learn and seriously put into application Sufficiency Economy Philosophy in terms of managing the family's accounting in keeping records of daily income and expenses. (3.77)
- G) Firmly decides to put an end to fierce academic competitions as well as severe university activities. (3.76)
- H) Regardless of the level of daily expenses, the student intends to put one portion of income toward savings. (3.75)
- I) Has enthusiasm whenever the student hears, or watches matters of Sufficiency Economy Philosophy via the radio, television, or other media, including having discussion with friends and relative on the topics of sufficiency economy.

Furthermore, the lifestyle and activities of students within the Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University both specific and in general are as follows:

TABLE II

LIFESTYLE AND ACTIVITIES OF STUDENTS WITHIN THE SUAN SUNANDHA RAJABHAT UNIVERSITY

Aspect	Student Lifestyle	Mean	S.D.	Level
1	Academic performance	3.90	0.55	Many
2	Community relations activities	3.97	0.60	Many
3	Social gathering	3.87	0.66	Many
4	Outreach and volunteer work	3.90	0.62	Many
5	Building a career / income	3.96	0.58	Many
6	Life habits	3.92	0.59	Many
7	Health, sports, and exercises	3.93	0.63	Many
Total		3.92	0.49	many

As for the level of opinions on the life application for students, the Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University's overall statistics are considered high (mean average of 3.86). Upon considering the individual item, it is found that all items have 'high' standing. In order from the highest to lowest, the mean averages are expressed as followed:

- 1) Community relations activities (3.97)
- 2) Building a career / income (3.96)
- 3) Health, sports, and exercises (3.93)
- 4) Life habits (3.92)
- 5) Academic performance; and outreach / volunteer work (3.90)

6) Social Gatherings (3.87)

TABLE III

THE COMPARISON BETWEEN A STUDENT'S LIFE STYLE AT THE UNIVERSITY ACCORDING TO ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT (GRADE POINT AVERAGE FROM THE PREVIOUS ACADEMIC TERM)

Lifestyle of the Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University students	GPA of not more than 3.0		GPA of 3.01 - 4.00		t	Sig.
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.		
Academic performance	3.84	0.53	4.00	0.58	2.783	0.006*
Community relations activities	3.90	0.59	4.13	0.60	3.734	0.000*
Social gathering	3.84	0.63	3.91	0.71	1.000	0.318
Outreach and volunteer work	3.87	0.59	3.96	0.67	1.346	0.179
Building a career / income	3.93	0.53	4.02	0.66	1.327	0.186
Life habits	3.87	0.58	4.02	0.60	2.318	0.021*
Health, sports, and exercises	3.94	0.62	3.93	0.65	-0.119	0.905
Total	3.88	0.47	3.99	0.52	2.149	0.032*

\* .05 level of statistical significance

The comparison of the difference of the students' lifestyle within the campus was categorized by the academic achievement (GPA of the previous semester) using the t-test method of .05 level of statistical significance. Considering in overall, it is found that the students who's GPA are lower than 3.00, and those who's GPA are 3.01-4.00 have different in-campus lifestyle at a .05 level of statistical significance in the aspects of their studies/ academic area, social activities, and behavior in their general lifestyle. The students whose GPA are 3.01-4.00 live according to these 3 aspects of the ways of life or lifestyle more than those whose GPA are lower than 3.00, which have been considered and compared by mean. Moreover, the motivation to achieve and the lifestyle in activities concerning the practicality of the sufficiency economy philosophy have a positive relationship at an average level ( $r = .317$ ) with the in-campus lifestyle of the students at a .05 level of statistical.

V.CONCLUSION

The students studying at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, mostly, are from provinces outside of Bangkok. The foundation of Thai people, especially those who are from a province outside of Bangkok, adheres to the fine Thai tradition, such as holding fast to the principles in Buddhism, paying respects to the elders, obeying the teaching of their parents or teachers, humbly applying the sufficiency economy philosophy to their daily routine, e.g. living in sufficiency or moderation, being economical, being patient, enduring, and being honest. Therefore, the students will hold these core values with them the rest of their lives. In addition, most of the students' background is that their families are in the middle class, such as merchants, public servants, general employees, including farmers. The students from provinces outside Bangkok don't like to be alone, so if they go to study in the capital city, they will try to form a group of close friends, such as a group of upper-classes, lower-classes and friends from the same hometown. Having a group of friends make them feel

safe, and reduce the loneliness because if they live in a dormitory alone, they could feel homesick. Furthermore, it is noticed that the students' lifestyle in general is to help each other in areas of their studies, part-time jobs, also to help one another when someone gets sick, or lacks anything. As for the aspect of the academic achievement, mostly the academic results have been average, and they focus more on the social activities. As for the aspects of earning some income, health, sports and entertainment, there are varieties of activities that are like a lifestyle of the students within a campus. The activities help them to practice taking care of themselves, earning some income for themselves to help reduce some expenses of their families and help them to recognize the value of the income they have made, and learn how to save. They have determination, comprehension, and motivation to achieve practicality of following the sufficiency economy philosophy in their daily life both within and outside the campus. Therefore, in conclusion, most of the students have strong motivation to follow the sufficiency economy philosophy of His Majesty the King Bhumibol Adulyadej.

VI. DISCUSSION

The students in the campus of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University know how to apply sufficiency economy philosophy to their self-development, learn the word, "moderation," know how to rejoice with others, live according to their means in the current situation by knowing how to plan to be self-dependent, and learning how to live with the word, "sufficient," in their habits of eating, spending, housing, and living. Moreover, they always realize by themselves that even though they experience hard times, they are ready to fight, not being discouraged, by holding on to the principles of sufficiency. They realize that they have to work legally, not living recklessly, and be determined to firmly preserve the fine tradition inherited from their own hometowns. They have been instructed by their families to know how to be frugal, and know the value of the money they have. Since holding on to the principles of Buddhism brings joy to them, they know how to apply those principles to their daily lifestyle, and therefore, the students are able to live their lives in the campus in the aspects of their studies, self-dependence, social activities, earning some income to support themselves and their families, and reaching achievement goals. Although their academic results are average, they are able to improve themselves, build immunity for them to be happy, content and have joy in their own sufficient lifestyle [7]. Furthermore, it is noticed that the regular daily lifestyle of the students is composed of social activities, such as activities in each faculty, activities creating bonding among students who are in different majors, e.g. welcoming the first year students, paying homage to the professors, practicing sports or recreation, joining camps to help develop the rural communities, including the communications between lower-classes, friends, and upper-classes through systems of information technology. The students tend to give their first priority to social activities because when they entered into the university system, the first thing to do is to learn how to live with others. Therefore, there

is a system of welcoming the first year students which became a good tradition to build relationships among upper-classes and lower-classes in each major, faculty and university. In addition, most students join the activities concerning creating part-time jobs and earning some income to support themselves – to cover their daily expenses. They do not only focus on their studies, but also set aside their time to earn some extra income for themselves since a number of the students' families are in the middle class and impoverished. Their parents struggle to make money to pay for their education. Sometimes, they cannot afford it throughout the school years, therefore they have to take loans from the Student Loans Fund. Some of them have to work part-time after school. Thus, from this research, we find that they have motivation and determination to graduate from the university by humbly applying the sufficiency economy philosophy to their daily lifestyle in order to succeed in their studies, moderate lifestyle in the capital city to be able to go back and develop their hometowns. Whether the students are studying in a province outside of Bangkok or in this capital city, they often mention their hometown where they were born. It reflects that when they graduate, they will go back and develop their hometowns, create bonding, see the value of their own regions [8] and love and be proud of their own hometowns [9].

#### VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University has to increase the knowledge in the sufficiency economy philosophy for the students by attaching the philosophy into its teaching to create comprehension, understanding, and access to it; and to create motivation and practicality. This would create an immunity for the students to be able to sustain themselves until they can achieve their goal, which is graduation from the university with pride and being able to find a job to support themselves.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author thanks to Institute for Research and Development, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University ([www.ssru.ac.th](http://www.ssru.ac.th)) for encouragement and support.

#### REFERENCES

- [1] The Chaipattana Foundation, "*Sufficiency Economy and the New Theory*". Bangkok: Amarin Printing & Publishing, 2007.
- [2] His Majesty the King Bhumibol Adulyadej, "*Teachings of Father: Collection of Royal Remarks Regarding Sufficiency Economy*". Phradabos Foundation, 8<sup>th</sup>Ed, Bangkok: Bangkok Publishing, 2009.
- [3] Office of the Higher Education Commission (OHEC), "*Compilation of Graduate Education Laws*", Bangkok: The War Veterans Organization of Thailand Under Royal Patronage of His Majesty the King, 2009.
- [4] Yamane, Taro, "*Statistics: An Introductory Analysis*", (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.). Tokyo: Harper, 1973.
- [5] Thanin Sinjaru, "*Statistical Research and Analysis by SPSS*". 5th Ed. Bangkok: V. Interprint, 2006.
- [6] Phusit Phukamchanoad, "*The Way of Happy Lives According to Sufficiency Economy: Philosophy of People of Urban Communities in Dusit District, Bangkok*". Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, 2012.
- [7] Phusit Phukamchanoad, "*The Patterns application of Sufficiency Economy Philosophy for Living of Students in Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University*". Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. 2012.
- [8] Phusit Phukamchanoad, "*Community Attachment Style of People in BaanPukongkarntorpa Community of Dusit District, Bangkok*". Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. 2011.
- [9] Suwaree Yodchim, Assist. Prof, "*The Development of English Learning Process and English Teachers for Tourism in Local Areas: Attractions in Bangkok Areas*". Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, 2010.