

# Factors Affecting Non-Graduation According to the Study Plan Required by the Program: A Case Study of the Master of Arts in Performing Arts Program at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University

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## Abstract

The purpose of this research was to investigate the factors influencing non-graduation within the designated timeframe specified by the curriculum for students in the Master of Arts Program, Department of Performing Arts, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, during the 2023 academic year. The study employed quantitative data collection methods through questionnaires divided into three parts: 1) general information of respondents, 2) factors affecting non-graduation, and 3) feedback from respondents. The results revealed the following: 1) most respondents were female, aged between 21 and 30 years old, single, and simultaneously employed while studying. 2) Key factors influencing non-graduation were related to students' thesis or independent research processes, their thesis advisors, and available facilities. 3) Significant challenges included a lack of experience and understanding of the thesis process, workload, and financial constraints, all of which contributed to delays in completing the program.

**Keywords:** Factors Affecting Non-Graduation, Master of Arts, Performing Arts

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background and Significance of the Problem

Graduate education plays a vital role in developing specialized skills and knowledge across various fields to address the needs of the labor market and society in the modern era. However, the issue of non-graduation according to the curriculum plan poses a significant challenge for many institutions, impacting not only students but also educational institutions and the broader education system as a whole. (Policy and Planning Division, Office of the President, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, 2017)

At present, students in various educational institutions often encounter challenges in adhering to the study plan outlined by their curriculum. This can lead to two main outcomes: some students face dismissal before graduation due to failing to meet the university's grade criteria, while others manage to continue their studies but are unable to graduate within the timeframe specified by the curriculum. (Sereekul, 2005)

The Master of Arts Program in Performing Arts, offered by the Faculty of Fine Arts at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, is designed to produce scholars in performing arts (Thai dance

and theater arts). Graduates of this program are expected to possess advanced analytical and synthesizing abilities in performing arts, integrating their knowledge and skills with other disciplines to contribute to the development of society and the nation. Graduates will also be equipped to work collaboratively, provide services to society, and engage in the conservation, creation, and sustainable development of performing arts. The program aims to foster analytical thinking and effective communication skills, enabling graduates to transfer knowledge and disseminate performing arts works to the broader community. This two-year program is open to both Thai and international students and accommodates two study plans: Plan A (A2) and Plan B. Students are required to complete a minimum of 36 credits to graduate (Master of Arts Program in Performing Arts, 2022). It was observed that some students were unable to graduate as scheduled. This issue highlights the need for an in-depth investigation into the factors contributing to this situation.

### **1.1.1 Analysis of Factors Affecting Non-Graduation**

Failure to complete a study plan as scheduled can result from various factors, which can be categorized into five main groups: teaching and learning factors, student-related factors, thesis/independent research factors, advisor-related factors, and facility-related factors. These are analyzed as follows:

#### **1.1.1.1 Teaching and Learning Factors**

Effective teaching and learning management at the graduate level are essential for students to develop specialized skills. When teaching designs fail to address student needs or lack clear learning outcome assessments, it can lead to delays or failures in achieving study goals. This is particularly evident in elective or supplementary courses, where undefined content may cause confusion or waste students' time.

#### **1.1.1.2 Student-Related Factors**

Graduate students often juggle multiple responsibilities, including academic work, employment, and personal life. Stress from these burdens, health issues, or inadequate support in areas like financial aid or time management can hinder research and academic performance. Additionally, some students lack long-term motivation due to unclear goals or boredom with their studies, resulting in inconsistent learning and failure to meet academic objectives.

#### **1.1.1.3 Thesis/Independent Research Factors**

These or independent research projects are integral components of graduate education, requiring substantial time and effort to complete. Several challenges can hinder progress:

- 1) Data Collection: Students often encounter difficulties in collecting data, which can delay their research.
- 2) Research Topic Clarity: A lack of clarity in defining research topics or insufficient availability of data sources can obstruct the research process.
- 3) Delays in Execution: Delays in conducting research or writing the thesis are significant factors contributing to non-completion within the scheduled time frame.
- 4) Financial Constraints: The costs associated with graduate studies, including expenses for conducting research, can pose substantial obstacles for students with limited financial resources.

5) External Impacts: Environmental and social disruptions, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, have negatively affected students by causing delays in field data collection and limiting access to essential learning and research resources.

These factors collectively contribute to delays or failures in completing the thesis/independent research component, ultimately affecting students' ability to graduate as planned.

#### 1.1.1.4 Advisor-Related Factors

The role of a thesis or independent research advisor is critical. If advisors fail to provide effective guidance or adequate support, students may encounter challenges in their research progress, resulting in delays or the inability to complete their thesis within the required timeframe.

#### 1.1.1.5 Facility-Related Factors

Facilities such as libraries, research equipment, and technological tools are vital for graduate education. Inadequate or unavailable facilities can create barriers for students, making it difficult to study or conduct research efficiently, thereby preventing them from adhering to their study plans.

### 1.1.2 Importance of Factor Studies

Studying the factors that affect non-graduation can help educational institutions develop targeted strategies to support students, for example, organizing programs to strengthen time management skills. Organizing a financial support system or creating a mentor system for learning and research. These actions not only help increase graduation rates, but also strengthen the quality of the education system as a whole. (Janta et al., 2021)

## 1.2 Research Objective

To investigate the factors influencing non-graduation within the designated timeframe specified by the curriculum for students in the Master of Arts Program, Department of Performing Arts, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, during the 2023 academic year.

## 2. Body of paper

### 2.1 Research Methodology

In this research, the researcher employed a quantitative approach, analyzing statistical data using questionnaires as the primary data collection tool. The data were collected through an open-ended questionnaire. The quality of the questionnaire was evaluated in two key aspects: content validity and reliability.

The questionnaire designed by the researcher consisted of three parts:

#### Part 1 General Information of Respondents

This section gathered demographic and background information using multiple-choice questions. It included items on gender, age, marital status, and educational characteristics at the master's level.

#### Part 2 Factors Affecting Non-Graduation

This section explored the factors contributing to non-graduation within the program's specified timeframe. The responses were collected using a five-level Likert scale (largest, most, medium, lowest, smallest). The questions were divided into five aspects and included both positive and negative statements.

### Part 3 Suggestions on Factors Affecting Non-Graduation

This section provided an open-ended format, allowing respondents to offer suggestions and insights on the factors affecting non-graduation in the Master of Arts Program.

The population for this research comprised students enrolled in the Master of Arts Program in Performing Arts at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University during the 2023 academic year who have completed their studies but have not yet graduated.

## 2.2 Results of the Study

### 2.2.1 General Information of Respondents

#### 2.2.1.1 Gender Distribution

The analysis of respondent demographics by gender revealed that the majority were female, accounting for 80%, while males made up 20%.

#### 2.2.1.2 Age Distribution

Regarding age, most respondents were between 21 and 30 years old, representing 86.7%. The remaining 13.3% were between 31 and 40 years old.

#### 2.2.1.3 Marital Status

All respondents reported being single, accounting for 100% of the sample.

#### 2.2.1.4 Nature of Education at the Master's Level

The majority of respondents were pursuing their master's degree while working, representing 93.3%, while 6.7% of respondents were solely focused on their education.

### 2.2.2 Part 2 Factors affecting the non-graduation of students of the Master of Arts program Department of Performing Arts, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University

#### 2.2.2.1 Teaching and Learning Management Factors

The results of the data analysis showed that the respondents had opinions on the factors of teaching and learning management that affect the non-graduation according to the specified period of the Master of Arts program students. Department of Performing Arts, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University The overall picture is minimal (X 1.49, S.D. 0.06). By organizing teaching and learning activities, it encourages the practice of knowledge research skills from various sources (X 1.53, S.D. 0.51) and the content of the subjects taught is in line with the current social conditions (X 1.53, S.D. 0.63). Secondly, the courses arranged in the curriculum are complete and suitable for the field of study (X 1.46, S.D. 0.63). Studying in the curriculum improves thinking ability. Problem analysis (X 1.46, S.D. 0.63) and curriculum education improves research and research ability (X 1.46, S.D. 0.51) the effect is at the least level, respectively

#### 2.2.2.2 Factors related to students

The results of the data analysis showed that the respondents had opinions on factors related to students that affected the non-graduation according to the prescribed period of the Master of Arts program students. Department of Performing Arts, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University The overall picture is moderate (X 3.01, S.D. 0.18) with students lacking experience in dissertation/independent research. As a result, it takes longer to process than experienced people (X 3.33, S.D. 0.97). Students have a financial burden that results in delays in the conduct of research. (X 3.33, S.D. 1.47) Students do not have a good plan and do not have good time management to prepare their thesis (X 3, S.D. 1.25) and students do not know the process of conducting research clearly. In order to complete the research according to the prescribed process (X 2.93, S.D. 1.16) the effect is moderate, followed by students who do not follow the plan according to the process set by the curriculum (X 2.46, S.D. 1.18). The effect is small, respectively

#### 2.2.2.3 Factors for Thesis Execution / Independent Research

The results of the data analysis showed that the respondents had opinions on the factors of dissertation/independent research that affected the non-graduation of the Master of Arts program students. Department of Performing Arts, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University In the overall picture, it is very high (X 4.08, S.D. 0.25). By publishing/disseminating articles as part of the research (X 4.13, S.D. 1.06) Collecting research data from relevant agencies and groups of individuals. (X 4.2, S.D. 0.56) The use of language in writing research reports to be concise, clear, and accurate according to academic principles (X 4, S.D. 1.13) and understanding the form. How to Write a Thesis/Independent Research (X 4, S.D. 1) It has a large effect on all of them respectively

#### 2.2.2.4 Thesis Advisor/Independent Research Factors

The results of the data analysis showed that the respondents had opinions about the factors of thesis advisors/independent research that affect the non-graduation of the Master of Arts program students. Department of Performing Arts, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University the overall level is minimal (X 1.44, S.D. 0.004) with the advisor sincerely paying attention to the thesis work. They are not concealed and can fully devote their time to counseling (X 1.53, S.D. 0.64). The second is that the advisor is knowledgeable and competent and interested in the thesis topic that the student is working on (X 1.46, S.D. 0.64). The advisor supervises the implementation of structured research according to the research process. The advisor can provide advice to avoid and solve problems in dissertation/independent research. (X.4, S.D. 0.63) Advisors are selfless. Be friendly. He is not arrogant and open-minded and accepts the opinions of students (X 1.4, S.D. 0.63). The effect is at the least level, respectively

#### 2.2.2.5 Facility Factors

The results of the data analysis showed that the respondents had opinions about the factors of facilities that affect the non-graduation according to the specified period of the Master of Arts program students. Department of Performing Arts, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University Overall is low (X 1.6, S.D. 0.07) the library has enough books and materials for research (X 1.73, S.D. 0.59) and has sufficient internet and Wi-Fi connections. The place of study is suitable. The atmosphere is suitable for studying, followed by a high level (X 1.6, S.D. 0.73). Secondly, the library has enough books and materials for research (X 1.6, S.D. 0.73). The effect is at the least level, respectively

### **2.2.3 Part 3 Suggestions on Factors Affecting Non-Graduation According to the Specified Period of the Master of Arts Program Students Department of Performing Arts, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University**

In general, there are suggestions in the case of people who work with them and study together. Because most of the informants are convenient to provide information on weekdays, which coincides with the researcher's working day, it takes a long time to go to the data area. The university's curriculum is very good and fully taught. The advisor is attentive and kind to give us good feedback

## **3. Conclusion**

3.1 The general information of the respondents indicated that the majority were female (80%) and within the age range of 21-30 years (86.7%). All respondents were single (100%), and most were pursuing their studies while working (93.3%).

3.2 Factors influencing the non-graduation of students in the Master of Arts program, Department of Performing Arts, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, were analyzed and found to be at a low level overall, with an average score of 2.31 and a standard deviation of 0.28. This indicates that these factors have a relatively minor impact on student learning and graduation. However, a closer examination of each factor revealed areas that require significant attention. The primary issue identified was the challenge of data collection and writing research papers, which demand a high level of expertise. Many students face difficulties in developing these skills, leading to challenges in completing their research. Additionally, student-related factors were found to have a moderate impact, with an average score of 3.01 and a standard deviation of 0.18. This reflects the need for personal skill development to effectively meet academic challenges. Amenities were found to have the least impact, with an average score of 1.6 and a standard deviation of 0.07. Although students benefit from available conveniences and technologies that enhance learning, these facilities do not appear to significantly affect graduation rates. Furthermore, students' adaptation to rapid changes in the modern era and their ability to develop creative thinking in line with current technological and innovative trends remain critical factors in fostering inspiration and motivation. (Phensit & Jasuwat, 2021) The role of thesis advisors or independent research supervision, with an average score of only 1.44 and a standard deviation of 0.004, was identified as the least influential factor. Key issues in this area include learning activities that do not stimulate research and course content that does not align with contemporary social conditions. In conclusion, the study suggests the need for educational reforms in several areas, including enhancing research skills and updating curriculum content to align with societal and technological changes. These improvements would better support students in achieving their academic goals efficiently.

3.3 Respondents provided feedback on the factors influencing non-graduation among Master of Arts Program students in the Department of Performing Arts, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. A common challenge highlighted was the difficulty faced by students who work and study simultaneously, particularly in completing their thesis. This issue arises because most information providers are only available during weekdays, which overlap with the students' working hours, resulting in extended time required for data collection. On a positive note, respondents praised the university's curriculum, describing it as comprehensive and well-structured. Additionally, the advisors were commended for being attentive, supportive, and providing valuable feedback throughout the program.

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