

The Motivation in Applying to the Public Graduate School:

A Case of Mahasarakham University

Suchat Bangwiset*

Phrapariyatsaravethee **

Kraivan Jinadattiyo ***

Natthawut Sabphaso ****

Suphachai Suphakicco *****

Witoon Thacha *****

ABSTRACT

The objectives of this research were to study and compare the motivations of graduate degree applicants at Mahasarakham University Center and Udon Thani Center – as a classified variable in the academic year 2014 in 4 aspects: 1) Educational Management, 2) Social Needs, 3) Occupations, and 4) Knowledge Learning. The purposive sample consisted of 424 applicants who gave opinions to a 30 item rating-scale questionnaire (reliability = 0.93) for analyzing means, standard deviation and t-test. The results found that the applicants both at Mahasarakham Center and at Udon Thani Center had high motivation score on Educational Management, Social Need, Occupation and Knowledge Learning. It was found that motivations to applying to the Graduate School as a whole and in each of the 3 aspects were not different except Educational Management was different at the .05 level statistical significance. The applicants at Mahasarakham University Center had higher motivation in Educational Management than those at Udon Thani Center. The suggestions from the applicants on the open-ended questionnaire were: 1) The university should have many more doctoral instructors or associate professors to advise and look after students. 2) The educational center of the university may facilitate the instruction and learning by using library and new instructional materials. 3) The university should have a variety of fields of study and centers for responding to local needs.

Background

Motivation is a theoretical concept used to explain behavior. It represents the reasons for people's actions, desires, and needs. Motivation can also be defined as one's direction to behavior, or what causes a person to want to repeat a behavior and vice versa. A motive is what prompts the person to act in a certain way, or at least develop an inclination for specific behavior. According to Maehr and Meyer, "Motivation is a word that is part of the popular culture as few other psychological concepts are. (Wikipedia, 2014)

It is generally recognized in ordinary experiences that motivation occupies an important place in human learning. The term motivation is used to denote the springs of action, be they native or acquired. Literally it means causing or inducing movement. It is also used to mean stimulation of a desire on the part of the learner to master the subject-matter or to react to a given situation Motivation is simply the moving power that elicits

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* Lecturer, Loei Rajabhat University

** ,*** Lecturers, Mahamakut Buddhist University, Main Campus

**** , ***** , ***** Lecturers, Mahamakut Buddhist University, Isan Campus

vigorous effort to learn or to do things. Hansen uses the term to refer to “movement toward some kind of behavior, or movement resulting in some kind of behavior.” Any behavior is basically pointless unless it helps the learner to reach some goal. Therefore, the importance of goals in motivating behavior and learning becomes evident. Motivation may also denote cravings, incentives, drives, desires, urges, or satisfactions. Motivation is effective only when it gives a mental set toward learning. The teaching approach that is made a part of the regular teaching procedure often serves as the most effective form of motivation. The effectiveness of learning depends in part upon the strength of the needs and upon the satisfaction the learning brings. It can be said that the rate of learning depends upon the strength of the motive. Motivation is the very heart of the learning process. (Mondal, 2015)

The teacher's responsibility is to cater for all the students, dark horses and late bloomers alike, trying to give a push and a fair chance to everyone, in other words, trying to motivate all of them, using teaching and motivation techniques that could accommodate most of their differences. Furthermore, teachers generally have to meet their students' short-term goals and their long-term career goals, eventually equipping them for autonomous and lifelong learning. In this, motivation also plays a key role. (Slaoljev – Agejev et al., 2005)

Thailand changed rapidly and significantly during last decade from new technology and information systems. The transformation of knowledge and foreign cultures were alert. The educators were aware of being necessary to manage the educational system responding to the changes efficiently. The human resource development can improve the quality of citizens who must adapt and know well on world changes. And developing Thailand to prosperity and balance in economy, society, politics, culture, environment, and science and technology. Educational management is a very important process to develop human resources living in the society peacefully, and to support the country development appropriately and to synchronize in all aspects of country changing (Maharakham University, 2012)

The higher education management of Thailand has been changed clearly because the Council of Ministers had a consensus on the independence of universities within 2002. The Good Governance Policy led to improvement and reform of ministry, bureau, department and government offices. The public unit must improve its organization and organizational management. Maharakham University has progressed in Bachelor's Degree, Instructional Certification, Master's Degree and Doctor's Degree in the academic year 2014. There were 24,037 students, 2,018 personnel. The part-time and full-time programs are provided with 14 faculties and 1 college. The curricular management and fields in graduate studies were conducted by graduate school to cooperate, support, quality assurance and educational management (Maharakham University, 2012). As the major researcher, used to work as the Secretary of the Graduate School so it is very important to know about motivations and reasons of graduate school applicants. Finally, this study would be a basic data for planning and improving the curriculums and programs to respond the educational needs.

Research objective

The study concepts, theories and views, as well as research of scholars such as Brown,(1997) written in *New Directions for the Comprehension High School*, Cave and Lynn (2003) written in *The Effects of Strengths Education on the Academic Motivation of First-Year College Students*, Darkenwald and Masiam (1985) written in *The Social Aspect of Adolescent Students*, Khowtrakul (2001) written in *A Study of Causal Factors of Choosing or Not Choosing to Study Vocational Programs of the Tenth-Grade Students Under Government Schools In Lampang Province*, and Maharakham University (2012). Written in *A Study of Users' Satisfaction with Services Provided by the Plan Division under the Office of Maharakham University President in 2005*, etc. The research team has

set research objective aimed to examine to study and compare the motivations of graduate degree applicants at Mahasarakham University Center and Udon Thani Center – as a classified variable in the academic year 2014 in 4 aspects: 1) Educational Management, 2) Social Needs, 3) Occupations, and 4) Knowledge Learning.

Methodology

The survey study was designed to use in this research. The population comprised 910 applicants of graduate school of Mahasarakham University in the academic year 2014. They were 690 applicants at Mahasarakham University Center and 220 applicants at Udon Thani Center. The sample comprised 424 from purposive sampling: 351 applicants at Mahasarakham University Center and 73 applicants at Udon Thani Center. The questionnaire was divided into two parts with a checklist and a 30 item rating-scale questionnaire with a 0.93 reliability. In the last part were open-ended questions for suggestions. The researcher started to gather the data from July 2014 to December 2014 with 424 returned copies, at 100 percent. For the quantitative data, the computer program “SPSS/PC+” was used to analyze the data to obtain frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, and One-way analysis of variance (t-test). The qualitative data were analyzed and interpreted in the descriptive form.

Results

The results of this study showed the motivation of graduate degree applicants and compared the motivation in applying to the graduate school in Mahasarakham University. There were 3 parts: Informants' information, the motivation and motivation comparison as follows.

Informants' information: most of the applicants were female (58%) and male (42%), aged; 20–30 years (55.7%) 31–40 years (27.40%), 41–51 years (15.10%). Applicants' region; the Northeast (95.80%), the North (2.10%) and the South (1.20%). Status: single (66.5%), married (33.50%). Occupations: government officials (63.20%), not mentioned (23.8%) and business owners (7.8%). Incomes: no more than 10,000 baht (35 Baht = 1 US. dollar approximately) (45.50%), 10,000–15,000 baht (25.50%) and more than 20,000 baht (16%). The applicants knew about the application from website of Graduate School (59.2%), friends (27.1%) and documents (11.8%). Levels of application; Master's Degree (80%), Instructional Diploma (14.4%) and Doctor's Degree (5.2%)

The level of motivation in applying to the graduate school: At Mahasarakham University Center, the total result was a “high” motivation (mean = 4.06; standard deviation = .4023) as well as each aspect: Social Need (mean = 4.31; standard deviation = .4930), Knowledge Learning (mean = 4.26; standard deviation = .5520), Occupations (mean = 3.94; standard deviation = .5821), Educational Management (mean = 3.79; standard deviation = .4859). At the Udon Thani Center, the total result was a “high” motivation by total (mean 3.99; standard deviation = .4583) as well as each aspect: Social Need (mean = 4.33; standard deviation = .4994), Knowledge Learning (mean = 4.18; standard deviation = .5757), Occupations (mean = 3.85; standard deviation = .6368) and Educational Management (means = 3.61; standard deviation = .5265) (Note: The values of the means were interpreted according to the following: 1.00–1.50 = “lowest”; 1.51–2.50 = “low”; 2.51–3.50 = “moderate”; 3.51–4.50 = “high”; and 4.51–5.00 = “highest.” (Srisa-ard, 2010)

The results of motivation comparison: It was found that motivations to applying to the Graduate School as a whole and in each of the 3 aspects were not different except Educational Management were different at the

.05 level statistical significance. The applicants at Maharakham University Center had higher motivation in Educational Management than those at Udon Thani Center. (mean 3.79 > mean 3.61)

The suggestions from the applicants on the open-ended questionnaire were: 1) The university should have many more doctoral instructors or associate professors to advise and look after students. 2) The educational center of the university may facilitate the instruction and learning by using library and new instructional materials. 3) The university should have a variety of fields of study and centers for responding to local needs.

Discussion

The whole and unit applicants of Graduate School had a “high” motivation on Educational Management, Social Need, Occupation, and Knowledge Learning at both centers.

The motivations to apply to the Graduate School at Maharakham University Center and at Udon Thani Center as a whole were at a high level. When each aspect was considered, it was found the motivations in the order from the highest to the lowest mean were: Social Need, Knowledge learning, Occupation, and Educational Management.

The results of this study indicated that, in general, the motivation of applicants was in at a high level. By considering in each aspect there were “high” motivations in Social Need, knowledge transformation with new friend, teachers and improving oneself to social need to be in accordance with the research of Khowtrakul (2001) who studied the components of causes effecting to choose or not choose to study in vocational program of the 10th grade secondary students in public schools. The students concentrated on own needs firstly, the components were skill, interesting, capacity, honor, income and higher educational opportunity. All of components were found in 4 aspects in Motivation Theory of Maslow in 1954 and in the research of Darkenwald and Masiam (1985) who informed significantly on the social aspect of adolescent students. They were not significant different in other needs, occupation, undesirable condition escape and knowledge learning because the students had the similarity in motivation. Then, the total results of motivation comparison were not significantly difference.

The motivations to applying to the Graduate School as a whole and in each of the 3 aspects were not different except Educational Management were different at the .05 level statistical significance. The applicants at Maharakham University Center had higher motivation in Educational Management than those at Udon Thani Center The motivations to applying to the Graduate School as a whole and in each of the 3 aspects were not different except Educational Management were different at the .05 level statistical significance The applicants at Maharakham University Center had higher motivation in Educational Management than those at Udon Thani Center means that administrators and teachers at Udon Thani Center will be featured on various issues related to attracting more Educational Management and also must take the theories about whether an incentive to use more as the opinion of Blounless (2016) stated that the management of motivation is therefore a critical element of success in any business; with an increase in productivity, an organization can achieve higher levels of output. Research has shown that motivated employees will: (a) always look for a “better” way to complete a task, (b) be more quality-oriented, and (c) work with higher productivity and efficiency. In summary, motivated employees will retain a high level of innovation while producing higher-quality work more efficiently. There is no downside—i.e., the opportunity cost of motivating employees is essentially zero, assuming it does not require additional capital to coach managers to act as effective motivators.

Recommendations

1. Should take the theories about whether an incentive to use more especially in educational management aspect at Udon Thani Center.
2. The university should have many more doctoral instructors or associate professors to advise and look after students.
3. The educational center of the university may facilitate the instruction and learning by using library and new instructional materials.
4. The university should have a variety of fields of study and centers for responding to local needs.
5. There should be research in motivations of students and instructors at the graduate studies level in state higher educational institutions in order for provision of education to cover more aspects.
6. There should be comparative research studies in motivations to study further of students at the graduate studies level between among universities. The obtained body of knowledge would be used for planning strategies in terms of educational business for educational competitions in future.

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