

# Ways of Life of Undergraduate Students Based On Sufficiency Economy Philosophy in Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University

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**Abstract**—This study aimed to analyse the application of sufficiency economy in students' ways of life on campus at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. Data was gathered through 394 questionnaires. The study results found that the majority of students were confident that "where there's a will, there's a way." Overall, the students applied the sufficiency economy at a great level, along with being persons who do not exploit others, were satisfied with living their lives moderately, according to the sufficiency economy. Importance was also given to kindness and generosity. Importantly, students were happy with living according to their individual circumstances and status at the present. They saw the importance of joint life planning, self-development, and self-dependence, always learning to be satisfied with "adequate". As for their practices and ways of life, socially relational activities rated highly, especially initiation activities for underclassmen at the university and the seniority system, which are suitable for activities on campus. Furthermore, the students knew how to build a career and find supplemental income, knew how to earnestly work according to convention to finish work, and preferred to study elective subjects which directly benefit career-wise. The students' application of sufficiency economy philosophy principles depended on their lives in their hometowns. The students from the provinces regularly applied sufficiency economy philosophy to their lives, for example, by being frugal, steadfast, determined, avoiding negligence, and making economical spending plans; more so than the students from the capital.

**Keywords**—Application of Sufficiency Economy Philosophy, Way of Living, Undergraduate Students.

## I. INTRODUCTION

THE 9<sup>th</sup> National Economic and Social Development Plan (2006–2002) referenced the "Sufficiency Economy" principles as guidelines for national development and administration, with the goal of improving the well-being and happiness of Thai people, through adherence to the "middle path", leading to sustainable stability for the nation. Importance was also given to public participation in decision-making and determination of the direction for development, taking into consideration frugality and reason, building strong immunity and preparation for risks inherent with changes arising from globalization. This is built on a foundation of knowledge, forethought and ethics, as well as His Majesty the King's Sufficiency Economy concept as reflected in the 10<sup>th</sup> National Economic and Social Development Plan (2007-

2011) and The 11<sup>th</sup> National Economic and Social Development Plan 11 (2012-2016). The government included the Sufficiency Economy in the National Economic and Social Development Plans 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 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.

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*“...Sufficiency Economy is a foundation of life and a foundation of national security. It can be compared to the anchor pile 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...”*

Social trends based on material progress have created problems in young people's lives in educational institutions, especially in universities far away from adherence to Sufficiency Economy philosophy. They regress into an unsatisfied way of life, consumerism behaviours, usage of excessively expensive and brand-name products, lack of financial planning, dependence on others, lethargy, failure to strive to find supplemental income while in school, behavior inappropriate for one's financial status, hedonism, low threshold for suffering, inability to face reality, and failure to gain learning for one's own future and profession. [3] The inappropriate behaviour of young people in general is clearly reflected from a survey by the Office of the Education Council, Ministry of Education, together with Suan Dusit Rajabhat University. From a survey of 2,788 people, the following traits were found: extravagance and materialism (25.21%); immodest or inappropriate dress and dressing to follow foreign fashions (24.83); vices, such as smoking, drinking, drug abuse, late-night partying and game addiction (20.05%) [4]. It is imperative that educational institutions have a role in correcting the aforementioned problems, and improve the quality of students in line with the mission and responsibility to produce ethical and quality graduates who are ready to effectively start careers, instilled with the consciousness of being valuable human resources in development of the nation on the foundation of Thai-ness. 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 [5]. Therefore, having a sufficient lifestyle in the midst of globalization brings about rapid social, economic, political, technological and environmental change. If one is not mentally, academically and operationally prepared for such changes, the ways of life of students of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University may very well cause the institution to loose quality graduates, which is both unfortunate and unprecedented.

## II. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

To analyses the application of Sufficiency Economy principles and student life 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 [6], [7]; 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; One-Way ANOVA (F-test), in order to find factors affecting students' ways of life. Statistical significance was figured at .05. The standard for measuring application of Sufficiency Economy philosophy at a personal and household level and 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 2.60 - 1.81 (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

Field data regarding student life on the campus of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University revealed that students of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University were largely female, had a group of close friends numbering approximately 5 persons upwards, had monthly expenses of 3,001-5,000THB, and were largely from the provinces, stayed in the student dormitories or rented housing not far from the university, traveled to campus by public transportation, and had online social media groups such as Facebook, Twitter, and chat programmes. The majority has received instruction regarding Sufficiency Economy philosophy, by way of professors inserting Sufficiency Economy into lectures and subject material. The ways of life of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University students was clearly shown in 2 forms: way of life forms of application of Sufficiency Economy principles by students from Bangkok (capital); and way of life forms of application of Sufficiency Economy principles by students from the provinces (locality). When the Sufficiency Economy way of life is considered, it was found that the majority of students from the provinces applied Sufficiency Economy principles more than students

from Bangkok (capital). The details of application of Sufficiency Economy principles are as follows.

Students of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University largely applied Sufficiency Economy principles at a great level (mean of 3.95), both overall and each area. From greatest to least, "Adequacy", Self-improvement, not exploiting others and being satisfied with a sufficient way of life (mean of 4.05); mind and emotion (mean of 4.03); ways of life (mean of 4.01); generosity and helpfulness (mean of 3.98); technologically (mean of 3.95); natural resources/environment (mean of 3.93); socially (mean of 3.92); and economically (mean of 3.88). This indicates that the students are mindful of moderation, the mindset and emotion; not exploiting others; being satisfied with an adequate way of life; and being generous and helpful, and also gave weight to developing technology in academic studies, based on the principle of sufficiency, as shown by the following overview table.

TABLE I  
SHOWING OVERVIEW AND LEVEL OF APPLICATION OF SUFFICIENCY ECONOMY PRINCIPLES AT A PERSONAL LEVEL

Application of Sufficiency Economy Principles at a Personal Level	Mean	S.D.	Level
Mind and emotion	4.03	0.58	Great
Economically	3.88	0.58	Great
Socially	3.92	0.61	Great
Technologically	3.95	0.62	Great
Natural Resources and Environment	3.93	0.62	Great
"Adequacy", Self-improvement, not exploiting others and being satisfied with a moderate way of life	4.05	0.56	Great
Way of life	4.01	0.56	Great
Generosity and helpfulness	3.98	0.60	Great
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.95</b>	<b>0.52</b>	<b>Great</b>

Interestingly, the categories that did not have a differing level of application and had the 3 highest means were, "Adequacy", Self-improvement, not exploiting others and being satisfied with a sufficient way of life (mean of 4.05); mind and emotion (mean of 4.03); and way of life (mean of 4.01) as follows.

TABLE II  
SHOWING OVERVIEW AND LEVEL OF APPLICATION OF SUFFICIENCY ECONOMY PRINCIPLES AT A PERSONAL LEVEL, IN THE CATEGORY OF "ADEQUACY", SELF-IMPROVEMENT, NOT EXPLOITING OTHERS AND BEING SATISFIED WITH A SUFFICIENT WAY OF LIFE

"Adequacy", Self-improvement, not exploiting others and being satisfied with a sufficient way of life	Mean	S.D.	Level
Happy with living according to their individual circumstances and status at the present	4.13	0.68	Great
Adhering to frugality, abating wastefulness in daily life	4.01	0.69	Great
Joint life planning, self-development, and self-dependence by learning about what is "enough"	4.10	0.71	Great
Uprightness, spurning evil, and acting according to religious principles consistently	4.03	0.74	Great
Self-examination in every area, such as eating, spending, living and way of life	4.03	0.74	Great
When faced with personal problems and obstacles, the students would rely on themselves to find a solution first	4.03	0.75	Great
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.05</b>	<b>0.56</b>	<b>Great</b>

Overall and in each aspect, the application of Sufficiency Economy principles at a personal level among Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University students in the category of "Adequacy", Self-improvement, not exploiting others and being satisfied with a sufficient way of life is at a great level in every aspect. This shows that the majority of the students is happy with living according to their individual circumstances and status at the present, and knows how to plan their lives to depend on themselves and learn about what is "adequate" in the areas of eating, spending, housing and way of life, to name some.

TABLE III  
SHOWING OVERVIEW AND LEVEL OF APPLICATION OF SUFFICIENCY ECONOMY PRINCIPLES AT A PERSONAL LEVEL, IN THE CATEGORY OF MIND AND EMOTION

Mind/emotion	Mean	S.D.	Level
Striving to save money every day	3.98	0.76	Great
Determination to live frugally and be self-dependent to the greatest extent possible	4.01	0.69	Great
Even though their lives are currently difficult, then students are ready to persevere and adhere to Sufficiency Economy principles, and will not give up until they and their families are successful	4.19	0.67	Great
The students and their families are determined to keep honest occupations, even if they experience suffering and financial hardship	4.14	0.71	Great
Ability to control one's temper and emotions and use reason in preparation for facing problems	4.04	0.74	Great
Ability to control excessive spending desires	3.96	0.81	Great
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.03</b>	<b>0.58</b>	<b>Great</b>

Overall and in each aspect, application of Sufficiency Economy principles at a personal level among Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University students in the category of mind and emotion is at a great level in every aspect. This shows that even though they are experiencing difficulties, the majority of the students are ready to persevere in life, will not give up, will adhere to Sufficiency Economy principles and will keep an honest occupation.

TABLE IV  
SHOWING OVERVIEW AND LEVEL OF APPLICATION OF SUFFICIENCY ECONOMY PRINCIPLES AT A PERSONAL LEVEL, IN THE CATEGORY OF WAY OF LIFE

Way of life	Mean	S.D.	Level
Adherence and practice according to religious principles	4.05	0.75	Great
Searching for information, thirst for knowledge, and keeping up with current domestic events	3.98	0.73	Great
Adherence to democracy and reason in daily life	4.07	0.74	Great
Keeping accounts of household expenses	3.86	0.90	Great
The students' and their families' occupations are honest, non-exploitative, live in moderation and not invested beyond their means.	4.11	0.72	Great
In all actions, whether studying or entertainment with fellow students, the feelings of others and the consequences of actions are considered	4.02	0.71	Great
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.01</b>	<b>0.56</b>	<b>Great</b>

Overall and in each aspect, application of Sufficiency Economy principles at a personal level among Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University students in the category of way of life is at a great level in every aspect. This shows that the majority of the students intends to keep honest occupations, will not

exploit others, live in moderation and is not invested beyond their means, adhere to democratic principles and use reason in their daily lives.

As for student life on the campus of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, when the various activities are measured, it was found that the majority of students participate in each activity at a high level (mean of 3.92). Ranked from greatest to least, the activities are: social relations (mean of 3.97); career-building and supplemental income (mean of 3.96); health, sports and entertainment (mean of 3.93); way of life behaviours (mean of 3.92); studies and academics (mean of 3.90); and volunteering and public service (mean of 3.87). This shows that Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University students have ways of life largely oriented towards social relationships and career-building/supplemental income.

TABLE V  
SHOWING LEVEL OF OPINIONS REGARDING STUDENT LIFE ON THE CAMPUS OF SUAN SUNANDHA RAJABHAT UNIVERSITY, OVERALL AND BY CATEGORY

Student life on the campus of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University	Mean	S.D.	Level of opinion
Studies and academics	3.90	0.55	Great
Social relationship activities	3.97	0.60	Great
Creative groups	3.87	0.66	Great
Volunteering and public service	3.90	0.62	Great
Career-building and supplementary income	3.96	0.58	Great
Way of life behaviours	3.92	0.59	Great
Health, sports and entertainment	3.93	0.63	Great
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.92</b>	<b>0.49</b>	<b>Great</b>

All areas in which participated by students are at a great level. There are 2 activities of interest in which students participate every day (2 greatest means); social relationships (mean of 3.97), and career-building/supplemental income (mean of 3.96), as shown in the following table.

TABLE VI  
SHOWING LEVEL OF OPINIONS REGARDING STUDENT LIFE ON THE CAMPUS OF SUAN SUNANDHA RAJABHAT UNIVERSITY, IN THE ASPECT OF SOCIAL RELATIONSHIP ACTIVITIES

Social relationship activities	Mean	S.D.	Level of opinion
Joining initiation activities for underclassmen at the university	4.08	0.78	Great
The seniority system among students of various faculties is considered to be an appropriate system for activities in the university	4.03	0.72	Great
Join all faculty and university activities, because it is a part of well-rounded education	4.02	0.75	Great
Participation in fundraising for various activities	3.90	0.76	Great
When friends organize parties or meals for exclusive groups, students always join, even if the activity is at night	3.98	0.82	Great
When there is an inter-personal problem in the classroom, students will always ask advice from the instructor/professor	3.88	0.84	Great
When there is an inter-personal problem in the faculty (between upperclassmen and underclassmen) the students will always ask for advice from the student advisor or dean	3.88	0.85	Great
Using the internet for communication between year classes or friends, such as through Facebook or e-mail	4.03	0.82	Great
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.97</b>	<b>0.60</b>	<b>Great</b>

When considered overall and in each aspect, the level of opinions among Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University students in the aspect of social relationship activities is at a great level (mean of 3.97). This shows that the majority of students give importance to joining initiation activities, the seniority system among students, and communication between class years and friends by using the internet, such as through Facebook and e-mail.

TABLE VII  
SHOWING LEVEL OF OPINIONS REGARDING STUDENT LIFE ON THE CAMPUS OF SUAN SUNANDHA RAJABHAT UNIVERSITY, IN THE ASPECT OF CAREER-BUILDING/SUPPLEMENTAL INCOME

Career-building and supplemental income	Mean	S.D.	Level of opinion
Interest in making something of one's self	4.06	0.76	Great
Interest in excelling academic-wise for future progress	3.96	0.83	Great
Choosing subjects that are beneficial to establishing a profession	3.99	0.80	Great
Necessity to complete studies course before or on the designated schedule	3.98	0.80	Great
Interest in studying and working according to what is delegated by instructor/professor	3.94	0.81	Great
Earnestly working by plan to finish work quickly	4.03	0.69	Great
A diploma is of importance to a students' career	3.87	0.82	Great
Recreation with friends relating to future career	3.90	0.75	Great
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.96</b>	<b>0.58</b>	<b>Great</b>

When considered overall and in each aspect, the level of opinions among Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University students in the aspect of career-building/supplemental income is at a great level (mean of 3.96). This shows that the majority of students are interested in in making something of themselves, earnestly working by plan to finish work quickly, and choosing subjects that are beneficial to establishing a profession.

The factors influencing student life on the campus of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University which have a statistical importance of .05 are: 1) faculty or major: it was found that students in the Faculty of Education, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences and the College of Nursing and Health had a higher participation in the various university activities than the other faculties and majors; 2) academic results (cumulative grade point average from the previous semester): it was found that students with a cumulative grade point average of 3.01 – 4.00 had higher participation in university activities than students with a cumulative grade point average not exceeding 3.00; and 3) income factors (average monthly income) of the students' households: it was found that students whose average monthly household income did not exceed 10,000 THB had a lower participation in university activities than students whose households had an average monthly income exceeding 10,000 THB.

## V. CONCLUSION

Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University students are largely from the provinces. Basically, the provinces in Thailand have less material development; there is abundant nature and local

people still cling to traditional folkways and have agricultural occupations. They adhere to religious morals, and the temple is the religious and spiritual centre of the village, community or city. These foundations are reflected through the fact that provincial people live according to morals, well-integrated into their ways of life. For example, moderation, frugality, spending sense, perseverance, loyalty and honesty, not exploiting others, gratefulness, respect for elders, and good social etiquette are all social capital that the students already possess. This is different from city-dwellers, who possess much material development which leads to the neglect of moral teachings regarding moderation. Often, one's life is increasingly full with a lack of spending plans, and is rushed, competitive and grasping for one's own benefit instead of the common good. It is difficult for city-dwellers or students in the capital to completely return to a moderate lifestyle, but they can apply such measures as appropriate to their lives, even if it is difficult. Their former social context serves as social capital that instilled certain behaviours for them. Thus, this reflects the research findings that the majority of students on the campus of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University is from the provinces; therefore they know and are conscientious of applying Sufficiency Economy philosophy very well. They also have a ways of life as students, participating in various activities within the university walls, mindful of moderation, adequacy, not excessive, knowing how make plan of actions, and knowing how to meet and confer. The results of this research therefore found that every aspect of the ways of life of students in every faculty is at a considerably great level of adherence to Sufficiency Economy philosophy of His Majesty the King.

## VI. DISCUSSION

The application of Sufficiency Economy philosophy principles at a personal level among Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University students stresses self-improvement by learning about "moderation" in order to reflect a mindset that does not exploit others, knows how to create happiness and be satisfied with living according to their individual circumstances and status at the present, knowing how to plan for self-dependence, always learning about "adequacy" in eating, spending, housing and ways of life, to name some. The students are conscientious that even though their lives are currently difficult, they are ready to persevere in life and will not give up, adhering to Sufficiency Economy principles, keep an honest occupation, adhere to democratic principles and use reason in daily life, know how to conduct themselves and aptly apply Sufficiency Economy principles. This is because incoming students are largely from the provinces (other localities). Their economic standing and social sphere is inherently different from city-dwellers, who have a high cost of living and to whom money is an immensely important factor in daily life; without money, it is nearly impossible to live in the capital or in a large city. In the current era, people in large cities tend to be materialistic and use extravagance in order to enter society. This leads to material comparison, economic lavishness and adornment, rank, title or social

status, work responsibilities, and high income – all of which are indicators of social standing and status, and very difficult for city-dwellers to avoid. This also occurs on campus, however in restricted groups or faculties. The students largely still firmly adhere to the culture and customs passed down in their hometowns. Rooted in teachings from their families in the provinces, the students know how to be frugal and economical, know the value of their money, and know their own potential. The fact that students adhere to moral Buddhist religious practices makes them happy to apply various ethics in their daily life. Ultimately, it is understood that they are happy and satisfied, content with their current life situation [8]. When participating in activities based on the students' ways of life, importance is given to social relationship activities (mean of 3.97) and career building and finding supplemental income (mean of 3.96) had the highest mean. This indicates that Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University students have ways of life in the form of social relationship activities, by joining in traditional initiation activities for under classmen at the university; the students in various faculties and majors have a seniority system that is appropriate to conducting various activities in the university. Communication between class years and groups of friends is facilitated by communication technology. The fact that students give importance to social relationship activities is because one of the first things that students learn when entering university is to get along with others. The welcoming and initiation activities for incoming freshmen are considered a good tradition for building relationships between class years, faculties and the university. Initiation activities in particular are stipulated by the university for every faculty before the start of every semester, by way of the student activity department of the faculties and university. Furthermore, the initiation system builds relationships that stress respect for those with seniority. Good behaviour without any violence or harshness by the upperclassmen while welcoming incoming freshmen creates good relationships. Learning and the exchange of knowledge also occurs through the use of technology such as communication programmes through the internet, which is easily accessed by students. The majority of students also participate in career-building or supplemental income activities, owing to the fact that many students come from poor families. Their parents must struggle to provide for an education, and sometimes cannot provide completely, making it necessary for students to rely on students loans, which are limited, and many students find additional work after classroom hours or on public holidays. This work and study combination, besides providing income, also provides experience, aiding professional progress after graduation. This coincides with the research titled, "Study of Forms of Way of Life of Ramkhamhaeng University Students" [9], which found that Ramkhamhaeng University students lived by professional and progressive groups, and had a high standard of living, concurring with research titled, "Forms of Ways of Life of Rajabhat Kamphaengphet University Students" [10], which found that Rajabhat Kamphaengphet University students also largely lived by professional and progressive groups. One

discovery of this research is, regardless of whether one came from the provinces or from the capital, the place of one's birth was frequently mentioned as hometown or birthplace, creating love and pride [11], solidarity and seeing the value of one's own hometown [12]

#### VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

The application of Sufficiency Economy philosophy at a personal level of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University students has the lowest mean in the area of keeping monthly personal expenditure accounts. It is extremely important for instructors/professors in each subject to include in the subject matter some teachings on keeping expenditure/income and saving accounts as suitable for students, in order to aid the students in reviewing their daily expenditure/income. More importantly, the students will learn consistent self-discipline.

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