# INFLUENCE OF PASSION FOR LEARNING DRIVE ON MENTAL HEALTH OF KASETSART UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN SITUATION OF COVID 19 PANDEMIC

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Abstract

This research aimed to study 1. the relationship between passion for learning drive on mental health of Kasetsart University students in situation of COVID 19 pandemic. 2. the influence of passion for learning drive on the mental health of Kasetsart University students. The sample consisted of 400 undergraduate students enrolling in the academic year 2021 by using validated and reliable questionnaires. The data were analyzed by using a statistical package program consisting of descriptive statistics and inferential statistic by comparing t-mean, Pearson correlation analysis, and a simple regression test. The results found that the majority of Kasetsart University students were 287 females, representing 78.80%, with a high level of academic earnestness and learning drive, 35.70%, and a lower-level of mental health than common people, 54.80%. A statistical significance level of different between the means of academic earnestness and learning drive of students with lower mental health than common people and mean of academic earnestness and learning drive of students with the same level of mental health and higher than common people found that there was a difference at a statistical significance level of .01. A correlation analysis revealed that academic earnestness and drive was positive correlation with mental health at a statistical significance level of .01. Influence analysis revealed that academic passion for learning drive were variables predicting mental health of students ($\beta$ = .263) the variance was 93.10 at a statistical significance level of .01.

Keywords: passion for learning drive, mental health, students

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Introduction

Higher education is a high level of education in which learners must study to develop knowledge and skills for work, practice specializations in the fields of learners' interests and practice educational innovation skills of their own readiness development for the world of future careers. Therefore, the learners at this level must rely on a wide variety of factors that will lead them to succeed in their study (Phimsri, Phimsri, 2021). These fundamental factors include their motivation, self-regulation, personality, life abilities, learning disciplines, social skills, emotional control, learning habits, learning attitudes, earnestness, learning passion and physical and mental health (Harerimana, 2019; Wanzer, Postlewaite and Zargarpour, 2019). The learners who realize their potential can cope well with the stresses of life, work creatively and make a contribution to their own society. If they behave in the way mentioned above, this will be an indicator of good mental health (World Health Organization, 2019), and their good mental health will be an essential part of living life. At the same time, the common and diverse mental health problems among learners are determined by the socio-economic environment that affects each stage of life. These are risk factors for mental health problems that are strongly associated with social inequality, access to government services, social support, success in education and career, etc.

The previous studies on epidemiology of adolescents' mental health in the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic revealed that during the COVID-19 pandemic, the students had problems with emotional stability of 20 percent, morale of 14.9 percent, dealing with problems of 12.9 percent, stress of 28.2 percent, anxiety of 46.8 and depression of 32.2 percent (Kerdcharoen, Kolkijkovin, Thaworn, 2021). And among high school students who prepared for admission to study in higher education, 80 percent of them had severe levels of stress and needed strengthening in life to cope with stress. All of these problems were caused by fatigue from studying and educational deterioration (Tossungnoen, Tungpunkom, Sethabouppha, 2021).

The previous studies found that correlative factors, supportive factors and factors encouraging students' mental health included setting educational goals, intellectual ability, problem-management ability, learning motivation, personality, learning styles, learners' social conditions, social support, etc. (Prasongsuk, Chalittikul, Badkeaw, Supaporn, Chumcheo, 2019; Nakrapanich, Puengsema, 2021). The factors mentioned above which were studied and experimented with both domestic and overseas learners were approved by scholars that the learners with good educational support would lead to happiness in learning, even when they faced with various problems and obstacles in learning. However, whether encountering problems or obstacles in life, the learners were still patient with their learning, never gave up trying to learn and continued to practice self-improvement of their own abilities all the time. Those were regarded as behaviors reflecting that the learners focused on earnestness and learning drive (Vallerand, 2015). The previous studies also revealed that earnestness and learning drive affected mental well-being of the learners (Chanthasilp, Hattasak, Onjaiuea, 2020). If the learners had low learning drive, they would be at risk of mental health problems such as depression, anxiety, stress, lower learning ability and giving meaning to living life, etc. (Serin, 2017; Higgins & Boone, 2021.There were still scarcely advance studies on passion for learning drive in Thailand, such as the

development of passion for learning drive scales in Thailand (Chanthasilp, Hattasak, &Onjaiuea, 2020), studies on passion for learning drive with game addiction (Phudphong, Kaewchinda, Somanandana, 2021) and studies on the influence of psychological factors such as learning style, personality affecting passion for learning drive (Autthanitee, Hatthasak, 2021). Graduate thesis and basic research of Kasetsart University students focused on understanding behavioral characteristics, relationships and influences encouraging earnestness and learning drive. However, understanding relationship patterns and passion for learning drive affecting mental health of the learners in the context of Thai society was still not found. The aforementioned problems of the students facing stress before and after getting the admission for higher education during the Covid-19 pandemic affected mainly students' physical and mental health. The previous findings reported that passion for learning drive would enable the learners to overcome difficulties and obstacles more effectively and help individuals have good mental health while facing the problems. Therefore, the researcher is interested in making understanding the relationship patterns and effects of earnestness and learning drive on the mental health of Kasetsart University students. The researcher expects that the results can expand the knowledge on

passion for learning drive and can be used to plan the mental health development of learners to develop a model of learning process, as well as effectively understand the learners individually for their greater happiness in learning.

**Research questions**

1. Does the passion for learning drive relate to the mental health of Kasetsart University students?

2. Does the passion for learning drive influence the mental health of Kasetsart University students?

**Research objectives**

1. To analyze the relationship of passion for learning drive towards mental health of Kasetsart University students.

2. To analyze the influence of passion for learning drive on mental health of Kasetsart University students.

**Variables used in research studies**

Independent Variable is passion for learning drive.

Dependent Variable is mental health.

**Conceptual framework**



Figure 1: Conceptual framework

**Scope of the study**

The population used in this study were undergraduate students of Kasetsart University who enrolled in the academic year 2021. The formula for the number of independent parameters was calculated for the sample size which was be estimated by using the rule that the ratio between the sample unit and the number of observable variables should be 20 to 1 (Hair, Black, and Babin, 2010). In this study, there were 20 observable variables, the researcher determined to use the sample group of 20 cases per 1 observable variable, resulting in a sample size of 400 subjects through multi-stage sampling method.

**Hypothesis**

1. Passion for Learning Drive relates to the mental health of Kasetsart University students.

2. Passion for Learning Drive influences the mental health of Kasetsart University students.

Methodology

The concepts of passion for learning drive based on the Dualistic Model of Passion (DMP) theory (Vallerand, 2015) and related research were applied for this survey research as a conceptual framework for the study.

**Sample group**

Kasetsart University undergraduate students who enrolled in the academic year 2021 were sample size of this study. The formula for the number of independent parameters was calculated for the sample size which was be estimated using the rule that the ratio between the sample unit and the number of observable variables should be 20 to 1 (Hair, Black, and Babin,

2010). As 20 variables were observed, the researcher determined to use 20 samples per 1 observable variables in this research. Therefore, 400 Kasetsart University undergraduate students were sample size calculated by using the multi-stage sampling method as follows:

1.The group of Kasetsart University undergraduate students, Bangkhen who enrolled in the academic year 2021, was divided into 4 years.

2. A sample quota was set for 100 students per year for Kasetsart University undergraduate students who enrolled in the academic year 2021.

3. A total of 400 Kasetsart University undergraduate students were selected by simple random sampling the students' email addresses in each year from the student database and sending an invitation email to participate in the research project and online questionnaire to 100 randomly selected students per year.

**Tools**

The instrument used in this research was to measure the influence of passion for learning drive on mental health among Kasetsart University undergraduate students. The researcher divided the questionnaire into 3 parts as follows:

Part 1: A basic questionnaire consisted of 3 items.

Part 2: 20 items of a scale and development of passion for learning drive for Kasetsart University undergraduate students created by Chanthasilp, Hattasak, & Onjaiuea (2020).

Part 3: 15 items in short version of the Thai Mental Health Indicator Test were developed by Mongkol, Vongpiromsan, Tangseree, Huttapanom,

Romsai. Chutha (2009); Anusanti, Pimbaotham, Phumsrikao, Ramsit (2018).

**Quality Testing**

The Passion for learning scales by Chanthasilp, Hattasak, & Onjaiuea (2020) used for data collection had the index of item-objective congruence (IOC) with operational definition of between 0.66 and 1.00 with a determinant power of between 0.32 and 0.64. Confirmative component analysis revealed that the construct validity had the entire Cronbach's alpha coefficient equal to 0.90, the harmonization aspect of 0.87 and the passion aspect of 0.81. From the previous research results reflecting that the measurement model having good validity and reliability was tried out with 30 samples who had similar characteristics to 30 participants that were used for the influence analysis. The confidence value calculated by Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha analysis was .902 (High Level) and the researcher constructed complete 15-item version of Thai Mental Health Indicator Test from Mongkol, Vongpiromsan, Tangseree, Huttapanom, Romsai, Chutha, (2009) to collect data. The study found that the short 15-item version of Thai Mental Health Indicator Test consists of 4 components: 1) mental state, 2) performance of the mind, 3) quality of mind, and 4) supportive factors, had the reliability in each component equal to 0.86, 0.83, 0.77 and 0.80, respectively. The short 15-item version of Thai Mental Health Indicator Test had the reliability of 0.70. According to the research by Anusanti, Pimbabotham, Phumsrikao, Ramsit (2018), the scale calculated by using Cronbach's alpha coefficient analysis had a reliability of 0.93. The results of previous research reflected that the scales had good validity and reliability. Therefore, a trial of 30 participants revealed that the short 15-item version of Thai Mental Health Indicator Test had the reliability calculated by using Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha analysis, at a high level of .743. (High Level)

**Data collection**

In August 2021, the student database was randomly selected and the invitation emails was sent to those students to participate in research and answer the questionnaires.

Data analysis

In analysis of basic data of the sample group through the sampling process, descriptive statistics i.e., percentage, mean, standard deviation, and Inferential statistics were used to analyze the relationship between the factors that were measured across scales by calculating the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The predictive factors were analyzed by using Stepwise multiple regression analysis.

Results

1. Basic data obtained from the sample group through the sampling process were 400 Kasetsart University undergraduate students, who enrolled in various subjects in the academic year 2021. 287 of them were female of 78.80 percent and had a high level of passion for learning drive of 35.70 percent and had lower mental health than the general people of 54.80 percent. When comparing the average of the students' passion for learning drive of mental health that was lower than the normal people to the students who had the same mental health as the normal people and higher than the normal people, it was found that the students' passion for learning drive was significantly different at the .01 level. (Table 1)

Table 1. Number and percentage of the sample of undergraduate students Kasetsart University, Bangkhen, who enrolled in the academic year 2021

| Basic information | Number (person) | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Sex | | |
| Male | 100 | 25.00 |
| Female | 287 | 71.80 |
| Not mentioned | 13 | 3.20 |
| Earnestness and learning drive | | |
| Very low | 7 | 1.80 |
| Low | 55 | 13.80 |
| Moderate | 131 | 32.70 |
| High | 143 | 35.70 |
| Very high | 64 | 16.00 |
| Max=100, Min=32.00, $\overline{X}$=65.88, SD=11.29 | | |
| Mental Health | | |
| Lower than normal | 219 | 54.80 |
| Normal | 151 | 37.70 |
| More than normal | 30 | 7.50 |
| Max=60, Min=24.00, $\overline{X}$=42.60, SD=5.61 | | |

2. The correlation analysis revealed that passion for learning drive was positively correlated with mental health and found a very low correlation with statistical significance at the .01 level (Table 2).

Table 2. The relationship between passion for learning drive related to mental health.

| Variables | | Passion for learning drive | Mental health |
|---|---|---|---|
| Passion for learning drive | Pearson Correlation | 1 | |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | |
| | n | 400 | |
| Mental health | Pearson Correlation | .263[**] | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | n | 400 | 400 |

** Statistical significance at the .01 level.

3. Influence analysis found that passion for learning drive was a predictive variable of mental health of Kasetsart University undergraduate students ($\beta$ = .263) with statistical significance at the .01 level (Table 3).

Table 3. The influence of passion for learning drive as predictors/predictive variables of mental health

| Variables | B | SE | $\beta$ | t | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Passion for learning drive | .131 | .024 | .263 | 5.445 | .000 |
| Constant | 33.982 | 1.606 | | 21.161 | .000 |
| $R^2$=.069, Adjust $R^2$=.067, $F_{29.648}$, P<.01 | | | | | |

Discussion

The study on the influence of passion for learning drive on mental health of Kasetsart University undergraduate students reveals that the students' passion for learning drive is at a high level, but at the same time, their mental health is in a lower level than normal people. This may be affected by the current situation with the epidemic that affects the lifestyle. The ways of life need changing into a new normal, namely, the students have to switch from studying onsite to online learning. Accordingly, they have to study alone, without a real-life interaction and only meet others online. The students are still committed to studying, but online learning affects their happiness and mental health, consistent with the research by Buatchum, Nukaew, Suwannawat, Worrasirinara, Jeratchayaporn, Christraksa (2022). The relationship between learners and teachers affects the learners' mental health. Friendly teachers who accept the students' opinions and empathize with students are able to encourage their students to have good mental health and learn happily. However, in the situation of a disease pandemic, isolation, quarantine, reduction of interpersonal contact and non-socialization probably result in feelings of loneliness, stress and a decline of social skills and Phonrakdee's research (2022) reveals that during the situation of COVID–19 pandemic, the students' stress from online learning in music education, Faculty of Education, Burapha University is high with a total average of 54.67. Most of the students get stress from the online learning in the situation of COVID-19 at a high level, followed by severe and moderate levels, respectively, in consistence with the study by Hiransai, Wongwassana (2022) states that the overall negative impact of COVID-19 among undergraduate students was at the highest level, in descending order of 1) health impacts 2) social impacts 3) economic impacts within the family, and the quality of students' lives as a whole has a high level of life quality in descending order of 1) mental aspect 2) physical aspect 3) educational aspect. It can be seen that the COVID-19 pandemic has a number of impacts on students, whether mentally, physically, and economically. In addition, the study of Srichannil (2021) has suggested that adolescents should receive psychological therapy focusing on cultivating through suffering may have the potential to enhance mental health and proper mental dealing in times of anxiety and isolation, such as during the COVID-19 pandemic.

From the first objective, analysis of the relationship of passion for learning drive towards mental health of Kasetsart University undergraduate students reveals that passion for learning drive has significantly positive correlation with mental health, meaning that the

more passion for learning drive the students have, the stronger they enhance their mental health. Those also help the students overcome various obstacles in their lives (Vallerand, 2015; Chanthasilp, Hattasak, & Onjaiuea, 2020). In consistence with the research on the development of a measure of passion for learning drive of Kasetsart University undergraduate students, the findings reveal that the passion for learning drive is important for learners and instructors both in terms of learning ability and good mental health. As long as, with a balance of positive and negative relationship, the learners will be mentally immune and prevent further learning problems in the future (Chanthasilp, Hattasak, Onjaiuea, 2020). In addition, it also found the correlation of the passion with educational management, physical health, performance and self-esteem (Vallerand, 2015).

From the second objective, the study on influence of passion for learning drive towards mental health of Kasetsart University undergraduate students reveals that the passion for learning drive is statistically significant predictive variables of Kasetsart University students' mental health. In consistence with the study of Phudphong, Kaewchinda, Somanandana (2021), their findings reveal that passion for learning drive has significantly positive correlation with online game addiction among undergraduate students (Chanthasilp, Hattasak, Onjaiuea, 2020).

Accordingly, the evolution of the theory rooted in the 3 stages of philosophical psychology includes: Phase I: Passion for learning drive will lead to irrationality and lack of control. Individuals with passion for learning drive are often seen as unusual and have difficulty in living their life. Phase 2: Passion for learning drive is transformed into a more positive perspective. Individuals with passion for learning drive

are passionate about doing something like love and interest in various sciences seriously. The ones with high passion for learning drive will get success. Phase 3: Passion in this phase is a cross-disciplinary integration between philosophical knowledge and behavioral science knowledge that requires an understanding of internal behaviors, such as thoughts, emotions and sensations in combination with an understanding based on observing what is seen by the human eyes. During this phase, passion has both positive and negative aspects (Chanthasilp, Hattasak, Onjaiuea, 2020). Since the 20th century, this view has been attracted as individuals are viewed as having both sides of passion. If there is too much on one side, it will cause imbalance in life and will lead to mental health problems. Successful individuals tend to have a balance on both sides where earnestness and drive have been always served as variables that influence the existence of mental health issues in the past (Vallerand, 2015). This study has shown that passion is linked to mental health issues. If individuals have imbalance of both variables, they will develop mental health problems and other problems for themselves and society.

Suggestions

**Suggestions for applications**

The study on influence of passion for learning drive towards mental health of Kasetsart University students in the situation of COVID-19 pandemic is developed for Kasetsart University undergraduate students only. Therefore, the results cannot be referred to students in other educational institutions. Interested researchers should create or develop normal criteria for interpreting scores from the scale for passion for learning drive to cover their sample. In addition, this study used

the short 15-item version of Thai Mental Health Indicator Test as a screening test for mental health problems only. To diagnose mental health problems, a psychological assessment of other mental health problems must be used.

**Suggestions for policy**

Passion for learning drive has significantly positive correlation with mental health at the .01 level. In addition, the passion for learning drive is a variable predicting mental health of Kasetsart University students with statistical significance at the .01 level, reflecting that the student's good mental health is influenced by their passion for learning drive. The Student Affairs Division and departments relating to teaching and learning management should organize activities or curricula in accordance with the holistic development of learners especially the development of mental health and the development of passion for learning drive so as to achieve a balance. If a person has a balanced passion for learning drive, they will not face with mental health problems and problems for themselves and society.

**Suggestions for further study**

The research on the influence of passion for learning drive towards mental health among Kasetsart University students in the situation of COVID-19 pandemic is fundamental research with insufficient knowledge of passion for learning drive to understand what the causes and what variables are. And what are the causes of students' mental health problems? Therefore, research on variables contributing to predict the occurrence of health problems, research on a model of causes affecting mental health or research on influence towards mental health among individuals with other lifestyle needs should be undertaken so as to study the

predictive ability of the passion for learning drive variables.

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