

**ACADEMIC COPING STRATEGIES AMONG UNDERGRADUATE  
STUDENTS IN NAKHON SI THAMMARAT PROVINCE, THAILAND**

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**ACADEMIC COPING STRATEGIES AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN  
NAKHON SI THAMMARAT PROVINCE, THAILAND**

**By**

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

|          |   |
|----------|---|
| ANOVA    | Analysis of Variance  |
| BAPCP    | Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies             |
| BT       | Behavioural Therapy   |
| CGPA     | Cumulative Grade Point Average  |
| CLT      | Communicative Language Teaching                                       |
| CT       | Cognitive Therapy   |
| GPA      | Grade Point Average   |
| IUM      | International Islamic University Malaysia                             |
| MOE      | Ministry of Education in Thailand                                     |
| QUAL     | Qualitative   |
| REBT     | Rational-Emotive Behavioural Therapy                                  |
| RET      | Rational-Emotive Therapy  |
| RU       | Ratchamangala University of Technology                                |
| T-CARP   | Thailand Collegiate Association for Research of Principle             |
| U.S. Aid | U.S. Operation Mission  |
| WU       | Walailak University   |
| YEWP     | Youth Federation for World Peace Thailand                             |
| YPLE     | Youth Centre for Promotion of Better Life and Environmental Awareness |

**STRATEGI COPING AKADEMIK DALAM KALANGAN PELAJAR  
IJAZAH SARJANA MUDA DI NAKHON SI THAMMARAT PROVINCE,  
THAILAND**

**ABSTRAK**

Tiga skala strategi *coping* akademik yang terdiri daripada Strategi Pendekatan, Strategi Pengelakan, dan Strategi Sokongan Sosial telah dicadangkan untuk membantu mahasiswa bertindak mengatasi masalah akademik mereka. Reka bentuk kaedah campuran penjelas berujukan telah digunakan untuk menjawab soalan kajian dan menguji hipotesis kajian mengikut objektif kajian ini. Ketiga-tiga skala strategi *coping* akademik (yang disesuaikan dan disemak semula daripada Sullivan, 2010) telah digunakan sebagai instrumen kajian. Sampel telah dipilih secara rawak daripada 6 buah sekolah di 2 buah universiti di Nakon Si Thammarat, Thailand. Sampel kajian terdiri daripada 240 pelajar tahun kedua dari Universiti Teknologi Ratchamangala dan 480 pelajar tahun kedua dari Universiti Wailailak. Julat umur mereka adalah antara 18 hingga 20 tahun. Satu temu bual berstruktur telah dikendalikan ke atas 12 pelajar yang pernah mengalami masalah akademik. Data yang dikumpulkan telah dianalisis menggunakan analisis deskriptif seperti min, sisihan piawai, dan ujian khi kuasa dua, dan ujian t. Seterusnya, ukuran berulang sehala ANOVA telah digunakan. Keputusan daripada analisis kuantitatif menunjukkan bahawa responden kajian ini bersetuju bahawa ketiga-tiga skala strategi *coping* akademik dapat membantu mahasiswa bertindak mengatasi masalah akademik mereka. Pada keseluruhannya, 650 pelajar bersetuju bahawa strategi *coping* pendekatan telah membantu mereka bertindak mengatasi masalah akademik mereka. Seramai 569 lagi pelajar bersetuju bahawa strategi daya tindak pengelakan

telah membantu mereka bertindak mengatasi masalah akademik mereka. Akhirnya, 483 pelajar lagi bersetuju bahawa strategi *coping* sokongan sosial telah membantu mereka dengan masalah akademik mereka. Untuk merumuskan, penemuan kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa mahasiswa Thai telah menggunakan strategi *coping* pendekatan paling kerap apabila mereka mempunyai masalah akademik. Tambahan lagi, mereka kurang sedikit mengamalkan strategi *coping* pengelakan dan strategi *coping* sokongan sosial, apabila berhadapan dengan masalah untuk mencapai prestasi yang baik dalam pengajian mereka. Untuk menyokong penemuan kuantitatif, analisis kualitatif telah digunakan untuk menganalisis data yang dikumpulkan menggunakan temu bual berstruktur melalui pendekatan bertema. Keputusan temu bual tersebut jelas menunjukkan bahawa strategi *coping* akademik telah membantu mahasiswa bertindak mengatasi masalah akademik mereka. Oleh itu, para pensyarah, kaunselor, penasihat akademik dan mentor perlu memperbaiki strategi pengajaran mereka supaya merangkumi kesemua tiga skala strategi *coping* akademik untuk membantu mahasiswa bertindak mengatasi masalah akademik mereka.

## **ACADEMIC COPING STRATEGIES AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN NAKHON SI THAMMARAT PROVINCE, THAILAND**

### **ABSTRACT**

The three scales of Academic Coping Strategy Scales (ACSS) comprising Approach, Avoidance, and Social Support strategies have been recommended to help Thai undergraduate students to cope with their academic performance problems. Sequential explanatory mix methods design was used to answer the research questions and to test the research hypotheses following the objectives of this study. The Three Scales of Academic Coping Strategy on academic performance problems (adapted and revised from Sullivan, 2010) was used as an instrument. Samples were randomly selected from six schools at two universities in Nakhon Si Thammarat, Thailand. These samples consisted of 240 second year students from Ratchamangala University of Technology and 480 second year students from Walailak University (students 18-20 years old). A structured interview was conducted with 12 respondents who have experienced academic performance problems. The data collected were analysed using descriptive analysis such as means and standard deviations, and chi-square test, *t*-test. In addition, the one-way repeated measures ANOVA were applied. The results from the quantitative analysis showed that the respondents of this study agreed that the three scales of academic coping strategy have helped undergraduate students cope with their academic performance problems. Altogether, 650 students agreed that the approach coping strategy helped them cope with their academic performance problems. Another 569 students agreed that avoidance coping strategy helped them cope with their academic problems. Finally, 483 students agreed that social support coping strategy helped them cope with their

academic performance problems. To summarise, the findings show that Thai undergraduate students have used the approach coping strategy most frequently when they have academic performance problems. In addition, they practiced avoidance coping strategy and social support coping strategy less frequently, when facing difficulties to perform well in their studies. To support the quantitative findings, qualitative analysis was used to analyse data collected from a structured interview through thematic analysis. The interview results clearly showed that academic coping strategies helped students cope with their academic performance problems. Therefore, lecturer, counsellors, academic advisors and mentors need to improve their teaching strategy to include all the three scales of academic coping strategy in helping students to cope with their academic performance problems.

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### **1.0 Introduction**

By 2015, Enrolment at undergraduate students (18-23 years old) is 1.72 million (Thailand Ministry of Education, 2015). Nakhon Si Thammarat province has two formal universities, there are Ratchamangala University and Walailak University, there have approximately 2,644 undergraduate students including both males and females with age ranging between 18 and 20 (Ratchamangala University of Technology Srivijaya, 2010 and Walailak University, 2014).

Undergraduate students in Thailand are facing academic performance issues. In addition, these various problems such as emotional problem, English language problem, family problem (broken family status, uncommunicative well with parents, high expectation from parents), and self-management problem are affecting undergraduate students' academic performance. No professionals in the university likewise counsellor to provide guidance and counselling services such as academic coping strategies in helping undergraduate students to cope with their academic performance issue. Kongsakun, Kajornnit, & Fung (2012) suggested that undergraduate student in Thailand needed the expertise and knowledge of the counsellors to provide guidance and counselling services including academic coping strategies to perform students' academic performance, identification of learning strategies, handling of inter-personal relation, along with self-understanding of the mind and body. It can be said that academic coping strategies provides by the counselor are assist students to perform well in their academic performance and help them to cope with other problems related to their academic performance issues.



Academic coping strategies can help undergraduate students to enhance their academic performance (Kadhiravan & Kumar, 2012). Academic coping strategies benefit undergraduate students in that they help the students cope with their academic problems, improve their class attendance, their participation, and their persistence, even when faced with setbacks or failure in general. In addition, these strategies will make them stronger and more resilient, and will eventually lead them to a much more positive learning experience (Aun, Kimira, Hern, & Ahmad, 2011). According to Sullivan (2010), academic coping strategies can help undergraduate students improve their academic performance through various factors of academic coping strategies, such as approach, avoidance, and social support. Furthermore, academic coping strategies can also be designed to help undergraduate students to cope with their life experiences, which include not only physical well-being, but also emotional, spiritual, and psychological well-being (MD Yasin & Dzulkifli, 2009). Kiatisak et al. (2009) also suggested that academic coping strategies, knowledge and personal attributes are major factors which can lead them to accomplish their academic achievement, secure advancement and to be more successful in their future life.

## **1.1 Background of the Study**

Higher education institutions (HEI) in Thailand were started in the 19th century. During the 1960s to 1990s, the Ministry of Thailand has formed many public universities through amalgamations of colleges or upgrades of colleges to universities. The higher education policies in Thailand were set towards making the new education system autonomous by 1997. The Thai government transformed Thai public universities to become autonomous public universities rather than governed

by the old bureaucratic system. Being autonomous public universities, means they are allowed to independently set their own regulation with regard to academic affair, administration of personnel, and to manage their budget and assets independently (Teerawut, 2011).

In Thailand, higher education is predominantly provided at public and private universities and colleges. Two distinct levels of educational attainment are provided, namely the diploma and the degree level. According to the Ministry of Education (2011), over 2.2 million students were enrolled in the higher education sector. The participation rates of university aged students have increased significantly over the last few years from an average of 26% to the current average of 40% (Thailand, Ministry of Education, 2011). In recent years, there has been a significant increase in higher education opportunities with the registration of 78 public universities and 89 private universities (Ministry of Education, Thailand, 2011).

The means for students' admission to the higher institutions in Thailand is the high school entrance examination, taken at the end of Mattayom 6 (Grade 12). The age of undergraduate students ranges from 19 to 22 years old (Ministry of Education, Thailand, 2008).

The Ministry of Education (2011) has introduced several strategies to help university students to cope with their academic performance. In addition, the Ministry also has provided them with more opportunities to express and actualize their natural talents and potentials. Besides, the Ministry also introduced developmental programmes to help them in handling their continued personal-social, career, and their educational development. The specific objective of Thailand's Eleventh National Economic and social Development Plan (2012-2016) which are related to academic coping strategies included the following:

1. To invest in efforts to raise the quality of academic strategies in addressing the issues of the development of teachers, curricula, instructional media, and information technology.
2. To increase academic excellence in teacher training by developing coping strategies to ensure quality and high moral standards among teachers.
3. To promote academic coping strategies by using information technology to enhance learning efficiency.
4. To develop coping strategies of higher of quality and standard at institutions of higher education.
5. To promote and improve regulations of academic coping strategies to support the decentralisation of educational administration and management to district education offices and academic institutions.
6. To encourage the practice of academic coping strategies in educational management (Thaiguide, 2012).

Considerable changes have been done to the structure of the management and administration of education in Thailand to support the key teaching and learning changes stipulated by the 1999 National Education Act. The Act and the National Education Plan (2012-2016) govern the administration and provision of education and training in Thailand. The underlying principles in the reform of the education system emphasised a unified policy, flexibility in implementation, decentralisation, quality assurance, and improvement in academic coping strategies in the professional education of teacher at higher level of education. In respect of academic coping strategies among undergraduate students, the Ministry of Education (2011) has planned and introduced the following strategies.

1. To promote academic coping strategies and develop Thai undergraduate students at the vocational and higher education to become professionals and modern citizens of the world living in a knowledge-based society, having diverse skills and become competitive in the global market.
2. To support academic coping strategies and create an intelligence capital for the nation.
3. To increase academic coping strategies in helping undergraduate student to perform well in their studies at the university level, both public and private Thai universities (Thaiguideance, 2012).

## **1.2 Statement of Problem**

Thai undergraduate students face academic problems because they lack academic strategies to help them cope with problems affecting their academic performance. This study aims to identify the academic coping strategies practiced by undergraduate students in Thailand. The following problems such as academic performance issue, emotional problem, English language problem, family problem (poor family income, broken family status, uncommunicative well with parents, high expectation from parents), and self-management problem faced by Thai undergraduate students and caused them to score low in their academic performance. The research reasonably shows a need to provide academic coping strategies to undergraduate students with academic performance issues, the emotional problem, English language problem, family problem (poor family income, broken family status, uncommunicative well with parents, high expectation from parents), self-

management problem that effected academic performance among undergraduate students.

**(a) Academic Performance Issue**

Academic are the main issue that cause undergraduate students to achieve low academic performance. Even though, the results of academic performance in this study (Table 1.1) showed that majority of undergraduate student scored high academic performance when they were studying third year of the study (semester 1/2014), 178 (24.7%) students achieved accumulative grade point average (CGPA) of 4.00 (A); 195 (27.08%) students achieved CGPA of 3.5 (B<sup>+</sup>); and 183 (22.78%) students achieved CGPA of 3.00 (B), it is probable that these students were cheated in their examination. Likewise, in a study of Young (2013), he found that Thai undergraduate students were cheating during their examination.

Young (2013) studied perspectives on cheating at Thai universities. One of the major problems facing Thai higher education at the university level is academic dishonesty. A survey of 106 undergraduate students of Phra Nakhon Si Autthaya Rajabhat University, the findings found that students have engaged in cheating. From the total students surveyed, 61 (52%) of them agreed that getting good grades is the most important part of education. Another 18 (17) % of the students agreed that cheating is okay if one does not get caught, and 27 (25 %) of students know others who have cheated in their tests.

Moreover, this study showed that the academic performance results (accumulative grade point average (CGPA)) of undergraduate students when they were second year of the study (semester 1/2013 and semester 2/2013) were not stable in each semester of the study. One hundred and thirty (18.06%) students who studies

semester 1/2013 achieved accumulative grade point average (CGPA) of 4.00 (A); 110 (15.28%) students achieved CGPA of 3.5 (B<sup>+</sup>); 148 (20.56%) students achieved CGPA of 3.00 (B), and 322 (44.73%) students achieved CGPA of 3.00 (C<sup>+</sup>). One hundred and ninety eight (27.50%) students who studies semester 2/2013 achieved accumulative grade point average (CGPA) of 4.00 (A); 142 (19.72%) students achieved CGPA of 3.5 (B<sup>+</sup>); 195 (27.08%) students achieved CGPA of 3.00 (B), and 185 (25.70%) students achieved CGPA of 3.00 (C<sup>+</sup>) (Table 1.1). It can be concluded that these students did not practice by using academic coping strategies or they were lacking academic coping strategies so they did not perform well with their academic performance. In addition, undergraduate students who participated in this study could not control their academic performance results and might not make it stable in each semester of the study because they lacked of social support coping strategy such as counsellors, parents, friends who provided them academic coping strategies. Table 1.1 shows the academic performance of undergraduate students (grade point average CGPA) according the universities.

Table 1.1  
*Academic Performance (Grade Point Average CGPA) among Undergraduate Students from two Universities in Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand According to Semester and Year of the Study*

| <b>Academic Performance (Grade Point Average: CGPA)</b> | <b>Semester 1/2013 (N =720)</b> | <b>%</b>   | <b>Semester 2/2013 (N = 720)</b> | <b>%</b>   | <b>Semester 1/2014 (N = 720)</b> | <b>%</b>   |
|---|---------------------------------|------------|----------------------------------|------------|----------------------------------|------------|
| 4.00 (A)  | 130                             | 18.06      | 198                              | 27.50      | 178                              | 24.72      |
| 3.50 (B <sup>+</sup> )                                  | 110                             | 15.28      | 142                              | 19.72      | 195                              | 27.08      |
| 3.00 (B)  | 148                             | 20.56      | 195                              | 27.08      | 183                              | 25.42      |
| 2.50 (C <sup>+</sup> )                                  | 332                             | 44.73      | 185                              | 25.70      | 164                              | 22.78      |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>720</b>                      | <b>100</b> | <b>720</b>                       | <b>100</b> | <b>720</b>                       | <b>100</b> |

**(b) Emotional Problem**

Emotional problem is one of the main issues among undergraduate students in Thailand. They are having stress because of their academic performance. Therefore, proper academic coping strategies can help these students to cope with stress and academic performance problems (Paitoon, 2012). Jedsatid and Kasetchai (2011) examined the factors affecting students' academic achievement at Prince of Songkla University. The aim of their study was to investigate the factors affecting academic achievement of undergraduate students who dropped into probation status. Proportional stratified sampling was employed among 390 undergraduate students from different programmes. Data were collected via questionnaires and interviews. Binary logistic regression was used to analyse factors affecting academic achievement of undergraduate students under probation condition. They found that gender was one of the factors affecting academic achievement besides stress, students' responsibility, and environmental factors.

Passakorn, Sujitra, and Chorlada (2009) studied on stress, factors affecting stress, and stress coping among 400 of the first to fourth year students in Prince of Songkla University. Their findings showed that academic and educational factors could significantly predict stress for undergraduate students with a coefficient of variation of 38.5% ( $p < .01$ ). Four academic coping strategies on academic performance problems related to stress were practiced. The strategies were the palliative coping behaviour, the emotive coping behaviour, the confrontive coping behaviour, and the subtractive coping behaviour. The study found that the undergraduates consulted their families and friends only if their coping strategy failed (Passakorn, Sujitra, & Chorlada, 2009).

**(c) English Language Problem**

English is the most popular foreign language taught in universities. Since the introduction of English language teaching, many substantial changes have been made to the curriculum to make Thailand's economy more competitive in the global market and to meet the international community's expectations and demands (Attapol, 2010). Undergraduate students in Thailand have communication problems because they lack English speaking strategies. Juan (2009) studied language learning strategies and English proficiency in a study of Thai-Chinese undergraduate programmes in Thailand. The purpose of was to investigate the use of language learning strategies by Thai-Chinese undergraduate students. Juan investigated the extent to which the students use language learning strategy categories in the Oxford Taxonomy and the relationship between the use of language learning strategies and English proficiency. Participants consisted of 254 Thai-Chinese undergraduate students (123 males and 131 females) in Assumption University, Thailand. The results showed that the Thai-Chinese students had English speaking problems. They lacked memorising strategy to remmber the English vocabulary, therefore they could not communicate in the class and they got low grades in English communication class.

**(d) Family Problem**

Thai undergraduate students faced of family problem, they did not score high in their academic performance because of some of them came from poor family income, their parent inadequate income. They needed to work for finding more money to pay for tuition fee so they have no time to study and read books for their examination (. In addition, a single-parent family can be traumatic and children



brought up in such family structure often suffer some emotional problems such as lack of warmth, love and disciplinary problems, which may hinder their academic performance (Uwaifo, 2012).

Furthermore, parents who have high expectation to their children, they are controlling their child by changing or pressuring him/her to do, think, or behave in particular ways. Students whose have parents highly controlling and structuring, they are more likely to promote non-self-determined (controlled) forms of learning motivation while providing no strong support for other positive to their children' s academic performance outcomes (Sittipan, 2012). Moreover, students who have kinds of parents instruction and these students performed low academic performance might result from lack to consultation or uncommunicative well with their parents (Anongpan, 2003).

Thai undergraduate students are claimed to be lacking in self-confidence, self-management, and social skills. This is because in Thai culture, parents have high expectation to their children to study starting from primary school level to university level. Undergraduate students are encouraged to pursue their studies in order to comply with Thai social norms and to gain a higher social status, which is often a ticket in moving to a better life style (Kiatisak et al., 2009). Students whose have parents give full support to their children and these parents become over strict and control to their study (Jedsarid & Kasetchai, 2011). When students had academic performance problems or other academic issues, they seemed lacking of self-confidence, self-management, and parent support so they could not cope up with their problems that they faced (Wichuda, 2013).

**(e) Self-Management Problem**

Simasathiansophon (2014) suggested that Thai undergraduate students have problem with the capability of being responsible for their own learning. Thitirat (2011) studied undergraduate students' opinions towards self-management in the faculty of Humanities at Kasetsart University, Thailand. The participants consisted of 302 second year to fourth year undergraduate students who registered for the second semester in 2009; the instrument used in this study was questionnaires about the undergraduates' opinions on their self-management. The study found that second year students have higher level of self-management problems than fourth year students. However, students with a GPA of 3.00-3.5 had lower self-management problems compared with students with lower GPA. In addition, Sasima & Apassa (2014) stated that students scored low in their academic performance because they are poor in their self-management and lacking time management, they failed in their study because they do not put enough effort and they are persistent in their study.

**1.3 Research Objective (ROs)**

The research objectives (ROs) of the study are as follows:

1.3.1 To examine Thai undergraduate students' academic performance.

1.3.2.1 To examine the differences and similarities of academic coping strategies among undergraduate students.

1.3.2.2 To examine the factors of academic coping strategy that led students to practice by using academic coping strategies.

1.3.3.1 To examine the types of academic coping strategy practiced by the males students in helping them to cope with their academic problems.

- 1.3.3.2 To examine the types of academic coping strategy practiced by the female students in helping them to cope with their academic problems.
- 1.3.4.1 To examine the types of academic coping strategy practiced by undergraduate students in relation to their academic performance.
- 1.3.4.2 To examine the types of academic coping strategy practiced by undergraduate students at Walailak University.
- 1.3.4.3 To examine the types of academic coping strategy practiced by undergraduate students at Ratchamangala University.
- 1.3.5.1 To examine the types of academic coping strategy practiced by undergraduate students at Ratchamangala University in relation to their academic performance.
- 1.3.5.2 To examine the types of academic coping strategy practiced by undergraduate students at Walailak University in relation to their academic performance.
- 1.3.6.1 To examine how Thai male undergraduate students do practice their academic coping strategies to perform in their academic performance.
- 1.3.6.2 To examine how Thai female undergraduate students do practice their academic coping strategies to perform in their academic performance.

#### **1.4 Research Questions (RQs)**

The research questions (RQs) are as follows:

- 1.4.1 What is the Thai undergraduate students' academic performance?
  - 1.4.2.1 What are the differences and similarities of their academic coping strategies among undergraduate students?
  - 1.4.2.2 What are the factors of academic coping strategy that led students to practice by using academic coping strategies?

- 1.4.3.1 What is the types of academic coping strategy practiced by the male students in helping them to cope with their academic problems?
- 1.4.3.2 What is the types of academic coping strategy practiced by the female students in helping them to cope with their academic problems?
- 1.4.4.1 What are the types of academic coping strategy practiced by undergraduate students in relation to their academic performance?
- 1.4.4.2 What are the types of academic coping strategy practiced by undergraduate students at Walailak University?
- 1.4.4.3 What are the types of academic coping strategy practiced by undergraduate students at Ratchamangala University?
- 1.4.5.1 What are the types of academic coping strategy practiced by undergraduate students at Ratchamangala University in relation to their academic performance?
- 1.4.5.2 What are the types of academic coping strategy practiced by undergraduate students at Walailak University in relation to their academic performance?
- 1.4.6.1 How do male undergraduate students practice their academic coping strategies to perform in their academic performance?
- 1.4.6.2 How do female undergraduate students practice their academic coping strategies to perform in their academic performance?

## **1.5 Research Hypotheses**

This study seeks to examine the implement of academic coping strategy scales providing by counsellors and it effectiveness. So the opinion of the university management, parents and general public, students personnel (lecturer/counsellor/academic advisor/mentor) involved in this implement of

academic coping strategy scales provided to students in helping them to perform in their academic performance are important. Thus the following hypotheses are set to be tested in this research.

**Hypothesis 1 (H<sub>01</sub>)**

There is no significant difference in the opinion of the students about the effectiveness of the approach coping strategy practiced by undergraduate students in helping them to perform their academic performance.

**Hypothesis 2 (H<sub>02</sub>)**

There is no significant difference in the opinion of the students about the effectiveness of the avoidance coping strategy in helping them to perform their academic performances.

**Hypothesis 3 (H<sub>03</sub>)**

There is no significant difference in the opinion of the students about the effectiveness of the social support coping strategy in helping them to perform their academic performance.

**Hypothesis 4 (H<sub>04</sub>)**

There is no significant difference in the opinion of the male students on the effectiveness of the approach coping strategy in helping them to cope with their academic problems.

**Hypothesis 5 (H<sub>05</sub>)**

There is no significant difference in the opinion of the male students about the effectiveness of the avoidance coping strategy in helping them to cope with their academic problems.

**Hypothesis 6 (H<sub>06</sub>)**

There is no significant difference in the opinion of the male students about the effectiveness of the social support coping strategy in helping them to cope with their academic problems.

**Hypothesis 7 (H<sub>07</sub>)**

There is no significant difference in the opinion of the female students about the effectiveness of the approach academic coping strategy in helping them to cope with their academic problems.

**Hypothesis 8 (H<sub>08</sub>)**

There is no significant difference in the opinion of the female students about the effectiveness of the avoidance coping strategy in helping them to cope with their academic problems.

**Hypothesis 9 (H<sub>09</sub>)**

There is no significant difference in the opinion of the female students about the effectiveness of the social support coping strategy in helping them to cope with their academic problems.

**Hypothesis 10 ( $H_{10}$ )**

There is no any significant difference in the opinion of undergraduate students about the effectiveness of the approach coping strategy in relation to their academic performance.

**Hypothesis 11 ( $H_{11}$ )**

There is no any significant difference in the opinion of undergraduate students about the effectiveness of avoidance coping strategy in relation to their academic performance.

**Hypothesis 12 ( $H_{12}$ )**

There is no any significant difference in the opinion of undergraduate students about the effectiveness of social support coping strategy in relation to their academic performance.

**Hypothesis 13 ( $H_{13}$ )**

There is no any difference in the opinion of undergraduate students at Ratchamangala University about the effectiveness of approach coping strategy in helping them to cope with their academic problems.

**Hypothesis 14 ( $H_{14}$ )**

There is no any difference in opinion of undergraduate students at Ratchamangala University about the effectiveness of avoidance coping strategy in helping them to cope with their academic problems.

**Hypothesis 15 (H<sub>15</sub>)**

There is no any difference in the opinion of undergraduate students at Ratchamangala University about the effectiveness of social support coping strategy in helping them to cope with their academic problems.

**Hypothesis 16 (H<sub>16</sub>)**

There is no any difference in the opinion of undergraduate students at Walailak University about the effectiveness of approach coping strategy in helping them to cope with their academic problems.

**Hypothesis 17 (H<sub>17</sub>)**

There is no any difference in the opinion of undergraduate students at Walailak about the effectiveness of avoidance coping strategy in helping them to cope with their academic problems.

**Hypothesis 18 (H<sub>18</sub>)**

There is no any difference in the opinion of undergraduate students at Walailak University about the effectiveness of social support coping strategy in helping them to cope with their academic problems.

**Hypothesis 19 (H<sub>19</sub>)**

There is no any significant difference in the opinion of undergraduate students at Ratchamangala University about the effectiveness of approach coping strategy in helping them to cope with their academic problems.



**Hypothesis 20 ( $H_{20}$ )**

There is no any significant difference in opinion of undergraduate students at Ratchamangala University about the effectiveness of avoidance coping strategy in helping them to cope with their academic problems.

**Hypothesis 21 ( $H_{21}$ )**

There is no any significant difference in opinion undergraduate students at Ratchamangala University about the effectiveness of social support coping strategy in helping them to cope with their academic problems.

**Hypothesis 22 ( $H_{22}$ )**

There is no any significant difference in the opinion of undergraduate students at Walailak University about the effectiveness of approach coping strategy.

**Hypothesis 23 ( $H_{23}$ )**

There is no any significant difference in the opinion of undergraduate students at Walailak University about the effectiveness of avoidance coping strategy in relation to their academic performance.

**Hypothesis 24 ( $H_{24}$ )**

There is no any significant difference in the opinion of undergraduate students at Walailak University about the effectiveness of social support coping strategy in relation to their academic performance.

## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

Academic performance problems among undergraduate students in Thailand have alarmed the government, lecturers, counsellors, parents, and other prompt them to intervene and identify the causes/factors to find solutions to cope with these problems with utmost condition. Academic coping strategy scales provided by the counsellor have three strategies: They are approach, avoidance and social support. These academic coping strategies help students to cope with their academic performance issue, emotional problem, English language problem, family problem (a broken family, poor family background), self-management problem and various problems affected undergraduate students' academic performance outcome.

The study of academic coping strategies among undergraduate students in Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand is significant because the aim is to identify the students' academic performance issue and whether the present academic coping strategies practiced by these students will help the government, lecturers, and counsellors prevent and intervene to help undergraduate student to cope with their academic performance issue.

In addition, this study would helpful to the following authorities:

### **(a) The Ministry of Education in Thailand (MoE)**

The Ministry of Education in Thailand is the authoritative body to design and implement the educational policies in Thailan. By referring to the output of this study, the MOE can improve undergraduate students' academic performance and the quality of education by changing the attitude of students towards learning, facilitating students, and improving the teaching procedures (Mushtaq & Khan, 2012). In addition, administrators can help in developing universities in Thailand to

become institutions of quality, which will provide the highest benefit to the learners, institutions of higher learning, besides teaching standard in higher education. Furthermore, administrators can enhance their functions with the participation of students, teachers, instructors, parents, and communities.

**(b) The University Management**

The university management may utilize the findings of the study to design systematic academic coping strategies among undergraduates. The results of this study would also provide useful information regarding academic performance among undergraduate students. Moreover, this information could be useful to university management to examine how helpful these academic coping strategies are in improving the academic performance of undergraduate students in Thailand. Academic coping strategies are provided to first year students to improve their academic performance. Finally, the information obtained from this study can be used to assist students as they prepare themselves in their transition from the secondary school environment to the higher education environment (Ballentine, 2010).

**(c) Parents and the General Public**

Parents and the general public will be able to help undergraduate students to develop to their fullest potential, in accordance with their aptitude, interests and capabilities; the students can learn how to acquire knowledge, they will be happier in studying, thus they will love to continue their process of life-long learning. Parents will recognise and realize their children's aptitudes, interests, abilities, and potentials in learning; and thus understand their roles in providing support and encouragement to their children's learning. Therefore, they will be happy to contribute to the

development of their children's education and learning. The public will have people endowed with quality, potential and responsibility for the development of community, society, and country. Society and the nation will be endowed with people who have virtue, quality, and the potential to further develop the country (Chantana, 2002).

**(d) Students Personnel (Lecturer/Counsellor/Academic Advisor/Mentor)**

Student's personnel such as lecturers, counsellors, academic advisors, and mentors can provide special programmes and packages to help the undergraduates with new knowledge and to understand them better when they provided academic coping strategies and study skills to undergraduate students. When the students are provided with new experiences, they can improve their academic performance. On the other hand, when these staff members of the students' department put the academic coping strategies into practice with the students, they will eventually become professionals in the implementation of academic coping strategies. The members of staff who are more empathetic can serve as good mentors, advisors, and provide support to undergraduate students facing academic performance problems. It is imperative that academic coping strategies, time management and examination management need to be taught to students during their studying class (Mysorekar, 2012).

**1.7 Limitations of the Study**

This study focuses on the Thai undergraduate students. Thus, it has some limitations, which can be enumerated as follows:

First, the study is focused only on academic coping strategies in two public universities in Nakhon Si Thammarat, Thailand, namely Ratchamangala University and Walailak University. Thus, the results of this study should not be generalised to all public universities in Thailand.

Second, this study is restricted to only male and female of second year undergraduate students from the two public universities in Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand. Thus, the results need to be carefully interpreted if they were to be generalised to students of different levels of study or students of the same level but from other universities, public or private.

Third, the result of this study is limited to undergraduate students from two public universities in Nakhon Si Thammarat, Thailand. Consequently, the results should not be generalized to universities in other provinces Thailand.

## **1.8 Definition of Terms**

To avoid any misinterpretations of the important expressions and terminologies used in this research, this section provides the clarification of the major definitions and their intended meanings.

### **1.8.1 Basic Concepts**

#### **(a) Coping Strategy**

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) have been most influential in conceptualising the concept of coping. They defined coping as “constantly changing cognitive and behavioural efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person” (p.141). Hood and

Carruthers (2002) suggested that the definition of coping strategy consists of three parts. The first definition holds the view that the notion of coping efforts are constantly changing, that it would be necessary for people to learn a variety of possible coping strategies. This means that they need to learn to assess the situation in order to determine which strategies might work best in different situations. The second definition believes that the issues that give rise to the need for coping may originate outside of the person or from within the person; thus, facilitating improved coping may include examining the appraisal process (the assessment of the demands of the situation) as well as the teaching of coping strategies. Finally, coping is seen to be context specific and thus, the process of coping is a function of the connection between the person and his or her environment.

**(b) Academic Coping Strategy Scale (ACSS)**

Sullivan (2010) suggested that the successful students use more adaptive strategies and they think about ways to actively handle the challenges they face. The three factors of academic coping strategy scales include Approach, Avoidance, and Social Support (Sullivan, 2010).

**(c) Undergraduate Students**

Thai undergraduate students refer to students (18-23 years old) who have been registered in a Thai university (first year to fourth year) (Ministry of Education, Thailand, 2008).

### **1.8.2 Operational Definitions**

The terms used in this research are defined as follows, unless otherwise stated.

#### **(a) Coping Strategy**

Coping strategy in this context refers to the action taken by the undergraduate students to solve problems they face in their study. The problems include family, social, emotional, and self-management.

#### **(b) Academic Coping Strategy Scale (ACSS)**

Academic coping strategy scale is the way how the undergraduate students try to solve their academic problems during their study in the university. In this study, academic coping strategies refer to the approach coping strategy, avoidance coping strategy, and social support coping strategy.

#### **(c) Undergraduate Students**

In this study, undergraduate students refer to the Thai undergraduate students who are studying in the two universities in Nakhon Si Thammarat province, Thailand. Specifically, they are second year students whose ages range from 18 to 20 years old, and are studying in Ratchamangala University and Walailak University.

### **1.9 Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework in this study is to explore independent variable (Academic Performance Issue, Emotional Problem, English Language Problem, Family Problem, and Self-management Problem), do practice academic coping