ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Embarking on a PhD journey is akin to navigating a vast ocean, where each wave represents a new challenge, and every storm a test of resilience. Yet, amidst the turbulent waters, lie hidden treasures of knowledge, waiting to be unearthed with determination and perseverance. As I reflect on my Ph.D. journey, I am filled with gratitude towards the individuals who have played pivotal roles in shaping my academic path. From my dedicated supervisor, whose guidance has been invaluable, to the supportive friends who have stood by me through every challenge, I am immensely thankful for their unwavering encouragement and wisdom. With heartfelt appreciation, I would like to express my gratitude in detail to those who have contributed to my PhD study.

First and foremost, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Anchalee Wannaruk, who has provided me with exceptionally effective guidance, offering thought-provoking instruction, invaluable encouragement, and constructive feedback on numerous drafts of my dissertation. Despite her demanding role as the dean of Institute of Social Technology, she consistently made time to tutor me, even during her off-work hours, patiently addressing all my inquiries. I also appreciate the relative independence she afforded me while keeping me on track, enabling my growth while ensuring that I aligned with my research goals.

I owe immense gratitude to my thesis committee members: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Adisa Teo (served as chair) from Prince of Songkla University, Asst. Prof. Wirada Amnuai, from Rajamangala University of Technology Isan, Asst. Prof. Dr. Athip Thumvichit, from Mahidol University and Dr. Jitpanat Suwanthep, from Suranaree university of Technology. But for their constructive comments and insightful suggestions, this dissertation would be of far inferior quality.

I am also greatly indebted to my teachers in Suranaree University of Technology (SUT): Asst. Prof. Dr. Adcharawan Buripakdi, Asst. Prof. Dr. Sirinthorn Seepho, Asst. Prof. Dr. Issra Pramoolsook, Dr. Suksan Suppasetseree, Prof. Dr. Andrew Lian, to name just a few. They are like sturdy trees, selflessly nurturing students, providing guidance and support without seeking anything in return. Their dedication to academic excellence also has left a profound impact on me. I am determined to carry forward their spirit in my own endeavors.

I am deeply thankful to my participants for their contribution to data collection and my inter-coders for meticulously coding the data, ensuring the accuracy and reliability of the findings. Their dedication and collaboration were invaluable to the success of this study.

I would also like to extend a special note of gratitude to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Lin Deng, whose research has been a constant source of inspiration for me. His generous assistance and support have been invaluable throughout my academic journey. My sincere gratitude also goes to those who helped me a lot and make my life in SUT easier and happier including my classmates (e.g., Hay, Mei He…), my friends working with same supervisor (e.g., Huimin Shi, Xia, Seth, Tom), my seniors (Yiming Zhang, Huashan Lu, Zhongmin Li…), my Chinese friends in SUT (Kai Xu, Meng Huang, Lin Zhao, Xiaofang Zhang, Angela…), my colleagues (Prof. Dr. Xingbin Tian and Prof. Dr. Huahong Rao), and my students (e.g., Yin Zhang, Shirong Long…).

Last but not least, deepest thanks are also expressed to my family for their love, understanding, encouragement and support throughout my PhD study. They have been the sturdy anchor in the tempest of my academic pursuits, their unwavering support akin to the unwavering lighthouse guiding me through turbulent seas. Gratitude extends to all those whom I am unable to individually name due to space constraints.

Xue Luo