

Selection of a Graduate Thesis Topic in a Multicultural Educational Environment

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Abstract

This article presents a case study, performed at Blekinge Institute of Technology (BTH), Sweden, about the topic selection routines for a graduate thesis. The study focuses on the international graduate students who are having different academic cultures of their respective countries. Given that BTH has succeeded in the provision of an academic environment that has been efficient in absorbing different academic cultures in a productive manner at a reasonably good scale. However, in a multi-cultural educational environment, it is a challenge for most international students to adapt to the new academic culture and select the graduate thesis topic according to their real potential. Our findings gathered through an online survey, questionnaire, and focus group discussion is presented. The conclusions indicate, albeit, BTH has well defined routines for the thesis selection, the international graduate students face problems at the stage of thesis selection. The article concludes with suggestions to refine the thesis selection process at the micro level to help both students and staff.

1. Introduction

A common challenge faced by the graduate students in the final year of graduate studies, i.e., master degree, is the selection of a topic for their degree thesis. This is one of the most important decisions, which a graduate student makes at the ending phase of his/her academic career [2]. Most of the students at this stage are highly ambitious to accept the challenges pertaining to their studies and upcoming practical life as they are on the verge of academic and career life. The selection of thesis topic may have a direct relation with their plans [5]. At Blekinge Institute of Technology (BTH), many international students are coming from different backgrounds, academic cultures, and social norms; we believe that the choice of thesis topic is affected by all these factors. Many students face problem in either selecting their topic or realizing their intrinsic interests. Selection of an inappropriate (not matching their skills or interests) thesis topic may result in a situation where either the students is not able to fulfill the requirements of a good thesis or try to compromise the quality of work. To understand the graduate thesis selection process for students, a study has been performed at BTH during the spring semester of 2012. The results provide pointers that can help both the students and teachers to improve the thesis selection process and quality of the outcome.

Outline

The remainder of the article is organized as follows: Section 2 discusses the background, and related work. Section 3 presents the BTH routines for preparing the students and graduate thesis selection routine. Section 4 discusses our strategy and tools used to address the problem. In Section 5, the results are discussed and analyzed. Finally, Section 6 concludes the work with recommendations to improve the thesis selection process.

2. Background

The Swedish higher education system was reformed in 1977. The state imposed a uniform system of education, which constituted all postsecondary education in a single system. These reforms brought many changes in the Swedish education system as well as attracted the attention of international students in Swedish Universities. Since then, international students constitute a large part of the student population in Sweden. More than 16,000 non-European students were registered in Swedish universities for the academic year 2009-2010 [1], both at undergraduate and graduate level. The percentage of international students seeking research degrees doubled from the mid-1990 to 2005 [6]. Since 1977, because of changes, the Swedish higher education system has gone through many improvements and adaptations. The Swedish Government Bill "*Ett lyft för forskning och innovation*" (2008) or "A Boost for Research and Innovation" (translation obtained from Google Translator {<http://translate.google.com/>}) regulated the allocation of resources to the universities based on a set of quality indicators and number of students. The quality indicators mainly concern the academic research. Hence, the research publications and their impact / citations have been granted by incentives [6].

The graduate students at Swedish universities, as a part of their degree are required to demonstrate their analytical abilities by applying their knowledge for solving a particular problem in the form of a master's degree thesis. The research task is also supported by the students' literary and/or quantitative skills. The students learn these skills during the study of different opted courses where students are required to apply either qualitative or quantitative skills or both skills for solving class level problems. However, for addressing an original problem and to contribute in existing knowledge, these skills acquire new meanings and involve both intellectual and perhaps emotional stake of the students. Students also reinforce other necessary skills such as organizing, planning, collaboration, and time management. At emotional level students either feel satisfaction if they proceed and see their contribution or the thesis becomes an endure activity for them. The outcome of such a degree thesis is normally a thesis report which explains the research work done. For a quality research work by the student, an optional by-product is to publish the results of the thesis as an article in a conference or a journal. However, before all this process, the question of selecting a topic for the thesis remains vexed for all the students. Albeit ambitious, students face trouble in finalizing a topic. There are different factors that may affect the process of finding a thesis topic for a particular student. For many graduate students, the topic selection is a laborious, stressful, and time-consuming [5]. The factors affecting topic selection vary from person to person depending upon their background, social circle, and previous learning experiences [4]. One of the main influencing factors may be the interest developed in specific subject or domain after attending a particular course or series of courses.

A large number of international graduate students, in Sweden, are from Asian countries such as China, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Iran. For this particular study, students from China, India, Iran and Pakistan have participated. These students have been raised in an educational system where teachers are mainly responsible for suggesting thesis topics. In China at the graduate level, single teacher is responsible for taking all the academic decisions for the student during his/her whole tenure of graduate studies. At the end of studies, in most of cases, the teacher suggests a topic. The graduate student may or may not be interested in that particular topic, however, student opt to work on it just to finish the degree. In India, Pakistan and Iran, the culture is different in the sense that single teacher is not selected as mentor, however, at the end of under-graduate or graduate studies, students either bring their own idea or (in most cases) work on the idea given by teacher that may or may not be of their particular interest. In a way students may not be affected by different factors for choice of their thesis topic as they follow the steps laid down by the teachers.

The educational culture in Sweden is different in the respect that at graduate level, students are expected to drive their educational progress. At the end of their studies, it is expected that a student using his/her analytical skill shall develop an idea of his/her genuine interest. However, this is not the optimal case as the students from the different background may not be accustomed to this norm and still expect the teacher to produce a thesis topic for them. It has been observed as a common practice among students to visit different teachers and discuss different options. This is done by initiating an email from the students to different teachers, in which students introduce themselves and ask for appointment to discuss thesis topic. In most cases, students come without any preparation and directly ask the teacher about some topic.

If teacher is already having a topic, he/she evaluates the students by using different tools such as by asking questions or giving a small task. In this process, student and teachers both may make an optimistic judgment about the required skills, which may turn into delayed thesis or poor quality thesis.

Another option executed by the students, especially those students who are planning to have their career in the industry, is to find an industrial thesis in some company outside the university. Because of industrial thesis, students get hands on experience of working in industry. Their respective companies evaluate the student's thesis and evaluate the students' performance. In many cases, students who produce good quality thesis are offered jobs in the industry also. The best way to find an industrial thesis is either to contact different industries or to follow the bulletins of different companies. In some cases, different teachers also offer thesis with the collaboration of industry. However same problem also exists that students may not be genuinely interested in the topic, which may create the antagonistic effect both for student and teacher at later stages.

As it can be seen, the problem at hand is multi-fold. The international graduate students have a variety of academic backgrounds in general and different routines of the degree thesis in particular. The Swedish education system sustains the academic freedom to absorb different academic cultures; at the same time, the university administration (especially) and academic staff is keen about the quality indices introduced by the Government [6]. It is a common practice from both stakeholders to take necessary measures in this regard. Given the fact that there has been practical efforts at BTH to make the students acquainted with what is expected from them while the selection of their degree thesis (e.g., Research Methodology course, described later),

the international students still face problems in the selection of a topic for a graduate thesis. In this article, the factors which affect the topic selection at student level, are indicated.

Related Work

A discussion on successful strategies of finding a topic for a thesis and critical factors affecting the students' selection of a thesis topic has been presented in [2]. In broad terms, students either just do a thesis on a topic provided by some advisor or they choose a thesis topic themselves in consultation with some scholar. Senior researchers may indicate a particular research area which needs further exploration and they may also suggest students to do their thesis as a part of their ongoing big project work. Students who want to find a topic themselves; they should visit the library repositories to find potential research topics by reading thesis reports and dissertations found in there. They may also read journals and conference proceedings in their area of interest. Secondary sources of literature such as text books on the relevant field and reviews of the latest research should also be considered for topic selection of a thesis. Students are also advised to get in touch with researchers of their field of interest through email and telephone etc. for receiving guidance. A number of factors influencing the selection of thesis topic have been listed such as ongoing research topics in the related faculty, students' familiarity and interest towards a certain topic, future trends in some area and research time line and funding.

In reference [3], the author has put forward some objective considerations which should be met while deciding a thesis topic. He argues that a dissertation is tractable if the following aspects of a thesis have been accounted for. First the concept of "reach" is achieved which is meant as the deliberation performed to define the scope of the thesis in terms of its length. The second important concern is the availability of the data required for the completion of a certain thesis. Last crucial consideration is the clarity of the problem at hand. We observed the significance of these factors in our research work also.

Many researchers have investigated and suggested a list of factors which can help the students in making the decision about topic choice [2]. However, it has not been investigated what are factors which influence the choice of students in computer science or engineering. This study aims to present the common influential factors among a specific group of students at a similar level in two different schools for the choice of thesis topic.

Efforts at BTH

According to HSV act (prop. 2009/10:139) on ensuring quality in higher education, which is put in action in 2011, resource allocation related to graduate degree was made dependent on the quality of the education offered at an institute. The quality is measured by three factors. These factors are 'Theses and reports', 'Questionnaires and Interviews' and 'Self-evaluation'. The new system of quality applies both to bachelor and master degrees. In order to prepare students for producing high quality theses, Swedish universities have already started introducing improvement measures. Moreover, there have been some collaborative works between universities to improve the current state. One such example is the cooperative work done by software engineering (SE) departments at two Swedish universities, i.e., BTH and Chalmers Tekniska Högskola (CTH). In May 2011, a seminar is conducted in Gothenburg to share the strategies adopted at both universities [8]. It is argued that out of the three quality evaluation measures given above; quality of theses work is the most important in judging the overall quality of a degree program. Guidelines for the process of thesis work done at BTH (developed

during 2007-2009) is considered clear on the basis of the mechanism of quality assurance of thesis work under supervisor, examiner and faculty reviewer. This system of guidelines at BTH is called VBMA (Swedish equivalent to: The World's Best Thesis). The rubrics for quality criteria and levels for thesis proposal and report is also shared. The aim of the system has been to align the grading process at BTH with that of the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education (SNAH). Moreover, it is presented that improvement in quality is initially adopted at SE department and the system was to be adopted BTH-wide in 2011. The results of changes at BTH level are yet to be seen. In accordance with such ongoing activities at administration level, the conduction of such study under the concepts of pedagogy is felt productive, mainly to find some recommendations on the basis of feedback from the current students at BTH.

3. Graduate thesis at BTH

Pre-thesis Preparation

At BTH graduate students get the opportunity to improve their writing skills by writing project reports for some of the selected courses. The course responsible (main teacher of the course) usually suggests a template for report writing which acquaints the students with the process of documenting technical work within a specified framework. Moreover, in addition to the report, students are also required to deliver a presentation for their classmates and teacher. During the presentation, students are expected to defend the work by answering the questions from the audience. However it is worth to note that such routines teach students a part of the research process.

In an effort to improve research skills among the graduate students, Research Methodology (RM) course has been introduced as a mandatory course for master programs in both schools. This course has been under different revisions to meet different challenges [7]. The main objective of the course is to provide an in-depth knowledge of research activities such as scientific methods and scientific approach to the students. During this course, students are expected to do a course project, which consists of the following components:

1. Find a valid research topic.
2. Complete the research work within the stipulated period in collaboration with the partner/s (other students).
3. Write about the work performed in a suggested standard format such as IEEE or ACM article formats.
4. Present the work to an audience for independent evaluation and defend the project.

The overarching objective of this particular course is to prepare graduate students for their degree thesis. Even if the students are from different academic backgrounds, ideally, this course unifies them under the umbrella of a Swedish paradigm of research. Hence, there should not be any issue for students to find a research topic for the degree thesis and follow research process. Unfortunately, it has been observed that this is not the case in reality. The effectiveness of RM course has also been investigated in this study.

Thesis selection routine at BTH

The general routines of thesis selection at BTH (under the guidelines given in VBMA) are given below for reference, however minor details may vary such as the thesis routine in the School of Computing (www.bth.se/com/dv2512) are different from that of the School of Engineering.

1. A list of supervisors is announced.
2. Student finds a potential supervisor from the announced list of supervisors and communicates with him/her.
3. If supervisor agrees to supervise, go to next step; otherwise go back to the second step again.
4. If any specific research topic is not announced by the supervisor then different topics are discussed between the supervisor and the student. Sometime students may have their own ideas or supervisor may have different suggestions. A topic is finalized by discussion. However it has been observed that generally in discussions, supervisor plays a dominate role.
5. The student works on the finalized topic and prepares a proposal.
6. When the proposal is finalized, it is sent to the faculty reviewer and the examiner who provide their feedback.
7. Research work for thesis is completed under the guidance of supervisor, when the work is finished it is sent to the supervisor, examiner, faculty reviewer, and opponents.
8. Thesis is presented and defended in public.
9. Students fix the problems identified by opponents, audience, faculty reviewer, and examiner and submit the final copy of thesis.

The above-mentioned steps are ideal steps for an ideal situation; however, the reality is different. A supervisor can supervise maximum up to five groups and these groups are allocated quickly. Many students do not get the supervisor from their interested area. This hinders the quality of thesis. On the other hand, the supervisor may consider that work is done up to the mark and allow the students to defend their work. However, faculty reviewer may disagree with the supervisor; in such cases, students suffer most and questions about the whole process are raised.

4. Investigation

To investigate the problem at hand, we decided to address the problem in three steps, i.e., an online pilot survey, a questionnaire based survey and a focus group discussion. At every step we narrowed down our results and focused more towards the causes of the problem. Online survey helped us to define the boundaries of collage. Questionnaire helped us to explore different factors and understand the nature and core reasons of the problem. The third tool, i.e., focus group discussion helped us to look at the problem from different angles and on more focused details.

Online pilot survey

In the online survey, the international students who were enrolled in the RM course were asked open ended questions to reflect on their thoughts. In response to the first question, most of the students were unable to understand the objective of the question and contrary replied by stating what they need for writing a thesis. It was difficult to deduce any appropriate related

information/results from the answers provided by the students. The second question, however, had a better response and students considered it objectively while replying. However, results were not enough to get insight into different academic cultures and understand the problem in question. It was observed that we might need to ask the same question through different angles to get the appropriate response. Based on the lessons learnt from the online survey, a questionnaire was formulated (see the appendix) which sets the grounds for the outcomes of this study.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire is a form of a research instrument that is used to collect data which can be statistically analyzed. Sir Francis Galton presented the idea of the questionnaire in the 18th century. A questionnaire contains a series of questions. The benefit of using questionnaire is that information is collected in standardized format and that makes it easy to interpret. The questionnaire for this particular study contains dichotomous, nominal-polytomous, and open ended questions.

The questions given in the questionnaire can be divided into 4 sub-groups. The questions in the first group focus on gathering the background of students before the thesis. Another purpose of these questions is to evaluate the suitability of students for the thesis. Questions 1, 2, 5, and 6 are included this group. The second group of questions collects information that how thesis selection from the students is performed. Question 3, 4, 6-11, 13, and 16-17 are included in this group. Third group of questions collects the information about the factors affecting the thesis selection. Questions 6-10, 12, 14, 18 and 19 are included in this group. The fourth and last group is about the training for thesis in BTH. This group contains questions specific to RM course. This group contains Q.20 and has three parts.

Focus group discussion

The focus group discussion was performed to validate the results extracted from the survey and questionnaire. There were 60 participants in total. 30 master course students from each school participated in the questionnaire-based survey. In the school of computing, one-third of the total participants were from Pakistan. In the school of engineering, 6-7 participants from each country participated in the questionnaire. Afterward a subset of two students from each country was made for the focus group discussion in each school. The time given to each focus group was 30 minutes and thesis authors participated as observer and moderator.

5. Results and Discussion

The result of questionnaire and the focus group discussion are presented below, divided by the country of the students:

From India

A majority of this group had started their Master's degree in BTH right after completion of the Bachelor's degree. It was common practice in their academic culture to do a Bachelor's degree thesis on the topic/ problem suggested by their teacher. They were not in practice of developing their own idea for a degree thesis.

Nonetheless, after having trained at BTH for a while, an improvement was observed in students as they indicated that a specific order of courses has been followed by them to enhance their knowledge in a particular field. Moreover, they were willing to define their own topic. However, many of them were still willing to follow the old practice and described that they would do a master degree thesis on a topic suggested by some teacher. As far as the training course RM offered at BTH was concerned, they were having a mixed response about it. In their view, the course was very helpful in strengthening their research skills. The general impression about the course was as “It taught them actually how to start their research work, e.g., for doing their master degree thesis”. In contrast, some of them were very critical about the book and theoretical concepts in it. This group of students argued that they had to spend extra time for memorizing the stuff which was not of use for them in their studies.

From Iran

Similarly to the Indian students, Iranian students are studying master programs after earning a Bachelor's degree in Iran. However, quite different from their Indian counterparts, they followed three different routines for their Bachelor degree thesis. First routine was to select a topic which was their own and not merely suggested by the teacher/supervisor. The other routine was to finalize a topic by having discussions with the teacher. The last routine was to work on a topic suggested by the teacher. They showed a similar strategy of studying subjects in a given order to achieve expertise in a particular field. They were willing to finish their degree by doing a thesis in the same field. Iranian students indicated that their friends and teachers can help them in finding and selection of thesis topic. They also seem to be reluctant in doing a thesis project based entirely on their own idea. About the feedback for the RM course, they also had mixed opinion that whether this course was useful for strengthening their research skills or not. As the case with Indian students, the text book was not popular in this group.

From Pakistan

The perspective of students from Pakistan was different from other students. The choice of thesis in their previous degree can be clearly divided into three groups, their own idea, an idea provided by a teacher or a thesis selected from a list of announced topics. In Pakistan, it is a common practice that a list of projects on different topics is announced from different supervisors. Students may select the topic of their choice. Another difference from other of students is that most of the students in this group have job/industrial experience. Due to their exposure of practical fields, they have different expectations from BTH and adopt different approach in selection of topic for their final thesis. Most of students are interested in a project that can be carried out with industrial collaboration or they can publish their work so later on they can secure academic positions such as graduate studies.

Regarding the influence of the RM course, the response is based on different factors. To the students of engineering and computer science, RM does not seem to be very useful. However, a subset of CS student from software engineering department, have appreciated the course and

found it very helpful. In general, students are willing to take a course which can help them in enhancing their independent thinking, critical thinking and decision making abilities. A lot of suggestions ranging from the course contents to the teacher's feedback and examinations have been given by students.

From China

The group of students from China represents a special subset of students who are entirely different from previously mentioned groups. They share similarities with other groups only with respect to the background aspect that they arrived in Sweden after finishing undergraduate or graduate studies. Chinese students are from a background where they have strict hierarchical academic system, and a teacher is considered ultimate authority for decision in the academic matters. When a Chinese student completes his/her undergraduate studies, he/she needs to compete in a national competitive exam. After passing the national exam, he/she have to compete in the university exam (where they are willing to get admitted).

After crossing the barriers, students attend seminar in which different teachers (mostly professors or senior researchers) give presentations about their areas of interest. Students select the teacher and if the teacher also accepts the student, he/she serves a mentor throughout the graduate education. At this level, the mentor decides about the subjects or tracks and the students follow the directions. In the Chinese educational system, it is more important to follow instructions and directions given by their mentor than anything else as he/she is the sole authority to decide on completion of the degree. When students from China enter a system where they are expected think independently and critically, they face problems. With the passage of time, they learn the required characteristics. However, at the time of topic selections for their thesis, most of them get reluctant and expect to be guided by a teacher. The group of students from China also faced problem in understanding the objective of RM course and its contents.

Conclusion

This study presents the problem of thesis selection for master students at BTH. We have used three different methods including online survey, questionnaire and focus group discussion to investigate and understand the root cause of the problem. For this particular study, it was observed that a majority of the international students (participants) were from an academic culture where the teacher had the responsibility of guiding the students in all respects and the students followed their instructions. In some cases students disliked the suggestions of the teacher or were not interested in the suggested topic. However, these students followed their instructions in spite of disliking the topic. During the focus group discussion it became apparent that in teacher centric cultures many students did not used their real potential and selected an easy topic which was easy to work with. When students were exposed to a student centric academic culture, they mimicked the same behavior. As a help to students, the research methodology course was offered. However this course did not prove very helpful in aligning the students with the expectations. Consequently, we suggest that the research methodology

course should be revised. Besides the research methodology course, some other courses should also be taught in a way that can help the students to adopt the new academic culture, think critically, and meet the expectations. Another possible solution is to conduct a workshop few weeks before the start of theses work. The objective of a workshop may help the students to understand the thesis selection process at BTH.

6. Recommendations

In order to increase the quality of research, students should be given an education that may enhance their independent thinking and helps them to practice the routines of BTH and the expectations of the Swedish educational system.

The following are our suggestions for RM course in particular:

- From an academic help point of view, we suggest that first RM course should be revised extensively. The course should be aligned in a way that students who are participating in the course find it interesting.
- Besides the RM course, additional courses should be offered which may help the students to think critically and get prepared to meet the expectations.
- For the administration, we strongly suggest that a workshop should be arranged a few weeks before the students are expected to begin writing on their theses. Such a workshop should be comprised of rigorous interactive short assignments by which students may get maximum understanding of the thesis selection process at BTH.
- Students need more guidance/coaching on how they can find topics for the project in this course. Although an introduction to search databases is a part of the course, the students need discussions on what kind of topics they should search and will they be able to complete the project in stipulated time or not.
- It would be very productive if some examples of the whole process from finding a specific topic to the completion of the project are presented in class.
- A majority of the students actually found it difficult to manage the project along with preparing for the text book about theory of science. Given the fact that, project and seminars/group meetings take more time than an ordinary course, the textual contents of the book should be reduced significantly.
- Students should be encouraged to consult with the faculty members other than the course teacher, especially with the teacher who are doing research in the same field as that of the topic of the project. In this way, they will get support to complete their project in a way much better than they would do themselves only. We expect that by doing the RM project in this way, students may be able to enhance that project to make a topic for the degree thesis.

Even after a specialized course targeted on training the students for thesis projects, most of the students are unable to produce a good/acceptable research proposal for the theses. Among other considerations, as mentioned above, the following approach can be made as part of the thesis training course. An example of a certain good thesis work, performed already, should be presented to the students, highlighting how it got through different stages of its completion, for example:

- How the research proposal was developed
- How the proposal was accepted, after passing through some improvements
- How the thesis work was performed in the light of its research proposal
- How (if any) the research proposal and hence thesis work plan was changed in accordance with something unforeseen happened.

It has been observed during the focus group discussion that students face challenges in understanding the actual requirements of a thesis work. To circumvent this issue, a proposal that was discussed and appraised by the majority that senior students from each culture should be invited for short talks/discussions to address the new students. In this way, without any barriers of a foreign language, students who are about to start their thesis work would benefit from the experiences of the students who have already gone through that stage in their studies.

Some other problems indicated by the students are the following:

- Personal / academic or political conflicts among the supervisor and the faculty reviewer creates trouble for the students
- Faculty reviewer provides feedback after the final presentation, when students consider the thesis work to be done. If the reviews are not good, students become frustrated.

To solve these particular problems, we suggest that faculty reviewer shall provide feedback before final presentation. When the comments of faculty reviewers are addressed the students would be allowed to present and defend their thesis. If there is a conflict between the supervisors opinion and faculty reviewer opinion about the work, a mechanism shall be developed in which students are least affected.

A general suggestion about thesis process is that the whole process should be divided into two parts. In the first part students develop their proposal during the RM course and later on, the thesis work is carried out. In this way students will get more time to do a thesis and quality can also be controlled.

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Questionnaire

Thanks for your time. You are hereby requested to sign off the rights to publish statistical results based on your answers of this survey. Please read the below mentioned disclaimer for details.

Disclaimer: *This survey is conducted for knowing the factors affecting the choice of thesis among students. This survey is part of the course PE-2404. The outcome of this survey will be published as a report or article. All the responses and participants of this survey will remain anonymous. No indication about any particular participant will be given at any stage. You reserve the right of not answering any question or not disclosing any information.*

Karlskrona

Signature

2012-05-11

Questions:

1. From which country are you? _____
2. Your last degree (degree before starting this degree)? _____
3. How did you choose your thesis topic in your bachelor degree? Was your own idea or some teacher suggested the topic?
4. How did you choose your thesis topic in your master degree (*if done already*)? Was it your own idea or some teacher suggested the topic?
5. Do you have any experience of doing job related to the current or previous degree? If yes then answer following questions please.
 - a. How many years? _____

- b. Your designation? _____
6. Your favorite subjects in previous degree?
1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

7. Your favorite subjects in current degree?
1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

8. Are you taking the courses in specific order to enhance your knowledge in a specific field?
- Yes / No

9. What are your future objectives?
- a. Pursue a Ph.D. b. Find a Job
- b. c. Others (Please Mention) _____

10. What kind of a thesis do you want to do?
- a. Academic (a thesis which is done only in academic environment, pure theoretical research)
- b. Industrial (a thesis with the cooperation of industry or about an industrial problem)
- c. Others (Please Mention) _____

11. Have you decided about topic of your thesis? If yes then please write three main motivations for choosing this particular thesis
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

12. Is it your future plans, which will help you to choose a topic for you?

13. If it is your future plans, please write shortly how this thesis will help you?

14. Is it a specific subject which will attract you to do a thesis with in that domain? :

Yes / No

15. Do you think by studying a particular subject; it may change your choice of thesis topic?

16. Is it your friends, who will suggest you to do a particular thesis?

Yes / No

17. Is it a particular teacher, with whom you want to work, so any topic suggested by him will be acceptable for you?

18. What do you think what are the three main factors which will dominate choice of your thesis? (If you have not decided anything about thesis yet)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

19. Is it a particular skill such as programming that may affect the choice of thesis topic? If Yes please mention skill.

20. If you have studied the Research Methodology (RM) course offered here at BTH, share your reflections on it, e.g.

I. How helpful was it to make the thesis topic easy to search for?

II. How did it improve your skill of doing scientific research?

III. How can this course be made better for you? Suggest some changes which you would like to see in it!