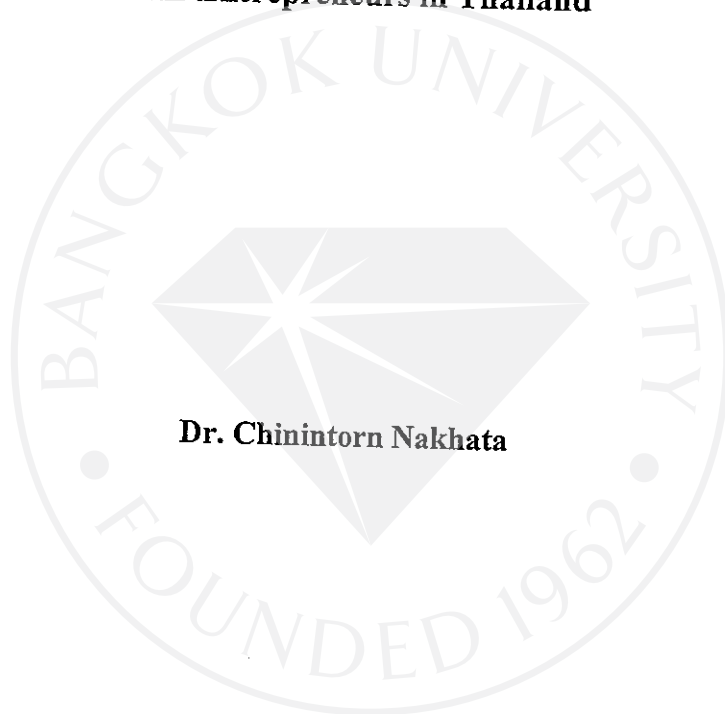




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เรื่อง

**A Study of the Relationship between Job Dimensions and Job Satisfaction of
SME Entrepreneurs in Thailand**



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ชื่อโครงการ A Study of the Relationship between Job Dimensions and Job Satisfaction of
SME Entrepreneurs in Thailand
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วัตถุประสงค์หลักของงานวิจัยชิ้นนี้คือ บ่งชี้ระดับของมิตินงานและ ความพึงพอใจในงาน และ ศึกษาความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างมิตินงาน และ ความพึงพอใจในงานของผู้ประกอบการ SME ในประเทศไทย แบบสอบถามที่ใช้ในการวิจัยชิ้นนี้พัฒนาโดยดัดแปลงจาก Job Diagnostic Survey (JDS) ซึ่งจัดทำโดย Hackman and Oldham (1980) ข้อมูลที่ใช้ในการวิเคราะห์เป็นข้อมูลที่ได้ จาก 392 แบบสอบถามที่จัดส่งให้กับผู้ประกอบการ SME จำนวนทั้งหมด 500 คน ผลการวิเคราะห์สรุปได้ว่า ความสำคัญของงาน และความ เป็นเอกลักษณ์ของงานเป็นมิตินงานที่ปรากฏมากที่สุด ความพึงพอใจในงานของผู้ประกอบการ SME ส่วนใหญ่อยู่ในระดับปานกลาง ความสัมพันธ์ในแง่บวกระหว่าง ความหลากหลายของงาน ความเป็นเอกลักษณ์ของงาน และความสำคัญของงาน กับความพึงพอใจในงานอยู่ในระดับต่ำ ในขณะที่ความสัมพันธ์ในแง่บวกระหว่าง ความเป็นอิสระของงานและ ผลตอบกลับของงาน กับความพึงพอใจในงานอยู่ในระดับ ปานกลาง ดังนั้นผู้ประกอบการ SME ควรให้ความสำคัญ และ พัฒนา มิตินงานในส่วนของ ความเป็นอิสระของงานและ ผลตอบกลับของงาน

ABSTRACT

The research question guiding this study is: *To what extent are job dimensions related to the job satisfaction of SME entrepreneurs in Thailand?* The specific objectives of this study are to determine job dimensions, job satisfaction, and the relationship between the job dimensions and the job satisfaction of SME entrepreneurs in Thailand. The modified version of the Job Diagnostic Survey (JDS) developed by Hackman and Oldham (1980) was sent to 500 SME entrepreneurs. Based on 392 usable responses, SME entrepreneurs perceived task significance and task identity as the job dimensions most present in their jobs, while perceiving feedback as the least. They had a moderate level of job satisfaction. Skill variety, task identity, and task significance had weak positive relationships with job satisfaction, while autonomy and feedback had moderate positive relationship with job satisfaction, suggesting that SME entrepreneurs in Thailand should focus on improving the job dimensions of autonomy and feedback.

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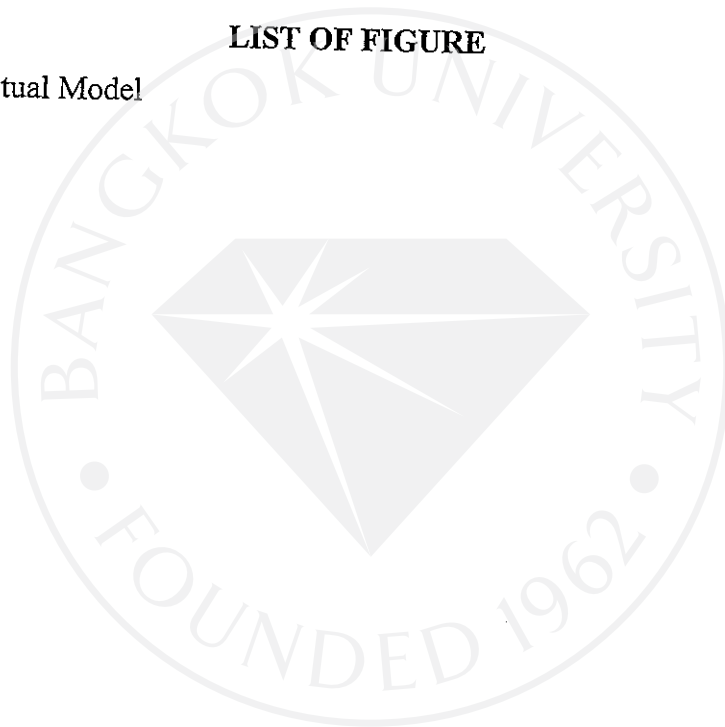
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Research Background

SMEs (Small and Medium Enterprises) have been recognized as the backbone of Thailand's economy and contribute greatly to the country's economic and social development. The Office of SME Promotion (OSMEP, 2008) has identified more than two million SMEs operating in Thailand in 2007, which represents more than 99% of all private enterprises in the country. SMEs employed more than 75% of the total labor force and generated more than 38% of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (OSMEP, 2008).

SMEs provide a solid foundation for Thailand's industrial development, their products being utilized in larger industries as semi-products or raw materials (Tapaneeyangkul, 2001). In addition to their industrial role, SMEs constitute the key element in linking all crucial units of industry together and in filling the small gaps in industrial clusters (Simachokedee, 1999). SMEs also compensate for the limited success that large enterprises in Thailand have had in generating jobs. The concentration of economic power and the financial and physical-capital-intensive nature of large enterprises are, in many instances, in direct conflict with the goals of the Thai government's social and economic development plan. In contrast, SMEs employ a large percentage of the human capital, provide a productive outlet for the entrepreneurial spirit of individuals, and assist in dispersing economic activity throughout the country. This makes SMEs more effective job creators than large enterprises; therefore, SMEs promote free enterprise and a sufficiency economy by creating wealth and spreading it out to the grassroots level, which stimulates the economic and social development of Thailand (Wasuntiwongse, 1999).

SME entrepreneurs have become a major labor force since the economic crisis of 1997. In a context of widespread restructuring, reengineering, and downsizing of large enterprises and of a reduction in opportunities for career advancement, a number of Thai people have decided to become SME entrepreneurs instead of continuing as traditional employees in large enterprises (Wasuntiwongse, 1999). Realizing the importance of SME

entrepreneurs to economic and social development, the Thai government has given its full support to enhancing the performance of SME entrepreneurs by establishing various organizations to support both organizational and financial activities, such as the Office of SME Promotion (OSMEP), the Institute of SME Development, (ISMED), the Rural Industry Development Program (RIDP), the SME Bank, The Industrial Financial Corporation of Thailand (IFCT), the Thai Venture Association, the Government Saving Bank, the Export-Import (EXIM) Bank, and the Market for Alternative Investment (MAI).

To further stimulate entrepreneurial activities in Thailand, it is important to understand which job dimensions SME entrepreneurs derive job satisfaction from. On the individual level, knowledge of the relationship between job dimensions and job satisfaction are important in accessing potential venture success and continuation (Cooper & Artz, 1995; Cranny et al., 1992). On the societal level, entrepreneurial job satisfaction affects job creation (Reynolds & White, 1997), increased industry competition (Kirzner, 1979), and the development of new products and services (Alvarez & Barney, 2001) through continued effort in developing and expanding new ventures. In other words, entrepreneurial job satisfaction leads indirectly to increased social wealth.

Research Objectives

This study aims to provide a better understanding of the relationship between job dimensions and the job satisfaction of SME entrepreneurs in Thailand. The research question guiding this study is: *To what extent are job dimensions related to the job satisfaction of SME entrepreneurs in Thailand?* The specific research objectives of this study are as follows:

1. to determine the job dimensions of SME entrepreneurs in Thailand;
2. to determine job satisfaction of SME entrepreneurs in Thailand;
3. to examine the relationship between the job dimensions and the job satisfaction of SME entrepreneurs in Thailand.

Contributions of the Study

It is expected that this study will make contributions to the literature on both entrepreneurship and organizational behavior. With regard to entrepreneurship, an important step is to better understand entrepreneurs' job satisfaction through a job dimensions approach. With respect to organizational behavior, an empirical test of the job satisfaction model (and measurement instruments) which has become established in the literature on organizational behavior, may improve current knowledge of organizational behavior in the specific context of SMEs in Thailand.

Definition of Terms:

Autonomy: The degree to which the job provides substantial freedom and discretion to an individual in scheduling the work and in determining the procedures to be used in carrying it out.

Feedback: The degree to which carrying out the work activities required by a job results in an individual's obtaining direct and clear information about the effectiveness of an individual's performance either directly from the job itself or from other people.

Job Satisfaction: The pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of an individual's job or job experience.

Skill Variety: The degree to which the job requires the exercise of a number of different skills, abilities, or talents.

SMEs (Small and Medium Enterprises): Private enterprises that are relatively small compared to other enterprises in the same market or industry and not formed as a part of large enterprises or business groups.

SME Entrepreneurs: Owners or co-owners of SMEs, who may or may not be the founders of their business and for whom SMEs are their primary source of income and consume the majority of their time and resources.

Task Identity: The degree to which the job requires the completion of a whole and identifiable piece of work—doing a job from beginning to end with a visible outcome.

Task Significance: The degree to which the job has a substantial impact on the lives or work of other people.



CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition of SME Entrepreneurs

The English word *entrepreneur* is derived from the French verb *entreprendres*, which means 'undertake' (Carland et al., 1984). *The Oxford English Dictionary* (2007) has defined entrepreneurs as individuals who start or organize commercial enterprises. Schumpeter (1934) has stated that entrepreneurs are the decision makers in a particular cultural context who command a range of behaviors that exploit certain opportunities. The idea that entrepreneurs function primarily as creators of innovation in the production process has influenced much of the literature on entrepreneurship in developed economies where entrepreneurs have commonly been associated with the founding of business ventures (Chusimir, 1988; Kirzner, 1979). However, in recent years, there has been an alternative explanation of entrepreneurial roles that focuses more on the entrepreneurs' abilities to organize rather than to create, which has resulted in the interchangeable use of the terms *entrepreneurs* and *small business owners* (Spring & MacDade, 1998).

The definition of SMEs varies across countries due to differences in business law and infrastructure (Curren & Blackburn, 2001; Gunasekaran et al., 2000). In Thailand, SMEs are classified into four sectors: manufacturing, service, wholesale, and retail (OSMEP, 2002) (see Table 2.1).

Table 2.1: Definition of SMEs in Thailand

	Small		Medium	
	No. of Employees	Fixed Assets (million baht)	No. of Employees	Fixed Assets (million baht)
1. Manufacturing	Fewer than 50	Less than 50	51 – 200	50 – 200
2. Service	Fewer than 50	Less than 50	51 – 200	50 – 200
3. Wholesale	Fewer than 25	Less than 50	26 – 50	50 – 100
4. Retail	Fewer than 15	Less than 50	16 – 30	30 – 60

Source: OSMEP (2002)

In this study, I follow Burn (2001) in defining SME entrepreneurs as owners or co-owner of SMEs, who may or may not be the founders of their businesses and for whom SMEs are their primary source of income and consume the majority of their time and resources. This operational definition is used because this study focuses primarily on

the job dimensions and the job satisfaction of SME entrepreneurs. Owners or co-owners can effectively assume the entrepreneurial roles of bearing uncertainty, innovating, and capturing market opportunities when managing and developing the business; it is not necessary that they be the founders of the business (Man, Lau, & Chan, 2001).

Roles of SME Entrepreneurs

SMEs are not merely scaled-down versions of large organizations (Storey, 1994). Thus, the roles of SME entrepreneurs in SMEs differ both quantitatively and qualitatively from those of managers in large organizations (Johnson & Winterton, 1999). For example, the small size of SMEs brings advantages such as simple structures and processes that allow for greater flexibility, adaptability, and dynamism and disadvantages such as limited resources and shallow benchmarks for managerial and technical competencies (Johnson, 1999). While the small size of such businesses offers some degree of independence and a relatively high degree of control, it also burdens SME entrepreneurs with greater business and personal risks. These size-related benefits and drawbacks lead SME entrepreneurs to manage practically all of the functional areas, e.g., marketing, finance, production, and human resource, themselves and even to perform some of the jobs on the production floor (Storey, 1994). While this requires and enables the SME entrepreneurs to develop a holistic view of the business and to exert more centralized control, it also places tremendous demands on their time and makes it very difficult for them to be away from the business for any extended period of time. Supervision and control are informal and personal, communication is direct, and business records are often minimal if not non-existent (Johnson & Winterton, 1999). SMEs generally rely on the technical knowledge of the SME entrepreneurs, of a technical partner, or of key employees, which limits their capacity to innovate and upgrade processes and product quality. This may, in turn, restrict the enterprise's ability to adjust to changing market needs. Financing of the enterprise is mainly based on the resources of the SME entrepreneurs, their families, and close associates (Johnson, 1999; and Storey, 1994).

With this narrow resource base, management in SMEs focuses on the short-term, day-to-day operations of the enterprise, which inhibits or discourages any long-term

strategic orientation. Management becomes primarily an adaptive process concerned with exploiting limited resources in order to gain the maximum immediate, short-term advantages. Efforts are concentrated not on predicting but on controlling the operating environment, adapting as quickly as possible to the changing demands of that environment, and devising suitable tactics for mitigating the consequences of any changes that occur (Jennings & Beaver, 1997). The very essence of SME management is the SME entrepreneur's personal day-to-day handling of transactional and other relationships with customers, marketing channels, suppliers, bankers, workers, regulatory authorities, peers, friends, family, and other stakeholders in the business environment (Gibb, 1997).

Demographics of Thai SME Entrepreneurs

In the past, a majority of the Thai SME entrepreneurs had relatively little formal education (Wasuntiwongs, 1999). SME entrepreneurs were also unlikely to develop their performance through formal training programs, as they perceived operational issues as being more important than the acquisition and development of new knowledge and skills. However, due to the increasing importance of the knowledge-based economy that has been evolving since the late 1990s, the new generation of SME entrepreneurs is paying more attention to the pursuit of higher education, and the improvement of educational systems in Thailand has allowed many in this new generation to pursue higher formal education through distance-learning or by becoming part-time students in various public and private universities nationwide (Tapaneeyangkul, 2001).

Thai Culture and SME Entrepreneurs

Culture has been defined in many ways. Kluckhohn (1951) has stated that culture consists of patterned ways of thinking, feeling and reacting, acquired and transmitted mainly by symbols including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional ideas and especially their attached values. There are four dimensions of national culture: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, and masculinity (Hofstede, 1980). The section below describes the Thai culture and its impact

on SME entrepreneurs based on the findings of Hofstede's (1980) research, conducted in 40 countries (see Appendix 3).

Power Distance

Power distance is the degree of inequality in power between the less powerful individual and the more powerful individual in a single social system. Power distance, on average, scored 51. The Philippines had the highest score at 94, while Australia had the lowest score at 11. Thailand had a relatively high score of 64, while the UK and USA had relatively low scores of 35 and 40, respectively. In high power distance countries like Thailand, Singapore, and India, most entrepreneurs were perceived by their employees as inaccessible. Thailand's high scores can be explained by the fact that Thai society is characterized by a rigid, hierarchical ordering of all social relations (Kirsch, 1975). People with lower status are expected to pay deference to those with higher status. This deference is shown both in the verbal forms of address for seniors and in body language such as the *wai*, a greeting with hands folded and heads bowed (Komin, 1990). Thus, employees in SMEs generally behave submissively in the presence of SME entrepreneurs (their superiors), rather than thrashing things out face to face.

Uncertainty Avoidance

Uncertainty avoidance encompasses the ways in which a society copes with living on the brink of an uncertain future. Uncertainty avoidance, on average, scored 64. Greece had the highest score at 112, while Singapore had the lowest score at 8. Thailand fell exactly on the average of 64. In countries with high uncertainty avoidance scores, working in SMEs, individual decisions, and high levels of organizational change tend to be perceived as risky situations, and few people are willing to face them. In contrast, in countries with low uncertainty avoidance scores, people generally showed a greater willingness to take risks.

That Thailand ranked in the middle can be explained by the fact that many Thai people are willing to take on the risks of starting their own businesses and becoming SME entrepreneurs. However, they are not willing to face high levels of risk. Thus, most

of the SMEs in Thailand evince low levels of financial capital, human capital, technology, innovation, and growth perspective.

Individualism

Individualism describes the relationship between the individual and the collectivity in a given society and is reflected in the way people live, e.g., in nuclear or extended families. This dimension is intimately linked with societal norms and the structure and functioning of many other institutions besides the family, including education, religion, and politics. The norm prevalent in a given society with respect to the degree of individualism/collectivism expected from its members strongly affects the nature of the relationship between a person and the organizations to which he or she belongs. The level of individualism/collectivism also dictates what type of people will be admitted into positions of special influence in organizations. More individualistic societies call for emotional independence from the company, more importance attached to freedom and challenge on the job, autonomy, and individual initiative.

Individualism on average scored 51. The USA had the highest score at 91, while Venezuela had the lowest score at 12. Like other Southeast Asian countries, Thailand scored relatively low. Thailand, Taiwan, Singapore, and Hong Kong scored 20, 17, 20, and 25, respectively. In Thailand, individualism as practiced in the West is generally not accepted as a social value because individuals seek identity not so much in terms of who they are as in terms of whom they are associated with. Within Thai culture one has a strong obligation to one's family and close friends. This obligation requires one to offer assistance commensurate with one's ability when called upon to do so. This helps to explain why most SMEs in Thailand are identified as family businesses (Arttachariya, 1997). In particular, the evidence can be found in the rural countries of Thailand that most of the nature of SME industries requires collective people from family members, close friends, or neighbors such as rice, apparel, and local food and snacks widely known as One Tambol One Product (OTOP).

Masculinity

Masculinity is associated with autonomy, aggression, and domination, while femininity (low masculinity) is associated with nurturance, affiliation, helpfulness, and humility. Countries with higher masculinity scores show greater differences between men and women in the same jobs. The average score for masculinity was 51. The countries with high masculinity scores were Japan, the UK, and the USA, with the scores of 95, 66, and 62 respectively. Most Asian countries, excluding Japan, scored in the middle, such as South Korea (39) and Thailand (34). At the lower end were the four Scandinavian countries, with Sweden ranked the lowest, with a score of 5.

Much of societal masculinity–femininity differences are both historically and traditionally determined. The relatively high femininity score for Thailand can be explained by the fact that during the early part of the century, it was women who managed their homes and families (Komin, 1990). However, according to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (2005), among the 35 participating countries in the survey, the middle-income countries such as Venezuela and Thailand exhibited the highest women's early-stage entrepreneurial activity prevalence rates, with 23.8% and 19.3%, respectively, while high-income countries like the Netherlands and Japan exhibited the lowest rates, 2.1% and 1.2%, respectively. This shows that there have been an increasing number of women-SME entrepreneurs in Thailand.

Human Resource Strategies in Thai SMEs

Thailand has an extensive statutory framework governing employment relations, including a minimum wage and certain safeguards for unions. However, enforcement is not pursued strongly, and the regulations are avoided by many enterprises, especially SMEs. Despite a significant labor surplus, Thailand still faces areas of skilled-labor shortage. While unskilled human resources are plentiful, some SMEs prefer to hire only those with work experience to save on training costs. Among SMEs that hire unskilled labor, there is also a problem with the labor supply, as many workers return to their villages for planting and harvesting. Filling managerial positions is generally more difficult, especially when SMEs prefer to recruit only those who have been educated abroad or who are fluent in English or other language because, such people generally

prefer to work in large multinational enterprises. Compared to SMEs, foreign-owned companies normally offer higher salaries and more opportunities for training (Arttachariya, 1997).

A significant number of SMEs in Thailand are family enterprises (Lawler, Zaidi, & Atmiyanandana, 1989; Tapaneeyangkul, 2001). Virtually all key management slots in such companies are occupied by relatives of the SME entrepreneurs and a strategic theme in the human resource practices of family enterprises can be characterized as social control. This is maintained through class distinction: lower levels defer to higher-level employees, older or more senior employees often serve as intermediaries with upper management or supervisors to help resolve conflicts or express dissatisfaction. In this way, proper social distance between individuals is maintained, since improper familiarity might threaten the notion of inequality and diminish perceived status differences. There is no clear-cut human resource function in family enterprises and most policies are developed on an ad hoc basis by SME entrepreneurs. Having contact with someone in the family, preferably SME entrepreneurs or members of their immediate family, is often critical to obtaining jobs in these SMEs, even in low-level positions. Although loyal and commitment to SME entrepreneurs are features of traditional of Thai systems, they are not demanded to the same extent that Japanese enterprises expect such behavior from their employees (Lawler, Zaidi, & Atmiyanandana, 1989).

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction has been the subject of research at least since the Hawthorne studies of the 1920s (Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1939). Job satisfaction has been identified as a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences (Spector, 1997). Schjoedt (2002) has postulated that job satisfaction comprises the degree of positive attitude that a person holds towards their jobs as perceived by the person, whereas job dissatisfaction is the degree of negative attitude that a person holds towards his or her job. Thus, job satisfaction is a within-person construct.

An individual's attitude about his or her job should have meaningful implications for the way he or she does it. Many human-relations era researchers sought to establish

job satisfaction as a driver of performance (e.g., McGregor, 1960). Brayfield and Crockett (1955), however, cited conflicting research results and questioned this view. Porter & Lawler (1968) espoused the contrary view that performance drives job satisfaction. This has become the generally accepted view. Even so, the strength of the relationship appears to be very weak (Iaffaldo & Muchinsky, 1985).

Greater job satisfaction has also been generally related to reduced intent to leave the organization (Brayfield & Crockett, 1955; Mowday, Koberg, & McArthur, 1984) and to reduced rates of absenteeism (Porter & Steers, 1973). In addition, job satisfaction has been shown to be strongly related to organizational commitment (Porter, Steers, & Mowday, 1974) and to organizational citizenship behaviors (Smith, Organ, & Near, 1983; Organ, 1988).

The importance of job satisfaction lies not in its relationship with performance but in its stabilizing effects (reducing tardiness, absenteeism, and turnover) and its effects on cohesion (increasing organizational citizenship behaviors and organizational commitment). Job satisfaction appears to mediate the effects of in-role performance, role conflict, and job-induced tension on intent to leave and extra-role performance.

Job Satisfaction and SME Entrepreneurs

SME entrepreneurs differ from other organizational groups in their degree of commitment to the organization (Cooper & Artz, 1995). It can be argued that this commitment is due to the fact that SME entrepreneurs have developed the venture strategy and that the financial benefits of venture success often affect the SME entrepreneurs directly. Thus, if SME entrepreneurs are not satisfied, they may reduce their commitment to the venture, leading to undesired consequences, such as life-style venture, withdrawal cognitions and behaviors, or closing of the venture (Williams & Hazer, 1986). On the other hand, job satisfaction and contextual performance are related at the individual level (Organ & Ryan, 1995). This means that when SME entrepreneurs are satisfied, they are more likely to engage in organizational activities that exceed basic entrepreneurial tasks. Several of the effects of contextual performance at the individual level occur at the aggregate level of organizational performance (Ostroff, 1992). Thus, it

can be argued that job satisfaction has an influence in achieving financial success and organizational effectiveness (Cooper & Artz, 1995).

Job Satisfaction Theories

Dispositional Theory

Dispositional theory is a very general theory that suggests that people have innate dispositions that cause them to have tendencies toward a certain level of satisfaction, regardless of their job. This approach became a widely accepted explanation of job satisfaction in light of evidence that job satisfaction tends to be stable over time and across careers and jobs. Research has also indicated that identical twins have similar levels of job satisfaction.

A significant model that narrowed the scope of the Dispositional Theory is the Core Self-Evaluations Model proposed by Judge et al. (1998). Judge et al. have argued that there are four Core Self-Evaluations that determine one's disposition towards job satisfaction: self-esteem, general self-efficacy, locus of control, and neuroticism. This model states that higher levels of self-esteem (the value one places on his self) and general self-efficacy (the belief in one's own competence) lead to higher work satisfaction. Having an internal locus of control (believing one has control over one's own life, as opposed to outside forces having control) leads to higher job satisfaction. Finally, lower levels of neuroticism lead to higher job satisfaction.

Affect Theory

Locke's Affect Theory (1976) is arguably the most famous job satisfaction model. The main premise of this theory is that satisfaction is determined by a discrepancy between what one wants in a job and what one has in a job. Further, the theory states that how much one values a given facet of work (e.g., the degree of autonomy in a position) moderates how satisfied/dissatisfied one becomes when these expectations are/aren't met. When a person values a particular facet of a job, this impacts his or her satisfaction to a greater extent either positively (when expectations are met) or negatively (when expectations are not met) than it does for one who doesn't value that facet. To illustrate,

if Employee A values autonomy in the workplace and Employee B is indifferent about autonomy, then Employee A would be more satisfied in a position that offers a high degree of autonomy and less satisfied in a position with little or no autonomy than Employee B would be. This theory also states that too much of a particular facet will produce stronger feelings of dissatisfaction the more a worker values that facet.

Two-Factor Theory

Herzberg's Two factor Theory (or Motivator-Hygiene Theory) attempts to explain satisfaction and motivation in the workplace (Herzberg, 1966). This theory states that satisfaction and dissatisfaction are driven by different factors—motivator and hygiene factors, respectively. Motivating factors are those aspects of the job that make people want to perform and provide people with satisfaction. These motivating factors are considered to be intrinsic to the job or the work carried out (Miner, 1980). Motivating factors include aspects of the working environment such as pay, company policies, supervisory practices, and other working conditions (Ondrack & Evans, 1986)).

While Herzberg's model has stimulated much research, researchers have been unable to reliably prove the model empirically, with Hackman and Oldham have been suggested that the success of Herzberg's original formulation of the model may have been a methodological artifact (Spector & Jex, 1991). Furthermore, the theory does not consider individual differences, conversely predicting that all employees will react in an identical manner to changes in motivating/hygiene factors (Blau & Katerberg, 1982). Finally, the model has been criticised for not specifying how motivating/hygiene factors are to be measured (Weiss & Brief, 2002).

Job Characteristics Theory

Job Characterisitcs Theory or Job Characteristics Model (JCM) proposed by Hackman and Oldham (1976), is a very influential model of job enrichment which attempts to address how a core set of job characteristics impact a number of psychological states, leading to specific related outcomes in the work environment. The model has been developed as a response to the shortcomings of Herzberg's Two-Factor

Theory. Hackman and Oldham's research has led them conclude that five characteristics can be used to describe the motivating potential of a job. These characteristics follow:

1. **Skill Variety:** the degree to which the job requires the exercise of a number of different skills, abilities, or talents;
2. **Task Identity:** the degree to which the job requires completion of a whole and identifiable piece of work—doing a job from beginning to end with a visible outcome;
3. **Task Significance:** the degree to which the job has a substantial impact on the lives or work of other people;
4. **Autonomy:** the degree to which the job provides substantial freedom and discretion to an individual in scheduling the work and in determining the procedures to be used in carrying it out; and
5. **Feedback:** the degree to which carrying out the work activities required by a job results in an individual's obtaining direct and clear information about the effectiveness of his or her performance either directly from job itself or from other people.

According to JCM, skill variety, task significance and task identity are used in the work environment to stimulate meaningfulness and produce outcomes of high intrinsic motivation and/or high job performance. Therefore, if employees feel that they are fully utilizing a variety of their skills (skill variety), that their job affects many people to a great extent (task significance), and that they are being allowed to complete the task from beginning to end (task identity), they are likely to perceive the job as meaningful, which will lead to high job performance and/or high intrinsic motivation. The presence of autonomy in the workforce leads to the psychological state of feeling responsibility for outcomes, which results in high job satisfaction. Thus, if employees are able to determine the method or approach in which the work is accomplished (autonomy), they will feel responsible for the end product and will therefore be more satisfied with what they have accomplished, less likely to quit (turnover), and also more likely to attend work (low absenteeism). Autonomy is contrasted by being told what to do and the manner in which

to do it. The last core job characteristic, feedback produces a psychological state in which employees develop knowledge of their results, producing outcomes similar to autonomy (high job satisfaction, low turnover/absenteeism). In other words, knowing how you are performing and being aware that superiors know how you are performing (feedback) leads to greater job satisfaction, less absenteeism, and lower turnover.

Job Dimensions

The debate over which and how many job dimensions are required for a comprehensive model has continued from the early research studies of Turner and Lawrence (1965), Hackman and Lawler (1971), and Hackman and Oldham (1975, 1976). This is largely because little research has been carried out to advance the measurement of job dimensions beyond the initial research (Taber, Beehr, & Walsh, 1985). Also, inductive research has not been done to establish how many and which job dimensions are necessary for job characteristics research.

Some inconsistencies in findings exist in the literature (Aldag & Brief, 1978; Dunham, Aldag, & Brief, 1977; Fried & Ferris, 1987). These inconsistencies may be attributed to the use of different job dimensions and different numbers of job dimensions. For example, Turner and Lawrence (1965) used six job dimensions that were different from the four job dimensions (task variety, autonomy, task identification, and feedback) proposed by Hackman and Lawler (1971). Hackman and Oldham (1975, 1976, 1980) used the four job dimensions presented by Hackman and Lawler (1971) and added task significance, bringing the total to five job dimensions, which are measured by the Job Diagnostic Survey (Hackman & Oldham, 1975). In their critique of the JDS, Sims, Szilagyi, and Keller (1976) have presented an alternative instrument, the Job Characteristics Inventory (JCI), based on six job dimensions, with four of the six job dimensions being the same as those suggested by Hackman and Lawler (1971). These suggestions for different numbers of job dimensions, together with some studies using a limited number of the presented job dimensions e.g., the three-dimension model (Harvey, Billings, & Nilan, 1985; Fried & Ferris, 1986), may account for many of the inconsistent findings in the literature. Despite these inconsistencies in the number of job dimensions

employed, the five job dimensions (skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback) originally presented by Hackman and Lawler (1971), and used in JDS (Hackman & Oldham, 1975) appear to have been used to an overwhelmingly degree in the literature.

Objective versus Subjective Job Dimensions

Most job characteristics research, especially research using JDS and JDI, has been based on perceived job dimensions. This research is in line with the comment by Hackman and Lawler (1971: 264) that “it is how much he perceives that he has which will affect his reactions to the job.” They continue, “it should be emphasized that, for all the job dimensions discussed above, it is not their objective state which affects employees and behaviors, but rather how they are experienced by the employees.” These comments clearly show that it is the subjective job dimensions that form the basis for the model. This is in line with the literature on job satisfaction, which has focused on the within-person attitudes. Hackman and Lawler (1971) have also provided evidence that supports their statement, as they have found that job incumbents’ perceptions are greater between job categories than within.

Despite these comments and initial findings, researchers have tended to discuss job dimensions in objective terms yet without objectively assessing the job dimensions (Pierce & Dunham, 1976), while subjective job characteristics may be considered representative of the objective job dimensions. Brief and Aldag (1975) have found significant, positive correlations between subjective and objective job dimensions, and Hackman and Oldham (1980) found that the correlation is 0.65. Further evidence for the convergence between subjective and objective job dimensions has been provided by Roberts and Glick (1981), Fried and Ferris (1987), and Schjoedt (2002).

A related issue that needs to be considered is what affects perceptions of job dimensions. Steers and Mowday (1977) have suggested that individual differences may affect perception. Caldwell and O’Reilly (1982) have been unable to determine the magnitude of the effect that extrinsic job characteristics and social cues have on the perceived job characteristics. James and Jones (1980) have concluded that job perception is at least in part descriptive of objective job dimensions and that job

satisfaction is causally influenced by job perceptions. They have also found support for the hypothesis that job perceptions are influenced by affectivity. James and Tetrick (1996) have found that the causal effect of job perceptions on job satisfaction takes precedence over the satisfaction–job perception causal path. This discussion regarding use of subjective job dimensions and the discussion of temporal sequence in the job characteristics approach, illustrates that perceived job dimensions determine the level of job satisfaction experienced by an individual—at least in part.

Meta-Analyses of Job Dimensions

Three meta-analyses were conducted on the job characteristics approach in the 1980s (Fried & Ferris, 1987; Roberts & Glick, 1981; Loher et al., 1985). All three meta-analyses found support for the basic job characteristics model that certain job dimensions are associated with job satisfaction. Roberts and Glick (1981), in their qualitative review, pointed out that little theoretical development had been made since the original development of the model. Loher et al. (1985) conducted a meta-analysis of only 28 studies but did not address the full JCM, whereby these researchers implicitly suggested that the basic (content-based) job characteristics approach is the model of interest. They found a mean correlation between job dimensions and satisfaction of 0.39. The third meta-analysis, conducted as a part of Fried's doctoral dissertation (Fried & Ferris, 1987) was based on over 200 studies.

Fried and Ferris (1987) found support for the content-based job characteristics approach and the JCM. Their findings were in line with results of Hogan and Martell (1987), who found support for the basic job characteristics approach. Despite this support for the JCM, Fried and Ferris (1987) also found inconsistencies in the literature. They suggested that some of the inconsistencies in findings were due to background noise, such as demographical factors (age, income, and tenure) and co-workers' influence on perception of job dimensions.

Fried and Ferris (1987) also suggested that a causal relationship may exist whereby satisfaction influences perceived job dimensions. Yet, Fried and Ferris (1987) stated that objective and subjective job dimensions overlap. In response to the suggestion that satisfaction influences the perception of job dimensions, Hogan and Martell (1987) found no support that satisfaction affects perceived job dimensions, whereas James and Tetrick (1986) found that job satisfaction occurs after perceptions of job dimensions are developed. Another reason for

inconsistent results is that most research examining the job characteristics approach has not specified which underlying theory was used or whether only parts of the JCM (Hackman & Oldham, 1976, 1980) were used in the studies. To summarize Fried and Ferris' (1987) findings, a positive causal relationship exists between job dimensions, whether objective or subjective, and job satisfaction, but the relationship is affected by spurious effects from demographic variables and co-workers.

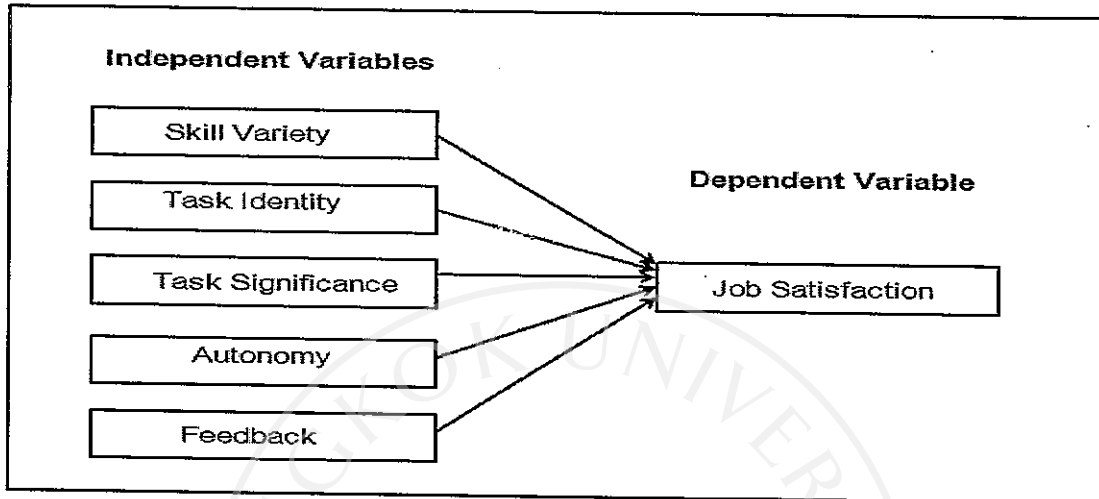
Job Dimensions of SME Entrepreneurs

SME entrepreneurs develop a conceptual business by identifying business opportunities or by researching different business ideas and developing one into their particular business activity. This may be made tangible by developing a business plan prior to starting a new venture. This means that the SME entrepreneurs generally have a large amount of freedom to choose how to develop a new venture based on the identified business opportunities. In other words, SME entrepreneurs have autonomy. In developing a new venture, both conceptually and practically, SME entrepreneurs engage in multiple tasks, such as planning, financing, marketing, and human resources management. This means that SME entrepreneurs engage in task significance and have skill variety. When SME entrepreneurs pursue funding for the new ventures, they plan means to obtain funding and actively carry out the plan by presenting the business plan and control costs in a new venture creation process. Thus, SME entrepreneurs can identify individual parts of work, or task identity towards developing new ventures. The completion of individual steps in the process of creating new ventures such as obtaining necessary funding, and, in particular, establishing the new ventures, provided SME entrepreneurs with feedback as to how well each step in the venture creation process has been completed.

Thus, in order to examine the relationship between job dimensions and job satisfaction of SME entrepreneurs in Thailand, this study employs JCM (Hackman & Oldham, 1980), five job dimensions including *skill variety*, *task identity*, *task significance*, *autonomy* and *feedback*. These five job dimensions have consistently been empirically shown the significant positive relationship with job satisfaction (Fried & Ferris, 1987; Hackman & Oldham, 1980; Pierce & Dunham, 1978; Schjoedt, 2002). The

conceptual model (See Figure 2.1) and hypotheses of this study are formulated as follows:

Figure 2.1: Conceptual Model



Hypotheses

- H1: Skill variety has a positive relationship with job satisfaction.
- H2: Task identity has a positive relationship with job satisfaction.
- H3: Task significance has a positive relationship with job satisfaction.
- H4: Autonomy has a positive relationship with job satisfaction
- H5: Feedback has a positive relationship with job satisfaction

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Research design is a strategy for answering the questions or testing the hypotheses that stimulated the research in the first place (Cavana & Sekaran, 2001). This study employs a cross sectional survey and designed based on the descriptive-correlation method to answer the research question, *To what extent are job dimensions related to the job satisfaction of SME entrepreneurs in Thailand?* This study has entailed gathering descriptive information about the job dimensions and job satisfaction of SME entrepreneurs in Thailand. It has also involved correlation analysis to determine the degree of the relationship between the selected independent variables (skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback) and the dependent variable (job satisfaction).

Population and Sample

The unit of analysis of this study is SME entrepreneurs (owners or co-owners). Kotey and Meredith (1997) have found that SME entrepreneurs' characteristics differed depending on the business infrastructure environment. In Thailand, business infrastructures in metropolitan areas are much more developed than those in provincial areas. To control for such differences and thereby strengthen the internal validity, this survey limited the geographic location of the sample to Bangkok. Bangkok is the capital city of Thailand and has the most developed business infrastructure and the greatest number of SMEs. The other consideration is business size. Only SME entrepreneurs whose businesses had at most 50 employees were selected for the analysis.

Sampling

This study used systematic sampling, which is defined as a sampling procedure in which an initial starting point is selected by a random process and then every n^{th} number on the list is selected (Cavana & Sekaran, 2001). To ensure that the sample population was drawn from an up-to-date database, the 2007 *Thailand's Yellow Pages* digital

database was used as the sampling frame in this study to extract a list of business names, addresses, and telephone numbers.

Sample Size

As the 2007 Thailand's Yellow Pages digital database shows that there are 85,735 businesses located in Bangkok, the sample size of this study is set at 385 according to Sekaran (2003) (See Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: Sample Size for a Given Population

N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S
10	10	85	70	220	140	440	205	1200	291	4000	351
15	14	90	73	230	144	460	210	1300	297	4500	354
20	19	95	76	240	148	480	214	1400	302	5000	357
25	24	100	80	250	152	500	217	1500	306	6000	361
30	28	110	86	260	155	550	226	1600	310	7000	364
35	32	120	92	270	159	600	234	1700	313	8000	367
40	36	130	97	280	162	650	242	1800	317	9000	368
45	40	140	103	290	165	700	248	1900	320	10000	370
50	44	150	108	300	169	750	254	2000	322	15000	375
55	48	160	113	320	175	800	260	2200	327	20000	377
60	52	170	118	340	181	850	265	2400	331	30000	379
65	56	180	123	360	186	900	269	2600	335	40000	380
70	59	190	127	380	191	950	274	2800	338	50000	381
75	63	200	132	400	196	1000	278	3000	341	75000	382
80	66	210	136	420	201	1100	85	3500	346	100000	384

Source: Sekaran (2003)

Research Instrument

The survey instrument used in this study was a self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire was developed by synthesizing and adapting questions from previously validated survey instruments found in prior studies with the same research objectives (Fried & Ferris, 1987; Hackman & Oldham, 1980; Ostroff, 1992; Schjoedt, 2002). To increase the comprehension level of the participants, all questions were translated from English to Thai. Then, they were translated back into English, and this new English translation was compared with the original English version to ensure that there were no significant deviations in meaning between the original English version and the translated Thai version.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experience (Locke, 1976). This definition indicates that job satisfaction is a singular construct. In line with this definition, Scarpello and Campbell (1983) have concluded, based on an empirical study comparing an overall job satisfaction measure and a summed job facet satisfaction measure, that an overall measure is a better tool for measuring job satisfaction than summed scores of a sum of facet satisfaction measure

According to Scarpello and Campbell (1983), the reason that an overall measure is better than measures based on a sum of facets is that an overall measure is more inclusive in assessing job satisfaction than a sum of facet measure. Wanous, Reichers, and Hudy (1997) have found that an overall job satisfaction measure shows substantial convergent validity with facet scales and that an overall measure could reasonably be expected to be more robust than a sum of facet scales measure. In this study, job satisfaction was measured using three items of overall job satisfaction. All three items were measured with seven-point Likert scales (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = slightly disagree, 4 = undecided, 5 = slightly agree, 6 = agree, 7 = strongly agree). This measure was developed by Hackman and Oldham (1976) and suggested to be valid measures of overall job satisfaction with satisfactory psychometric properties (Scarpello & Campbell, 1983; Schjoedt, 2002; Trevor, 2001).

Job Dimensions

Job dimensions were measured by the short format of Job Diagnostic Survey (JDS) (Hackman & Oldham, 1980). JDS measures five job dimensions consisting of *skill variety*, *task identity*, *task significance*, *autonomy*, and *feedback*. All five items were measured using seven-point Likert scales (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = slightly disagree, 4 = undecided, 5 = slightly agree, 6 = agree, 7 = strongly agree).

Other Variables

For the personal information variables, gender was measured on a two-point nominal scale (male or female). Marital status was measured on a four-point nominal

scale (single, married, divorced, or widowed). Age was measured on a six-point ordinal scale (under 20, 21–30, 31–40, 51–60, over 60). Education level was measured on a six-point ordinal scale (primary school, secondary school, commercial/technical college, bachelor’s degree, master’s degree, or doctoral degree). Prior relevant work experience is measured on a two-point dichotomous-nominal scale (yes or no). Prior start-up experience is measured on a two-point dichotomous-nominal scale (yes or no).

For the business information variables, number of employees was measured on a six-point ordinal scale (1–5, 6–10, 11–15, 16–25, or 26–50). Business type was measured on a four-point nominal scale (manufacturing, service, wholesale, or retail). Method of becoming a business owner was measured on a five-point nominal scale (start-up, succession, joining as a partner, takeover, or others). Number of working hours per week was measured on an eight-point ordinal scale (less than 10, 10–20, 21–30, 31–40, 41–50, 51–60, 61–70, more than 70). Ownership of other businesses was measured on a two-point dichotomous-nominal scale (yes or no). Current business stage was measured on a four-point nominal scale (introduction stage, growth stage, maturity stage, or decline stage) (See Table 3.2).

Table 3.2: Variable-Question Association

Part	Main-Variable	Sub-Variable	Questions Number	Scale
A	Personal and Business Information	• Gender	1	Nominal
		• Marital Status	2	Nominal
		• Age	3	Ordinal
		• Education Level	4	Ordinal
		• Prior Work Experience	5	Nominal
		• Prior Start-Up Experience	6	Nominal
		• Number of Employees	7	Ordinal
		• Type of Business	8	Nominal
		• Method of Becoming an Entrepreneur	9	Nominal
		• Working Hours per Week	10	Ordinal
		• Owner of Other Business(es)	11	Nominal
		• Business Stage	12	Nominal
B	Job Dimensions	• Skill Variety	1, 6, 11	Interval
		• Task Identity	2, 7, 12	Interval
		• Task Significance	3, 8, 13	Interval
		• Autonomy	4, 9, 14	Interval
		• Feedback	5, 10, 15	Interval
C	Job Satisfaction	• Overall Job Satisfaction	1, 2, 3	Interval

Pre-Test

A pre-test is a trial run with a group of respondents used to screen out problems with the design of the questionnaire (Zikmund, 2003). I pre-tested the data collection tool to discover whether the questions meant the same thing to all respondents, that is, whether the wording, sequence, and structure were clearly understood. As a member of the Office of SME Promotion (OSMEP), I pre-tested the questionnaire on 30 members of OSMEP. All of them could be identified as SME entrepreneurs whose businesses were currently in operation. Cronbach's alpha coefficients were calculated, and the results showed that Cronbach's alpha coefficient for all variables ranged between 0.71 and 0.85 (see Table 3.3). This indicated that the questionnaire could be considered reliable, since the values for Cronbach's alpha coefficient were greater than 0.6 for all variables as suggested by Cavana and Sekaran (2003).

Table 3.3: Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients (Pre-test)

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha
Job Characteristics Inventory (JCS)	
• Skill Variety (3 items)	0.77
• Task Identity (3 items)	0.74
• Task Significance (3 items)	0.85
• Autonomy (3 items)	0.75
• Feedback (3 items)	0.71
Job Satisfaction (3 items)	0.83

Data Gathering

Primary Data

The primary data was collected through a survey. Each questionnaire consisted of five pages, comprising an informational cover letter, a consent form, and two pages of research questions. To increase the response rate, a 10 well-trained research assistants personally delivered the questionnaires to the 500 targeted SME entrepreneurs. An appointment for collecting the questionnaire was made on the day the questionnaire was delivered. Of the collected questionnaires, only those which indicated the number of employees in the company did not exceed the maximum number of 50 employees were used for further analysis.

Secondary Data

In preparation for the analysis of the survey responses, extensive secondary research was undertaken to gather publicly available data relevant to SME entrepreneurs, particularly in the context of Thailand. The secondary data were taken from several sources, including journals, newspapers, magazines, and selected Internet sites. Data were then assessed for standard and relevance and arranged in a coherent order in preparation for use as support for primary findings.

Statistical Treatment of Data

In this study, *Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) for Windows*, version 15.0, was used to analyze the data from the completed questionnaires. Two types of data analysis were employed: descriptive analysis and inferential analysis (correlation analysis).

Hypotheses Testing (Correlation Analysis)

Bivariate correlation analysis differs from non-parametric measures of association analysis in two important ways (Gilbert & Churchill, 1999). First, parametric correlation requires two continuous variables measured on an interval or ratio scale. Second, the coefficient does not distinguish between independent and dependent variables. It treats the variables symmetrically. As the purpose of the hypotheses testing in this study was to examine the relationship between independent variables (job dimensions) and dependent variables (job satisfaction) and as all the variables in this study were either interval or ratio scales, the proposed five hypotheses were tested using the Bivariate Correlation (Pearson Product-Moment Correlation), which is the type of analysis normally used to determine the significance, direction, and relationship of the variables in interval or ratio scales (Cavana & Sekaran, 2001). In particular, regression analysis was rejected because this study made no attempt to test the job characteristics approach in predicting the influences of job dimensions on job satisfaction; it focused solely on explaining the relationship between particular variables. The Pearson correlation coefficient (r) was calculated as follow:

$$r = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n (X_i - \bar{X})(Y_i - \bar{Y})}{\sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^n (X_i - \bar{X})^2 \sum_{i=1}^n (Y_i - \bar{Y})^2}}$$

Where:

- r = correlation coefficient between X and Y
- n = sample size
- X_i = value of variable X unit i
- Y_i = value of variable Y unit i
- \bar{X} = sample mean of variable X
- \bar{Y} = sample mean of variable Y

The significance level of this study was set at 0.05; thus, the null hypotheses was rejected when Sig. (2-tailed) was less than α . The correlation coefficient (r) reveals the magnitude and direction of relationship varying over a range from +1.00 through 0 to -1.00 (Cooper & Schindler, 2003). In this study, the correlation results acquired from the test were then interpreted according to the following correlation coefficient range.

<u>Correlation Coefficient (r)</u>	<u>Correlation Level</u>
1.00	Perfect positive correlation
0.61 – 0.99	Strong positive correlation
0.31 – 0.60	Moderate positive correlation
0.01 – 0.30	Weak positive correlation
0.00	No correlation
-0.01 – -0.30	Weak negative correlation
-0.31 – -0.60	Moderate negative correlation
-0.61 – -0.99	Strong negative correlation
-1.00	Perfect negative correlation

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND ANALYSES

General Information of the Respondents

The general information of the respondents including personal information (gender, marital status, age, education level, prior work experience, and prior start-up experience) and business information (number of employees, type of business, way of becoming an entrepreneur, working hours per week, owner of other businesses, and business stage) are presented as both of frequencies and percentages.

Personal Information

Table 4.1: Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	204	52.04
Female	188	47.96
Total	392	100.00

Note: The total number of the respondents, 392, exceeds the minimum requirement of 384 respondents, were used for research analyses. The response rate was 78.40% (The questionnaires were randomly sent to 500 SME entrepreneurs).

Table 4.1 shows that of the total 392 respondents, the number of male respondents was slightly larger than the number of female respondents. There were 204 male respondents (52.04%) and 188 female respondents (47.96%)

Table 4.2: Marital Status

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	210	53.57
Married	170	43.37
Divorced	9	2.30
Widowed	3	0.76
Total	392	100.00

Table 4.2 shows that a majority of the respondents were single; married respondents made up the second largest group. There were single 210 respondents (53.57%) and 170 married respondents (43.37%). Only a small number of respondents were divorced and widowed, consisting of 9 divorced respondents (2.30%) and 3 widowed respondents (0.76%).

Table 4.3: Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage
Under 20	7	1.79
21 – 30	85	21.68
31 – 40	120	30.61
41 – 50	106	27.04
51 – 60	59	15.05
Over 60	15	3.83
Total	392	100.00

Table 4.3 shows that most of the respondents were between 20 and 60 years of age. The largest portion of the respondents, 120 (30.61%), was in the 31–40 age range, followed by 106 respondents (27.04%) in the 41–50 age range, 85 (21.68%) in the 21–30 age range, and 59 (15.05%) in the 51–60 age range. Only 15 (3.83%) respondents were over 60 years old, and only 7 (1.79%) respondents were under 20 years old.

Table 4.4: Education Level

Education Level	Frequency	Percentage
Primary School	5	1.27
Secondary School	27	6.89
Commercial/ Technical College	76	19.39
Bachelor's Degree	230	58.67
Master's Degree	48	12.24
Doctoral Degree	6	1.54
Total	392	100.00

Table 4.4 shows that most of the respondents (91.84%) had a tertiary education. There were 230 bachelor's degree respondents (58.67%), 76 commercial/technical college respondents (19.39%), 48 master's degree respondents (12.24%), and 6 doctoral degree respondents (1.54%). There were only 27 secondary school respondents (6.89%) and a mere 5 primary school respondents (1.27%).

Table 4.5: Prior Work Experience

Prior Work Experience	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	343	87.50
No	49	12.50
Total	392	100.00

Table 4.5 shows that most of the respondents, 343 (87.50%) had prior work experience. Only a small minority of the respondents, 49 (12.50%), did not have any prior work experience.

Table 4.6 Prior Start-Up Experience

Prior Start-Up Experience	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	134	34.18
No	258	65.82
Total	392	100.00

Table 4.6 shows that a fair portion of the respondents, 134 (34.18%), had prior start-up experience, although more than half of the respondents, 258 (65.82), did not have any prior start-up experience.

Business Information

Table 4.7: Number of Employees

No. of Employees	Frequency	Percentage
1 – 5	201	51.28
6 – 10	106	27.04
11 – 15	35	8.93
16 – 25	29	7.39
26 – 50	21	5.36
Total	392	100.00

Table 4.7 shows that most of the respondents, i.e., 307 respondents (78.32%), owned businesses that employed from 1 to 10 people. There were 201 respondents (51.28%) who owned businesses with 1–5 employees and 106 respondents (27.04%) who owned business with 6–10 employees. Only 35 respondents (8.93%), 29 respondents (7.39%), and 21 respondents (5.6%) owned businesses with 11–15, 16–25, and 26–50 employees, respectively.

Table 4.8: Type of Business

Type of Business	Frequency	Percentage
Manufacturing	69	17.61
Service	149	38.01
Wholesale	32	8.16
Retail	142	36.22
Total	392	100.00

Table 4.8 shows that the largest portion of the respondents, at 174 (44.38%), worked in the trading sector (wholesale and retail). Respondents in the service sector constituted the greatest number, with 149 respondents, (38.01%), followed by retail, manufacturing, and wholesale, with 142 (36.22%), 69 (17.61%), and 32 respondents (8.16%), respectively.

Table 4.9: Method of Becoming an Entrepreneur

Method of Becoming an Entrepreneur	Frequency	Percentage
Start-Up	243	61.99
Succession	88	22.45
Joining as Partner	50	12.76
Takeover	3	0.76
Others	8	2.04
Total	392	100.00

Table 4.9 shows that start-up was the most general method of becoming an entrepreneur. There were 243 respondents (61.99%) who owned their businesses by start-up. The second largest portion of the respondents, 88 (22.45%), owned their business through succession. A fair portion of the respondents, 50 (12.76%), owned their businesses by joining as partner. Only a minority of the respondents owned their businesses by other means or takeover, numbering 8 (2.04%) and 3 respondents (0.76%), respectively.

Table 4.10: Working Hours per Week

Working Hours per Week	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 10	4	1.02
10 – 20	23	5.87
21 – 30	62	15.82
31 – 40	119	30.36
41 – 50	125	31.88
51 – 60	38	9.69
More than 60	21	5.36
Total	392	100.00

Table 4.10 shows that the majority of the respondents, at 306 (78.06%), worked between 21 and 50 hours per week. The number of working hours per week of 41–50, 125 respondents (31.88%), constituted the greatest number, followed by 31–40, and 21–30, with 119 (30.36%) and 62 respondents (15.82%) respectively. Only a small number of respondents worked more than 50 hours and fewer than 20 hours per week. There

were 38 respondents (9.69%) who worked 51–60 hours per week, 23 respondents (5.87%) who worked 10–20 hours per week, 21 respondents (5.36%) who worked more than 60 hours per week, and 4 respondents (1.02%) who worked fewer than 10 hours per week.

Table 4.11: Owner of Other Businesses

Owner of Other Businesses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes (Related)	94	23.98
Yes (Not Related)	12	3.06
No	286	72.96
Total	392	100.00

Table 4.11 shows that most of the respondents, 286 (72.96%), did not own any other businesses. There were 94 respondents (23.98%) who owned other related businesses. Only a small portion of the respondents, 12 (3.06%), owned other non-related businesses.

Table 4.12: Business Stage

Business Stage	Frequency	Percentage
Introduction Stage	249	63.52
Growth Stage	46	11.73
Maturity Stage	69	17.61
Decline Stage	28	7.14
Total	392	100.00

Table 4.12 shows that businesses in the introduction stage constituted the greatest number, at 249 (63.52%), followed by maturity stage, growth stage, and decline stage, with 69 (17.61%), 46 (11.73%), and 28 (7.14%), respectively.

Outliers Analysis

Outliers are non-representative of the population due to their distinct difference from other data points (Hair et al., 1998). Outliers affect statistics because of their extreme values. They can be identified using the Explore procedure in SPSS, which lists the cases with the five highest values and the five lowest values for each variable. No outliers were found for any of the variables in this study; thus, no outlier cases were deleted from the sample.

Common Method Variance Analysis

Common method variance is the systematic variance introduced by the measurement method, not derived from the variables of interest and their interrelationships (Campbell & Fiske, 1959; Podsakoff & Organ, 1986). Since the data were self-reported and collected using a survey, common method variance is an issue that needs to be addressed (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986). The presence of common method variance can be identified by the analysis of the existence of the differences in internal reliability estimates between two time-separated data collections. Table 4.13 shows that there were no substantial differences of the internal reliability estimates between the pre-test and the large-scale study; thus, common method variance was not considered a threat for this study.

Table 4.13: Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients (Pre-Test & Study)

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	
	<u>Pre-Test</u>	<u>Study</u>
Job Characteristics		
• Skill Variety (3 items)	0.77	0.74
• Task Identity (3 items)	0.74	0.68
• Task Significance (3 items)	0.85	0.70
• Autonomy (3 items)	0.75	0.79
• Feedback (3 items)	0.71	0.72
Job Satisfaction (3 items)	0.83	0.77

Reliability Analysis

Hackman and Oldham (1980) established internal consistency reliabilities for each of the scales measured by the JDS. The alpha coefficient for all variables in this study ranged from 0.68 to 0.79 with skill variety at 0.74, task identity at 0.68, task significance at 0.70, autonomy at 0.79, feedback at 0.72, and job satisfaction at 0.77 (see Table 4.13).

Descriptive Analysis of the Main Variables

Job Dimensions

All job dimensions—skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback— were measured with seven-point Likert scales, and described by average weighted means, as follows:

Arbitrary Level	Descriptive Rating
6.16 – 7.00	Strongly Agree
5.30 – 6.15	Agree
4.44 – 5.29	Slightly Agree
3.40 – 4.43	Undecided
2.72 – 3.57	Slightly Disagree
1.86 – 2.71	Disagree
1.00 – 1.85	Strongly Disagree

Skill Variety

Table 4.14: Skill Variety

Skill Variety	Mean	SD
• My job provides a lot of variety.	5.54	1.10
• While performing my job I get the opportunity to work on many interesting projects.	4.88	1.15
• My job gives me the opportunity to use many new technologies.	5.22	1.21
Total	5.21	0.94

Table 4.14 shows the three items measuring skill variety. The overall perceptions of the respondents on skill variety fell in the “slightly agree” range, with an average weighted mean of 5.21 and a standard deviation of 0.94. These results indicate that the respondents generally felt that their jobs provided moderately high levels of skill variety.

Task Identity

Table 4.15: Task Identity

Task Identity	Mean	SD
• My job is one that may affect a lot of other people depending on how well the work is performed.	5.84	1.11
• My job has the ability to influence decisions that significantly affect the company.	5.77	1.14
• My job influences day-to-day company success.	5.71	1.16
Total	5.77	0.89

Table 4.15 shows the three items measuring task identity. The overall perceptions of the respondents on task identity fell in the “agree” range, with an average weighted mean of 5.77 and a standard deviation of 0.89. These results indicate that the respondents generally felt that their jobs had high levels of task identity.

Task Significance

Table 4.16: Task Significance

Task Significance	Mean	SD
• My job allows me the opportunity to complete the work I start.	5.82	1.18
• My job is arranged so that I have a chance and the ability to talk with customers.	5.66	1.15
• My job is arranged so that I have an understanding of how it relates to the business mission.	5.97	1.14
Total	5.81	0.91

Table 4.16 shows the three items measuring task significance. The overall perceptions of the respondents on task significance fell in the “agree” range, with an average weighted mean of 5.81 and a standard deviation of 0.91. These results indicate that the respondents generally felt that their jobs had high levels of task significance.

Autonomy

Table 4.17: Autonomy

Autonomy	Mean	SD
• My job lets me be left on my own to do my own work.	5.19	1.13
• My job provides me the opportunity of self-directed flexibility of work hours.	4.92	1.20
• I am able to act independently of my supervisor in performing my job function.	5.11	1.17
Total	5.07	0.91

Table shows 4.17 the three items measuring autonomy. The overall perceptions of the respondents on autonomy fell in the “slightly agree” range, with an average weighted mean of 5.07 and a standard deviation of 0.91. These results indicate that the respondents generally felt that their jobs had moderately high levels of autonomy.

Feedback

Table 4.18: Feedback

Feedback	Mean	SD
• My job by itself provides feedback on how well I am performing as I am working.	4.03	0.97
• My job provides me with the opportunity both to communicate with my supervisor and to receive recognition from them as well.	3.94	1.15
• I receive feedback from my co-workers about my performance on the job.	3.68	1.17
Total	3.88	0.89

Table 4.18 shows the three items measuring feedback. The overall perceptions of the respondents on feedback fell in the “undecided” range, with an average weighted mean of 3.88 and a standard deviation of 0.89. These results indicate that the respondents generally felt that their jobs had moderate levels of feedback.

Job Satisfaction

All job satisfaction items were measured with seven-point Likert scales, and described by average weighted means, as follows:

Arbitrary Level	Descriptive Rating
6.16 – 7.00	Strongly Agree
5.30 – 6.15	Agree
4.44 – 5.29	Slightly Agree
3.40 – 4.43	Undecided
2.72 – 3.57	Slightly Disagree
1.86 – 2.71	Disagree
1.00 – 1.85	Strongly Disagree

Table 4.19: Job Satisfaction

Job Satisfaction	Mean	SD
• Generally speaking, I am very satisfied with this job.	5.15	1.08
• I frequently think of quitting this job. (reversed score)	5.23	1.11
• I am generally satisfied with the kind of work I do in this job.	5.33	1.14
Total	5.24	0.87

Table 4.19 shows the three items measuring job satisfaction. The overall perceptions of the respondents on skill variety fell in the “slightly agree” range, with an

average weighted mean of 5.24 and a standard deviation of 0.87. These results indicate that the respondents generally felt that they had moderately high levels of job satisfaction.

Hypotheses Testing

Table 4.20: Summary of Hypotheses Testing

Job Dimension	Job Satisfaction	
	Pearson Correlation	P-Value
Skill Variety	0.302	0.000
Task Identity	0.256	0.000
Task Significance	0.286	0.000
Autonomy	0.553	0.000
Feedback	0.603	0.000

Skill Variety and Job Satisfaction

Ho1: Skill variety has no positive relationship with job satisfaction.

Ha1: Skill variety has a positive relationship with job satisfaction.

Table 4.20 shows that the Sig. (2-tailed) is 0.000 and the correlation coefficient is 0.302. As the Sig. (2-tailed) is less than the significance level of 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that there is a significant relationship between skill variety and job satisfaction at a weak positive relationship level, i.e., respondents with higher levels of skill variety were more likely to evince higher levels of job satisfaction.

Task Identity and Job Satisfaction

Ho2: Task identity has no positive relationship with job satisfaction.

Ha2: Task identity has a positive relationship with job satisfaction.

Table 4.20 shows that the Sig. (2-tailed) is 0.000 and the correlation coefficient is 0.256. As the Sig. (2-tailed) is less than the significance level of 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that there is a significant relationship between task identity and job satisfaction at a weak positive relationship level, i.e., respondents with higher levels of task identity were more likely to evince higher levels of job satisfaction.

Task Significance and Job Satisfaction

Ho3: Task significance has no positive relationship with job satisfaction.

Ha3: Task significance has a positive relationship with job satisfaction.

Table 4.20 shows that the Sig. (2-tailed) is 0.000 and the correlation coefficient is 0.286. As the Sig. (2-tailed) is less than the significance level of 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that there is a significant relationship between task significance and job satisfaction at a weak positive relationship level, i.e., respondents with higher levels of task significance were more likely to evince higher levels of job satisfaction.

Autonomy and Job Satisfaction

Ho4: Autonomy has no positive relationship with job satisfaction.

Ha4: Autonomy has a positive relationship with job satisfaction.

Table 4.20 shows that the Sig. (2-tailed) is 0.000 and the correlation coefficient is 0.553. As the Sig. (2-tailed) is less than the significance level of 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that there is a significant relationship between autonomy and job satisfaction at a moderate positive relationship level, i.e., respondents with higher levels of autonomy were more likely to evince higher levels of job satisfaction.

Feedback and Job Satisfaction

Ho5: Feedback has no positive relationship with job satisfaction.

Ha5: Feedback has a positive relationship with job satisfaction.

Table 4.20 shows that the Sig. (2-tailed) is 0.000 and the correlation coefficient is 0.603. As the Sig. (2-tailed) is less than the significance level of 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that there is a significant relationship between feedback and job satisfaction at a moderate positive relationship level, i.e., respondents with higher levels of skill variety were more likely to evince higher levels of job satisfaction.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND FURTHER RESEARCH

Discussions

Reliability of Research Tools

The research tool used in this study has been modified for use specifically with SME entrepreneurs. There are two versions of the questionnaire, English and Thai. The Thai version was used in this study. The results of the alpha coefficients for all variables in this study are proved to be reliable and not significantly different from those of the original version developed by Hackman and Oldham (1980). The alpha coefficients in this study ranged from 0.68 (task identity) to 0.79 (autonomy), while the alpha coefficients in the original version (Hackman & Oldham, 1980) ranged from 0.58 (task significance) to 0.77 (job satisfaction).

Job Dimensions

Of the five job dimensions included, task identity and task significance are the two dimensions that receive the highest ratings. Skill variety and autonomy lie in the middle range while feedback is at the lower end (see Table 5.1).

Table 5.1: Summary of Job Dimensions

Rank	Job Dimension	Mean	SD	Rating
1	Task Significance	5.81	0.91	Agree
2	Task Identity	5.77	0.89	Agree
3	Skill Variety	5.21	0.94	Slightly Agree
4	Autonomy	5.07	0.91	Slightly Agree
5	Feedback	3.88	0.89	Undecided

The high scores of task significance and task identity are broadly consistent with expectation. This is because SME entrepreneurs are usually the major shareholder, as well as being the highest executive of their SME. Thus, their jobs are generally involved in making strategic and important/final corporate decisions, which produce significant effects on other jobs in the SMEs. Also, this study shows that more than 78% of

respondents in employ fewer than 10 employees. The limited number of employees means that most SME entrepreneurs are able to or required to complete a certain jobs/tasks individually.

The moderate scores for skill variety and autonomy can be explained by the fact that most SME entrepreneurs need to perform many activities that challenge their skills, knowledge, and abilities. They have responsibility not only for technical work but also for management. They have to update the information about customer preferences, industry trends, their competitors' movements, new technologies, new laws and regulations, and employee relations. Unlike employees in large enterprises, SME entrepreneurs generally have a high degree of freedom, independence, and discretion in scheduling their work and determining how they will carry it out (Leonard, 2001; Vivarelli, 1991; Willax, 1998). It is worth noting that the autonomy score in this study not falling in the high range maybe due to the fact that approximately 47% of the respondents in this study worked more than 40 hours per week. This number of working hours is close to that of employees in large enterprises. The average working hours of all enterprises in Thailand are eight hours a day, five days a week (Arttachariya, 1997). Also, many of the SMEs, which are sub-contractors and, thus, have to make products that exactly match the requirements of their customers (large enterprises); so these SME entrepreneurs mostly do not have the freedom to make their own decisions concerning the development of new products based on their own ideas.

The relatively low feedback score in this study can be explained by the fact that the Thai national culture exhibits a high level of power distance (Hofstede, 1980). Thus, a large gap exists between the power and position of SME entrepreneurs and that of their employees. For this reason, many employees in SMEs are not encouraged to offer sincere feedback or criticism to their SME entrepreneurs. In addition, many SME entrepreneurs do not want ideas or suggestions from their employees. This is because many SMEs cannot afford to employ highly qualified employees i.e. those with high levels of education and experience and because most highly qualified people prefer working in large enterprises to working in SMEs. Hence, SME entrepreneurs are usually convinced that their ideas must be better than those of their employees.

Job Satisfaction

I found that SME entrepreneurs generally have moderate levels of job satisfaction (slightly agree rating). This may be explained by the fact that a number of SME entrepreneurs in Thailand, being influenced by the Theravada Buddhist concepts of “a human being’s need to work individually for his/her own karma (salvation)” and “the middle way of life”, that is, avoiding extremes of either positive or negative emotions and behaviors (Kirsch, 1975). This explains their tendency to be moderately satisfied with their jobs.

Additionally, the type of SME entrepreneurs found in Thailand may also play a significant role in determining job satisfaction level. According to Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (2005), entrepreneurs around the world can be divided into two types: opportunity-based and necessity-based. Opportunity-based entrepreneurs are entrepreneurs with high levels of human capital and entrepreneurial competencies. They become SME entrepreneurs when they perceive business opportunities; thus, pursuing an entrepreneurial career may be seen as being their choice. Necessity-based entrepreneurs, on the other hand, are entrepreneurs with low levels of human capital and entrepreneurial competencies. They generally lack other viable options for earning a living; thus, pursuing an entrepreneurial career constitutes not a choice but a compulsion. As in other developing countries, the majority of SME entrepreneurs in Thailand have been identified as necessity-based entrepreneurs (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2005). This may help explain why the level of job satisfaction of SME entrepreneurs in Thailand fell in the moderate range as opposed to the high range as is generally found in developed countries.

Furthermore, SME entrepreneurs in Thailand seem to consider measuring career success in terms of subjective rewards such as job satisfaction to be as important as measuring it in terms of objective rewards such as high levels of income and/or social status. This is due to the fact that the Thai government is currently focusing on a philosophy of self-sufficiency and a number of SME entrepreneurs appear to be following this policy by managing their businesses with a low-growth perspective and by not investing in high-risk ventures, which might be inhibiting the generation of high levels of income or other objective signs of career success.

Job Dimensions and Job Satisfaction

The results of the hypothesis testing show that all five job dimensions, consisting of skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback have positive relationships with job satisfaction (See Table 5.2). This implies that achieving high levels in the job dimensions provides reasonable assurance of attaining job satisfaction.

Table 5.2: Summary of Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis	Job Satisfaction
Ho1: Skill variety has no relationship with job satisfaction.	Weak positive correlation Ho Rejected
Ho1: Task identity has no relationship with job satisfaction.	Weak positive correlation Ho Rejected
Ho1: Task significance has no relationship with job satisfaction.	Weak positive correlation Ho Rejected
Ho1: Autonomy has no relationship with job satisfaction.	Moderate positive correlation Ho Rejected
Ho1: Feedback has no relationship with job satisfaction.	Moderate positive correlation Ho Rejected

Implications for Academic Researchers

Many researchers have pointed out the significance of national culture as a factor that may influence the universal applicability of management and behavioral theories developed in, and appropriate to, one specific socio-cultural context (e.g., Hofstede, 1980; Laurent, 1986; Parnell & Hatem, 1999; Rousseau & Fried, 2001). Thus, we should not automatically expect theories developed in Western countries with respect to issues such as job dimensions and job satisfaction to apply equally well in other socio-cultural contexts. The findings of this study contribute to the contextual understanding of SME entrepreneurs in Thailand, particularly in terms of job dimensions and job satisfaction. They also improve the theoretical explanation of the relationship between job dimensions and job satisfaction through a job characteristic model.

Furthermore, this study provides for better understanding of SME entrepreneurs in Thailand by analyzing data related to the characteristics of Thai SMEs, the

demographics of Thai SME entrepreneurs, Thai culture and its effects on Thai SME entrepreneurs, and human resource strategies in Thai SMEs.

Finally, the results from the hypothesis testing support a particular theoretical model of the job satisfaction of SME entrepreneurs. As all of the job dimensions have positive relationships with job satisfaction, this study provides both theoretical and empirical evidence for the crucial role these factors play in determining the job satisfaction of SME entrepreneurs and advances earlier research efforts to re-emphasize on the individual perspective in entrepreneurship and career research.

Implications for Potential and Practicing SME Entrepreneurs

First, as the instrument for measuring job dimensions and job satisfaction used in this study (in both English and Thai versions) has been modified specifically for SME entrepreneurs, and has already been empirically tested with SME entrepreneurs in Thailand, it could be used as a self-assessment tool for SME entrepreneurs in Thailand and other countries to identify their own job satisfaction and personally levels of job dimensions and, thereafter, to appropriately redesign their jobs.

The fact that autonomy and feedback are the two job dimensions that have moderate positive relationships with job satisfaction suggests that SME entrepreneurs should particularly focus on improving their jobs in these two dimensions.

For autonomy, SME entrepreneurs, especially those who are sub-contractors, should negotiate carefully with their counterparts before signing contracts. The details of the contracts that SME entrepreneurs should take into account include the degree of flexibility that SME entrepreneurs have in making decisions about the features of the products and how to carry out their work. In addition, SME entrepreneurs in general should focus more on time management. They should analyze their current tasks deliberately to see whether they are overloaded or not. If they have too many day-to-day or routine jobs, SME entrepreneurs need to hire more employees. Furthermore, SME entrepreneurs should concentrate on performing their core business activities and should outsource other activities such as accounting and logistics to professional companies.

With regard to feedback, SME entrepreneurs should open additional feedback channels because opening feedback channels can help SME entrepreneurs discover whether their performance is improving, deteriorating, or remaining at a constant level. It is suggested that SME entrepreneurs learn about their performances directly as they do their jobs. Job-provided feedback is usually more immediate and private than feedback from business advisors, customers, co-workers, or SME employees, and it increases the SME entrepreneur's feeling of personal control over his or her work in the bargain. In addition, it avoids many of the potentially disruptive interpersonal problems that can come up.

What should be done to open feedback channels varies depending on the characteristics of the job and the industry type and size of each SME. However, the changes generally involve simply removing existing blocks that isolate SME entrepreneurs from naturally occurring data about performance rather than generating entirely new feedback mechanisms. For example, SME entrepreneurs should accept the new management styles of decision making based not on only top-down but also on bottom-up information flow— i.e., listening to the ideas of their workers. Additionally, they should ask for the opinions of their co-workers (or other shareholders) when making critical decisions. Moreover, they should establish direct relationships with their current and potential customers because this can help remove the blocks between SME entrepreneurs and natural external sources of data about SME entrepreneurs' work and performance. Finally, they should use computers and other automated systems to provide them with necessary data, particularly, day-to-day or routine data, which can be programmed to provide SME entrepreneurs with immediate feedback in the form of computer screens and printouts indicating that an error has been made.

Limitations and Further Research

First, there are some specific limitations involved in employing the job characteristics approach. To begin with, the five job dimensions used in the present study have been used since Hackman and Lawler (1971) a priori chose to operationalize the job characteristics approach by focusing on skill variety, task identify, task significance,

autonomy, and feedback. Little research has been done to advance the measurement of job characteristics (Taber, Beehr, & Walsh, 1985). Despite the inductive study by Herzberg (1966), no study has identified how many and which job dimensions need to be considered in a comprehensive test of the job characteristics approach. Despite this limitation, most research examining the job characteristics approach has employed the five job dimensions used in the present study, which form the basis for the two most utilized measurement instruments: the Job Diagnostic Survey (JDS) (Hackman & Oldham, 1980) and the Job Characteristics Inventory (JCI) (Sims, Szilagyi, & Keller, 1976). Therefore, the limitations affecting the dimensionality of the job characteristics construct that are apparent in the job characteristics literature also apply to this study.

The controversy about whether it is objective or subjective job dimensions that need to be considered in job characteristics research likewise affects this study. This study is based on an early argument made by Hackman and Lawler (1971: 264), "it is how much he perceives that he has which will affect his reaction to the job." Brief and Aldag (1975) have found that subjective and objective job characteristics are positively correlated, and Roberts and Glick (1981) and Fried and Ferris (1987) found, in their meta-analyses, a convergence between objective and subjective job characteristics. Therefore, the limitation of the present study consists of the study being based on perceived job characteristics without any assessment of the objective job characteristics and without controlling for perceptual biases that affect the job characteristics.

Moreover, the causal direction from job dimensions to job satisfaction has been assumed by previous research and not empirically established (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1977; Thomas & Griffin, 1983). This is also the case in this study. James and Tetrick (1986) have shown that perceived job characteristics have a casual effect on job satisfaction and that this casual relationship has precedence over the job satisfaction–job perception casual path. Further, Hogan and Martell (1987) have found no support for the idea that satisfaction affects perceived job characteristics. I have, therefore, assumed in the present study that perceived job dimensions influence job satisfaction without testing this assumption of the casual direction.

Second, the sample for this study was chosen from among SME entrepreneurs in Bangkok, Thailand. Further comparative work could usefully be conducted, as follows:

- a comparison between different industries;
- a comparison between urban and rural SME entrepreneurs in Thailand as the backgrounds of urban and rural Thai people differ significantly in terms of education and wealth;
- a comparison across countries/cultures— i.e., a comparison between SME entrepreneurs in western-developed countries and those in Southeast Asian-developing countries; and
- a comparison in job dimensions and job satisfaction among SME entrepreneurs, employees in large corporation, and employees in SMEs.

Third, the descriptive results in this study show that the majority of SMEs were in the introduction stage and only a minority of SMEs was in the maturity stage. Thus, I suggest that further research concerning the relationships between business stage and job satisfaction of SME entrepreneurs be conducted.

Finally, the relationship between time investments and job satisfaction of SME entrepreneurs should be a focus of further research efforts. Longitudinal studies or experimental designs that could help establish the flow of causality between time investments and job satisfaction would be particularly enlightening. Future research employing a multi-wave panel study design would be useful not only for clarifying the causal order linking job satisfaction and time investments among new SME entrepreneurs but also as a way to study changes in job satisfaction among SME entrepreneurs across time.

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APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE (English Version)

Research Title: "A Study of the Relationship between Job Dimensions and Job Satisfaction of SME Entrepreneurs in Thailand"

Dr. Chinintorn Nakhata

Department of Entrepreneurship, School of Business Administration, Bangkok University
Rama IV Road, Bangkok 10110, Thailand

Tel: 02 350 3500 ext. 1640 Mobile: 08 1842 5617

E-mail: chinintorn.n@bu.ac.th

Dear SME entrepreneur,

This questionnaire is a research tool for a research project of Bangkok University. It has been designed to gather information concerning the job dimensions and job satisfaction of SME entrepreneurs in Thailand. As a SME entrepreneur, you are the right person who can give me information necessary for conducting this research. Thus, I would like to invite you to participate in this research project by completing this questionnaire.

Your company name has been randomly selected from the *2007 Thailand's Yellow Pages* digital database. In order to ensure the utmost privacy, you are not required to provide your name, your surname, sensitive personal information, or your company name. Your responses will be kept *strictly confidential*. Only I will be able to access the information you provide. Your participation is on a purely *voluntary basis*. You will be asked to sign your name on the enclosed consent form. You have the right to participate in or withdraw from this survey at anytime. All completed questionnaires will be kept in a secure environment at the researcher home.

This research project has been reviewed and approved by the Bangkok University Committee. If you would like a copy of the research findings, please inform me on the questionnaire-delivery day. A summary of the findings will be mailed to you after the data are completely analyzed. If you require any further information, please contact me directly at +66 8 1842 5617.

Thank you very much for your cooperation in completing this questionnaire.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Chinintorn Nakhata
Instructor
Bangkok University

Consent Form

Research Title:

A Study of the Relationship between Job Dimensions and Job Satisfaction of SME Entrepreneurs in Thailand

Researcher's Name: Dr. Chinintorn Nakhata

Department of Entrepreneurship

School of Business Administration, Bangkok University

- I have read the Participant Information Sheet, and the nature and purpose of the research project has been explained to me. I understand and agree to take part.
- I understand the purpose of the research project and my involvement in it.
- I understand that I may withdraw from the research project at any stage and that this will not affect my status now or in the future.
- I understand that while information gained during the study may be published, I will not be identified and my personal responses will remain confidential.

Participant's Name: _____

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____

I have provided information about this research to the research participant and believe that he/she understands what is involved.

Researcher's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Part A: Personal and Business Information

Personal Information

1. Gender: (1) Male (2) Female
2. Marital status: (1) Single (2) Married (3) Divorced (4) Widowed
3. Age:
(1) Under 20 (2) 21–30 (3) 31–40 (4) 41–50 (5) 51–60 (6) Over 60
4. Education Level:
(1) Primary School (2) Secondary School (3) Commercial/Technical College
(4) Bachelor's Degree (5) Master's Degree (6) Doctoral Degree
5. Before starting up/owing this business, did you have any work experience relevant to it?
(1) Yes (2) No
6. Did you have business start-up experience prior to this business? (1) Yes (2) No

Business Information

7. Number of employees (including you):
(1) 1–5 (2) 6–10 (3) 11–15 (4) 16–25 (5) 26–50 (6) More than 50
8. Your type of business:
(1) Manufacturing (2) Service (3) Wholesale (4) Retail
9. Method of becoming an owner of your business:
(1) Start-up (2) Succession (3) Joining as a partner (4) Takeover (5) Others
10. On average, how many hours per week do you usually spend on this business?
(1) Less than 10 (2) 10–20 (3) 21–30 (4) 31–40
(5) 41–50 (6) 51–60 (7) 61–70 (8) More than 70
11. Apart from this business, do you also own an other business(es)? (1) Yes (2) No
If yes, are any of them relevant to this business? (1) Yes (2) No
12. What is the current stage of business development of your industry?
(1) *Introduction Stage* (Product or services are unfamiliar to many potential users, and industry-wide demand is beginning to grow.)
(2) *Growth Stage* (Total industry-wide demand for products or services is growing at an annual rate of 10% or more.)
(3) *Maturity Stage* (Products or services are familiar to the vast majority or prospective users and industry-wide demand is relatively stable.)
(4) *Decline Stage* (Total industry-wide demand for products or services is decreasing at a more or less steady rate.)

Part B: Job Dimensions

Directions: Indicate how you personally feel about your job. Write a number in the blank beside each statement, based on the following scale:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Undecided	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

- ___ 1. My job provides a lot of variety.
- ___ 2. My job allows me the opportunity to complete the work I start.
- ___ 3. My job is one that may affect a lot of other people depending on how well the work is performed.
- ___ 4. My job lets me be left on my own to do my own work.
- ___ 5. My job itself provides feedback on how well I am performing as I am working.
- ___ 6. While performing my job I get the opportunity to work on many interesting.
- ___ 7. My job is arranged so that I have a chance and the ability to talk with customers.
- ___ 8. My job has the ability to influence decisions that significantly affect the company.
- ___ 9. My job provides me the opportunity of self-directed flexibility of work hours.
- ___ 10. My job provides me with the opportunity both to communicate with my supervisor and to receive recognition from him/her.
- ___ 11. My job gives me the opportunity to use many new technologies.
- ___ 12. My job is arranged so that I have an understanding of how it relates to the business mission.
- ___ 13. My job influences day-to-day company success.
- ___ 14. I am able to act independently of my supervision in performing my job function.
- ___ 15. I receive feedback from my co-workers about my performance on the job.

Part C: Job Satisfaction

Directions: Indicate how you personally feel about your job. Write a number in the blank beside each statement, based on the following scale:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Undecided	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

- ___ 1. Generally speaking, I am very satisfied with this job.
- ___ 2. I frequently think of quitting this job.
- ___ 3. I am generally satisfied with the kind of work I do in this job.

APPENDIX 2: QUESTIONNAIRE (Thai Version)

หัวข้อโครงการวิจัย: “การศึกษาความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างมิตินงานและความพึงพอใจในงานของ
ผู้ประกอบการ SMEs ในประเทศไทย”

ดร. ชินินทร นาคะตะ

สาขาวิชาการเป็นเจ้าของธุรกิจ, คณะบริหารธุรกิจ, มหาวิทยาลัยกรุงเทพ

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โทร. 0 2350 3500 ต่อ 1640 มือถือ 0 8 1842 5617 E-mail: chinintorn.n@bu.ac.th

เรียน ผู้ประกอบการ SME,

แบบสอบถามฉบับนี้เป็นเครื่องมือในการทำโครงการวิจัยของมหาวิทยาลัยกรุงเทพ ซึ่งได้รับการ
ออกแบบเพื่อใช้สำหรับเก็บข้อมูลเกี่ยวกับมิตินงานและความพึงพอใจในงานของผู้ประกอบการ SMEs ในประเทศ
ไทย ในฐานะที่ท่านเป็นผู้ประกอบการ SME ท่านจึงเป็นบุคคลที่มีความเหมาะสมที่จะให้ข้อมูลที่สำคัญและ ในครั้ง
นี้ ดิฉันจึงขอเชิญท่านเข้าร่วมในโครงการวิจัยด้วยการตอบแบบสอบถามนี้

ชื่อบริษัทของท่านได้รับการสุ่มเลือกมาจากฐานข้อมูลสมุดหน้าเหลืองประจำปี 2550 และเพื่อเป็นการให้
ความเชื่อมั่นเรื่องความเป็นส่วนตัว ท่านไม่จำเป็นต้องแจ้งชื่อ นามสกุล ข้อมูลส่วนตัวอื่นๆ รวมถึงชื่อบริษัทของ
ท่าน ข้อมูลต่างๆที่ได้รับจากท่านจะได้รับการเก็บอย่างดี เป็นความลับไม่เปิดเผย มีเพียงดิฉันเพียงคนเดียว
เท่านั้นที่จะเข้าถึงข้อมูลของท่านได้ ความร่วมมือของท่านอยู่บนพื้นฐานของความสมัครใจ จึงใคร่ขอให้ท่านลง
นามในแบบฟอร์มแสดงการยินยอมเข้าร่วมการวิจัยที่แนบมาให้ด้วย ท่านมีสิทธิ์ที่จะเข้าร่วมหรือหยุดการตอบ
แบบสอบถามฉบับนี้ได้ทุกเมื่อโดยที่ไม่มีผลกระทบต่อดำเนินงานของท่านแต่อย่างใด แบบสอบถาม
ที่ได้รับการตอบสมบูรณ์แล้วทุกฉบับจะได้รับการเก็บอย่างปลอดภัยที่บ้านของดิฉัน

โครงการวิจัยครั้งนี้ได้รับการตรวจสอบและอนุมัติจากคณะกรรมการของสถาบันวิจัย มหาวิทยาลัย
กรุงเทพการ ในกรณีที่ท่านต้องการบทสรุปของผลการวิจัยครั้งนี้โปรดกรุณาแจ้งดิฉันในวันที่ท่านได้รับ
แบบสอบถาม ท่านจะได้รับบทสรุปโครงการวิจัยนี้ทางไปรษณีย์หลังจากที่ข้อมูลที่เก็บรวบรวมได้รับการวิเคราะห์
เสร็จสมบูรณ์แล้ว

ขอขอบคุณอย่างยิ่งสำหรับการเสียสละเวลาให้ความร่วมมือในการตอบแบบสอบถามนี้เป็นอย่างสูง

ขอแสดงความนับถือ

ดร. ชินินทร นาคะตะ

อาจารย์ประจำสาขาวิชาการเป็นเจ้าของธุรกิจ คณะบริหารธุรกิจ

มหาวิทยาลัยกรุงเทพ

แบบฟอร์มการยินยอมเข้าร่วมการวิจัย

โครงการวิจัย: การศึกษาความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างมิตงานและความพึงพอใจในงานของ
ผู้ประกอบการ SMEs ในประเทศไทย

ผู้วิจัย: ดร. ชินินธร นาคะตะ

- ข้าพเจ้าได้อ่านเอกสารที่อธิบายถึงวัตถุประสงค์และขั้นตอนของการวิจัยครั้งนี้เป็นที่เรียบร้อยแล้ว ข้าพเจ้าเข้าใจและยินดีที่จะเข้าร่วม
- ข้าพเจ้าเข้าใจวัตถุประสงค์ของโครงการวิจัยนี้ รวมถึงสิ่งที่ข้าพเจ้ามีความเกี่ยวข้องด้วย
- ข้าพเจ้าเข้าใจว่าข้าพเจ้าสามารถถอนตัวออกจากโครงการนี้ได้ทุกเมื่อ โดยที่จะไม่มีผลกระทบใดๆ ต่อสถานะของข้าพเจ้า ทั้งในปัจจุบันและอนาคต
- ข้าพเจ้าเข้าใจว่าข้อมูลบางส่วนที่รวบรวมจากการศึกษาวิจัยครั้งนี้อาจได้รับการตีพิมพ์ แต่ข้อมูลส่วนตัวของข้าพเจ้าจะถือเป็นความลับ โดยจะไม่มีภาระบุ หรืออ้างอิงถึงข้าพเจ้าเป็นการส่วนตัว

ผู้เข้าร่วมการวิจัย: _____

ลายมือชื่อ: _____

วันที่: _____

ดิฉันได้จัดเตรียมข้อมูลเกี่ยวกับรายละเอียดของการวิจัยนี้ให้กับผู้ตอบแบบสอบถามและเชื่อว่าพวกเขา
เข้าใจถึงสิ่งที่พวกเขามีความเกี่ยวข้อง

ลายมือชื่อผู้วิจัย: _____

วันที่: _____

ส่วนเอ: ข้อมูลส่วนตัว และข้อมูลเกี่ยวกับธุรกิจ

ข้อมูลส่วนตัว

1. เพศ: (1) ชาย (2) หญิง
2. สถานภาพ: (1) โสด (2) แต่งงาน (3) หย่า (4) หม้าย
3. อายุ (ปี):
 - (1) น้อยกว่า 20 (2) 21-30 (3) 31-40
 - (4) 41-50 (5) 51-60 (6) มากกว่า 60
4. ระดับการศึกษา
 - (1) ประถม (2) มัธยมศึกษา (3) วิทยาลัยพาณิชย/เทคนิค
 - (4)ปริญญาตรี (5) ปริญญาโท (6) ปริญญาเอก
5. ก่อนที่ท่านจะเริ่มต้น/เป็นเจ้าของธุรกิจปัจจุบัน ท่านเคยมีประสบการณ์ในการทำงานที่มีความเกี่ยวข้องกับธุรกิจปัจจุบันหรือไม่ (1) เคย (2) ไม่เคย
6. ท่านเคยมีประสบการณ์สร้าง/เริ่มต้นธุรกิจใหม่ ก่อนดำเนินธุรกิจปัจจุบันหรือไม่ (1) เคย (2) ไม่เคย

ข้อมูลเกี่ยวกับธุรกิจ

7. จำนวนพนักงาน (รวมคุณ)
 - (1) 1-5 (2) 6-10 (3) 11-15 (4) 16-25 (5) 26-50
8. รูปแบบธุรกิจ:
 - (1) การผลิต (2) การบริการ (3) การขายส่ง (4) การขายปลีก
9. วิธีการเป็นเจ้าของธุรกิจ:
 - (1) เป็นผู้ก่อตั้ง (2) รับ/สืบทอดช่วงต่อ (3) เข้าร่วมเป็นผู้ถือหุ้นหลัก (4) ยึดกิจการ (5) อื่นๆ
10. โดยเฉลี่ย คุณใช้เวลาในการทำงานอาทิตย์ละกี่ชั่วโมง
 - (1) น้อยกว่า 10 (2) 10-20 (3) 21-30 (4) 31-40
 - (5) 41-50 (6) 51-60 (7) 61-70 (8) มากกว่า 70
11. คุณเป็นเจ้าของธุรกิจอื่น นอกเหนือไปจากธุรกิจนี้หรือไม่ (1) ใช่ (2) ไม่ใช่
ถ้า "ใช่" มีธุรกิจใดดังกล่าวที่มีความใกล้เคียง/สัมพันธ์กับธุรกิจนี้หรือไม่ (1) มี (2) ไม่มี
12. ธุรกิจของคุณกำลังอยู่ในช่วงวงจรธุรกิจใด
 - (1) "ช่วงเริ่มต้น" (ผลิตภัณฑ์หรือบริการ ยังไม่เป็นที่คุ้นเคยกับผู้บริโภคโดยทั่วไป อุตสาหกรรมโดยรวมกำลังเริ่มเติบโต)
 - (2) "ช่วงเติบโต" (อุตสาหกรรมโดยรวมมีอัตราการเติบโต 10% หรือสูงกว่า)
 - (3) "ช่วงเติบโตเต็มที่" (ผลิตภัณฑ์หรือบริการเป็นที่คุ้นเคยกับผู้บริโภคโดยทั่วไป อัตราการเติบโตของอุตสาหกรรมโดยรวมมีอัตราคงที่)
 - (4) "ช่วงถดถอย" (อัตราการเติบโตของอุตสาหกรรมโดยรวมลดลง)

ส่วนบี: มิตินงาน

คำแนะนำ: ระบุความรู้สึกส่วนตัวที่ท่านมีต่องานของท่าน โดยเขียนตัวเลขไว้ในช่องว่างข้างหน้าแต่ละข้อความ บรรยายลักษณะงาน ตามสเกลต่อไปนี้

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
ไม่เห็นด้วย อย่างยิ่ง	ไม่เห็นด้วย	ไม่เห็นด้วย เล็กน้อย	ไม่มีความ คิดเห็น	เห็นด้วย เล็กน้อย	เห็นด้วย	เห็นด้วยเป็น อย่างยิ่ง

- 1. งานของข้าพเจ้ามีลักษณะที่หลากหลาย
- 2. งานของข้าพเจ้าเปิดโอกาสให้ข้าพเจ้า สามารถทำงานดังกล่าวได้ตั้งแต่เริ่มต้นจนงานชิ้นนั้นสำเร็จ
- 3. ระดับคุณภาพงานของข้าพเจ้า มีผลกระทบต่อบุคคลหลายบุคคล
- 4. ข้าพเจ้าสามารถทำงานของข้าพเจ้าได้ด้วยตนเองเพียงผู้เดียว
- 5. งานของข้าพเจ้าสามารถบ่งบอกผลตอบกลับเกี่ยวกับระดับคุณภาพในการทำงานของข้าพเจ้า
- 6. ในระหว่างการทำงาน ข้าพเจ้ามีโอกาสในการทำงานหลายสิ่งที่มีความน่าสนใจ
- 7. งานของข้าพเจ้าถูกจัดให้มีลักษณะที่เปิดโอกาสให้ข้าพเจ้า สามารถพูดคุยกับลูกค้าได้
- 8. งานของข้าพเจ้าเป็นงานที่มีอิทธิพลต่อการตัดสินใจที่สำคัญของบริษัท
- 9. งานของข้าพเจ้ามีลักษณะเวลาในการทำงานที่ยืดหยุ่น
- 10. งานของข้าพเจ้าเปิดโอกาสให้ข้าพเจ้า สามารถติดต่อสื่อสารเพื่อขอคำปรึกษาและรับผลตอบกลับกับที่ปรึกษาทางธุรกิจของข้าพเจ้า
- 11. งานของข้าพเจ้าเปิดโอกาสให้ข้าพเจ้าใช้หลากหลายเทคโนโลยีสมัยใหม่
- 12. งานของข้าพเจ้าถูกจัดให้มีลักษณะที่ทำให้ข้าพเจ้าเข้าใจถึงความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างงานของข้าพเจ้าและพันธกิจของบริษัท
- 13. งานของข้าพเจ้ามีอิทธิพลต่อความสำเร็จของบริษัทในแต่ละวัน
- 14. ข้าพเจ้าสามารถทำงานของข้าพเจ้าบนพื้นฐานของความคิดเห็นส่วนตัวของข้าพเจ้า
- 15. ข้าพเจ้าได้รับผลตอบกลับเกี่ยวกับระดับผลการทำงานของจากเพื่อนร่วมงานของข้าพเจ้า

ส่วนซี: ความพึงพอใจในงาน

คำแนะนำ: ระบุความรู้สึกส่วนตัวที่ท่านมีต่องานของท่าน โดยเขียนตัวเลขไว้ในช่องว่างข้างหน้าแต่ละข้อความ บรรยายลักษณะงาน ตามสเกลต่อไปนี้

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
ไม่เห็นด้วย อย่างยิ่ง	ไม่เห็นด้วย	ไม่เห็นด้วย เล็กน้อย	ไม่มีความ คิดเห็น	เห็นด้วย เล็กน้อย	เห็นด้วย	เห็นด้วยเป็น อย่างยิ่ง

- 1. โดยทั่วไปแล้ว ข้าพเจ้ามีความพึงพอใจในงานของข้าพเจ้า
- 2. ข้าพเจ้ามีความรู้สึกที่อยากจะเลิกทำงานที่ข้าพเจ้ากำลังทำอยู่บ่อยครั้ง
- 3. ข้าพเจ้ามีความพึงพอใจโดยรวมต่อลักษณะของงานที่ข้าพเจ้าทำอยู่

APPENDIX 3: HOFSTEDE'S DIMENSION OF CULTURE SCALES

Country	Power Distance	Individualism	Uncertainty Avoidance	Masculinity
Arab countries	80	38	68	53
Argentina	49	46	86	56
Australia	36	90	51	61
Austria	11	55	70	79
Belgium	65	75	94	54
Brazil	69	38	76	49
Canada	39	80	48	52
Chile	63	23	86	28
Colombia	67	13	80	64
Denmark	18	74	86	16
Finland	33	63	59	26
France	68	71	86	43
Germany	35	67	65	66
Greece	60	35	112	57
Hong Kong	68	25	29	57
India	77	48	40	56
Indonesia	78	14	48	46
Iran	58	41	59	43
Ireland	28	70	35	68
Israel	13	54	81	47
Italy	50	76	75	70
Japan	54	46	92	95
Mexico	81	30	82	69
Netherlands	38	80	53	14
New Zealand	22	79	49	58
Norway	31	69	50	8
Pakistan	55	14	70	50
Philippines	94	32	44	64
Portugal	63	27	104	31
Singapore	74	20	8	48
South Africa	49	65	49	63
South Korea	60	18	85	39
Spain	57	51	86	42
Sweden	31	71	29	5
Switzerland	34	68	58	70
Taiwan	58	17	69	45
Thailand	64	20	64	34
Turkey	66	37	85	45
UK	35	89	35	66
USA	40	91	46	62
Venezuela	81	12	76	73

AUTHOR

Dr. Chinintorn Nakhata received her D.B.A. (Management) from University of South Australia, Adelaide, Australia, M.B.A. (Marketing and Finance) from Sasin, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand, and B.B.A. (Marketing) from Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand. She is a full-time instructor at the department of Entrepreneurship, School of Business Administration, Bangkok University, Bangkok, Thailand. Currently, she is a Ph.D. candidate at the department of Marketing, School of Business Administration, University of South Florida, Florida, USA.

