

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

These days the rapid growth of economic and technological development brings modernity, convenience, and comfort to people in the country. Yet, would it not be surprising that many headlines in the news heard from various medias have not said so. Apart from a lot more strange and cruel crimes committed everyday, civil cases are seen there. For example, some are threatened by those whom they owe money because they cannot pay off their outstanding debts. Not only does the occurrence of this become common in people's view, but also the number of debtors has even been rising. For starters, based on a logical thinking, people should be happy when surrounded by a lot of facilities. This is what a capitalist economy stands for – human nature was trivialised; the distribution of income was clearly divided by separate groups with opposite opinions; and production, consumption, and exchange were based on self-centred maximisation (Calkins, 2006, p. 1). However, being driven by capitalism and materialism merely does not yield fruitful results as long as 'insufficiency' is instilled in people's mind which will never be filled up. The aforementioned example has proved this.

Alternatively, the philosophy of Sufficiency Economy, "**SE**" in short, was developed and bestowed by His Majesty the King to save the country and people's life in time. According to The King's remarks on some occasions, those who earn a living insufficiently can run into trouble as well as cause an unfriendly atmosphere to others. At the level of community and nation, leading with greed is not considered as a sustainable economic system. Nonetheless, if we employ moderation rather than going to extremes and not being obsessed with greed, our life will be healthy and content (United Nations Environment Programme Regional Resource Centre for Asia and the Pacific, 2006).

Prawes Wasri's study (อ้างถึงใน กลุ่มพัฒนากรอบแนวคิดทางทฤษฎีเศรษฐศาสตร์ปรัชญาของ เศรษฐกิจพอเพียง, 2547, น. 63-65) defined that SE is a moderate economy which is an integral part of economy, mind, society, culture, and environment. If the economy part is outweighed by physical and mental health, society, and culture, it will cause the entire economy system to be unbalanced. On the other hand, if each of them is taken into consideration proportionally, a flourishing and enduring economy system will result. He also added that SE is at least composed of the following matters:

- 1) Every person and family needs to have a self-supporting economy;
- 2) Once Matter #1 is fulfilled, what exceeds the needs can be offered to those in need;
- 3) Self-sufficient environment, self-immune community, and sufficient knowledge should be established;
- 4) The way of life is based on self-sufficient culture;
- 5) Having self-immunity can protect us from internal and external impacts so we remain healthy.

“‘Sufficiency Economy’ is a philosophy that stresses the middle path as an override for appropriate conduct by populace at all levels. This applied to conduct starting from the level of families, community, as well as the level of nation in development and administration so as to modernize in line with the forces of globalization” (Priyanut Piboolsravoot, 2004b, p. 128).

Since SE can be used by people from all walks of life, it is advisable to apply it to the way of life so that those who conduct themselves through philosophy intentionally will live happily towards uncontrollable factors. Having been working in an Information Technology-related (shortly “*IT*”) organisation, the researcher wants to see the way SE is applied to the way of life of IT people which is such a soaring group of people in society. The aspects which will be gained through the service of SE could indicate something short of and those which ought to be advanced.

INFOMAX System Solutions & Services Company Limited, INFOMAX in short, provides IT services and solutions to an interbank electronic single and bulk money transfer requirements for Processing Center Company Limited, or in short PCC, and National ITMX Company Limited, NITMX. Both PCC and NITMX are seen as companies which operate systems and services that have been implemented and maintained by INFOMAX. The customers of PCC, NITMX, and even INFOMAX are Thai and foreign commercial member banks.

INFOMAX is categorised as an IT-related organisation even though all the employees of the company are not software developers. INFOMAX consists of five divisions as follows: (1) Solutions & Services, (2) IT Management & Solutions, (3) Project Management Office, (4) Sales & Marketing, (5) Organisation Support, and (6) Administration. All the divisions work to support each other in order to bring about qualified systems and services that meet the requirements of our customers.

Since SE could lead its practitioners' lives to be prosperous and perfect, this study aims to find out the way the employees working in such an IT-related organisation – like INFOMAX, PCC, or NITMX – apply SE to their way of working and family lives in various aspects. They might have adapted SE to their way of life without knowing that they are doing so. In reality, there is no such thing in the real world perfect. It is worth exploring the difficulty in putting SE to use in their way of life. At the end, the findings of this study can lead management and even the employees themselves to realise the facts of which they may have not been aware: (1) Which of them is positive should be made known to the employees and promoted as the organisational agenda in order to encourage the employees to practice it. (2) Which of them is negative should be cured. Applying SE to their way of life deliberately, the IT people remain mentally and physically healthy. This will not only benefit the whole organisation, but also their families. As a result, when the organisation is healthy, we are able to maintain customers' loyalty and compete with counterparts in the IT marketplace.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

1.2.1 What is the degree of the application of SE in the way of life of IT people?

1.2.2 How does IT people put SE to use in their way of life?

1.2.3 What factors contribute to the degree of the application of SE in the way of life of IT people?

1.2.4 What hindrance(s) could apply SE to IT people's way of life?

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The Objectives of this survey are as follows:

1.3.1 Main Objective

To find out the role of SE in the way of life of IT people.

1.3.2 Sub-Objectives

1. To measure the degree of the application of SE in the IT people's way of life towards the behavior of spending money.

2. To ascertain the way that SE is put to use in the IT people' way of life.

3. To explore the problem(s) that IT people encounter when using SE in their way of life.

4. To determine what personal factors influence the application of SE in the IT people's way of life.

1.4 VARIABLES AND DEFINITIONS / DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

This section describes variables and their terms and definitions. The hypotheses of the study are also given.

1.4.1 Variables and Definitions

Table 1 enumerates the independent and dependent variables of the study.

Table 1. Conceptual Framework Depicting the Relationship Between Independent and Dependent Variables of the Study

Independent Variables		Dependent Variable
Personal Factors		The spending behavior of IT people consistent with SE in the following components:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gender - Age - Educational background - Marital status - Salary 	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Spending money on necessities of life - Materials utilisations and energy consumption in the workplace and at home - IT solutions acquisition

1.4.2 Definitions of Terms

Definitions of the terms of this study are as follows:

IT people refer to the female and male employees who either work in IT-related organisations or belong to the division of IT development.

The spending behaviour of IT people consistent with SE refers to the measurable degree of SE that is applied to the behavior of spending money of IT people in the following components:

1. **Spending money on necessities of life** as follows: clothes, food, transport, communications, health care, and recreational activities.

2. **Materials utilisation and energy consumption in a workplace and at home** refers to how the IT people utilise materials like paper, and energy resources such as water and electricity in the workplace and at home.

3. **IT solutions acquisition** refers to the cost-effective process in gathering and analysing customers' requirements, designing and implementing final IT solutions, and resource management.

All the components above can be measured by Likert's 5-point scale: (1) Always, (2) Often, (3) Somewhat, (4) Seldom, and (5) Never

1.4.3 Research Hypotheses

This study is conducted to test the following hypotheses:

Main Hypothesis: Personal factors influence how IT people apply SE to their way of life.

Sub-Hypothesis 1: Those who earn less are more likely to succeed in applying SE to their way of life than those who earn more.

Sub-Hypothesis 2: Women working in IT are more likely to succeed in adapting SE to their way of life than men.

Sub-Hypothesis 3: Younger people working in IT can follow SE better than those who are older.

Sub-Hypothesis 4: Following SE, females working in IT are more successful in saving money than males.

Sub-Hypothesis 5: Applying SE to their way of life, unmarried people working in IT people have a higher amount of money left than those who are married.

1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

As the researcher works at INFOMAX, some sampling units may be unwilling to express their true opinions on some company-wise and family-wise matters which are considered personal and sensitive. Particularly for the company matter, they might be afraid that putting their feelings into words may decrease their job security if their responses are identified. Also, the samples – especially the senior employees – may be reluctant to give personal information such as salary, age, and so on. However, the

researcher will convince the samples that their answer will be beneficial to them and assure them that all information received will be kept strictly confidential.

Although SE can be utilised by all levels of a population, most of the SE applications found in related works lie in agribusiness and communities in rural areas. These related works do not much provide a focus for the SE applications in urban areas. Thus, references of this study in most cases come from what the researcher so far has had experience of working with IT people inside and outside the company and asking colleagues for their way of life after hours.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study will help the policymakers of organisations learn a way of life of the employees working in the IT-related organisation, inspired by SE. Either the existing policies can be adjusted or the new regulations can be added to suit their way of life. An appropriate action plan abided by SE can be introduced against the negative way of life. The employees can receive training to learn how to apply SE to their life effectively. The overall performance of the organisation will, therefore, be increased when the employees feel comfortable with the changed organisation climate and when the negative way of life has been sorted out.

Furthermore, this study can benefit the IT people themselves. They will have a chance to learn the way of life of others, which is guided by SE and to adopt a positive and useful one to their life. As a result, the IT people themselves feel happier not only when being at a workplace, but also when being at home.

1.7 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

The study of roles of SE in IT people's way of life in this paper is organised into five chapters.

Chapter one provides general ideas of the study and statement of the problem, which led to the objectives, the scope of the study, the definition of terms, and the significance of the study, respectively.

Chapter two states the related literature concerning the conceptual framework of SE, its applications, and related works.

Chapter three describes the methodology used in conducting the research, subjects, materials, procedures, evaluation, and data analysis.

Chapter four presents the results of the study.

Chapter five includes a summary of the survey, its findings, discussions, conclusions, and recommendations for further study.

In the appendices, the questionnaire in Thai and English, which was used for data collection from the sample group, is also included.