

Flexible Working Arrangements: A Case Study of IT-SMEs in Thailand

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Abstract

This paper is part of the dissertation for an MSc in Project Management and Innovation of Strathclyde Business School. The research aims at understanding how IT-SMEs (Small and Medium-sized Enterprises in Information Technology Business) implement and use Flexible Work Arrangements and Flexible Working Hours (FWH/FWA) in their organisations. In-depth interview data was collected from managers and business owners of 31 companies whose needs for Work-Life Balance varied.

Results show that many factors positively influence IT-SMEs to use FWH/FWA. For example, customers and partners working at different work-hours, traffic congestions between home and office, and the general stereotype of IT personnel. However, the results also found several concerning factors that may hamper the success of FWH/FWA implementation. They include the inadequacy of management skills in tracking, monitoring, and assessing employee's real performance, contextual factors for Thai IT-SMEs, i.e. conflict resolution culture, IT people's protocol of communication exchanges, and shortcoming of technology infrastructure. The findings also show that many companies that had used FWA eventually stopped. Thus, a four-phase cyclical framework called PLIC (Purpose-Limitation-Implementation-Consequence) has been developed as an approach to FWH/FWA implementation.

Keywords : Flexible Working Arrangements, Flexible Working Hours, Flexplace, Work-Life Balance, IT-SMEs in Thailand

1. Introduction

Flexible Work Arrangements (FWA) is part of the governing systems used by management during the industrial revolution and continues to grow in the information revolution and beyond. As Dr William Edwards Deming, well known for his work on quality and the Deming Cycle (Plan-Do-Check-Act), put it, "A manager of people needs to understand that all people are different. This is not ranking people. He needs to understand that the performance of anyone is governed largely by the system he works in, the responsibility of management" [Deming, 2000]. Thus, if the FWA system is implemented correctly, companies and all stakeholders involved should benefit. One of the most popular types of FWA is flexible working hours (FWH).

While companies from the industrial age still dominate the world, a new era has emerged. Companies are getting smaller but their economic values are greater. The previously known as Dot-coms have a new label called Tech start-ups which many are valued over \$1 billion [Statista Ranking of Highest Valued Startup Companies Worldwide, 2016]. Regardless of what tags being given with the passing time, these companies are Information Technology (IT) companies, usually Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs). The question of whether IT-SMEs should all be using FWA is still debatable. More importantly, how to successfully implement a FWA system in IT-SMEs is yet to be explored.

The objective of the present research project is to investigate how FWA have been imple-

mented in IT-SMEs. The main goal of this study is to come up with good practice recommendations for FWA implementation in IT-SMEs with the least possible retribution. The limitations of the FWA usage will also be identified in the study result.

Findings from the study show different decisions made by owners of IT-SMEs in Thailand. Many of them chose to employ FWA extensively whereas others had terminated FWA privileges once given to employees. As a result, a straightforward implementation framework is proposed comprising four phases: Purpose, Limitation, Initiation, and Consequences. Each phase can be implemented independently without sequencing from one phase to another. By using the framework, companies can still benefit from their working process improvement.

2. Literature Review

This section first reviews the origin of working conditions, working hours in particular. Then the pros and cons of FWA and FWH as well as how they are perceived by both employees and employers are summarized. Finally, reviews of FWH literature as related SMEs and IT companies are provided since IT-SMEs constitutes the data collection context of the present study.

2.1 The Origins of Working Hours

The beginning of working hours started during the industrial revolution. Everything was about efficiency and making sure that factories can operate as much as possible throughout the

entire year. Back then, typical working hours can range from 10 to 16 hours per day [Chase, 2016]. In 1870, Maddison [2001] reported that most countries had their people work over 2,900 hours per year. However, nowadays the number has plummeted to around 1,800~2,100 hours depending on the country, holidays, and vacation days allowed.

During a major part of the industrial revolution, there was hardly any law or dealt with workers or working conditions. But, towards the end of this era, Robert Owen, one of the founders of socialism, was among the first to consider a more humane way to treat employees. From his writings during the early 1800s, 'A New View of Society' and 'The Factory Reformer, Owen suggests that children should work less than adults [Donnachie, 2000]. This led to 'The Factory Act of 1833 in the UK which stated that children from age 9~13 should work 9 hours per day while age 13~19 should work 12 hours per day [The National Archives, 2016].

Today, regular working hours differ from company to company and country to country. However, for the working class, there is a well-known phrase, 'working 9 to 5' which means the working hours is from 0900~1700. This is translated into the notion that people should work eight hours a day. The root of an eight-hour working day can be traced back to Robert Owen in 1817. He was the one who coined the phrase "Eight hours labour, eight hours recreation, eight hours rest" [Monument Australia Eight Hour Day Monument, 2016]. Though Owen himself was unsuccessful with his slogan during his time, he inevitably gave birth to the

eight-hour workday movements around the world. One of the first successful movements shown in history happened on April 21st, 1856 in the city of Melbourne, Victoria, Australia by Victorian stonemasons [Heritage Council Victoria, 2005; Monument Australia Eight Hour Day Monument, 2016] and later, the eight-hour day monument was created in 1903.

Besides the number of hours per day, the 40-hour workweek has become a de facto standard when Henry Ford of Ford Motor Company made a strategic move to adopt the use of a 40-hour per week or 5-day workweek while his competitors were still using a 6-day workweek. Ford mentioned that by reducing of work-hours but maintaining the same wages, he had increased productivity [History.com Ford Factory Workers get 40-hour week, 2009]. While operational efficiency was the idea based on Frederick Winslow Taylor's 'Scientific Management' [Taylor, 1914] that Ford had followed [Paton et al., 2011], Toyotaim focuses on making employee work efficiently to get 100% yields. Quality is more important than the quantity of working time. Thus, to increase productivity and remain competitive, companies can have machines work longer hours while humans work fewer hours [Hayden, 1999].

Later, in 1938, President Franklin D. Roosevelt of the U.S. passed the 'Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938'. For the first time in the U.S. history, the regular work-hours for employees all over the country were eight hours a day and five days a week by law. Eventually, working eight hours a day and five days a week became the norm throughout the world. However, this model is

understood differently by different cultures. For instance, the western world works from Monday to Friday, but most Islamic countries work from Sunday to Thursday. Another misinterpretation is how companies define 'eight hours of work.' Contradictory to the famous saying 'working 9 to 5', most companies exclude an hour of lunch break from the eight work-hours. So, in most places, employees need to stay at the company for more than eight hours depending on the length of the lunch break set by that company.

3. Flexible Working Arrangements (FWA)

After the eight-hours work-day became the norm, employees have been demanding for FWA. However, as Gerdenitsch et al. [2015] mentioned, there is significant ambiguity in what FWA means. Jeffrey Hill et al. [2008] stated that from a company's point of view, FWA is "the ability of workers to make choices influencing when, where, and how long they engage in work-related tasks" Examples of FWA are, but not limited to, FWH, flexible working place (flexplace), compressed workweek, paid leave, job sharing, part-time, staggered hours, and annualised hours.

Different studies reported the key benefits of using FWA differently. Nevertheless, one key advantage of FWA is the ability of employees to maintain good WLB [Galea et al., 2014; Hayden, 1999; McNall et al., 2010] which results in less turnover, increase in employee productivity [Elbing, 1975; Gerdenitsch et al., 2015], lower absenteeism [Whyman and Petrescu, 2014] and increase in employee satisfaction [Wang and

Walumbwa, 2007]. Another key benefit, mentioned by Kleinknecht et al. [2006] and Kotey and Sharma [2015], is that companies had fluctuated demands during the year and they need to find a solution to this unstable labour requirements. Hiring high or low skilled workers for the whole year would create unnecessary costs and managers would be unable to use them effectively. Thus, FWA is generally suitable for companies with uneven operations [Attia et al., 2014; Loretto and Vickerstaff, 2015].

Galea et al. [2014] suggested that some people consider FWA as extra benefits while others might consider FWA as a necessity to maintain their WLB. These includes individuals with responsibilities such as people with children, with disabilities, pregnant women, or with someone to take care of. People who work two jobs might need FWA in order to work around the conflicting schedules [Cowley, 2016]. Also, concurrent-hour workforces may encounter difficulties to do basic errands such as buying food or going to the dentists unless they take a half-day or a full-day off. However, with the introduction of FWA, both employees and employers can deal with conflicting demands and responsibilities better.

In the past, the cost of arranging FWA structures was high and time-consuming. However, the ongoing advancement of technology has automated many things, such as recording employee's working schedule and performance evaluations, instead of doing them manually by managers.

From Kush and Stroh's [1994] study, managers did not offer flexibility to their employees be-

cause they believed that businesses should not be run that way. Peper et al. [2005] added that businesses with the 'image of top performers' and 'beliefs about real work' would be successful. Thus, a great deal of managers believed that being available to customers all the time and having fast reactions to crisis' instead of preventing them were the key success factors. Consequently, personal time of employees were sacrificed and customers might not receive the best services from those employees.

The push from society such as the need to create equality between men and women can also be factored into the adoption of FWA. Dex and Scheibl [2001] and Peper et al. [2005] believes that FWA can increase equality. Also, most European countries are shunning away from the model of the male breadwinner to an alternate model of women working part-time [Boulin et al., 2006]. Companies that allow FWA can expect to benefit from a larger demographic pool of talent workers [Boden, 1999].

Laws, regulations, cultures, and traditions factor in the difference between FWA agreements from place to place. Boulin et al. [2006] and Heinz [2003] noted that if the law was weak, employees lifestyles would cost more than well-regulated markets. In 2007, the UK's first legislation of FWA came into effect and in June 2014, Nick Clegg, the deputy prime minister, enforced a new regulation that required companies to allow FWA to all employees who have worked with the company for over 26 weeks can request permission of FWA [Acas, 2014]. Now, companies can only refuse FWA requests based on only a number of reasons. [2014].

As more businesses move to a global scale, company operations might need to be available at unusual hours and the use of FWH could help businesses save the costs of payment for working overtime [Cowley, 2016]. In the present research, the FWA in focused is FWH or also known as flextime and flexitime.

4. Flexible Working Hours (FWH)

In 1967, a German company, Messerschmitt-Bölkow-Blohm (MBB), was the first to devise the plan of using FWH. This was a response to the low morale and low productivity of their employees. MBB and other companies used staggered hours to solve the problem of a long queue of time-clocking of their workers [Bolton, 1971; Wade, 1973]. Staggered hours is what was considered to be the first step of implementing FWH because of the core similarities [Hill, 1972]. Loosely speaking, both FWH and staggered hours mean that companies have 'core hours' that every employee have to be present; only arrival and departing time are 'flexible hours' that they can choose to a certain extent [Wade, 1973]. FWH gives employees the ability to decide how and when to do the work. The power transfer from firm to employees is the key difference and is what makes FWH a powerful tool if firms are able to use it effectively.

4.1 Implementing Flexible Working Hours in Companies

The first step of implementing FWH is to decide why should the company do it. Cowley

[Cowley, 2016] stated that the context of the company is a key criterion to evaluate if the company could benefit from FWH. For instance, businesses like hospitals or department stores need to have fixed working hours to operate. On the other hand, sales-oriented business which operate around the availability of their clients would embrace irregular hours of employees. FWH will make all employees only available during 'core hours' which can cause communication problems [Bolton, 1971; Hill, 1972]. Lee and DeVoe [Lee and DeVoe, 2012] stated that companies that adopt FWH with the goal of cutting costs could lower the overall profitability. Baltes et al. [1999] commented that over time, employees would perceive FWH as the norm rather than an additional benefit for them.

4.2 Flexible Working Hours from the Employer's Point of View

Hill [1972] concluded that the possible benefits to employers include: improvement in moral, reduction of sick leave and absence, reduction in overtime work, and lower turnover rates. In 1970, Lufthansa German Airlines implemented FWH and estimated that it lowered overtime during the peak demand months from 895 to 317 hours per month which lowered their annual expense by £500,000 [Bolton, 1971; Wade, 1973].

Kush and Stroh [1994] reported that the possible impediments to FWA implementation include: more monitoring, employees abusing the system, and the cost and difficulty of system implementation. However, Cowley [2016] suggests that managers need to look at the whole

picture. Fewer turnovers can help the company maintain highly skilled workers who are more productive and costs less than replacing them. Adopting to these skilled personnel needs with FWA can help retain them [Cramer and Pearce, 1990; Kush and Stroh, 1994].

4.3 Flexible Working Hours from the Employee's Point of View

Hill [1972] stated that it is important to explain the FWA schemes to every employee to reduce jealousy. Without official regulations, employees might not feel welcome to use FWA if their peers are not using them [Lambert et al., 2008] or they will feel that using FWA will penalise their career in the long [Scholarios and Marks, 2004]. Most blue collar employees cannot use FWA as effective as white collars. Hence, companies should find solutions that reduce the inequality between all employees in order to lower the resistance to change [Wade, 1973].

5. Small and Medium-sized Enterprises

SMEs have different definitions depending on which country and which organisation [OCED SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES, 2005]. In Thailand, according to the revenue department of Thailand, the definition of SMEs varied by the industry it is in, producers, retails, wholesales, or services. However, in general, Thai SMEs can be defined as companies with less than 200 employees, less than 30-million-baht turnover, and less than 200 million baht assets.

Although most literature of FWA concentrates around large organisations [Kotey and Sharma, 2015; Lavoie, 2004], FWA research in SMEs should not be overlooked. In the UK, SMEs cover 99% of the number of businesses [Government Digital Services Mid-sized Businesses, 2012]. In Australia the number SMEs in the private sector went up to 99.7% which employed 70% of the total workforce [Kotey and Sharma, 2015]. SMEs provide a large share of the total workforces in the world especially in developing countries where SMEs provides up to two-thirds of the workforce. In low-income countries, the number could reach up to 80% [Berrios and Pilgrim, 2013]. In the case of Thailand, SMEs provide 73% of the number of jobs in the industrial sector [Chaiprasit and Santidhiraku, 2011].

In both private and public sectors, De Kok et al. [2011] and Kotey and Sharma [Kotey and Sharma, 2015] found that FWH had been used in larger companies across most European countries. While smaller SMEs tend to be more flexible, larger organisations have more resources to support the flexibility of their WLB programs [Chaiprasit and Santidhiraku, 2011; Lavoie, 2004]. SMEs appears to use FWA as a mean to create competitive advantages which includes, trimming down employment redundancies during recession periods, and attracting high-performing prospects [Foster, 2009; Kotey and Sharma, 2015].

According to Foster's [Foster, 2009] research, both Laura Wilson, the HR support advisor from Loop Customer Management Ltd., and Dena McCallum, the owner of Eden McCallum Ltd.,

agreed that SMEs could easily embrace FWA because the communication line from senior management to employees are short. Wilson mentioned that adopting flexibility in a company was only possible if there was a similarity in work among her employees. McCallum said that it would be difficult to adapt FWA if all employees were doing different tasks because it might overburden the staff who had to cover the work of the ones using FWA. Each SME is relatively unique on its own. Thus, it is better to document 'good practices' of WLB programs across different firms instead of suggesting a one-size-fits-all approach [Lavoie, 2004]. Various good practices can then be modified to fit individual SMEs taste.

However, FWA is commonly given to employees on a case-by-case basis instead of to the whole class of employees [Dex and Scheibl, 2001]. As a result, obtaining the rights to use FWA could bring competition and negative long-term effects, for instance, Golden [2001] found that employees who worked more than the others did, i.e., 50 hours per week, were more likely to gain the rights of using FWH. This promotes overworking and increase the likelihood of employees burning out.

6. Information Technology Companies

The definition of what considers being an IT company has changed in recent years. For example, EBay and Amazon were once known as IT companies during the Dotcom era because their businesses were done on the internet. However, in today's business, most companies have online

transactions, which will be considered as IT company with the old definition [Bruner, 2014]. For some, Uber is a major player in modern day transportation systems, and yet Uber considers itself as a 'technology platform' part of the 'sharing economy' companies. Airbnb also considers itself as a 'tech company' and with that categorisation, it was able to bypass regulations governing the hospitality sector for a lengthy period of time. According to Guzzetta [Guzzetta, 2016], companies have branded themselves as 'tech companies' to gain benefits and to be more appealing to venture capitalists. Most of these self-claimed IT companies have levelled the competitor's playing ground by making large investment on their IT-based operations. Therefore, in the present research, an IT company will be defined as a company that uses technology and software to achieve competitive advantages.

In the IT world it is not hard to see companies overworking their employees which lead to the well-known phrase 'the 80-hour workweek' which became the ideal employee image of IT companies in Silicon Valley. Mostly these employees were young men without family commitments [James, 2013]. Ryan Sanders, the founder of BambooHR said that in one of his previous jobs, he was offered to work 80 hours per week and receive \$400 Amazon gift card as an incentive [Tozzi, 2013]. Companies in scientific research and IT fields were more likely to provide FWA to their employees because skilled employees were more likely to receive FWA [Kotey and Sharma, 2015].

A study was done by Perlow [Perlow, 1997] about a group of software engineers shown that

traditional work practices such as working longer hours do not increase productivity. One of the main claims by Perlow is that employees need to work extended hours because they do not always do quality work. From her observation, the substandard work was caused by interruptions and asking for help from co-workers. Perlow then suggested the company to implement 'quiet time' and 'interaction time' policies. This type of arrangement was likely to improve the productivity of employees. This suggestion goes along with FWH practice which divides the working hours into two parts, 'core hours' and 'flexible hours'. During the flexible hours, employees can clear their individual work without any disturbance while core hours can be used to coordinate the work within the team. However, for this method to be successful, the company needs to reward their employees by the quality of work and not by the amount of time spent on the work itself. Likewise, Behson [2016] states that most companies want to evaluate employees by their performance, but by doing so, it would put an enormous burden on the manager who has to do a thorough evaluation of the work which is significantly harder than measuring 'time at work.'

7. Research Method

7.1 Data Collection

In several FWH studies, questionnaires and interviews were widely used. In the present study, telephone interviews using VOIP technology were conducted using Facebook Call, Line Call,

Google Hangouts, Skype, and Cisco WebEx. Although most VOIP programs support video call which could combine advantages of face-to-face and telephone interviews [Morris, 2015] the researcher chose not to use the feature to make interviewees more likely to feel in control and less stressful during the interview because they will not have the face-to-face pressure.

Although it is hard to obtain an adequate number of samples even though the researcher is familiar with IT-SMEs.¹⁾ Therefore, a convenient sampling with snowball technique was used for sample selection. Nevertheless, to generalise the findings, the collected data should represent a variety of FWH practices. Thus, all participants in this research were deliberately chosen from different companies so that they can provide as many FWH practices as possible but still address cultural context, all samples are IT-SMEs from Thailand.

To acquire perspectives from different types of participants, the present study classified the subjects based on marital status used in most literature about WLB [Thompson, 2002], including Single (S), Married with no dependents (M), and Having Children (C). Also, to enable more generalisation in the findings without overlapping practices, participants were categorised into three roles: employee, manager, and owner. Owners (O) of SMEs are the person with authority who set up the rules and regulations of the company. Managers (M) (who are not owners) can give a valid viewpoint of how the work-hours affect the work of employees and suggest other practices of working around the firm regu-

lations without bias. Employees (E) are the people who receive the most impact from FWH/FWA. In order to report the interview results, the study uses pseudonyms to anonymise the interviewees. For example, 14MSO will represent the 14th interviewee who is male, single, and is the owner of the company.

7.2 Sample

A total of 31 individuals from different companies participated in the research. <Table 1> shows the profile of respondents. The majority of interviewees are single (68%). Males respondents doubled the number of Female respondents (68% to 32%). There are slightly more owners/managers being interviewed than employees, 55% to 45% respectively. Note that by using snowballing technique, the majority of participants was either employees or owners of similar ages as that of the researcher. Managers who were not owners were hard to find, because most owners of SMEs take on management role themselves. These selection biases are traded off with the research design to obtain the maximum diversity of organisation contexts-one participant from one company.

<Table 1> Profile of Interviewees

Respondent Profile	Type	Number(%)
Gender	Male	21(68%)
	Female	10(32%)
Role/Position	Employee (E)	14(45%)
	Manager (M)	4(13%)
	Owner (O)	13(42%)
Marital Status	Single (S)	21(68%)
	Married (M)	4(13%)
	Have Children (C)	6(19%)

1) At that time, the researcher was studying in Glasgow, Scotland.

<Table 2> shows the profile of the respondent's companies. Over half of these firms (56%) have at most twenty employees. Almost half (48%) are quite young (0~5 years old). Twenty firms (65%) have used FWH and seven (22%) had used but revert back to fixed-hours. Thirteen of the IT-SMEs (41%) in this research have used other types of FWA which are flexplace, compressed workweek, and staggered hours. Note that 'Weekend work' signifies that there is a possibility for employees to work on the weekend which can be from employees catching up on their normal workload or employees working extra upon company's requests. Only one company had mandatory work-hour on Saturday for one day per month.

<Table 2> Profile of Thai IT-SME Samples

Company Profile	Type	Number (%)
Size (number of employees)	1~20	17(56%)
	21~50	8(26%)
	51~100	2(6%)
	Over 100	3(9%)
	Unidentified	1(3%)
Age of company (approximate years)	Less than 2	7(22%)
	3~5	8(26%)
	6~10	5(16%)
	Over 10	6(20%)
	Unidentified	5(16%)
FWH usage	Officially regulated	8(26%)
	Not regulated but used	12(39%)
	Reversed back to FWH	7(22%)
	No regular working hrs	4(13%)
Weekend work	Saturday only	5(16%)
	Saturday and Sunday	13(42%)
	No weekend work	13(42%)
Compensation for working over the normal work-hours	Time only	12(39%)
	Money only	7(22%)
	Time and money	3(10%)
	No compensation	9(29%)
Other types of allowable FWA	Flexplace	10(32%)
	Compressed workweek	2 (6%)
	Staggered hours	1 (3%)

8. Result

Results from interview responses are grouped into five distinctive themes. First is to assess the participants' understanding of FWA. Second is to identify the problems that are caused by the implementation of FWH. Third is to explain the context of companies in Thailand. Forth is to elaborate on how companies should approach the use of FWA. Fifth and the final theme is the suggested course of actions from both employer and employee sides.

8.1 Understanding of FWA, FWH, Flexplace, and Compressed Workweek

The findings show that although FWH can be differentiated from other types of FWA, all of the FWA practices are more closely tied than expected. Most respondents combined the definitions together and used the terms; flexibility, FWA, FWH, flexplace, and compressed workweek interchangeably.

From the literature review, **FWA** was mostly created to accommodate individuals who have burden and responsibilities such as those with old parents or children. Some said 'Flexible is not flexible if you cannot work from home'. They mentioned that it does not make any sense for parents to go back to finished their eight-hour workload at the office after sending their children home (3MCO, 16MSE). Having the ability to work on an idea whenever it pops up is critical to jobs like programming because it is not a routine kind of work (25MSE, 28MSE, 31FCO).

The understanding of advantages and dis-

advantages of FWA and FWH varies widely among different types of participants. Thus, there is unlikely to be one-size-fits all policy of **flexplace**. One owner found conflicting views of flexibility as defined by managers and their subordinates (31FCO). However, interviewees agreed that face-to-face working is easier than remote working (11MSO, 25MSE). The proponents of non-flexplace indicated that face-to-face workplace can hasten the communication by the use of pencil and paper (18MSE) and fix problems faster by looking at each other's monitors instead of using team viewer programs (18MSE, 22MME). Without human interaction, communication can be dry (17MSE); working alone will lack the social aspect of life (25MSE); and communication will be slowed (22MME, 24MSE) or lost (16MSE). Furthermore, flexplace does not appeal to people who want to completely separate work from leisure (17MSE).

FWA limitations generally come from the company's customers. For instances, programmers and software houses can utilize compressed workweek because they do not need to face customers (5MSO, 25MSE). Companies which core business works closely with client cannot have that much flexibility in working as they have to follow the rules and schedules of their clients. Since their customers work five days a week, so should they (26FSO, 30MMO). Competing with the fast rate of change from competitors is why one company does not support the idea of only working four days a week (5MSO). (20FCO) believes that work can be done anywhere and supports the idea of flexplace, but the company requests employees to

standby at the office so as to contact them easier and in the case of surprised and emergency visits or calls from their customers.

Other reasons why employees do not utilise flexplace is the complexity of remote work which causes nuances such as slow network connection (24MSE). This is true if the nature of work deals heavily with hardware (28MSE) that obliges employees to work in the office. Likewise, flexplace is not applicable during the phase of the project which requires heavy coordination (27MSE).

In terms of **FWH**, there is a debate on the number of working hours per day an individual should do. A group of interviewees felt that people should not work continuously for a long period of time. Any working time more than normal will result in drawbacks such as: drastic reduction in productivity (3MCO, 14MSO, 16MSE, 24MSE), loss of concentration (17MSE, 29FSE), cause of sickness and employees using sick leaves (15FSO), and perhaps negative effect on time management (24MSE). The consequence of this argument leads to a disapproval of the idea of a **compressed workweek**.

On the other hand, some interviewees support the idea of working longer hours per day and they mostly agree that compressed workweek should benefit the company as well as the employees. When employees are 'in the zone' they have high productivity and by expanding the working day, their peak periods will expand as well (22MME, 27MSE). In addition, with longer weekends, they can also rejuvenate themselves more effectively (27MSE).

Another idea was to eradicate working hours

completely if they are IT workers who do not need to work face-to-face with customers (26FSO) and measure them by performance instead. IT workers are not blue collar workers so they should not be evaluated by the time they spend doing the work (28MSE) but by productivity (13FCM). A number of interviewees mentioned that they frequently worked more than eight hours a day so compressed workweek did not make sense from the beginning (2FSE, 5MSO, 28MSE).

Instead of managing people by working hours, the Scrum methodology manages people by 'Story Points' and helps people track's each other progresses. Eventually, the working hours will be restricted by their co-workers and customers (17MSE, 19MME). Furthermore, monitoring working hours FWH is hard and burdensome (5MSO, 13FCM, 28MSE). Measuring and recording time stamps can also exert pressure on employees (6MSM, 28MSE).

8.2 Problems of FWH

FWH will cause problems to managerial staff (2FSE) because employees can arrive and leave at different times. This can be a burden to schedule meetings (1MSM, 7FSE, 8FCO). By curving on flexibility, meeting arrangements are much easier (14MSO). One company supported the idea of FWH but the nature of IT employees of arriving late caused the managing director to be worried (28MSE). Using fixed-hours can assure that there will be somebody to do the work if a customer contacts the company at certain working hours (21MMO, 28MSE). The time for

day-to-day interaction within the team will be less leading to worse communications (9MSM, 17MSE) and a feeling like the company is fragmented and not unified (7FSE, 15FSO). Work might get delayed because the need to wait for employees who arrive at later hours (18MSE).

With the freedom of FWH, employees can get confused on non-essential details such as when they should go home (3MSE), when they should wake up, and where they might separate work from personal life (6MSM)—these appears to distract them from doing the actual work (11MCO).

Bad management can result in companies abusing employees from FWH implementation. Companies in Thailand use the term 'flexitime' to exploit employees over regular working hours (2FSE, 6MSM) such as being asked to work during the weekends or fixing a program bug at home at non-working hours, both incidents without any compensation or as the owners of both companies considered it to be part of the 'flexitime'. Another incident cause (6MSM) to work without breaks for two months but couldn't utilise the day's off gained within the time limit, working free for five days. But, later on, the company fixed this issue by giving employees the choice to choose between money or time compensation.

From a management standpoint, employees might abuse the company if the tracking system is poorly executed (24MSE). Then again, employees need to prove that they deserve the given flexibility by showing better productivity (23FSE). Managers who plan well enough can make FWH free of negative consequences (27MSE). The scope of work for each employee needs to be

clear to enable employees to use FWA (10MSO, 18MSE). Monitoring tasks, such as following up and rechecking work are necessary skills for managers (20FCO). Otherwise, employees might leech of the team's good performance (19MME).

The problem of jealousy among co-workers for not being treated equally was found across many companies (5MSO, 10MSO, 11MCO, 14MSO, 26FSO). (5MSO) had repeatedly been asked by his employees as to why some of his co-workers could use flexplace whereas the others could not. Many agreed that FWH could increase productivity. Nevertheless, they ended up with having to set a policy for everyone using the same set of rules regarding working hours (11MCO, 14MSO, 26FSO, 30MMO) so as to avoid jealousy projected by other teams or departments. However, most companies only allow good performing employees to use FWA and these people were only given FWA if they request on a case-by-case basis (21MMO, 26FSO, 31FCO). It was suggested that to avoid jealousy caused by different standards; the company needs to be clear about their policy of FWH (23FSE). Yet, it was suggested that the inequity can push employees to work harder to receive FWA privileges (31FCO). But it was also agreed that if the manager is not well skilled enough, it is better to omit the use of FWA (26FSO, 31FCO).

9. FWA and FWH in Thailand Context

9.1 Thai Culture

Most literature supporting FWA is based on western cultures. For Thailand, many inter-

viewees agreed that the working culture of Thai people do not support FWA (8FCO, 10MSO, 15FSO, 31FCO). Nonetheless, (15FSO) believed that the main reason why the Thais should work with fixed-hours systems is because of the deep-rooted cultural and social interaction manner called 'Grengjai' (Thai term). Thais consider it rude to express their true feelings upfront so they accumulate negative emotions until the breaking point as they should be 'Grengjai' to others. To avoid 'Grengjai', managers should work closely with their subordinates to observe any subtle emotions. Also, the Thais are not goal oriented (5MSO). They have the tendency not to fully work during working hours (3MCO). It is common for Thais to use Facebook, Line, YouTube, and answer phone calls for non-work related issues during working hours (3MCO, 5MSO).

9.2 Traffic Issue

Many interviewees agreed that implementing flexplace can reduce time wasted in traffic (19MME, 29FSE, 31FCO). Using public transportation such as the sky and underground train is not comfortable nor easy as you need to squish yourself into those trains (3MCO, 7FSE). All participants unanimously agreed that traffic in Bangkok is bad, and the major benefit from having FWH is to avoid rush hours (2FSE, 23FSE). Another company changed from fixed-hours to FWH because the traffic in Bangkok had gotten worse over time (9MSM). Some employees will stay in the office after working hours without doing any work just to avoid traffic (28MSE). Traffic and commute time is also

the main reason why companies give good performing employees the ability to request for flexplace (16MSE).

One interviewee (16MSE) said “... it’s very convenient because I could avoid the traffic hours. Like, I could come early and leave late. And some days I could leave early to avoid the traffic. That saves me a lot of time. It’s very important in Bangkok because the traffic will be really bad. Going back at one time might take one hour, but if I go in the rush hours it might take two to three hours.” In other companies (2FSE, 24MSE, 29FSE), commuting time to the office for employees typically take 2~4 hours per day which is why flexplace can be useful. However, travelling time in Bangkok cannot be determined accurately (4MSE). “Everyone knows that in Bangkok it is really hard to control the travelling time or to make sure one would arrive on time” (25MSE). With FWH, employees can feel relieved from the pressure and stress to arrive on time (9MSM, 17MSE, 18MSE). Some interesting non-traditional practices that were used to avoid traffic include having working hours from 1,200~2,100 (5MSO) and renting rooms in hostels nearby if early meetings were scheduled (10MSO).

10. Using Flexibility Appropriately

Employees who have families need FWA to maintain WLB (24MSE). Some employees apply for companies that allow them to utilise FWA because they have dependents (12MCO). Below average employees can increase their performance by working more hours (1MSM) while tal-

ented employees can have more free time if they finished their work early (26FSO). Other common **benefits** are mentioned in <Table 3>.

<Table 3> Benefits of FWH Commonly Cited

Benefits ...	Cited by Interviewee(s)
... feel less restricted and relaxed	7FSE, 20FCO, 27MSE
... enjoying more freedom in life	14MSE, 23FSE
... feel more productive	16MSE, 21MMO
... work at comfortable and productive times - early in the morning or late at night	3MCO, 4MSE, 22MME, 24MSE, 28MSE
... can be more creative and logical as ideas and inventiveness may not come at fixed-hours	1MSM, 2FSE, 3MCO, 13FCM, 23FSE, 27MSE, 31FCO
... focus on work not work-hours	21MMO, 25MSE
... can rebalance workload	26FSO
... trained to be more responsible	21MMO
... won't get bothered by office nuisances such as 'tapping on the shoulder' by creating 'quiet time'	1MSM, 10MSO, 22MME, 27MSE, 29FSE

From the company’s perspective, allowing FWH would enable employees to coordinate their work easier with international partners (16MSE) or clients that work at irregular hours (20FCO). If companies utilise flexplace effectively, there will be no need to have an office to begin with (14MSO, 28MSE, 31FCO).

FWA and FWH should be used with some **cautions**. Employee factors that make FWH hard to implement are: new hires (13FCM, 20FCO, 21MMO), graduates (26FSO, 30MMO, 31FCO), employees without self-autonomy (6MSM, 23FSE, 31FCO), and irresponsible employees (19MME, 21MMO, 27MSE). Thus, effective management systems are needed to keep bad employees from

unacceptable behaviours (29FSE). Sufficient technology should also allow more FWA for employees (5MSO, 11MSO, 13FCM, 16MSE, 19MME) which could reach to a point that the company doesn't need an office (28MSE). Cloud repositories could enable employees to work at home (19MME). Laptops with virtual private networks installed should be available for all employees who want to go home early (16MSE).

Implementing FWH in IT companies in general should not be a problem (22MME). Nevertheless, company's characteristics have some bearing on the implementation (5MSO, 12MCO). FWH can be applied mostly to software houses (22MME), start-ups (21MMO), and creative companies (27MSE). This opinion was not shared by other participants who suggested that FWH would have negative effects on communications within small companies but might not do much harm to large ones (11MSO, 17MSE). FWH can also make it harder for businesses to find appropriate coordinating times with their clients (21MMO, 30MMO). In some cases, it depends on the phase of the project (12MCO, 27MSE). During the phases that involve heavy customer engagements, firms should abstain using FWH (12MCO).

11. Suggested Course of Actions

Understanding the nature of the company and its employees is what managers need to think before considering any type of flexibility (1MSM, 3MCO, 10MSO, 18MSE, 27MSE, 29FSE). Most people do not like changes (25MSE) so managers and employees need to work together to find

solutions. During the transition, companies should set up regulations (7FSE, 8FCO, 10MSO, 22MME, 25MSE) and resolve conflicts (14MSO, 21MMO) in order to make employees as happy as possible (25MSE). Using peer-pressure to keep employees in order could be a creative solution to avoid conflict (29FSE, 30MMO). The policy of the company needs to be clear to avoid jealousy (4MSE, 16MSE). Issues like how the company deals with compensation for overtime work or working at unusual hours (4MSE, 7FSE, 8FCO, 10MSO) must be addressed.

Managers need to know how to delegate, track, and evaluate people by using target/goal and results instead of working hours (5MSO, 10MSO, 12MCO, 15FSO, 16MSE, 26FSO, 29FSE, 31FCO). If the managers are not capable or do not have the means to monitor and manage FWA's related activities, companies should not allow FWA to be used at all (29FSE, 30MMO, 31FCO). Nonetheless, the business unit should remain working without much flexibility (12MCO, 31FCO).

Together with FWA implementation, 'Quiet time' should be focused to allow employees to work without getting bothered and to be 'in the zone' of getting to excel execution at peak performance (10MSO, 17MSE, 22MME). This is because not all questions need an answer immediately and 'asynchronous communications' (22MME) can be effective too. Besides, employees need to find people to cover their work if they choose to arrive at later hours (22MME). Trust all-around is crucial for the success of FWA. As one employee put it, if firms do not trust their employees, supervisors do not have faith on

subordinates, or co-workers cannot rely on one another, the FWA will fail (29FSE).

Most participants suggested that the implementation should start in small scale as a pilot study, testing with one department at a time (9MSM) or with a small group of employees (21MMO). Testing on a low-risk-low-reward project in case things go wrong (19MME). A mediator needs to be appointed to evaluate how the change affects the overall productivity of the company and what the next move should be (9MSM, 14MSO, 19MME, 21MMO). One interviewee added that to make the change possible, all employees need to try out the FWA in order to get a better understanding (29FSE).

In the end, there should be a limitation. For instance, FWH should start by giving one flexible hour at first (14MSO), then move the hours up slowly, but end up setting the limit to around 2-4 flexible hours so as to have the adequate amount of core time available (3MCO, 17MSE). One specific suggestion of suitable time for IT companies to start their core working hours is at 1100 (3MCO, 17MSE). If employees tend to arrive late, moving up working hours could offset the problem (8FCO).

Small sized companies can perhaps implement FWH company-wide immediately because the owner is able to oversee the whole company with ease (24MSE). Nonetheless, even with a limited testing size of the study, a good representative should be created by mixing the high, medium, and low performing employees together (19MME). Finally, organisations need to prepare for constant changes during their growth period. It is common for a company to change

its organisational structure and policies when the number of employees reaches certain thresholds (5MSO).

12. Discussion

In this study, the research questions were based on the idea that FWH can be easily identified, simplistically separated from other FWA, and viably implemented across organisational settings. Although the definition of FWH can clearly be defined, the present findings from IT-SMEs in Thailand show that it cannot be separated from other FWA. Since findings from the result section is somewhat sporadic, an analysis framework is proposed as a general guideline for implementing FWA in IT-SMEs. The **PLIC** framework comprises four phases as follows: **P** describes the **purpose** of the implementation. Before the implementation process, managers and owners need to answer why they want to use FWA in the company. **L** looks at the **limitations** of implementing FWA. **I** explains what FWA **implementing** processes for companies with different contexts look like. Finally, **C** provides detailed **consequences** of implementing FWA.

Purpose (P):

Defining a concrete purpose must be the first step of FWA/FWH implementation. As mentioned by Bolton [Bolton, 1971], there are different variations of FWH, however, only one company in the study went beyond the first type of FWH, 'Flexibility within a day', to the second type of FWH, 'Flexibility within a week or

month', by working 30~50 hours per week. According to Galea et al. [Galea et al., 2004], some people considered FWA as extra benefits but for others, it was a necessity. These people had special demands and responsibilities which made them improbable to work as normal employees. The special needs include employee's own sickness, child rearing, or caretaking of elderly parents. Gerdenitsch et al. [2015] mentioned that there was ambiguity in the definition of FWA which was confirmed by most of the present findings. Interviewees generally did not differentiate among the terms and practices of FWH, flexplace, and compressed workweek. Many respondents used the term FWH as one of the benefits of working at home which is supposed to be flexplace. This clearly demonstrates the uncertainty of the terms in FWA. As shown in the present study, the purpose of FWA implementation can incorporate those from FWH, flexplace, staggered hours and compressed workweek together. To demonstrate why FWA cannot be evaluated separately, an example of routine travelling conditions of one employee with children was given. This employee needs FWH to pick up her children after the school-hours end. Since most primary, secondary and even high schools finish the classes around 1,500 and schools are usually far away from home, parents would typically pick up their children from school back to their offices. Children would wait until the rush hours are over and go back home with their parents after the office hours are over. This is because most parents would not feel comfortable to let their kids go home with inconvenient public transportations. Other parents

would leave the office to pick up the kids from school and send them home first before going back to their office to continue their work. They inevitably need to do at least two extra commutes per day if flexplace has not been implemented alongside FWH. Commute time per trip during non-peak hours is around one hour and for peak periods could take up to three hours. The additional commute time added could be very time-consuming and tiring.

Therefore, if companies want to embrace the idea of FWH so as to support the employees with children, then they need to allow flexplace as well. The idea can similarly be applied to any other routines of personal difficulties, such as periodic medical visits for the employees themselves or their family members (e.g. parents, children, and spouses). This finding coincides with Boden's [1999] conclusion that FWA can bring in a larger pool of applicable employees by answering their regimen work requirements. The present results show that flexplace can lower the cost of office usage. However, Lee and DeVoe [2012] warned that if companies use FWA to reduce costs, eventually, it might result in an overall profitability loss.

Employees often feel pressured to arrive at the office on time; thus, they focus too much on working hours. FWA can make employees change their focus from working hours to working results. Hence, productivity and production of the whole company are likely to improve. Additionally, many respondents mentioned that most IT works, programming included, has to do with creativity and coming up with new ideas. Ideas might not come during fixed times,

so it is better to allow them to work whenever these ideas come and let them flow as long as needed in order to maximise productivity.

Limitation (L):

There are contextual limitations that disrupt and make companies highly improper to adopt FWA. Two general factors were identified in the present study context, IT related aspects and management issues.

The first factor to look at is how companies in the IT industry generally operates. There are many types of IT companies ranging from software houses, IT customer services, and IT consulting services. The present study found that how flexible can the company be may subject to how much interaction required by its customers. For example, if the company has government bodies as its clients, the core hours of the company should be the same as the government's working hours of 0700~1600. If the customers are from other industries, i.e. department stores, hospitals, and banks, the company might need to work after regular working hours to avoid interruption of the client's core business. This finding is what was advised by Attia et al. [2014] and Loretto and Vickerstaff [2015] that owners of SMEs need to evaluate if FWA helps or hinders the nature of operations of the company.

Also, managers and owners in this research agreed that FWA was not appropriate for employees who are new hires, recent graduates, without self-autonomy, and irresponsible. Companies that use FWA would benefit greatly from employees who uses creativity to do their work

rather than blue collar workers. Cultural difference in working ethics is also a concern. Most interviewees agreed that Thai employees, in general, tend to ignore the need to be fully committed to work during working hours. They use Facebook and other social media outlets during working periods so tracking working time might not be a good option for Thai people overall.

The other apparent contextual factor is the skills required by management in handling flexibility. Firstly, managerial level employees need to be capable enough to manage FWA with skills including but not limited to delegating work, tracking work, and most importantly, evaluating employees by results instead of working hours. Face-to-face working can soften the effect of low-skilled management. One extreme recommendation was not to have working hours at all. This is similar to contract work, but the difference is that they are still the company's full-time employee. Secondly, the technical side of the business must support the use of FWA. Laptops with secure virtual private networks and cloud repositories can easily enable flex-place while good communication programs will help with coordination between employees as they do not work next to each other for all working hours. Good team management and tracking systems are also needed.

Initiation (I):

Similar to the findings from Lavoie [2004], De Kok et al. [2011], and Kotey and Sharma [2015], it is believed that large companies have more capability in implementing FWA. Employees can cover each other's work if the company want

to maintain similar performance as before. SMEs might have more flexibility due to their size and shorter hierarchy of commands. It was recommended that FWA should be implemented to low-risk-low-reward projects. Also, due to the size of a typical SME, most projects have a significant impact on the company and must not fail, unlike larger size companies that can take the time to run pilot studies to test the fitness of FWA.

The findings coincide with the literature showing that there is disagreement on how to implement the policies for FWA. Most people said that policies need to be applied to everybody in the department or company to avoid jealousy. But, even though FWA is implemented in the company, Scholarios and Marks [2004] and Lambert et al. [2008] warned that employees might feel insecure if their co-workers are not using it and the implementation of FWA will be just a waste. Owners should avoid any change that could harm good performing employees. One factor mentioned by many was not to implement the full flexibility because human interaction is still an important part of the social aspect of life after all.

There are many methods of FWA implementation being recommended in the literature and were confirmed by the interviewees in this study. As was suggested by Hill [29], the result concurred that the regulations on who was allowed to use FWA need to be fully explained and understood by all levels of employees. To be effective, companies should provide exposure on FWA to all employees for a short period of time first. After the employees have learnt how

the FWA works, then they can be involved in the setting up of regulations and criteria for eligible employees.

Continuing discussions between the company and its employees should help to solve the problems of abuse from both sides. Firstly, Dex and Scheibl [2001] agreed with most interviewees that FWA should be given on a case-by-case basis. Therefore, to obtain the rights, FWA candidates might need to do extra work to prove that they are worthy [Golden, 2001]. Secondly, in Thailand, 'flexitime' was defined by many as 'working as many hours as you want as long as you get the job done'. Some employees commented that they had to work on average of more than 10 hours per day without any added compensation. Besides, they were occasionally asked to come work on the weekends because 'there happens to be more work'. According to James [2013], if the employees refused to come, it would affect their performance reviews because they won't be considered as a team player.

Interviewees agreed that working long hours can cause fatigue, resulting in less productivity. However, it may be possible for people's bodies to adjust to working longer hours over time.

Consequences (C):

If a company wishes to implement FWA, then it needs to accept and explain the consequences to employees throughout the implementation period. To improve the productivity of software engineers, Perlow [1997] recommended the use of 'quiet time', which is the time that people could work without any interruption. Most FWAs, when implemented, will incorporate this 'quiet

time' scheme as it is a typical brainchild of FWA. The 'quiet time' implementation does come with consequences, such as the cost of decreased communications and increase interaction time between employees.

To mitigate these effects, employees of all levels need to understand the concept of 'asynchronous communications.' Since not all questions need immediate answers, allowing more 'quiet time' should make people work in a more maturing manner. However, this type of working environment might cause the company to be fragmented and less unified.

To conclude, IT companies by nature needs to keep up with rapid changing environment within its industry. Consequently, changing the nature of their operations in order to keep up with the pace of technology and inevitably force the FWA to revise and readjust all the time. In the end, after careful and thorough evaluation, many interviewees decided that it might be wise not to implement FWA in their companies at all.

13. Conclusion

The main purpose of this research is to find a good strategy to implement FWH for IT-SMEs. Since there is no study, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, that examine the implementation strategy of FWH in IT-SMEs from an emerging country; this research can provide insights to the field.

From the literature review, research on FWH/FWA was based in the production companies of western world setting. Most research seeks to

identify the type of possible benefits received from implementing various configurations of FWH/FWA. The two systems have separate definitions. However, based on the interview results, the conclusion from this research is different because the findings show that in practice the respondents were unable to separate FWH from FWA.

While some researchers suggested the use of FWH/FWA to maintain the WLB of employees across all company settings, the present study has a different conclusion. Nevertheless, the findings concur with Lavoie's [2004] suggestion that there is no one-size-fits-all for implementing WLB policies in SMEs. Even with similar organisational contexts such as software houses, companies differ greatly. In addition, several of them do not allow any type of FWA to be implemented at all. Thus, it is necessary for each company to take a more holistic approach in figuring out which particular FWA practice can or cannot be used to suit the company culture.

Many factors are reported in the literature to have a positive effect on the implementation of FWA. These factors are seen as benefits to the organisation and are the reasons why companies in the western world use various forms of FWH/FWA. The present result from IT-SMEs data has concluded the following similar positive factors:

- The operation nature of the company [Cowley, 2016], for instance, customers that require implementing systems at non-regular hours, coordinating work with people from different time zones, IT work that is time sensitive such as server monitoring.

- Traffic congestion of the routine travelling routes of employees. This factor is particularly important for employees with children in schooling ages.
- IT and creative personnel stereotypes of being insensitive to time or prefer to work late at night.

Although there are factors that positively influence the need to implement FWH/FWA, a large number of the study samples indicate their implementation concerns. Based on the findings, there are specific impediment factors that can be concluded:

- Inadequate management skills necessary, such as project work coordination, work progress tracking systems, and performance appraisal.
- Thai unique conflict resolution culture, 'Ghengjai'.
- Needs for co-worker's communications in term of 'quiet time' versus 'interaction time'.
- Unclear or questionable policy in applying the FWA system to everyone equally in the organisation.
- Insufficient technology infrastructure of the company to facilitate work processes.
- Inappropriate types of employees (e.g., new hires, recent graduates, employees without self-autonomy, and irresponsible employees.

Taking into consideration the foregoing positive and negative factors, the researcher developed a recommendation using a four-phase cyclical framework PLIC that managers should go through when implementing any FWA for the company. Thus, the following conclusion can be

made regarding key learning points throughout the processes:

- Understand the concepts how 'quiet time' and 'interaction time' could improve productivity by being 'in the zone.'
- Learn how to use 'asynchronous communication' effectively and recognising that not all questions need immediate answers.
- Understand employee needs and what management can do to accommodate them.
- Determine how management can use 'peer pressure' from co-workers to avoid conflict with management.
- Understand why evaluating working results instead of time is beneficial for the company in the long run.
- Learn how different variations of FWH and FWA relate to one another.

14. Recommendations for Future Research

The present research project found some interesting results that warrant future research. Four issues stand out as follows:

- Culture effect. Most researches in FWA and WLB was done in the western world, more precisely, in the UK, U.S., Europe, Canada, and Australia. People and companies operating in developing countries perceive things much differently, therefore, studies on FWA can be enriched with evidence from other countries.
- Data collection method. Papers on FWA and WLB were frequently done by using interviews or questionnaires which might not get to the root of the problem. Data collec-

tion by observation techniques could bring new ideas to the field.

- Research methodology. Since FWA implementation is quite complex, a longitudinal study can provide a better understanding of how different stakeholders perceive the changing of policies from the evolution of FWA in an organisation.
- Uniqueness of IT companies as research samples. For example, how the Scrum framework and IT employees as permanent contractors can revolutionise the landscape of FWA system.

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<Appendix> List of Abbreviations

FWA	Flexible Work Arrangements
FWH	Flexible Working Hours
IT	Information Technology
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprise
WLB	Work-Life Balance
Flexplace	Flexible Working Place
MBB	Messerschmitt-Bölkow-Blohm
VOIP	Voice-Over-Internet-Protocol
PLIC	Purpose-Limitation-Implementation-Consequences

■ Author Profile



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Intara Tanlamai is a project manager at Conicle Co., Ltd. which is an IT company in Thailand that produces HRD IT products. He received his bachelor's degree in Computer Engineering at Chulalongkorn University, Thailand, and worked in the IT industry for different companies before continuing his education. He received his MSc in Project Management and Innovation at the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, Scotland. His research interests include how flexible working arrangements effect IT-SMEs work.