

# CAREER SATISFACTION OF FILIPINO PROFESSIONAL SELF-INITIATED EXPATRIATES IN THAILAND

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## Abstract

Filipinos are renowned migrants to different parts of the world and are globally recognized with their professional workforce. An apparent influx of Filipino professional self-initiated expatriates in Thailand has inspired this study to explore their career plight and determine realistic approaches on how they would be satisfied with their career. The research conducted two-phased scheme wherein mixed quantitative and qualitative methods were considered. The quantitative approach was used in identifying the factors that attract Filipino professional Self-Initiated Expatriates (SIEs) in Thailand. The qualitative approach was used in identifying full for the It's tint the challenges that influence the patterns of their career satisfaction. The study was guided by Career Capital concept and was aimed at expanding its scope by extracting and expanding on the first main career competency – career satisfaction. The study found out that Filipino professional SIEs' demographic details and work-related information has different levels of influence towards their career satisfaction. The respondents came up with mutual practical methods on ensuring their career satisfaction in Thailand.

**Keywords:** Self-Initiated Expatriates, Career Satisfaction, Filipino Professionals, Thailand

## Introduction

Filipinos are renowned migrants to different parts of the world. The Commission of Filipinos Overseas (CFO) on its 2013 Stock Estimate of Overseas Filipinos reported that approximately 10,238,614 are living abroad; 48% are permanent, 41% are temporary, and 11% are irregular migrants. As Filipinos are globally recognized with their professional workforce, 2014 statistics from Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA), shows that 53,296 are deployed under the category of professional, technical and related workers. The Philippines is a country reported to have high rates of overseas migration for economic and career-related reasons (Presbitero & Quita, 2017). Of the top ten influences on a decision to be mobile, three were related to career motives such as to further professional development, new career challenges, and opportunities for career advancement (Thorn, 2009). Presbitero & Quita (2017) viewed self-initiated expatriation as a form of global mobility with an adaptive vocational behavior driven by an individual's self-regulatory capacity to thrive in another country and work to build one's career. A point of interest is stimulated by the fact that Thailand has its half-open-door policy toward migrant workers Filipino professional SIEs in Thailand are anticipated to manage their careers independently (Makkonen, 2016) and are more impulsive in dealing with their career. They autonomously search for employers (Ceric & Crawford, 2016) and they rely on their adaptive resources to develop their careers (Presbitero & Quita, 2017).

This expands in a dilemma on Filipino professional SIEs' career choice. SIEs freely seize new opportunities as they arise (Thorn, 2009) wherein some SIEs are working at jobs that do not draw on their qualifications or skills (career mismatch) while some are underemployed. These can result into uneven career paths (Scurry, Rodriguez & Bailouni, 2013) which affect smooth career transition (Malik,

Manroop, & Singh, 2017). On the other hand, SIEs can decide how long they will stay with the employer (Ceric & Crawford, 2016) and exhibit a high organizational mobility in their careers and have more intentions to change organizations (Biemann & Andresen, 2010). These affect how Filipino professional SIEs can ensure that they are following a progressive career pattern. As SIEs themselves plan, design and evaluate their careers (Ceric & Crawford, 2016), they undeniably are facing challenges in achieving their career goals. The existences of challenges pull anticipations on how could Filipino professional SIEs in Thailand promote their careers.

The solutions to these problems are yet to be well-defined by previous and existing researches and thus this research is motivated to investigate the career plight of Filipino professional SIEs in Thailand and determine realistic approaches on how they can progress in it.

### **Research Objectives**

1. To gather clear-cut narratives on the career path of Filipino professional SIEs in Thailand;
2. To analyze the challenges that influence the career satisfaction of Filipino professional SIEs in Thailand;
3. To draw on collected information to construct practical frameworks in ensuring career satisfaction of Filipino professional SIEs in Thailand.

### **Definition of Terms**

**Self-Initiated Expatriates (SIEs)** - individuals who find a job in a foreign country by themselves (Andresen, Bergdolt, & Margenfeld, 2012; Lidström & Laiho, 2014) without any attachments to a home organization (Lidström & Laiho, 2014)

**Professional SIEs** - were identified by skill and professional qualifications (Cerdin & Selmer, 2014) and that they are generally well educated (Haslberger & Vaiman, 2013).

**Career** - is a response to basic human needs (the need for survival and power, the need for connectedness, and the need for self-determination (Blustein, 2017) determined by learning experiences (self-efficacy, outcome expectations, goals, and actions) which influence individual career exploration and decision-making behaviors (Ireland & Lent, 2018)

**Career satisfaction** – reflects whether an employee's career goals have been met and it also refers to if there's a plan for career growth prospects and advancement for at least the next three to five years (Pande, 2011).

### **Hypotheses**

H1 : Career achievement positively influences career satisfaction of Filipino professional SIEs in Thailand.

H2: Career goals positively influences career satisfaction of Filipino professional SIEs in Thailand.

H3 : Financial goals positively influences career satisfaction of Filipino professional SIEs in Thailand.

H4 : Career advancement positively influences career satisfaction of Filipino professional SIEs in Thailand.

H5 : Development of new skills positively influences career satisfaction of Filipino professional SIEs in Thailand.

## Literature Reviews

### 5.1 Self-Initiated Expatriates (SIEs)

Reflecting on recent trends in the international labor force, several researches attempted to clearly illustrate who SIEs are. Andresen, Bergdolt, Margenfeld, & Dickmann (2014) identified SIEs by four criteria: (a) executing work abroad, (b) mode of employment, (c) initiative, and (d) legal decision of employment. Explaining each criterion, SIEs execute his work abroad; SIEs must have an employment contract; SIEs initiate their foreign movement individually; and the decision to employ the SIE is always made by an organization in the host country, either the same organization (Intra-SIE), e.g. in a foreign subsidiary, or a new organization (Inter-SIE) (Andresen, Bergdolt, Margenfeld, & Dickmann, 2014). Additionally, Ceric & Crawford (2016) pointed out individual identification of SIEs by four categories: (a) source of initiative (b) drivers of mobility, (c) support, and (d) potential inhibitors of expatriation success. Explaining each criterion, SIEs acknowledged as self-initiated; SIEs ascertain low on-the-job and off-the-job embeddedness, SIEs have intrinsic desire to have an international career, SIEs mobility encompass other circumstances/goals (e.g. career, finance, family, travel); SIEs don't have company support; and immigration policies are seen as potential inhibitors for SIEs' success (Ceric & Crawford, 2016). SIEs seek out international assignments on their own initiative (Lidström & Laiho, 2014; Andresen et al., 2012) and they independently journey abroad for work (Doherty, Richardson, & Thorn, 2013). Moreover, they typically come with considerable knowledge and skills and high motivation to work internationally. As companies face difficulties in finding highly skilled employees, SIEs are seen to have the potential in filling this talent gap (Andresen, Al Ariss, & Walther, 2012). They are becoming important source of global talent (Vaiman, Haslberger, & Vance, 2015).

Another distinction of SIEs is that they take the first action themselves (applying for a job abroad) and the legal employment decision is made by the host country organization (Andresen, Bergdolt & Margenfeld, 2012) with a clearer view that they are not transferred by their organization to another worldwide subsidiary.

### 5.2 Thailand as a Destination of Filipino Professional SIEs

One of the most relevant characteristics defining SIEs is their freedom to choose their destination (Cao, Hirschi, & Deller, 2013). They decide for themselves where they will expatriate (Ceric & Crawford, 2016). The Philippines is the only ASEAN country to break into the top 10 countries of origin for skilled migrants in Thailand,

Thailand is among the many countries that has opened its doors to expatriates. His Excellency Phadarmchai Sasomsab, Minister of Labor (2012) stated that "A number of features of economic development in Thailand have stimulated international migration. The country is now evolved as a migration hub. Thailand is not only a country of origin anymore, but also transit and destination for a large number of international migrants. Each year, about one million foreign workers come to Thailand and take several types of work, including skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled work". (p.2)

Thailand is in many ways welcoming to foreign labor force however there are certain rules and restrictions that foreigners have to follow. Legal migrant workers in Thailand are classified according to the conditions specified by the Office of Foreign Worker Administration; 1) temporary or general permit migrant, 2) permanent resident or lifetime permit migrant, 3) national verification permit migrant, 4) migrant worker under Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), 5) migrant worker under Investment Promotion Act (BOI), 6) border workers, and 7) other groups of working foreigners who are not covered by the Alien Employment Act B.E. 2551 (AEA 2008) due to diplomatic privileges (Paitoonpong & Chalamwong, 2012).

### 5.3 Career

Working has a significant role in fulfilling three basic human needs: the need for survival and power, the need for connectedness, and the need for self-determination further illuminated that when

basic needs are met, individuals can then focus on the accompanying aspects of work such as social connectedness and self-determination. Accordingly, the importance of work can vary in its ability to satisfy needs for social connectedness, depending on one's personal life circumstances. This perspective constructed Blustein's (2001, 2006, 2017) Psychology of Working with a goal of creating a way of thinking about work and career development that includes everyone who works or who wants to work, not just those with access to choice and volition about their educational and career options.

Interestingly, a recent research offered a model, Career Self-Management Model (CSM), emphasizing how people attempt to guide their own career progress (e.g., seek jobs, balance multiple roles, adjust to transitions), regardless of the specific career fields toward which they are drawn (Ireland & Lent, 2018). The CSM model measures learning experiences (self-efficacy, outcome expectations, goals, and actions) in career decision-making. Self-efficacy refers to one's perceived abilities to engage successfully in career exploration and decision-making tasks; outcome expectations are the anticipated consequences of engaging in these tasks (e.g., that such engagement will enable one to make better career decision); and goals and actions refer, respectively, to the intention to perform, and actual enactment of, career exploration and decision-making behaviors (Ireland & Lent, 2018). The model stipulates that self-efficacy and outcome expectations are seen as helping to motivate the goals and actions that, in turn, help determine career decisional outcomes.

Recently, a new normal in career planning and decision making has been influenced by rapid expansion in globalization and the rise of world-based organizations. This in particular takes the view on how individuals develop the intention to have a career in another country (Presbitero & Quita, 2017). Several researches identified factors that influence expatriate careers. Opportunities for travel and adventure, and for career development were highlighted as the most important motives in a decision to move across global boundaries (Thorn, 2009). Moreover, Dheer & Lenartowicz (2017) underlined that immigrant's decision to pursue a career is not guided merely by its economic prospects but also by the extent to which it offers socio-cultural solidarity and the feasibility to mobilize resources to pursue career choice. This can be in support to the indication that individuals who want to work overseas rely mainly on their adaptive resources to develop their career and that intention to have a career in another country is developed and influenced by the interaction between the self-regulatory characteristics and intercultural capability of individuals (Presbitero & Quita, 2017).

A career can be defined as our occupational progress through our lifetime which includes a pattern of work-related experiences and activities, such as job positions, duties, decisions and our subjective interpretations about work-related events (Davis, 2015).

#### 5.4 Career Capital Theory

Career capital is one of the useful measures of expatriate career development, which is accumulated through their expatriation (Guo, Rammal & Dowling, 2016) and SIEs accumulate and use career capital to accomplish career success (Al Ariss & Crowley-Henry, 2013). An individual SIE is motivated by career considerations including a desire to enhance career prospect with the presumption that expatriation might do the career some good (Selmer & Laurant, 2012). There are many individual factors influencing SIE motivation to expatriate and SIEs put a lot of emphasis on their employability, and hence they seek learning opportunities (Ceric & Crawford, 2016). Career capital is particularly important for expatriates, whatever the purposes of their assignment, either short-term or strategic, as it constitutes the foundation of their employability (Cerdin & Brewster, 2014).

Career Capital Theory characterizes how SIEs manage their own career structured with three career competencies – “knowing-why”, “knowing-whom”, and “knowing-how” (Inkson & Arthur, 2001). This was reinforced by Guo, Rammal & Dowling (2016) by applying Career Capital Theory to discuss SIEs' career capital development in terms of knowing-how, knowing-why and knowing whom through expatriation assignment in China. On the other hand, Cao, Hirschi, & Deller (2012) identified

three predictors to reflect how SIEs achieve career success subjectively and objectively – protean career attitude, career network size, and cultural intelligence.

### 5.5 Career Satisfaction

Career satisfaction can be viewed as an antecedent or component of an individual's overall quality of life or life satisfaction (Lounsbury, Park, Sundstrom, Williamson & Pemberton, 2004). It reflects whether an employee's career goals have been met and it also refers to if there's a plan for career growth prospects and advancement for at least the next three to five years (Pande, 2011). Career satisfaction is largely a matter of an individual comparing his/her career (and life) expectations with certain key career junctures and leads to a decision regarding career satisfaction and commitment (Harry et al., 1994).

Career satisfaction can be influenced by professional considerations, economic factors, and occupational and family considerations (Harry et al., 1994). Previous study of Cao, Hirschi & Deller (2012) pointed out that SIE expatriation is a life event that is influenced not only by career-related aspects, but also by family relationships, lifestyle, and even individuals' basic values, the role of such factors could be integrated into a holistic approach to study SIEs' career development.

Additionally, Cao, Hirschi & Deller (2013) confirmed that career and life satisfaction are important outcome of expatriation wherein a strong protean career attitude have a more positive view of their career and general well-being in the host country and that increasing their intention to stay is a strong indication of satisfaction and integration to the host country.

Individuals with proactive personality are more likely to engage in career management behaviors and experience greater career satisfaction than individuals with lower proactive tendencies (Barnett & Bradley, 2007). On the other hand, employees who are not fully engaged with work and their career generates lower levels of career satisfaction (Chiaburu & De Vos, 2013).

### 5.6 Strategies of SIEs in Managing Barriers for their Career Satisfaction

While expatriation is a valuable career development opportunity, individuals can navigate structural influences that affect their careers (Al Ariss, 2010). Concept of "modes of engagement" were combined and was used by Al Ariss (2010) to explore how SIEs manage structural barriers to their career development. The research found out that there are four dominant modes adopted – maintenance, transformation, entrepreneurship, and opt out. Accordingly, maintenance implies recognizing career barriers and working within them in order to obtain a desired outcome; transformation denotes identifying barriers to career advancement and trying to alter them; entrepreneurship meant taking an additional risk in organizing new business in an attempt to avoid discrimination and legal constraints in the context of employment; and opt out occurs when migrants are confronted with obstacles which push them to operate outside existing structures which entails for an individual a sense of subjective and objective failure to developing a desirable outcome career.

## Scope of the Study

The Immigration Act B.E. 2552 specifies a legal migrant worker as an alien who temporarily and legally enters the Kingdom of Thailand and receives a work permit under the Alien Employment Act 2008 (or 1978 and 2001 if came before 2008) (Paitoonpong & Chalamwong, 2012). With this, the research narrowed down in reaching out to those who have work permits. There shall be established an Immigration Commission consisting of the Under Secretary of the Minister of Interior as Chairperson, with the following members: the Under Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Director General of the Police Department, the Director-General of the Labour Department, the Director-General of the Public Prosecution Department, the Secretary General of the Board of Investment, the Secretary General of the National Security Council, the Director of the Tourism Organization of Thailand, and the Commander of the Immigration Division as member and secretary.

SIEs were also identified by skill and professional qualifications (Cerdin & Selmer, 2014) and that they are self-starting and generally well educated (Haslberger & Vaiman, 2013). SIEs are skilled individuals (Ceric & Crawford, 2016) and highly educated, therefore are possessing career capital (Al Ariss & Crowley-Henry, 2013). With these, Filipino professional SIEs in Thailand, in this research were identified in terms of professional positioning (Al Ariss & Crowley-Henry, 2013).

As of December 2015, there were 10,529 Filipino registered as professional workers with work permits in Thailand. Cities with bulk of Filipino professional SIEs based from latest available data from the Ministry of Labor were prioritized. However, the research included those in other places aside from big cities. It is a direct study of SIEs themselves which only encompasses “career concerns” and thus their family members living with them were excluded in the study.

### 6.1 Conceptual Framework

Harmonizing the established models and theories guided by career capital concept, the following framework was developed:

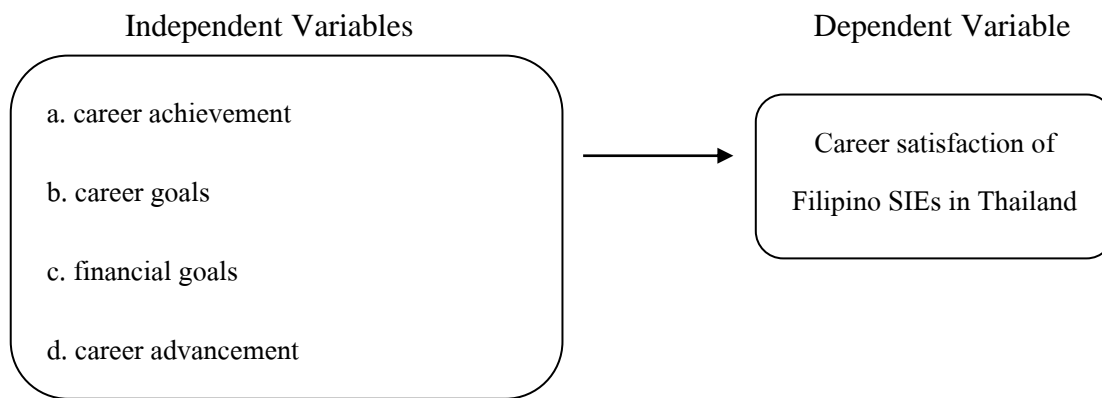


Figure 1 Relationship of Career Achievement, Career Goals, Financial Goals, Career Advancement, Development of New Skills, and Career Satisfaction

## Research Methodology and Data Analysis

### 7.1 Research Design

The explanatory sequential mixed method design involved a two-phase project in which the research collected quantitative data in the first phase, analyzed the results, and then used the results to build on to the second, qualitative phase.

The quantitative phase started with survey research which provided generalized factors that attract Filipino professional SIEs in Thailand. In the cross-sectional survey, those who have valid work permits with distinctive consideration to professional positioning was collected. The results were used to purposefully select participants for the qualitative phase taking on qualitative interviews to help explain the survey responses.

### 7.2 Methodology

In the first phase of the research, the modified concept of Career Capital Theory (Cao, Hirschi, & Deller, 2012) guided the direction of identifying the factors that attract Filipino professional SIEs in Thailand. Respondents were asked to identify the factors that attracted them to Thailand. This interestingly exhibited unique elements in Thailand that attract them.

The hypotheses addressed the relationship of career achievement, career goals, financial goals, career advancement, and development of new skills to their career satisfaction. The study used survey-oriented quantitative design to test the hypotheses with follow-up interviews which provided supplementary insights for survey findings.

Filipino professional SIEs themselves explained the challenges and barriers that influence their career satisfaction in Thailand and how would they ensure that they are satisfied with their career. Both were settled by the phenomenological qualitative inquiry wherein participants narrated their career experience in Thailand. Qualitative interview was used by Al Ariss (2010) when he analyzed the strategies of internationally mobile professionals in managing barriers to their career satisfaction.

### 7.3 Sampling

The research used non-probability sampling method wherein the selection of the population relied on subjective judgment which in the research designated professional positioning as basis of representation. A mixed sampling strategy was used to gain research access, incorporating both purposive and snowball approaches. To achieve a diverse group of participants in terms of professional positioning, purposeful sampling was used in selecting respondents. The population was guided by the Yamane formula in determining a suitable sample size based on total population of Filipino professional SIEs in Thailand obtained from the Ministry of Labor. As to the available report extracted, from 10,529 Filipino SIEs based on professions with work permits in Thailand, selected by using the open formula table of Taro Yamane 400 SIEs could represent SIE populations in Thailand.

### 7.4 Data Collection

The data collection proceeded in two distinct phases with quantitative sampling in the first phase and with purposeful sampling in the second, qualitative phase. The research started with a combination of convenience and snowball sampling. The convenience sampling technique allowed the research to obtain available primary data from Filipino professional SIEs who are most conveniently available. Snowball sampling helped to reach out to other SIEs since this technique aided in locating SIEs through referral networks.

Both target population and accessible population were set as the criteria of population selection whom the questionnaires were distributed. The target respondents were the Filipino members of Toastmasters International (an international organization with diverse professions located in Bangkok, Chonburi, Chiangmai, Chiang Rai, and Phuket); Filipino community (with diverse professions located all around Thailand); and some employment agencies in Bangkok with a precaution that employment agencies handle mostly educators.

To ensure that potential participants are indeed SIEs, participants were asked first whether they were not sent in Thailand by a company from their home country and that they are also holding work permits.

### 7.5 Data Analysis

The explanatory sequential mixed method design involves a two-phase project in which in the research collected quantitative data in the first phase, analyzed the results, and then used the results to build on to the second, qualitative phase. Data analyses were paralleled to the elements of both quantitative and qualitative description.

#### Phase 1: Quantitative Analysis

Statistical data analysis computer software allowed different types of analyses and data transformations. Means, standard deviations, Pearson Correlations and Cronbach's alpha was used for all measures. Both frequency distribution and percent distribution were used for data tabulation. Codebook for data entry was structured as well.

As the first objective of the research was to gather clear-cut narratives of the career path of Filipino professional SIEs in Thailand, work-related information (eight items) of the respondents was examined. All the items were treated as independent samples. For the descriptive measurements, all items were considered for mode descriptive and minimum and maximum values measurements. Items 7 and 8 will be further characterized by mean descriptive.

Samples in item 1 were categorized using the indicators of Professional and Skilled Occupations by the Foreign Workers Administration Office, Ministry of Labor (managers, teaching professionals, executives, business professionals, technical engineers, production sectors, social related fields, architect and engineers, clerks and officers, private households, and others). This statistical presentation was previously.

For demographic profiles of participants, statistical description of the data with mean as a form of average and standard deviation indicated numerically how spread out the data were. Since the research also aimed in exploring career patterns of Filipino professional SIEs in Thailand, demographic profile variables were disaggregated across work-related variables. Cross tabulation analysis method was favored to examine the relationship between the variables.

#### Phase 2: Qualitative Analysis

Thematic analysis was favored to investigate challenges and barriers that influence the career satisfaction of Filipino professional SIEs in Thailand as it offers an accessible and theoretically flexible approach to analyzing qualitative data

Interview results were transcribed and coded to mark underlying ideas that emerged from the data. A hybrid of pre-set and open coding was applied to enable richness of data.

Triangulation was also applied to develop comprehensive understanding of the career development patterns of SIEs in Thailand. Both methods triangulation and analyst triangulation facilitated multiple ways of seeing the data. For analyst triangulation, the research inquired HR managers of their interpretation of the research.

#### 7.6 Hypotheses Testing

The hypotheses addressed the relationship of career achievement, career goals, financial goals, career advancement, and development of new skills to the career satisfaction of Filipino professional SIEs in Thailand. The hypotheses were tested using regression analysis.

Career achievement, career goals, financial goals, career advancement, development of new skills and career satisfaction used multiple Likert constructs. Thus, the Cronbach's alpha was used to measure their internal reliability.

## Research Results

### 8.1 Filipino Professional SIEs in Thailand

Demographical variables and work-related information were inspected. The findings revealed that there is heterogeneity as to age, gender, and relationship status.

30-39 years old comprises the majority of Filipino professional SIEs in Thailand followed by 40-49 years old. This is an interesting nonconformity to the earlier findings that SIEs start their international career at a younger age (Biemann & Andresen, 2010) and younger SIEs prefer to have flexible, highly mobile careers (Vaiman, Haslberger & Vance, 2015). There is likely similar gender (male and female) and relationship status (single and married) record. This result is a development of showing the relative importance of motives across gendered life stages (Thorn, 2009).

Majority are currently located in central part of Thailand specifically Bangkok and have been staying in Thailand for more than 5 years. The study revealed that location in Thailand has no relationship with career satisfaction but length of staying in Thailand has a positive relationship with career satisfaction. This is a validation with the earlier proposition that the extent of adjustment, identity and establishment may differ for the person who has been in the country for a longer period compared to those who newly arrived in the host country (Doherty, Richardson & Thorn, 2013).

Majority of Filipino professional SIEs in Thailand chose to work abroad for financial reasons. The result come to an agreement with the previous study of Cao, Hirschi & Deller (2012) that SIE expatriation is a life event that is influenced not only by career-related aspects, but also by family



relationships, lifestyle, and even individuals' basic values. Respondents also disclosed that they chose to work abroad for career opportunities. This takes the view on how individuals develop the intention to have a career in another country (Presbitero & Quita, 2017).

Likely, Thailand is an attractive destination mainly because of expat expenses. This is exactly an agreement with Expat Explorer Report 2014 indication that 72% say that they spend less on utilities, on accommodation, on public transport and on groceries.

Majority of Filipino professional SIEs in Thailand finished bachelor's degree followed by master's degree and doctoral degree. This is confirming to the claim that SIE's characteristics are generally educated (Haslberger & Vaiman, 2013). Most are teaching professionals who are commonly directly hired by private employers in Thailand. Recruitment in Thailand is unique in a way that foreigners may enter the country as tourists and then apply for a job. The research revealed that most are directly hired by the employer than being employed by a recruitment agency which is the second mode of employment in Thailand.

Despite Thailand being a developing country and with restrictions with specific profession for foreigners, the study revealed that a slightly higher percentage were able to find a job for just less than a month seconded by those who were able to land a job from 1 to 4 months. Filipino professional SIEs in Thailand therefore are exceptions to the proposition that there exist more challenges (Guo & Dowling, 2016) considering international assignments.

The study revealed a higher percentage of those who have their current organization as their first organization since they arrived in Thailand. However, there are those who have already worked with previous organizations when the survey has taken place. This pattern of how often they change their organization illustrates Ceric & Crawford's (2016) claim that SIEs are mobile not only in terms of location, but also in terms of organizations.

As it is noted that work permits in Thailand are mostly valid for only one year and must be renewed (The Thailand Migration Report, IOM, 2011), it was revealed that majority are not sure whether they will change their employer when their contract expires. This result supports the thought that SIEs pay less attention to their degree of embeddedness in the organization when they decide to work internationally (Biemann & Andresen, 2010).

### 8.2 Career Path of Filipino Professional SIEs in Thailand

Exploring the distinctive characteristics of Filipino professional SIEs brought a precise designation of their career path in Thailand. SIEs' demographic details and work-related information has different levels of influence towards their career satisfaction. The following demographic factors such as age, gender, relationship status, length of stay in Thailand, location in Thailand, reasons for choosing to work abroad, and reasons for choosing Thailand as destination were explored. In addition, such as highest level of education, current occupation, type of organization, mode of employment, length of job hunting, number of past organizations, and plans of changing employer were also examined.

### 8.3 Hypotheses Testing

A multiple regression was carried out to test whether career achievement, career goals, financial goals, career advancement, and development of new skills could significantly influence career satisfaction of Filipino professional SIEs in Thailand.

The results are presented in Tables 4.1

Table 4.1

*Multiple Regression Analysis between Career Achievement, Career Goals, Financial Goals, Career Advancement, Development of New Skills and Overall Career Satisfaction*

<i>R</i>	<i>R Square</i>	<i>Adjusted R Square</i>	<i>Std. Error of the Estimate</i>		
.85	.73	.72	.28		
Coefficients					
	<i>Unstandardized Coefficients</i>		<i>Standardized Coefficients</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
	<i>B</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	<i>Beta</i>		
<i>(Constant)</i>	.80	.09	.00	8.51	.000
Career Achievement	.16	.04	.19	3.89	.000
Career Goals	.11	.05	.12	2.22	.027
Financial Goals	.09	.04	.11	2.34	.020
Career Advancement	.21	.04	.25	4.84	.000
Development of New Skills	.24	.04	.29	6.54	.000

The model explored the associations of career achievement, career goals, financial goal, career advancement, and development of new skills with overall career satisfaction. The result of the regression (Table 4.3) indicated that the model explained 72% of the variance and that the model was a significant predictor of career satisfaction. The analysis showed that career achievement ( $B=.16$ ,  $p=.000$ ), career goals ( $B=.11$ ,  $p=.027$ ), financial goals ( $B=.09$ ,  $p=.020$ ), career advancement ( $B=.21$ ,  $p=.000$ ), and development of new skills ( $B=.24$ ,  $p=.000$ ) positively influence career satisfaction.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

### 9.1 Challenges to Career Satisfaction of Filipino Professional SIEs in Thailand

Participants of this study acknowledged that they are undeniably facing challenges in carrying out their career satisfaction. It was affirmed by the interviewees that financing further studies such as masters or doctoral degree is very expensive. Majority of Filipino professional SIEs in Thailand finished only bachelor's degree. It was also mentioned that salary of some SIEs cannot compensate fees for further studying. Teaching professionals constitute the bulk of Filipino professional SIEs in Thailand. Having said that, they were also missing opportunities of developing new skills. It was cited that there were very few career-related activities that are conducted in English language. More than that, there are limited career opportunities to those who were in the provinces. The study also showed that changing of workplace made it difficult for them to adjust with new set of people to deal with. Majority had affirmed that they are not sure of changing to another organization, but it was followed by a bigger percentage of those who have plans of changing employers than those who will not. Language barrier and working culture differences were also highlighted as barriers for career satisfaction. A very thought-provoking revelation was that visa processing was considered as a common challenge that affects their career satisfaction in Thailand.

### 9.2 Practical Methods in Ensuring Career Satisfaction of Filipino Professional SIEs in Thailand

The respondents came up with mutual practical methods on ensuring their career satisfaction in Thailand. Investing in professional advancement, attending seminars and trainings, applying in an international organization, and job hopping were the recommended initiatives that can be executed by Filipino professional SIEs themselves to achieve highest level of career satisfaction. Socializing with locals, attending networking events, joining expat organization, and asking the help of recruitment agency

were recommended. Learning Thai language and adjusting and adapting with Thai cultures and traditions were highly suggested. Being flexible and being more open-minded were advised.

### 9.3 Research Contributions

Comprehensive efforts in the research arrived with supplemental understanding of Filipino professional SIEs particularly in the following standpoints:

#### 9.3.1 Theoretical and Methodological Expansion

Disclosed that available literatures present a narrow focus on SIEs and Al Ariss, Koall, Özbilgin, & Suutari (2012) revealed that there are no unifying frameworks for studying careers of skilled migrants. The research responded to a research recommendation of Cao, Hirschi, & Deller (2012) to conduct an empirical study in order to test their recently proposed theoretical framework. The expansion incorporated reflexive approaches and triangulated methods as suggested by Al Ariss & Crowley-Henry (2013).

Crowley-Henry, O'Connor, & Al Ariss (2016) determined that existing researches on SIEs concentrated on lower-level employment categories only. The research considered Filipino professional SIEs in Thailand.

#### 9.3.2 Filling in Important Knowledge Gaps from Previous Studies

The study of SIEs has gained pace but researchers themselves disclose that there are still missing points that needed to be considered:

Validated that personal adjustment (satisfaction with life), social adjustment (support by peers) and professional adjustment (job satisfaction) have significant positive relationships with expatriates' overall adjustment. Their research however investigated a certain profession, academic expatriates only, which they recommended bigger sample size and a wider representation of expatriates. This research took this as a reference in considering diverse professions of Filipino SIEs in Thailand which contributed towards a greater generalizability of research findings.

Presbitero & Quita (2017) viewed self-initiated expatriation as a form of global mobility with an adaptive vocational behavior driven by an individual's self-regulatory capacity to thrive in another country and work to build one's career. Their research put into picture that Philippines had experienced high levels of self-initiated expatriation. Choosing Filipinos as the participants in this study is a response to further explore the study of Presbitero & Quita (2017) in the actualization of Filipinos venturing into overseas careers.

#### 9.3.3 Practical Implications

Government level: As was revealed by the study, majority of Filipino professional SIEs in Thailand enter the country as tourists and later apply for jobs which in turn allow them to secure working visas and working permits. The study revealed that difficulties of visa system undesirably affect their level of career satisfaction. It was described that some Filipino professional SIEs can't simply transfer to a new employer with better opportunities due to the hardships of applying to a new working visa. It was also mentioned that there are unnecessary visa processes and documents that waste time and money instead of maximizing time and money to be more productive.

With this, it can be recommended that Filipino professional SIEs themselves can have a centralized platform where they can obtain all important information on how the system work such as updated procedures for visa processing, needed documents, and alternatives of doing things easier. This could save time and maximize the effort in securing working visas and other documents needed to work legally in Thailand.

Organization level: Analyzing common challenges and barriers that influence the career satisfaction of Filipino professional SIEs in Thailand served as reference to recognize specific career support and adjustment support to keep SIEs attached to the organization. It can be recommended that learning about the culture in general (Thai culture and organizational culture) and adapting oneself is the

starting point for having a smooth career pattern while in Thailand. On the other hand, working with international organizations is an option if localizing seems a barrier for career satisfaction.

Individual level: Different perspectives on personal career satisfaction provided tips to SIEs and would-be SIEs in Thailand in enhancing their career while in Thailand. Learning the language is the utmost recommendation. Investing in academic advancement, making connections with locals and expats, and cultural recognition and understanding emerged as practical strategies in managing challenges for career satisfaction.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

As the study has some methodological implications, a longitudinal research design would be an excellent approach to further explore Filipino professional SIE's career satisfaction over time. For example, newly arrived Filipino professional SIEs could be targeted and may ask to reflect on their expectations and plans about their career path. A follow up investigation will then be considered after several months.

Future research could also include examining perspectives of employers on how they could influence their SIE employees' career satisfaction. Inclusion of other nationalities can be an avenue of research expansion.

Moreover, future research could explore other factors that affect career satisfaction.

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