

**Knowledge and Attitude Towards the Readiness
for AEC Labour Market of Graduate Students
at King Mongkut's Institute of Technology
Ladkrabang**

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— *Review of* —
**Integrative
Business &
Economics**
— *Research* —

ABSTRACT

The purposes of this research were: 1) To study The knowledge about AEC of students 2); To study readiness for the AEC labour market of students; and, 3) To investigate the relationship between the level of AEC knowledge, personal factors, and the readiness of students for the AEC labour market. The sample includes 167 graduate students. Questionnaire was the research instrument to collect data. The statistics used were frequency, percentage, average (\bar{x}), standard deviation (S.D.), t-test, and one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The results were as follows: 1. Students' knowledge about AEC was at a moderate level; 2. Students' readiness for the AEC labour market was at a moderate level in each skill dimension, namely, leadership, professional career and working capacity, culture, and language and communication; 3. Students who differed in the level of English fluency indicated statistically significant differences at 0.01 level in their readiness for the AEC labour market; 4. Students who differed in age, timing of work, experience in travelling/visiting AEC, and knowledge about AEC, indicated statistically insignificant differences in their readiness for the AEC labour market.

Keywords: Knowledge about AEC, Readiness for AEC labour market, Graduate Students

1. INTRODUCTION

Readiness for preparing to labour market is very important especially when Thailand is going to join ASEAN Economic Community: AEC. The studies sample includes all graduate students who enrolled in KMITL. They all studied in Industrial Business Management and had variety background in their field of studies. Some of them have expectation to work in ASEAN countries. So, we should know more about those countries in order to prepare the students for getting ready when Thailand joins AEC.

2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

2.1 To study the knowledge about AEC

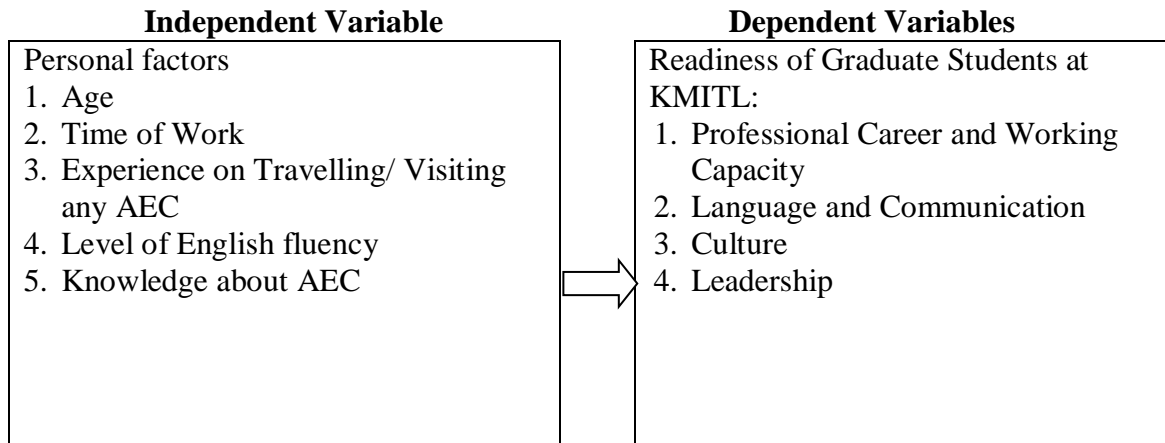
2.2 To study the readiness of graduate students who enrolled in King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang (KMITL) during the 2013 academic year when Thailand joined ASEAN Economy Community (AEC).

2.3. To investigate the relationship between personal factors and the readiness of students for the AEC labour market.

3. RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

Graduate Students at King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang who possess different personal factors have different opinions on their readiness when Thailand joins ASEAN Economic Community: AEC.

4. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



5. RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

The research instrument was a questionnaire which was divided into 3 parts. Part 1 was a set of questions about general information of personal factors including age, time of work, experience on travelling/ visiting any AEC, level of English fluency, and knowledge about AEC. Part 2 was a set of Readiness of Graduate Students at King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang when Thailand Join ASEAN Economic Community: AEC.

6. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The questionnaires were distributed to the whole population, and 167 were returned and used as a study sample.

The data were analyzed using SPSS for Window. The statistics used were percentage, arithmetic mean, standard deviation. Research hypotheses were tested using T-test and One-way ANOVA. The scores for student's opinion on the degree of readiness of graduate students when Thailand join AEC are interpreted by arithmetic as follows:

Average levels 4.50 to 5.00 means the degree of readiness are highest.

Average levels 3.50 to 4.49 means the degree of readiness are high.

Average levels 2.50 to 3.49 means the degree of readiness are moderate.

Average levels 1.50 to 2.49 means the degree of readiness are lower.

Average levels 1.00 to 1.49 means the degree of readiness are lowest.

7. RESEARCH RESULTS

TABLE 1. Analysis of Organizational Characteristics

Personal Characteristics	Number (n = 167)	Percentage (%)
1. Gender		
Male	80	47.90
Female	87	52.10
Total	167	100.00
2. Age		
≤ 25 yrs.	70	41.92
> 25-30 yrs.	50	29.94
> 30-35 yrs.	23	13.77
> 35 yrs.	24	14.37
Total	167	100.00
3. Timing of work (years)		
Never work before	23	13.77
Less than or equal 5 years	81	48.50
More than 5-10 years	32	19.16
More than 10-20 years	26	15.57
More than 20 years	5	2.99
Total	167	100.00
4. Experience on Travelling/ Visiting any AEC		
No	64	38.32
Yes	103	61.68
Total	167	100.00
5. Level of English fluency		
Poor	34	20.36
Medium	120	71.86
Good	13	7.78
Total	167	100.00
6. The knowledge of AEC		
Medium	122	73.05
High	22	29.95
Total	167	100.00
7. Self-preparation to the AEC labour market		
Less	68	40.72
Medium	91	54.49
Much	8	4.79
Total	167	100.00
8. Content That individual need to be more improve		
Culture	76	45.51
Leadership	54	32.34
Advanced Knowledge in one's own field	17	10.18
Law and Regulation	14	8.38
New Technology and applications	5	2.99

Communicating Languages	1	0.60
Total	167	100.00

TABLE 2. Analysis of Variance of The Age on Dimension Graduate Students 's Opinion About Readiness

Readiness of Graduate Students at KMITL	Age (\bar{X})				P-Value
	≤ 25 (n=70)	26-30 (n=50)	31-35 (n=23)	> 35 (n=24)	
Professional Career and Working Capacity	3.62	3.56	3.44	3.84	.084
Language and Communication	3.43	3.44	3.24	3.44	.622
Culture	3.49	3.44	3.25	3.46	.423
Leadership	3.74	3.65	3.54	3.88	.167
Total Average	3.57	3.52	3.37	3.65	.211

TABLE 3. Analysis of Variance of The Time of Work on Dimension Graduate Students' Opinion About Readiness

Readiness of Graduate Students at KMITL	Time of Work (\bar{X})				P-Value
	Never work before (n=23)	≤ 5 years (n=81)	$> 5-10$ years (n=32)	> 10 years (n=31)	
Professional Career and Working Capacity	3.64	3.60	3.56	3.67	.857
Language and Communication	3.37	3.42	3.54	3.29	.513
Culture	3.45	3.48	3.34	3.40	.567
Leadership	3.79	3.69	3.68	3.70	.887
Total Average	3.56	3.55	3.53	3.51	.982

TABLE 4. Analysis of Variance of The Experience on Travelling /Visiting any AEC on Dimension Graduate Students' Opinion about Readiness

Readiness of Graduate Students at KMITL	Experience on Travelling/ Visiting any AEC (\bar{X})		P-Value
	No (n=64)	Yes (n=103)	
Professional Career and Working Capacity	3.62	3.60	.890
Language and Communication	3.34	3.46	.255
Culture	3.45	3.43	.847
Leadership	3.61	3.76	.098
Total Average	3.50	3.56	.442

TABLE 5. Analysis of Variance of The Level of English Fluency on Dimension of Graduate Students opinion about Readiness

Readiness of Graduate Students at KMITL	Level of English fluency (\bar{X})			P-Value
	Poor (n=34)	Medium (n=120)	Good (n=13)	
Professional Career and Working Capacity	3.43	3.64	3.81	.065
Language and Communication	3.12	3.41	4.12	.000**
Culture	3.37	3.42	3.71	.187
Leadership	3.54	3.73	3.85	.143
Total Average	3.37	3.55	3.87	.005**

Remark** Statistically significant at 0.01 level.

TABLE 6. Analysis of Variance of Knowledge of AEC on Dimension Graduate Students' Opinion about Readiness

Readiness of Graduate Students at KMITL	Knowledge of AEC		P-Value
	Medium (n=122)	High (n=45)	
Professional Career and Working Capacity	3.12	3.08	.974
Language and Communication	3.58	3.58	.998
Culture	3.74	3.81	.468
Leadership	3.64	3.66	.864
Total Average	3.52	3.53	.907

8. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The result of this research indicated that Graduate Students' opinion on the readiness when Thailand joins ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) in overall dimension was at a moderate level. It could be interpreted that these students are ready to welcome AEC or they have towards it.

1) The analysis, using ANOVA, found that student's knowledge about AEC was at a moderate level. 2) Student's readiness for AEC labour market was at a moderate level in each skill dimension: leadership ($\bar{x} = 3.57$), professional career and working capacity ($\bar{x} = 3.33$), culture ($\bar{x} = 3.20$), and language and communication ($\bar{x} = 3.15$). 3) Students who differed in level of English fluency indicated statistically significant difference, at 0.01 level, on the readiness for AEC labour market. and 4) Students who differed in age, timing of work, and experience on travelling, or visiting any AEC, and knowledge about AEC, indicated no statistically significant differences on the readiness for AEC labour market.

Most students feel that their English was not yet at a good enough level for fluent communication with other ASEAN population. Therefore, Government and related agencies should pay more attention to the preparation of Thai citizen, in all dimensions including English skill, to well fit and then gain benefits from AEC.

Finally, this research concluded that Thai people need to learn more in the followings:

1. The knowledge and the way to communicate with others who have different cultures.
2. Working as a team with others from the AEC countries.
3. The professional expertise and skills in working with others in the AEC countries.
4. The spoken and written English proficiency.
5. The knowledge and understanding about laws and professional rules in each AEC country.
6. The knowledge and perception of each AEC countries' culture and norm, which can be explored by academic institutions to properly adjust their roles to align with the expectation of students and the public as a whole.

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