

The Influence of Demographic Variables on Attitudes and Acceptance of Thai Undergraduate Students in Private Universities towards Racial and Professional Diversity:

The Free Flow of Skilled Labor in AEC

ปัจจัยส่วนบุคคลที่มีผลต่อทัศนคติและการยอมรับของนักศึกษาไทยในมหาวิทยาลัยเอกชนที่มีต่อความหลากหลายทางเชื้อชาติอันสืบเนื่องจากการเคลื่อนย้ายแรงงานเสรีในประชาคมอาเซียน

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Abstract

This study was to examine the influence of demographic variables on attitudes and acceptance of Thai undergraduate students in private universities towards racial and professional diversity in the context of free flow of skilled labor in AEC. Questionnaires were employed to collect data from 384 Thai undergraduate students from private universities. Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient was run to test the reliability of the questionnaire items, with a value of .997. Descriptive Statistics was used to describe frequency, percentage, means, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis. Data obtained, then, were tested by using Multivariate Analysis of Variance: Two - Way MANOVA. The findings revealed that there were statistically significant differences on age, faculty, and university with the three components of the attitudes and acceptance of Thai undergraduate students in private universities, towards racial and professional diversity in the context of the free flow of skilled labor in AEC, while gender and years in the university had no statistically significant differences.

Keyword: *Attitudes and Acceptance, Racial and Professional Diversity, Free Flow of Skilled Labor, AEC, Thai Undergraduates in Private Universities*

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บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยครั้งนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาปัจจัยส่วนบุคคลที่มีผลต่อทัศนคติและการยอมรับของนักศึกษาไทยในมหาวิทยาลัยเอกชนที่มีต่อความหลากหลายทางเชื้อชาติอันสืบเนื่องจากการเคลื่อนย้ายแรงงานเสรีในประชาคมอาเซียน โดยใช้แบบสอบถามถามความคิดเห็นและทดสอบความเที่ยงค่าอยู่ที่ .997 นำไปเก็บรวบรวมข้อมูลจากกลุ่มตัวอย่างที่เป็นนักศึกษาไทยในมหาวิทยาลัยเอกชนจำนวน 384 ชุด นำข้อมูลที่ได้มาวิเคราะห์ด้วยค่าสถิติเชิงพรรณนา ได้แก่ การแจกแจงความถี่ ร้อยละ ค่าเฉลี่ย ส่วนเบี่ยงเบนมาตรฐาน ความเบ้ และความโด่ง จากนั้นข้อมูลที่ได้นำไปวิเคราะห์ความแตกต่างระหว่างกลุ่มด้วยสถิติการวิเคราะห์ความแปรปรวนของตัวแปรเชิงพหุแบบสองทาง พบว่าอายุ คณะ และมหาวิทยาลัยที่สังกัด มีอิทธิพลทางตรงต่อสามองค์ประกอบของทัศนคติและการยอมรับต่อความหลากหลายทางเชื้อชาติและการเคลื่อนย้ายแรงงานเสรีในอาเซียนของนักศึกษาไทยในมหาวิทยาลัยเอกชน ในขณะที่เพศและปีการศึกษาไม่มีอิทธิพลต่อทัศนคติและการยอมรับในการเคลื่อนย้ายแรงงานเสรีและความหลากหลายทางเชื้อชาติของแรงงานเสรีในอาเซียน

คำสำคัญ: ทัศนคติและการยอมรับ ความหลากหลายทางเชื้อชาติ การเคลื่อนย้ายแรงงานเสรี ประชาคมอาเซียน นักศึกษาไทยในมหาวิทยาลัยเอกชน

Introduction

The launch of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) with the ten nations of ASEAN, including Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam, was planned out since the end of the year 2015. The objective of AEC is to achieve goals in integrating and uniting their countries as a single market and production base with higher mobility of capital and labor within the region (Hansakul & Keng, 2013). Among several aspects of an AEC's agreement, the free flow of skilled labor, through Mutual Recognition Arrangements in the Services (MRAs), facilitates temporary cross-border movement of the skilled labors as to practice in other ASEAN member states with appropriate ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRFF), consisting of Engineering Services, Nursing Services, Architectural Services, Surveying Qualifications, Medical Practitioners, Dental Practitioners, and Accountancy Services (The ASEAN Secretariat, 2015). It was announced that as professional migration within the region

was growing, human resource development and capacity building in the area of services would be salient to economic and academic development in Southeast Asia (Sugiyarto & Agunias, 2014; The Government Public Relations Department, 2015).

While the incident of the free flow of skilled labor is somewhat practically interconnected with higher educational system, each country member must work hard not only to raise their higher educational system to meet the standard of MRAs, but also to educate and prepare their college students to be able to compete for their jobs in the future. Evidently, this incident has encouraged and implied the same kind of standards to all of the higher educational systems, including Thailand. Once the AEC becomes a reality, it definitely will become essential, particularly, to the members of the seven aforesaid professions (Ngamkham, Thanyapumi, Chindawanishkul, & Khachonpan, 2012). It could be seen here that Thai undergraduate students have been put directly into the scenario of AEC educational

system as they would become a large part of future labors in general. This study, thus, would focus on how Thai undergraduate students think and feel towards the seven professions of skilled labors as they would come and work in Thailand constantly.

However, due to the limited scope of the study, only undergraduate students in private universities were examined. This is because very few studies, involving undergraduate students in private universities in the area of ethnic and racial diversity of the free flow of skilled labors in AEC, have been done. Hence, this study

focused on Thai undergraduate students in private universities and their attitudes and acceptance towards racial and ethnic diversity in the context of the free flow of skilled labor in AEC.

Research Objective

The objective of this study was to examine the influence of demographic variables on attitudes and acceptance of undergraduate students, in private universities, towards racial and professional diversity in the context of the free flow of seven skilled labor in AEC.

Conceptual Framework

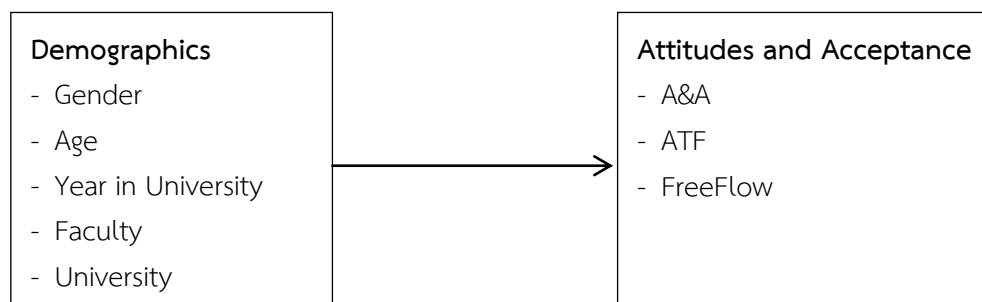


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Literature Review and Related Research

While Pickens (2005) has viewed attitude as a mindset or a tendency to act or behave in a certain way, in Oxford Dictionary of Psychology, attitude is defined as an enduring pattern of evaluative responses person, object, or issues which is a more or less consistent pattern of affective, cognitive, and behavioral responses (or of feeling, thinking, and behaving) towards psychological object (Colman, 2015). There are three components of attitude: 1) Affect – emotion and feeling; 2) Cognition –thought or belief; and 3) Behavior – an action (McLeod, 2009).

When it comes to the attitude and the acceptance in otherness as seen in racial and/or

cultural diversity, attitude is viewed as the relationship of self and other in that human beings are born into, and shaped by, a particular matrix. That is, no one can exist outside a particular culture. Cultural identities are not strictly individual, but collective. By comparing with “others,” both individuals and others become aware of dual concepts, that is who and what they are and who and what they are not (Delanty, 1999; UNESCO, 2005). Measuring the acceptance for another racial/ethnic/cultural, or nationality has become, particularly crucial, since it can explain the contexts and circumstances of openness to diversity which include the variety

that appears in the society, difference in races, ethnic backgrounds, cultures, age, values, beliefs, perspectives, styles, gender, personality, cognitive style, tenure and education levels and backgrounds, and ability (Hlepas, 2013; Greenberg, 2013; Guion, & Diehl, 2010).

Greenberg (2013) has suggested that organization's success and competitiveness depend on its ability to embrace diversity and realize the benefits out of the diversity. Thus, it is reported that when organizations actively involved in issues of diversity, and developed and implement diversity plans in the workplace, some benefits resulted in increased adaptability, diverse and various viewpoints, and higher productivity, profit, and return on investment.

In the last two decades, research in workplace diversity had explored generational differences according to the period of the birth years. There were four different generations: traditional -- the individuals born before 1945; the baby boomers, born between 1943 and 1965; Generation X, born between 1968 and 1979; and Generation Y, born between 1978 and 2002 (The National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Association Office of Diversity, 2006). With those generational differences, individuals born as traditional and baby boomers were different from one another on work ethic category, while being similar in some issues such as valuing conformity and rules and top down management, preferring special treatment, peer interaction, and feedback. Individuals in Generation X and Y, on the contrary, share some characteristics only in working as hard as needed including being able to adapt themselves to differences and diversity, that is, to embrace diversity, value friendly, social, professional, supportive, and capable workforces (Tolbize, 2008), be optimistic, tend to seek

flexibility, and appreciate teamwork, collective action, as well as adaptability to change (Jenkins, 2017; Kersten, 2002; The National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Association Office of Diversity, 2006; Tolbize, 2008; Zeeshan & Iram, 2012; Zemke, Raines, & Filipczak, 2002).

Chang, Denson, Saenz, and Misa (2006) found that high levels of cross-racial interaction among students made it possible for all students to improve their knowledge and ability. Pike and Kuh (2006) also reported that many students formed friendship upon their previous socialization as well as current social context, and friendship can vary as social construct depends on how it is connected to culture, social position, or intergroup relations.

In terms of diversity and acceptance, Blankenship, Hollier, Jones, and Lovett (2010) have concluded that administration and faculty should develop strategies and programs to facilitate implementation of positive and constructive interventions. Both the faculty and students are educated and informed regarding multicultural issues in order to foster campus experiences for all students that endanger acceptance of multiculturalism and sensitivity for culturally diverse individuals and groups. A research on South Korean's attitudes toward foreigners, minorities, and multiculturalism also revealed that South Koreans were more open and tolerant towards foreigners and immigrants living in South Korea since they viewed them as small and powerless. However, for the benefits of the country, they would confront and compete with any other countries to protect their own country's interest (Yoon, Song, & Bae, 2008).

Apparently, very few body of research has been found on Thai students' attitudes towards cultural diversity. However, there has been a

recent research conducted by Barbin and Nicholls (2013) which examined the extent to which Thai university students were prepared to embrace an AEC transitions. The focus of the study was on the knowledge and attitudes towards changes in visa requirements for ASEAN nationals, implementation of common visa for Non-ASEAN nationals, attitudes toward Thailand's Membership to ASEAN, the accession to membership of East Timor to ASEAN, the benefits of AEC integration and the factors promoting greater integration, the use of single ASEAN currency, job security and career mobility within the ASEAN Region after the AEC integration, and the importance of English language skills. The overall results revealed that both males and females students had positive attitudes towards ASEAN in every aspect.

Even though there have been several studies employed in the area of racial diversity, up to date, little research exists to examine diversity in the contexts of attitudes and acceptance of Thai college students towards racial and professional diversity of the of seven skilled labor in AEC. This study, hence, had made an effort to fill in this gap as to explore the way in which Thai undergraduates think and feel towards those seven professional skilled services so that it would help them adjust and prepare themselves properly either prior to or at the time of the encounters.

Research Methodology

A survey research design was employed and questionnaire items were developed and adapted from Attitudes and Actions Relative to Diversity (Blankenship et al., 2010); Attitudes toward Foreigners (Yoon et al., 2008); and the Free Flow of Seven Skilled Labors of AEC which indicated seven professional services in AEC. A five-point

Likert scale (Likert, 1932), ranking from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5), was used to measure attitudes and acceptance towards racial diversity and seven professional services in AEC, while the levels of attitude and acceptance of A&A, ATF, and FreeFlow, the mean scores, were ranked from Strongly Positive Attitudes (5, SPA) to Strongly Negative Attitudes (1, SNA)

According to the Office of the Higher Education Commission as of January 22, 2015, there are 41 private universities with 240,928 undergraduate students (The Office of the Higher Education Commission, 2015). The sampling size of this study had been calculated based on Krejcie and Morgan (1970), and 384 participants would be appropriate for construct validity and reliability at 95 percent of confidence level with 5 percent error.

Later, three private universities were selected using a simple random sampling, — Bangkok University, Rangsit University, and The University of the Thai Chambers of Commerce. Then, a quota sampling method was used to recruit 128 students from each of the said universities in four different faculties — Business Administration/ Economics, Humanities, Social Sciences, and Sciences. In terms of the questionnaire, part one contained demographic information and part two consisted of 18 items of questions (A&A, 5 items; ATF, 5 items, and FreeFlow, 7 items), with a 5-Rating Likert – scale to identify the attitudes and acceptance of Thai undergraduate students in private universities towards racial and professional diversity of the free flow of skilled labors in AEC. The Thai version of the questionnaire was translated by a Thai-English language expert before being administered to the participants.

Data Analysis

Descriptive Statistics was used to describe means, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis. Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient (α) was run to test the reliability of the questionnaire items with a value of .997. Data obtained, then, were tested by Multivariate analysis of variance: Two-Way MANOVA.

Results and Discussion

In terms of the background profile of the respondents, almost two-third were female

students (61%) and the rest were male (39%), while most of respondents were in the age groups of 21-23 (48%) and 18-20 (39%). The academic years of the sophomore (34%) and the senior (23%) were the most, while the respondents in the Faculty of Business Administration/Economics (37%) were the highest number, followed by those in the faculty of Sciences (27%). However, the numbers of students from all three universities were equally even (33.3%).

Table 1 Frequency and Percentage of Respondents and Sex Composition:

(n = 384)

Demographics of respondents		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	1. Male	151	39.3
	2. Female	233	60.7
Age	1. Below 18 years	17	4.4
	2. 18 – 20 years	148	38.5
	3. 21 – 23 years	185	48.2
	4. Above 24 years	34	8.9
Year in university	1. First Year	52	13.5
	2. Second Year	128	33.3
	3. Third Year	86	22.4
	4. Fourth Year	89	23.2
	5. Fifth Year	29	7.6
Faculty	1. Business Administration/Economics	140	36.4
	2. Humanities	60	15.6
	3. Social Sciences	82	21.4
	4. Sciences	102	26.6
University	1. Bangkok University	128	33.3
	2. Rangsit University	128	33.3
	3. The University of the Thai Chambers of Commerce	128	33.3

Table 2 showed that the participants indicated a moderate level of Attitudes and Actions Relative to Diversity Scale (A&A) (\bar{x} = 3.75, SD = .633), Attitudes towards Foreigners (ATF) (\bar{x} = 3.83, SD = .657), and The Free Flow of the Seven Skilled Labors (\bar{x} = 3.90, SD = .781). The mean

scores of all three components indicated that the participants hold positive attitudes towards A&A, ATF, and FreeFlow. All data reflected an indication of moderately skewed to the right and the slightly - skewed data still confirmed that the assumptions of MANOVA were met.

Table 2 Mean, Standard Deviation, Skewness, Kurtosis and Level of A&A, ATF and Free Flow

Attitudes and Acceptance of Racial Diversity and Free Flow of Seven Professions	\bar{x}	S.D.	Skewness (SK)	Kurtosis (KU)	(n = 384)
					Level of Attitudes and Acceptance
A & A	3.7568	.63389	-.755	1.791	PA
ATF	3.8383	.65730	-.910	2.229	PA
FreeFlow	3.9048	.78101	-.860	1.202	PA

As shown in table 3, further analysis has been employed to examine differences with respect to demographics of respondents' gender, age, year in university, faculty, and university. Two-Way MANOVA was conducted on attitudes towards racial diversity in the context of an AEC's Free Flow of Skill Labor of Thai undergraduate students in private university. Wilk's Lambda tests revealed that there were statistically significant differences at the levels of $p = 0.05$, between Faculty and the University, and the overall picture of three components of the attitudes of Thai undergraduate students in private universities towards racial and professional

diversity of the Free Flow of Skill labor, respectively. Gender, Age, and Years in University, however, had no significance differences when it came to the attitudes of Thai students towards racial and professional diversity of the Free Flow of Skill labor in AEC.

Accordingly, positive attitudes were reported on all three scales indicating that the participants hold positive attitudes towards A&A, ATF, and Free Flow which depicted the issues of feeling of approval of the Free Flow of Seven Skilled Professions of AEC, and being able to accept and getting to know foreigners as individuals, in this case, people from AEC countries.

Table 3 Multivariate Analysis of Variance: Two-Way MANOVA of Demographics of Respondents' Gender, Age, Year in University, Faculty, and University towards 3 Components of Racial and Professional Diversity in The Context of AEC Free Flow of Skilled Labor

(n = 384)

Effect	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.
Corrected Model	.054	1417.985 ^b	3.000	245.000	.000
Gender	.990	.786 ^b	3.000	245.000	.503
Age	.947	1.487	9.000	596.416	.149
Year in University	.922	1.684	12.000	648.501	.066
Faculty	.926	2.116	9.000	596.416	.026*
University	.936	2.729 ^b	6.000	490.000	.013*

*($p < .05$), **($p < .01$), ***($p < .000$)

Table 4 and 5 revealed the Two-way MANOVA results of the three components of attitudes and acceptance of Thai students towards racial and professional diversity in the context of AEC Free Flow of Skill labor of Thai undergraduate students in private universities – 1) Attitudes and Actions (A&A); 2) Attitudes towards Foreigners (ATF); and 3) FreeFlow, with respect to demographics

of respondents' gender, age, year in university, faculty, and university.

The results revealed a statistically significant multivariate effect of students' Age on ATF ($p = .01$) but not significantly on A&A and FreeFlow; Year in university on ATF ($p = .05$), but not on A&A and FreeFlow; and Faculty on all three scales: A&A ($p < .00$), ATF ($p < .01$), and FreeFlow ($p < .05$).

Table 4 Univariate Analysis of Demographics of Gender, Age, Year in University, Faculty, and University of Respondents' towards 3 Components of Racial and Professional Diversity in The Context of AEC Free Flow of Skill Labor

(n = 384)

Source		Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	A&A	79.907 ^a	136	.588	1.961	.000
	ATF	78.045 ^b	136	.574	1.621	.001
	FreeFlow	104.759 ^c	136	.770	1.477	.004
Intercept	A&A	1122.724	1	1122.724	3747.986	.000
	ATF	1120.211	1	1120.211	3164.866	.000
	FreeFlow	1179.940	1	1179.940	2261.727	.000
Gender	A&A	.472	1	.472	1.575	.211
	ATF	.017	1	.017	.049	.825
	FreeFlow	.116	1	.116	.222	.638
Age	A&A	1.118	3	.373	1.244	.294
	ATF	4.122	3	1.374	3.882	.010**
	FreeFlow	2.820	3	.940	1.802	.147
Year in university	A&A	2.149	4	.537	1.793	.131
	ATF	3.917	4	.979	2.767	.028*
	FreeFlow	3.306	4	.826	1.584	.179
Faculty	A&A	2.840	3	.947	3.160	.025**
	ATF	5.813	3	1.938	5.475	.001***
	FreeFlow	5.753	3	1.918	3.676	.013*
University	A&A	1.014	2	.507	1.693	.186
	ATF	1.542	2	.771	2.178	.115
	FreeFlow	.856	2	.428	.820	.442
Error	A&A	73.990	247	.300		
	ATF	87.426	247	.354		
	FreeFlow	128.860	247	.522		
Total	A&A	5573.558	384			
	ATF	5822.842	384			
	FreeFlow	6088.531	384			
Corrected Total	A&A	153.897	383			
Total	ATF	165.471	383			
	FreeFlow	233.619	383			

a. R Squared = .514 (Adjusted R Squared = .246)

b. R Squared = .472 (Adjusted R Squared = .181)

c. R Squared = .448 (Adjusted R Squared = .145)

Table 5 Estimated Marginal Means of A&A, ATF and Free Flow Categorized by Demographic Variables

(n = 384)

Demographic Variables		Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
A&A	Male	3.841 ^a	.056	3.732	3.951
	Female	3.718 ^a	.050	3.619	3.817
ATF	Male	3.817 ^a	.061	3.698	3.937
	Female	3.755 ^a	.055	3.648	3.863
FreeFlow	Male	3.903 ^a	.074	3.758	4.048
	Female	3.880 ^a	.066	3.749	4.010
A&A	1. Below 18 years	3.976 ^a	.155	3.671	4.282
	2. 18 – 20 years	3.660 ^a	.066	3.529	3.790
	3. 21 – 23 years	3.835 ^a	.051	3.734	3.936
	4. Above 24 years	3.753 ^a	.109	3.538	3.968
ATF	1. Below 18 years	4.029 ^a	.169	3.697	4.361
	2. 18 – 20 years	3.612 ^a	.072	3.470	3.754
	3. 21 – 23 years	3.888 ^a	.056	3.778	3.998
	4. Above 24 years	3.715 ^a	.119	3.482	3.949
FreeFlow	1. Below 18 years	4.172 ^a	.205	3.769	4.575
	2. 18 – 20 years	3.772 ^a	.087	3.600	3.944
	3. 21 – 23 years	3.964 ^a	.068	3.830	4.097
	4. Above 24 years	3.784 ^a	.144	3.500	4.068
A&A	1. First Year	3.821 ^a	.092	3.640	4.002
	2. Second Year	3.804 ^a	.074	3.658	3.951
	3. Third Year	3.644 ^a	.077	3.493	3.795
	4. Fourth Year	3.833 ^a	.074	3.688	3.979
	5. Fifth Year	3.810 ^a	.119	3.576	4.044
ATF	1. First Year	3.754 ^a	.100	3.557	3.951
	2. Second Year	3.858 ^a	.081	3.699	4.017
	3. Third Year	3.688 ^a	.083	3.525	3.852
	4. Fourth Year	3.889 ^a	.080	3.730	4.047
	5. Fifth Year	3.676 ^a	.129	3.422	3.930
FreeFlow	1. First Year	3.821 ^a	.121	3.582	4.060
	2. Second Year	3.970 ^a	.098	3.777	4.163
	3. Third Year	3.782 ^a	.101	3.583	3.981
	4. Fourth Year	3.992 ^a	.098	3.799	4.184
	5. Fifth Year	3.854 ^a	.157	3.546	4.163

Table 5 Estimated Marginal Means of A&A, ATF and Free Flow Categorized by Demographic Variables
(continue)

(n = 384)

Demographic Variables		Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
A&A	1. Business Administration/Economics	3.672 ^a	.064	3.547	3.798
	2. Humanities	3.811 ^a	.096	3.621	4.001
	3. Social Sciences	3.716 ^a	.078	3.563	3.869
	4. Sciences	3.926 ^a	.070	3.788	4.063
ATF	1. Business Administration/Economics	3.684 ^a	.069	3.547	3.821
	2. Humanities	3.867 ^a	.105	3.661	4.073
	3. Social Sciences	3.738 ^a	.084	3.572	3.904
	4. Sciences	3.889 ^a	.076	3.740	4.039
FreeFlow	1. Business Administration/Economics	3.689 ^a	.084	3.523	3.855
	2. Humanities	3.975 ^a	.127	3.725	4.226
	3. Social Sciences	3.916 ^a	.102	3.714	4.118
	4. Sciences	4.029 ^a	.092	3.847	4.210
A&A	1. Bangkok University	3.763 ^a	.061	3.643	3.883
	2. Rangsit University	3.626 ^a	.071	3.485	3.766
	3. The University of the Thai Chambers of Commerce	3.889 ^a	.063	3.765	4.013
ATF	1. Bangkok University	3.769 ^a	.066	3.639	3.899
	2. Rangsit University	3.827 ^a	.078	3.674	3.980
	3. The University of the Thai Chambers of Commerce	3.775 ^a	.068	3.640	3.910
FreeFlow	1. Bangkok University	3.822 ^a	.080	3.664	3.980
	2. Rangsit University	3.819 ^a	.094	3.634	4.004
	3. The University of the Thai Chambers of Commerce	4.006 ^a	.083	3.842	4.169

a. Based on modified population marginal mean.

Conclusions

The participants' positive attitudes and acceptance towards ethnic/racial diversity and the free flow of skilled labor in AEC appeared to be consistent with what is called attitude change (Pickens, 2005). As being argued, attitude can be formed, changed, and/or influenced by one's social world, or vice versa, in a more or less favorable through self-persuasion towards a particular person, object, or issue (Colman, 2015). Through this, the attitudes of the participants turned out to be positive and became more favorable towards people from nine different countries and seven skilled labors in AEC.

When applying McLeod's (2009) functions of attitudes into the above findings, it can be explained that the positive attitudes of the participants have been revealed through ego-defensive function or the way in which some parts of our attitudes would help protect us and position ourselves in a certain situation. As a result, the participants were comfortable and able to be around and work with AEC skilled professionals (as can be seen in A&A and ATF).

Furthermore, as the participants were exposed to the issues of cultural diversity and the free flow of seven skilled labor in AEC, the awareness of the reality of acceptance had been encouraged in that it urged them not only to be opened to social others but also to be able to accept other races, ethnic, and/or nationalities (Hlepas, 2013). This, in turn, assisted them to develop positive attitudes towards people with differences in races, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds which promoted them to develop tolerance to hostility and open themselves to social others as well (Greenberg, 2013; Petkova 2006).

Putting AGE and Years in the University together, it appeared that, when compared the two groups

of the participants, with the ages of 21 to 24 (senior years) and 20 or below (junior or lower), the first group would head for graduation and prepared themselves for a job situation in a very near future. Hence, the seniors must face with the realm of competitiveness of their first job pursuit, and they must accordingly adapt themselves to the new facets of life. The second-group of the participants, on the other hand, while studying, due to the perceived costs and benefits out of their future career, may be encouraged to be more adaptive and productive towards the new and unexpected situations and environment, which in turn could cause more positive attitudes towards the reality of cultural and professional diversity in AEC with respect to acceptance of otherness (Yue, 2013).

The participants at the age of 20 and below appeared to hold wider perspectives, ideas, and opinions that would help create an intellectual atmosphere of being able to accept the others as being the part of their social context (Chang et al., 2006). It could be argued that individuals in the Gen Y have been reported to competently adapt themselves to differences and diversity, (Jenkins, 2017; Kersten, 2002; The National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Association Office of Diversity, 2006; Tolbize, 2008; Zeeshan & Iram, 2012; Zemke et al., 2000). Obviously, the compatibility of the Gen Y and the majority of the participants, consequently, explained the significance of the above findings.

Finally, the Faculty was revealed to have a high impact on acceptance of people from AEC and a moderate impact on feeling approval with the free flow of seven skilled labor. Notably, the majority of the participants, in this study, who enrolled into the faculties of Business Administration/Economic and Sciences responded

directly in accordance with the factors of the pursuit of the unity of cultural diversity developed by UNESCO (2005) which represented directly those of seven skilled labors in AEC.

The attitudes of the participants were compatible with the pursuit of the unity of cultural diversity by UNESCO (2005). It was argued that equal dignity of all cultures become effective when ethnic and/or racial diversity coupled with the choices of education and employment competitiveness turned out to be beneficial to those individuals who welcome and think well towards diverse inter-ethnic interactions, either at schools or at work. (Greenberg, 2013; Hurtado, Dey, Gurin, P. Y, & Gurin, 2003; Jayakumar, 2008).

In conclusion, after being exposed to racial and professional diversity of the free flow of skilled labor in AEC, positive attitudes towards cultural diversity, acceptance of foreigners and free flow of skilled labor in AEC were positively reported among private university undergraduate students. This research has also confirmed fruitful information and knowledge that would help broaden perspectives of Thai students, teachers, practitioners, and researchers, especially, of how to prepare and adjust themselves into the realm of competitive AEC and the free flow of skilled labor in AEC. Due to the limited scope of the study, the future research should be furthered with students in public universities and/or workers in the areas of seven skilled labors in AEC as to understand of how they think and feel towards the diversity of the free flow of skilled labor so that the bigger picture in the realm of education and workforce in AEC has become clear.

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