A Situation Analysis of Communication Barriers in Cross-Functional Teams in the Service Industry prior to the AEC Integration

By

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Statement of Originality

This thesis is the output of my own work and has not been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any other university or other tertiary institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material that has been previously published or written by another person, except where cited and referenced accordingly. I give consent to the final version of my thesis being made available worldwide when deposited in the University’s Digital Repository subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968.

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3rd October 2016
Dedication

I dedicate the thesis to my family members and work colleague for their words of encouragement during the research process. Your support and inspiration kept me going through the process of compiling this research work. Thank you for providing words of wisdom when I required them most. This accomplishment is for you.
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Abstract

The year 2015 saw the AEC community becoming a fully functional entity. The service industry in Bangkok then saw the need to have terms that encompassed every stakeholder in the dialogues. These dialogues led to the forging of better working relationships between Thailand and ASEAN countries. The major cause of language barriers and strained work relationships in the service sector is due to the lack of or loss of trust. Trust is a critical ingredient where language barriers are a concern given that most of these nations have individual languages that are unique. Language barrier significantly affects how employees cope with the new environment and the occurrence of conflicts with other team members within the service industry thus, lowering trust among individual members. There is a paucity of studies focusing on communication barriers facing ASEAN communities. Moreover, it is necessary to ensure that while there are many barriers to language learning and development, these barriers be removed so as to make it easy for such an employee to fit into the new environment easily. The research study thus focused on exploring the communication barriers facing cross-functional teams in the service industry after the integration of AEC. The study focused on identifying communication barriers facing cross-functional team members within service industry in Bangkok as well as developing measures to mitigate the communication barriers. The study used mixed method research to conduct the analysis. Quantitative methodology was used in data collection, sampling process, and data analysis. The qualitative methodology was used as the research design. Simple random sampling was used for identifying the sample where 400 participants were recruited for data analysis. The findings indicate that language communication barriers negatively affect trust in overall among the members of cross-functional teams. In addition, trustor’s propensity also has negative impacts on cognition-base trust and emotion-based trust. Risk taking significantly influences trust among team members. The study concluded that improving communication skills and managing language barriers significantly reduces conflicts. Moreover, trust among the members is built when members engage in a common language with enhanced communication skills. The implications are that the managers will understand the existing communication barriers and develop measures to prevent them which in turn reduce conflicts. In addition, ASEAN members ought to learn multi-cultural languages to minimize barriers to communication which hinder business interactions. Future studies are recommended to study the communication challenges and trust building affecting managers and the impact on their work.