

Knowledge and Attitude of Burapha's Undergraduates in Becoming The ASEAN Member of Thailand

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Abstract. The findings show that media exposure about ASEAN, knowledge about ASEAN, attitude in becoming ASEAN member, and self-preparation for becoming ASEAN among undergraduate students' Burapha University were in a medium level. The difference in college years and majors caused the statistically significant difference at 0.5 level of ASEAN media exposure. The difference in genders, college years, incomes and majors among the undergraduate students led to the statistically significant difference at 0.5 level of knowledge about ASEAN. The difference in genders, college years and majors in the undergraduates caused the statistically significant difference at 0.5 level regarding attitude about becoming ASEAN. The difference in college years, incomes, and majors in the undergraduates caused the statistically significant difference at 0.5 level of preparation for becoming ASEAN. The difference level of ASEAN media exposure among the undergraduates caused the statistically significant difference at 0.5 level of knowledge, attitude, and preparation for becoming ASEAN. The difference level of knowledge about ASEAN in the undergraduates caused the statistically significant difference at 0.5 levels of the attitude and preparation for becoming ASEAN member of Thailand. And it found that higher level of media exposure could lead to higher level knowledge about ASEAN; and then could cause better attitude and self-preparation toward becoming ASEAN member of Thailand.

Keywords: knowledge, comprehension, attitude, undergraduates, ASEAN

Introduction

Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was established according to the Bangkok Declaration on 8 August 1967 among 5 founding members including Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand. The main objectives of ASEAN are to promote collaboration in politics, economy, social, peace, and stability in the region and to promote collaboration between ASEAN and other countries and international organizations. Nowadays, there are 10 countries as members in ASEAN including Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar, and Cambodia. In the 13th ASEAN Summit Meeting in Singapore in 2007, ASEAN leaders signed ASEAN Charter which was recognized as the charter of ASEAN to scope a legal framework and to set organization structure for increasing efficiency of ASEAN. The

main objectives of the ASEAN Charter were to make ASEAN an effective organization, to be people-centered, and to respect to the rules. ASEAN has prioritized the region cooperation according to 3 principles which are stability, social and culture, and economic collaboration. In 2015 as ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) (Department of ASEAN Affairs, 2015) was officially established. In 2017, is 60th Anniversary of ASEAN according to its establishment.

Thailand is one of 5 founding members and the beginning of ASEAN. Thailand has consistently played an active role in ASEAN activities including participation in pushing forward ASEAN to pursue cooperation projects in many parts which are related to environment and international situations such as setting up ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA), ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Meeting on politics and stability in Asia-Pacific, and

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Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ). Meanwhile, ASEAN has been significant for Thailand not only to establish alliances, solidarity, and covering stability and peace in the region, but also to increase an authority for international negotiations and to cooperate for solving transnational problems and foundation developments concrete in a manner. Economic and industrial cooperation in ASEAN has provided opportunities for expanding trades and investments in Thailand that would bring prosperities to Thai and the members' economy collectively.

Thailand has prepared itself to become ASEAN member by focusing on an education which is considered as ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC). Thailand will play an important role to strengthen other communities since education has become a foundation for development. This will promote Thailand to be the center of ASEAN Studies and the center of religions and cultures to push forward ASEAN Community by an education, understanding about neighbors in ASEAN, ethnic diversity, and human rights principles. The promotion teaching foreign languages to develop communication in ASEAN Community will be prioritized.

The Eastern region of Thailand is the important economic area which includes investments from foreign countries and many foreign workers. Because of becoming ASEAN community, the government initiated a project to develop Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC) which covers 3 provinces including Chachoengsao, Chonburi, and Rayong. These 3 provinces are the beginning area to push forward Thailand following the Thailand 4.0. policy. The primary goal is to link transportations to be serve goods and people, and to link with neighbors in ASEAN Community (Thailand Board of Investment, 2016).

Burapha University is the University of the East comprising of Bachelor's degrees, Master degrees, and Doctoral degrees in diverse majors including sciences and social sciences. The vision is "Wisdom of the East for the Future of the Nation". The university also prioritizes of becoming ASEAN member of Thailand. Preparations for becoming ASEAN member have been done including on knowledge, attitude, communication skill, and working strategies which will conform to the national economic and social development plan. The university has also raised awareness on the importance of ASEAN both in the

present and future especially among its undergraduate students who are studying in variety of majors which may be affected directly from the mobility of workforces according to ASEAN policy. From factors mentioned above, it is expected that the undergraduates of Burapha University should have knowledge, comprehension and a good attitude toward becoming ASEAN member of Thailand which led to the main objectives of this research. The Objectives of this research are to examine the level of knowledge about becoming ASEAN member among the undergraduates of Burapha University, to study the attitude on becoming ASEAN member of Thailand among the undergraduates of Burapha University, and to explore the preparation for living in the age of ASEAN among the undergraduates of Burapha University.

Research Methodology

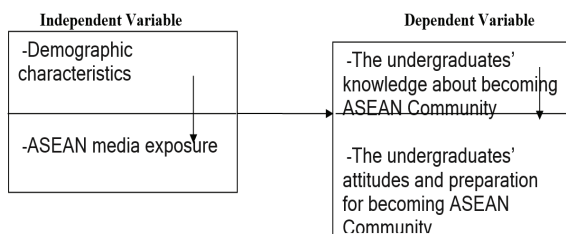
This research is a quantitative research to examine knowledge, and attitude among eight hundred undergraduates of Burapha University regarding becoming ASEAN member of Thailand. The research participants were recruited by using probably sampling and multi-stage sampling.

A closed-ended questionnaire was developed by using an ordinal scale in each topic according to research variables including ASEAN media exposure, knowledge about becoming ASEAN member, attitudes about becoming ASEAN Community-politics and policies/economy /social and culture, and self-preparation. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics including percentage, mean (\bar{x}), and standard deviation (S.D), and inferential statistics including T-Test and F-Test (ANOVA) for testing the research hypothesis was also applied.

Research Hypothesis, (1) The difference of demography among the undergraduates leads to the difference of ASEAN media exposure, (2) The difference of demography among the undergraduates causes the difference of knowledge about becoming ASEAN member of Thailand, (3) The difference of demography among the undergraduates affects the difference of the attitude and preparation for becoming ASEAN member of Thailand, (4) The different level of ASEAN media exposure among the undergraduates causes the difference of knowledge level, attitude level, and preparation for becoming ASEAN member of Thailand., (5) The

different level of knowledge about becoming ASEAN member of Thailand among the undergraduates causes the difference of attitude level and preparation for becoming ASEAN member of Thailand.

Research Variables



Research Results from Descriptive Statistics

The study reveals that most of the sample were female (60.9%), were living in the east (42.5), had incomes for spending between 3,0007,000- baht (55.3%), and were from self-employed business families (34.1%). For media exposure, most of the sample were exposed to media via television (41.4%) and the internet (30.5%). The most media that the sample were exposed were news (28.8%) and soap opera (24.3%). Most of the sample had knowledge about ASEAN (77.6%). The small amount of the sample knew clearly about ASEAN (11.0%). Some

Table 1
Knowledge on ASEAN Among Undergraduate Students.

The Level of Knowledge on ASEAN(118-point)	Frequency	Percentage
Low (06- point)	283	35.4
Medium (712- point)	373	46.6
High (1318- point)	144	18.0
Total	800	100.0

Table 2
Attitudes and Preparation for Becoming ASEAN Member

Attitudes Toward ASEAN	Mean(\bar{x})	S.D.	Level
Political and Policies	3.07	.54	Medium
Economic	3.27	.63	Medium
Social and Culture	3.12	.56	Medium
The preparation	3.17	.75	Medium
Total	3.15	.55	Medium

Table 3
The Difference of College Year vs. Media Exposure on Becoming ASEAN Member

College Year x Media exposure	Frequency	Mean(\bar{x})	S.D.	f	Sig.
First-year	120	2.77	.67	6.80	≤0.05***
Second-year	190	2.50	.67		
Third-year	271	2.45	.64		
Fourth-year and higher	219	2.49	.73		
Total	800	2.52	.68		

Table 4
The Difference of Major vs. Media Exposure About Becoming ASEAN Member

Major x Media exposure	Frequency	Mean(\bar{x})	S.D.	t	Sig.
science majors	400	2.58	.71	2.56	≤0.05*
Socialscience majors	400	2.46	.65		
Total	800	2.52	.68		

cases did not have knowledge (10.1%). The exposure level to media information on ASEAN in overall was in medium-low level (\bar{x} = 2.52). The most opportunity which made the undergraduates receive information about ASEAN was activities and public announcements in the university (\bar{x} = 3.03) while majority of the sample expressed their opinion that television was the most medium which had reports on ASEAN news (88%). Majority of the sample had seen an ASEAN's symbol, but majority of the sample mention that they did not recognize ASEAN's slogan. For knowledge about ASEAN, most of the undergraduates were knowledgeable about ASEAN in moderate level (See Table 1). The undergraduates' attitude and preparation for becoming ASEAN member of Thailand was also in a moderate level (See Table 2).

Research Results from Inferential Statistics for Testing the Research Hypothesis

The first hypothesis "the difference of demography among the undergraduates leads

to the difference of ASEAN media exposure", the study revealed that the undergraduates who were different in genders, native habitats, incomes, and their parents' occupations did not affect the statistically significant different level of ASEAN media exposure; but the difference of college years and majors affected the statistically significant different level of exposure on media information about ASEAN at 0.5. The first-year undergraduates were exposed to media information about ASEAN more than other years. The undergraduates studying in scientific majors were exposed to the media more than social sciences majors. (See Table 3 and 4)

The second hypothesis "the difference of demography among the undergraduates causes the difference of knowledge about becoming ASEAN member of Thailand.", the study revealed that the undergraduates who were different in genders, college years, incomes, and majors affected the statistically significant different level of knowledge and comprehension at 0.5. The knowledge levels of the female students were higher than other

Table 5
The Difference of Gender vs. Knowledge on Becoming ASEAN Member

Genders x Knowledge	Frequency	Mean(\bar{x})	S.D.	f	Sig.
Female	487	8.70	3.86	5.89	≤0.05**
Male	275	8.02	3.72		
Transgender	38	7.11	3.99		
Total	800	8.47	3.84		

Table 6
The Difference of College Year vs. Knowledge on Becoming ASEAN Member

College Year x Knowledge	Frequency	Mean(\bar{x})	S.D.	f	Sig.
First-year	120	9.08	3.49	3.51	≤0.05*
Second-year	190	8.71	4.13		
Third-year	271	8.55	3.66		
Fourth-year and higher	219	7.81	3.90		
Total	800	8.47	3.84		

Table 7
The Difference of Major vs. Knowledge About Becoming ASEAN Member.

Major x Knowledge	Frequency	Mean(\bar{x})	S.D.	t	Sig.
Science majors	400	8.97	3.59	3.71	≤0.05***
Social science majors	400	7.97	4.02		
Total	800	8.47	3.84		

genders. The knowledge levels of the first-year undergraduates were higher than other years. The knowledge levels of the undergraduates who had income 3,000-5,000- baht per month were higher than the undergraduates who had income more than 7,000 baht per month. The knowledge levels of the undergraduates in science majors were higher than social sciences majors(See Table 57-).

The third hypothesis "the difference of demography among the undergraduates affects the difference of the attitude and preparation for becoming ASEAN member

of Thailand," the study revealed that the undergraduates who were different in genders, college years, incomes, and majors affected the statistically significant different level of attitudes about becoming ASEAN member of Thailand at 0.5. Female undergraduates had better attitude about becoming ASEAN member compared to male and alternative genders. The first-year undergraduates had better attitude about becoming ASEAN member than the second-year students. Other factors did not affect statistically significant the attitude level (See Table 8/9).

Table 8
The Difference of Gender vs. Attitude about Becoming ASEAN Member

Gender x Attitude	Frequency	Mean(\bar{x})	S.D.	f	Sig.
Female	487	2.3	.49	0.89	
Male	270	1.3	.48		
Transgender	38	1.3	.56		
Total	800	3.10	.49		

Table 9
The Difference of College Year vs. Attitude about Becoming ASEAN Member

College Year x Attitude	Frequency	Mean(\bar{x})	S.D.	f	Sig.
First-year	120	2.27	.41	3.57	≤0.05*
Second-year	190	2.09	.52		
Third-year	271	2.13	.52		
Fourth-year and higher	219	2.17	.46		
Total	800	3.10	.49		

Table 10
The Difference of College Year vs Self-Preparation for Becoming ASEAN Member

Student Year x Self-Preparation	Frequency	Mean(\bar{x})	S.D.	f	Sig.
First-year	120	3.48	.41	9.19	≤0.05***
Second-year	190	3.13	.52		
Third-year	271	3.06	.52		
Fourth-year and higher	219	3.17	.46		
Total	800	3.17	.49		

Table 11
The Difference of Major vs Self-Preparation for Becoming ASEAN Member

Major x Self-Preparation	Frequency	Mean(\bar{x})	S.D.	t	Sig.
science majors	400	3.32	.72	5.72	≤0.05***
Socialscience major	400	3.02	.75		
Total	800	3.17	.74		

Table 12
The Difference of Media Exposure vs. Knowledge on Becoming ASEAN Member

Media Exposure (1-5) x Knowledge	Frequency	Mean(\bar{x})	S.D.	f	Sig.
				19.02	≤0.05***
Low (0-2.50)	398	7.84	3.72		
Medium (2.51-3.50)	348	8.77	3.74		
High (3.51-5)	54	11.00	3.96		
Total	800	8.45	3.83		

Table 13
The Difference of Media Exposure vs. Attitudes on Becoming ASEAN Member

Media exposure (1-5) x Attitude	Frequency	Mean(\bar{x})	S.D.	f	Sig.
				37.88	≤0.05***
Low (0-2.50)	398	3.01	.53		
Medium (3.50-2.51)	348	3.26	.42		
High (5-3.51)	54	3.45	.34		
Total	800	3.15	.49		

Table 14
The Difference of Media Exposure vs. Self-Preparation for Becoming ASEAN Member

Media Exposure (1-5) x Self-Preparation	Frequency	Mean(\bar{x})	S.D.	f	Sig.
				57.55	≤0.05***
Low (0-2.50)	398	2.92	.67		
Medium (2.51-3.50)	348	3.35	.68		
High (3.51-5)	54	3.79	.89		
Total	800	3.17	.75		

Table 15
The Difference of Knowledge Level vs. Attitudes on Becoming ASEAN Member

Knowledge Level x Attitude	Frequency	Mean(\bar{x})	S.D.	f	Sig.
				13.85	≤0.05***
Low (0-6 point)	283	3.04	.52		
Medium (7-12 point)	373	3.19	.47		
High (13-18 point)	144	3.28	.45		
Total	800	3.15	.49		

Table 16
The Difference of Knowledge Level vs. Self-Preparation for Becoming ASEAN Member

Knowledge level x Self-Preparation	Frequency	Mean(\bar{x})	S.D.	f	Sig.
				31.24	≤0.05***
Low (0-6 point)	283	2.95	.68		
Medium (7-12 point)	373	3.20	.73		
High (13-18 point)	144	3.53	.80		
Total	800	3.17	.75		

For self-preparation, the difference of college years, incomes, and majors affected the statistically significant different level of the undergraduates' preparation for becoming ASEAN member of Thailand. The first-year undergraduates had more self-preparation than other years. The undergraduates in science majors had more self-preparation than social science majors (See Table 10 and 11).

The fourth hypothesis "the different level of ASEAN media exposure among the undergraduates causes the difference of knowledge level, attitude level, and preparation for becoming ASEAN member of Thailand," the study revealed that the results were found according to the hypothesis. The undergraduates who were exposed to media in a higher level had more knowledge than the others who consumed media in medium or low level. The undergraduates who were exposed to media in a higher level had better attitude and self-preparation than the others who had media exposure in medium or low level (See Table 12 and 14).

The fifth hypothesis "the different level of knowledge about becoming ASEAN member of Thailand among the undergraduates causes the difference of attitude level and preparation for becoming ASEAN member of Thailand", the study revealed that the results were found according to the hypothesis. The undergraduates who had more knowledge about ASEAN had better attitude and self-preparation for becoming ASEAN Community compared to the others who had knowledge in medium or low level (See Table 15 and 16).

Discussion Media Exposure Among Undergraduate Students, Burapha University

It was found out that media information about ASEAN exposure among undergraduates was in a medium level. In details, it revealed that most of the students were informed about information on ASEAN but not in its details since media and university activities have informed them information about ASEAN merely prior to the last period that Thailand would become ASEAN member. Moreover, merely small number of students were interested in its details. Furthermore, only ten percent of the undergraduates revealed that they did not have any knowledge about ASEAN. The reason may be that although "ASEAN" was the term mentioned for a long time, the under graduates been taken

it for granted and have not realized that this term was related to them. Many of them expressed their opinion that this issue belongs to policy or governmental level that would not have any effect in that particular period of time. Since the students belong to Generation Y, social media then was widely used among this generation of people in terms of conversation, emotional expression and identity construction. According to survey results from ETDA, it was found out that the Generation Y was the group of people which was the highest internet usage group on the average at 53.2 hours per week. The first activity which was popular among internet users was conversation via social network (86.8%) (Electronic Transactions Development Agency, 2016). According to Sookplam (2016), it found out that the undergraduates were exposed to general media in medium level (3.29). The media they consumed the most was social media and the average level was high (4.57) while searching for knowledge on the education courses from the internet was in fair to poor level (3.12). The way most students received the course information was from asking their friends (3.68). Therefore, there was obvious that the student paid less attention on knowledge and educational information. Issues on ASEAN which the students have not recognized and have considered as not related to their everyday life were not also exceptional.

The difference in genders, demography, incomes, and parents' occupations among the undergraduates did not affect the statistically significant difference on the exposure level of media information about ASEAN due to media usage behavior among Generation Y mentioned above. However, it was found out that the difference in college years and majors affected the statistically significant difference in media information on ASEAN exposure level at 0.5. The exposure level among the first-year undergraduates was higher than other years. The exposure level among the undergraduates studying in science majors was higher than those studying in social science majors (See Table 3 and 4). Since the first-year undergraduates were the new members of the university, they were possibly more active than the other undergraduates in terms of searching for new knowledge and information than other years who were studying more specific subjects and pay less attention to other issues. The reason why the undergraduates in science majors spent more time on media than

those who were studying in social science majors were the affect from free-transborder-career policy comprised of medical doctors, dentists, nurses, architectures, engineers, and explorers (Department of ASEAN Affairs, 2015).

Knowledge and Comprehension in ASEAN Among Undergraduate Students, Burapha University

The study found that knowledge and comprehension on ASEAN among undergraduates was in a moderate level since most of the students pay less attention to ASEAN. The total amount of students who had knowledge about ASEAN but not in its details (77.6%) and students who did not have any knowledge on ASEAN (10.1%) was 87.7percent, which was considered problematic. This study results confirmed the previous study "Attitudes and Awareness toward ASEAN: Finding of a Ten Nation Survey" by ASEAN Foundation (2008 refer in Department of ASEAN Affairs, 2013) which found that Thai undergraduate knowledge about ASEAN was significantly in lower level than Laotian and Cambodian undergraduates. Only 27.5 percent of Thai undergraduates answered questions correctly while the average of every ASEAN nations was 49.5%. Moreover, the findings of this study also conformed the results of the survey "Comprehension of becoming ASEAN Community" by Ipsos Business Consulting Company in 2012 which found out that merely 25% of Thai people were knowledgeable on ASEAN issues (2012 refer in Department of ASEAN Affairs, 2015).

In comparing knowledge level among demographically differential groups, it found out that the undergraduates who were different in genders, college years, incomes, and majors led to the statistically significant difference levels of knowledge and comprehension in ASEAN at 0.5. Female undergraduates had higher level of knowledge and comprehension in ASEAN than other genders since female usually concentrates searching all knowledge more than male according to the survey results "English Proficiency" by Education First (EF), the survey found out that female has more language proficiency (PostToday, 2017). The knowledge and comprehension levels among the first-year undergraduates were higher than other years since they were previously educated from high school educational system which prioritized in ASEAN issues. The knowledge and comprehension

levels among the undergraduates studying in science majors was higher than those in social science majors since they would be affected from free-transborder-career policy as mentioned. Moreover, the undergraduates in science majors were tended to searching for knowledge than the students studying in social science majors who were more imaginative-oriented. However, the study found that the undergraduates who were high level of media exposure also had higher level of knowledge and comprehension in ASEAN than those who are in medium or low level in the media exposure – which was in accordance to the hypothesis.

Attitude in Becoming ASEAN Member

The research results show that the undergraduate students had an attitude in medium level in every part. They had better attitude in economy than other parts since information in economic was considered more tangible issue than others. Due to the economic situation surrounding the university as well as the mobilization of workers from neighboring countries in ASEAN in various business sectors. Having become ASEAN member will strengthen economic situation in Thailand than other aspects. This study results conformed a survey results from ABAC Poll which found out that the education on ASEAN Community in the topics of economy, trades, and investment were considered the most important (70%) while other aspects were recognized significantly less important, such as politics and security (13.9%) and social and culture (13.3%) (Department of ASEAN Affair, 2013).

In comparing the study results, it was found out that the undergraduates who were different in genders, college years, and majors led to the difference of attitude about becoming ASEAN member of Thailand. Female undergraduates had better attitude about becoming ASEAN member than male and alternative gender. The first-year students showed better attitude about becoming ASEAN member compared to other years. In conclusion, the high exposure and more knowledge about ASEAN could lead to the better attitude toward becoming ASEAN member of Thailand. According to Sookplam (2016), it was found out that the undergraduates who exposed to media in a higher level had better attitude toward the 2010-revised version of communication arts curriculum, Burapha University than the others who had media exposure in medium

or low level.

Self-Preparation for Becoming ASEAN Member Among the Undergraduates, Burapha University

The study found out that the undergraduate self-preparation was considerably in medium level which was higher than Cheumthong (2013) which found out that Durakij Pundit University undergraduate self-preparation for becoming ASEAN member was in low level. The topic that undergraduates of Burapha University were interested the most in terms of self-preparation was English language since English is the official language for communication between ASEAN member countries (Department of ASEAN Affair, 2009). English language score among Thai students was in very low level compared to neighboring countries in ASEAN. According to a survey by Education First (EF), English capability of Thai students was the fifteenth from nineteen countries. The survey was done in Asia. Singapore, Malaysia, and Philippines were in the top three respectively while Vietnam and Indonesia were in the seventh and ninth. Female students had higher English capability than male students. 1825- years old were the ages that considered the most skillful in English language (Post Today, 2017). Therefore, the undergraduates who were enthusiastic in ASEAN topics would pay more attention to English preparation than other aspects since English language capability would assist them to communicate with neighbors in ASEAN and those from other countries. This results of this study conformed a survey from NIDA Poll which found out that English and other languages in ASEAN education should be promoted (Refer in Department of ASEAN Affair, 2013).

The difference of college years and majors affected the self-preparation for becoming ASEAN member among the undergraduates in different ways. The first-years undergraduate self-preparation was higher than other years. The undergraduates who were in science majors prepared themselves better than the undergraduates who were studying in social science majors. This study result conformed to the previous study by Cheumthong (2013) which found out that the Durakij Pundit University undergraduates who were studying in different faculties had different self-preparation. This study also revealed that the undergraduates of Burapha University who were exposed to media in high level led to the high level of self-

preparation than other students who had low and medium levels of media exposure; while the group which had high level of knowledge and comprehension would also had high level of self-preparation. Unfortunately, this group of students was significantly small compared to the group of students who had knowledge in medium and low level. It could be concluded that higher level of media exposure could lead to higher level knowledge about ASEAN; and then could cause better attitude and self-preparation toward becoming ASEAN member of Thailand which could be serving as good role models for other undergraduates who prioritize on learning and improving themselves.

Conclusions

In general, Burapha University undergraduates were interested, were knowledgeable in ASEAN topics as well as were self-prepared in medium level. The research results show that campaigns and public announcement regarding information and knowledge about ASEAN which have been done so far were not considered successful since the undergraduates have not been enough active in searching for information and prepare themselves for the forthcoming transition. For general Thai population, their knowledge, comprehension and attitude are possibly in a lower level comparing to undergraduate students mentioned in this study. Therefore, it is time for Thai people to be urgently educated and prepared to become ASEAN member.

The study found that the students were interested in searching for information and were knowledgeable on ASEAN at the low level. According to the findings, the students are thus suggested to search for information about ASEAN which would be beneficial to their future. Academic staff and organizations should encourage students to prioritize on ASEAN and to realize that this issue is closely related to their lives in order that the students would be more interested and search for information to prepare themselves to be ready in terms of their career in the future.

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