

ABSTRACT

This study investigates a wide range of concerns related to the nature and structure of the IS profession in organizations operating in Thailand. The investigation tests predictions about similarities and differences between Provider organizations where the core activities are the provision of ICT products and services and User organizations which require those ICT products and services in order to conduct their different core activities. These predictions refer to approximately the next 5 years and are concerned with the global development of the IS profession. They are derived from a wide range of previous studies conducted mainly in technically advanced nations during the past 5 years. Predictions relate to the structuring of the IS profession into 4 work domains and the associated changes in the nature of and demand for IS knowledge and skills within those domains. Other predictions are concerned with the sourcing strategies that User and Provider organizations may use to acquire the IS knowledge and skills that they deem to be important for their development. In order to examine these issues thoroughly a comprehensive set of IS knowledge and skills items is constructed from the literature and examined in terms of changes in the importance of those items over the next 5 years and the sourcing strategies used among User and Provider organizations.

The study is both descriptive and explanatory in nature and adopts a cross-sectional field study approach to collect data from samples of User and Provider organizations operating in Thailand using a self-administered questionnaire. Quantitative methods are used to analyze the data using descriptive and inferential techniques. The results are interpreted and compared to the predictions made in previous studies and theoretical and practical conclusions are presented.

The main contributions from the study relate to both theoretical and practical outcomes. Theoretically, predictions made with respect to the global IS professional

environment are tested in the context of nature and structure of the IS profession in Thailand. The framework represented by the 4 work domains proves to be theoretically appropriate for examining the structure of the IS profession and the comprehensive list of IS knowledge and skills represents a valid and reliable means of examining the nature of the IS profession. A study of this type has not been conducted in Thailand and the results have significant practical implications for IS educators, organizations already operating or intending to operate in Thailand, and as those who are responsible for national ICT policy and development of a knowledge based society.

