What does ASEAN Mean to ASEAN Peoples? (The Philippine Case)

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Introduction

◦ Public perception study conducted in 2016
◦ Funded by ERIA and part of a bigger study comprising all 10 ASEAN member-states (AMS)
◦ The aim of the study is to make inferences about the level of awareness of the Filipino people of ASEAN as well as their aspirations, concerns, and hopes for the Association.

◦ Online and paper-based survey using a questionnaire provided by the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA)
◦ Three focus group discussions (youth – Butuan City; business sector – Cebu City; mixed – Quezon City)
Profile of survey respondents

**Affiliation**

- Government: 31%
- Academe: 18%
- Business: 17%
- CSO/NGO: 13%
- Others (mostly students): 21%

**Age**

- 15-30: 25%
- 31-49: 37%
- 50+: 38%

**Sex**

- Male: 52%
- Female: 48%
Key findings

◦ Moderate awareness of ASEAN which grows with age
◦ A general sentiment that Philippine membership of ASEAN is beneficial for the country, albeit only moderate
◦ Concordance on the pressing problems facing individual countries and ASEAN identified by the Philippine respondents and those in other member-states
◦ A general agreement that the media has low coverage of ASEAN and that school textbooks should be used more to educate young people about the Association
◦ A general agreement that the ASEAN Secretariat should beef up its capacity
Awareness of ASEAN, by affiliation

Level of familiarity (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affiliation</th>
<th>Slightly Familiar</th>
<th>Somewhat Familiar</th>
<th>Moderately Familiar</th>
<th>Very Familiar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>51.1</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academe</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>54.1</td>
<td>39.3</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>20.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSO/NGO</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>37.7</td>
<td>34.0</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>67.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>32.5</td>
<td>50.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Awareness of ASEAN, by age and sex
Awareness of ASEAN (Philippines vs. Other AMS)

Source: ERIA
Student familiarity of ASEAN over time (all AMS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Familiarity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ERIA 2016</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISEAS 2014</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISEAS 2007</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ERIA
Filipino students’ basic knowledge of ASEAN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2007 survey</th>
<th>2014 survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highest: Viet Nam, Laos, Brunei,</td>
<td>Highest: Viet Nam, Thailand,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>Brunei, Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowest: Singapore, <strong>Philippines</strong>,</td>
<td>Lowest: <strong>Philippines</strong>, Singapore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myanmar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Countries not mentioned fell in between the overall.

Source: Thompson et al. 2014. Do Young People Know ASEAN? Singapore: ISEAS.
Identification as ASEAN citizens, by affiliation and age
Benefits of ASEAN membership, by affiliation

- Philippines benefitting from ASEAN (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affiliation</th>
<th>Fairly</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>Very Much</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>35.6</td>
<td>52.5</td>
<td>46.7</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academe</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>35.6</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSO/NGO</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>49.1</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>51.4</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>46.4</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend: Fairly, Somewhat, Moderately, Very Much, Don't Know
Benefits of ASEAN membership (from FGDs)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Youth</th>
<th>Business sector</th>
<th>Mixed group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Good for tourism</td>
<td>• Good for keeping trade barriers low</td>
<td>• Sense of pride</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Good for trade especially in the export of fruits</td>
<td>• Beneficial for private firms as ASEAN policies have eased importation ad exportation activities</td>
<td>• Good for the Philippines especially in resolving conflict (e.g., Myanmar)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Will help the Philippine in rice importation</td>
<td>• Good for travelling to other ASEAN member-states and finding work for high-skilled workers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Useful for resolving conflicts related to sovereignty (ASEAN can serve as a “moderator”)</td>
<td>• ASEAN can serve as “an arena wherein member-states are able to be in sync with one another”, economically and politically</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ASEAN can help in peace-building and in resolving problems related to food security, hunger, and technology.</td>
<td>ASEAN should help the Philippines gain more ground in the issue of territorial disputes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On territorial/maritime disputes: ASEAN is doing nothing to help the Philippines in its geopolitical tension with China on the West Philippine Sea. It is USA helping the country not ASEAN.
Why the Philippines should keep its ASEAN membership – Reasons given by the youth in the FGD

• Important in trade
• The Philippines has poor capacity to create jobs; being a member of ASEAN will give Filipinos access to jobs in other ASEAN countries.
• Leaving ASEAN will weaken the Philippines as it will be alone in solving its problems particularly conflicts and calamities. [Used the analogy of not having friends if the Philippines is not part of ASEAN.]
Pressing problems of the Philippines today and until 2025 (from survey)

1. Corruption;
2. Income disparity and social inequality;
3. Agriculture and food security;
4. Unemployment;
5. Climate change and natural disasters, infrastructure availability and quality, and quality education and access.

Source: ERIA
Pressing problems of the Philippines today and until 2025 (from FGDs)
Pressing problems of ASEAN today and until 2025 (from survey)

1. Corruption;
2. Climate change and natural disasters;
3. Income disparity and social inequality;
4. Trade, investment and regulatory coherence;
5. Agriculture and food security

Source: ERIA
Pressing problems of ASEAN today and until 2025 (from FGDs)
Measuring expectations for ASEAN (Situation by 2025)

**Economic pillar**

- ASEAN is a region where goods, services, and businesses can move easily among countries in the region.
- ASEAN is a region where regulations and procedures make it easy for skilled workers and professionals to find work in other countries in ASEAN.
- ASEAN is a region where it is easy to physically move around through roads, railways, air, and shipping.
- ASEAN Community is a region where people and businesses can digitally interact and communicate easily with one another.
Measuring expectations for ASEAN (Situation by 2025)

- **Socio-cultural pillar**
  - ASEAN peoples are deeply aware of ASEAN Community and its programs.
  - ASEAN Community deeply engages and benefits its peoples.
  - ASEAN and its member-countries effectively protect human rights and minorities in the region.
  - ASEAN and its member-countries provide basic social protection and health services to migrant and temporary workers from other countries in ASEAN.
  - ASEAN pushes for equitable access to opportunities for ASEAN peoples.
  - ASEAN and its member-countries effectively conserve and sustainably manage the region’s biodiversity and natural resources.
  - ASEAN major cities are less polluted and more liveable than they are today.
  - ASEAN and its member-countries are very much able to anticipate, respond and recover faster and concertedly together from natural disasters and health hazards in the region.
Measuring expectations for ASEAN (Situation by 2025)

- **Political pillar**
  - ASEAN is a region of good governance and very much less corruption.
  - ASEAN has a strong voice and are important players in global negotiations and forums.
  - ASEAN deeply engages powers in the region and the world to ensure peace in the region and Asia Pacific.
Expectations for ASEAN (Situation by 2025)

- ASEAN deeply engages powers in the region and the world to... 4 21 52 153 58
- ASEAN has a strong voice and is an important player in global... 5 18 57 151 57
- Very much able to anticipate, respond, and recover faster and... 4 16 55 167 43
- ASEAN major cities are less polluted and more liveable than they... 18 30 100 100 36
- ASEAN and its member countries conserve and sustainably manage... 6 31 76 130 43
- People and businesses can digitally interact and communicate... 3 20 69 118 47
- Very much able to anticipate, respond, and recover faster and... 3 18 51 158 56
- Good governance and significantly less corruption. 8 31 95 118 34
- Migrant and temporary workers from other countries in ASEAN... 4 22 63 147 50
- Skilled workers and professionals can easily find work in other... 1 22 41 153 70
- Goods, services, and businesses can move easily among countries... 6 38 172 71
### Aspirations and Hopes by 2025

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ASEAN deeply engages powers in the region and the world to...</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASEAN has a strong voice and is an important player in global...</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Very much able to anticipate, respond, and recover faster and...</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASEAN major cities are less polluted and more liveable than they...</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASEAN and its member countries conserve and sustainably...</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectively protect human rights and minorities in the region.</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASEAN pushes for equitable access to opportunities for its peoples.</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ASEAN Community deeply engages and benefits its peoples.</td>
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<td>119</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASEAN people are deeply aware of the ASEAN Community and its...</td>
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<td>125</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People and businesses can digitally interact and communicate...</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy to physically move around through roads, railways, air, and...</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good governance and significantly less corruption.</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migrant and temporary workers from other countries in ASEAN...</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled workers and professionals can easily find work in other...</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goods, services, and businesses can move easily among countries...</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Aspirations and Hopes by 2025 (from FGDs)

Common across groups: Economic growth

From the Business sector:

1. For the AMS to be able to rank with China, Korea, and Japan in terms of being economically stable. Singapore could lead ASEAN in this regard. To achieve this, the AMS must be able to fortify their political powers through the integration agenda. That is, for the AMS to play an active role in global negotiations and forums that directly affect the ASEAN region.

2. On territorial disputes, conflicts in geopolitical jurisdiction could be won over through a unified stand and support for the concerned AMS.
Aspirations and Hopes by 2025 (from FGDs)

From the Business sector:

3. ASEAN integration is key for each AMS’s growth and development. Through strategic alliances, competitive advantages could be attained when negotiating and trading with nations outside ASEAN. To achieve this, the AMS must be able to fortify their political powers through the integration agenda. That is, for the AMS to play an active role in global negotiations and forums that directly affect the ASEAN region.

4. ASEAN could be instrumental in building quality education through promoting scholarship grants and student and faculty exchanges.
Upgrading the Capability of the ASEAN Secretariat

![Bar chart showing opinions on upgrading ASEAN Secretariat's capability]

On upgrading ASEAN Secretariat's capability: 9.45% Strongly agree, 41.1% Agree, 50.68% Neutral, 0% Disagree, 0% Strongly disagree.
Media coverage on ASEAN is not enough

![Bar chart showing the percentage of respondents believed media coverage on ASEAN is not enough, categorized by different groups such as Government, Academe, Business, CSO/NGO, Others, and TOTAL. The chart displays the distribution of responses as follows: Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly Agree.](chart_image)
Use of textbooks to promote ASEAN

![Bar chart showing the percentage of respondents' agreement with the use of textbooks to promote ASEAN across different sectors: Government, Academe, Business, CSO/NGO, Others, and Total. The chart indicates varying degrees of agreement, ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree.](image)
Some recommendations

1. Have more dynamic and targeted communication and outreach activities
   - Increase use of traditional channels like TV, radio, and print media.
   - Have a radio program dedicated to ASEAN news and current affairs
     - Example, *DurianAsean* online radio program in Malaysia
   - Partner with the media (TV, radio, print) to increase dissemination of ASEAN-related content
     - In 2016, more than 200 media practitioners from AMS attended the ASEAN Editor’s Summit. The participants came up with a resolution on enhancing media cooperation to promote ASEAN identity, awareness, and integration.
Some recommendations

◦ Maximize the use of social media to reach young people.

◦ Tap student organizations as channels to educate young people about ASEAN.

◦ Consider making it mandatory to have the ASEAN flag in schools (public and private) and government offices.

◦ Encourage the singing of the ASEAN anthem “The ASEAN Way” in schools and government offices.

◦ Celebrate the ASEAN Day in public schools every year (like the UN Day).
Some recommendations

2. Promote deeper understanding of ASEAN, its programs and activities, gains being enjoyed by the member-states, and issues affecting the region and how the Association is responding.

- Use school textbooks to educate young people not just about ASEAN’s history but also about its programs, the integration agenda, and how the Association has impacted the lives of its peoples. (Highlight the gains from ASEAN)

- Continue implementing activities for the youth like scholarships, exchange programs, and leadership programs.

- “Encourage use of the ASEAN Curriculum Sourcebook—not just in schools but as a resource for educators at any level—to discuss relevant aspects of ASEAN integration.” (Thompson et al. 2014)
Some recommendations

3. Promote a more inclusive ASEAN

◦ Maximize platforms for civil society engagement, business sector participation, and youth participation to promote greater interface between ASEAN and its stakeholders and to encourage broad-based support for the Association.

  (E.g., CSOs: ASEAN People’s Assembly, Regional Consultation on ASEAN and Human Rights, ASEAN Civil Society Conference/ASEAN Peoples Forum, and ASEAN Disability Forum; business: those spearheaded by ABAC and DTI)

◦ Develop and implement programs for micro and small entrepreneurs, women, youth, and indigenous peoples

  (E.g., programs spearheaded by DTI and ABAC Philippines, such as the ASEAN Business and Investment Program, ASEAN Mentors-Entrepreneurs Network, and ASEAN Young Entrepreneurs Council).
Thank you

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