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

Sheila V. Siar, Director for Research Information, PIDS
Background

- Public perception study conducted in 2016.
- Funded by the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) and part of a bigger study comprising all 10 ASEAN member-states (AMS).
- Study aims to determine the level of awareness of the Filipino people of ASEAN as well as their aspirations, concerns, and hopes for the Association.
- Conducted through an online and paper-based survey and three focus group discussions (youth – Butuan City; business sector – Cebu City; mixed group – Quezon City) using a questionnaire supplied by ERIA.
Profile of survey respondents

Total sample: 289 respondents

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

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

**Sex**
- Male – 52%
- Female – 48%
Awareness of ASEAN, by affiliation
# Awareness of ASEAN, by age and sex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Level of Familiarity (%)</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15-30</td>
<td>Slightly Familiar</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>6.5</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Somewhat Familiar</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>12.2</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moderately Familiar</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>48.4</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>31.7</td>
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<td>10.4</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>44.7</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very Familiar</td>
<td>56.3</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>16.7</td>
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<td>5.0</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>37.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-49</td>
<td>Slightly Familiar</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>37.3</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Somewhat Familiar</td>
<td>4.0</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moderately Familiar</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>54.2</td>
<td>54.2</td>
<td>44.7</td>
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<td>Very Familiar</td>
<td>44.7</td>
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<td>35.0</td>
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<td>35.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>50+</td>
<td>Slightly Familiar</td>
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<td>4.0</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Somewhat Familiar</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>54.2</td>
<td>54.2</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>54.2</td>
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<td>54.2</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very Familiar</td>
<td>44.7</td>
<td>35.0</td>
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<td>35.0</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>35.0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>Slightly Familiar</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>11.5</td>
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<td>11.5</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>11.5</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Somewhat Familiar</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>25.8</td>
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<td>25.8</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moderately Familiar</td>
<td>56.3</td>
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<td>56.3</td>
<td>43.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very Familiar</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>22.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sources of information about ASEAN

- School
- Work/profession
- TV and/or radio

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources</th>
<th>Media coverage of ASEAN is not enough (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academe</td>
<td>34.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSO/NGO</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>32.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Media coverage of ASEAN is not enough (Neutral: 10.4%, Agree: 44.3%, Strongly Agree: 35.4%)
Identification as ASEAN citizens, by affiliation and age

![Bar chart showing the level of identification as ASEAN citizens by affiliation and age groups. The chart includes categories such as Government, Academe, Business, CSO/NGO, and Others, with levels of identification ranging from No to Very Much. The age groups are 15-30, 31-49, and 50+. The chart displays the percentage of people in each category and age group who identify as ASEAN citizens.]
Benefits of ASEAN membership, by affiliation

- Government
  - Fairly: 2.2%
  - Somewhat: 6.6%
  - Moderately: 29.5%
  - Very Much: 46.7%
  - Don't Know: 2.2%

- Academe
  - Fairly: 11.5%
  - Somewhat: 35.6%
  - Moderately: 52.5%
  - Very Much: 0.0%
  - Don't Know: 0.0%

- Business
  - Fairly: 4.2%
  - Somewhat: 4.2%
  - Moderately: 37.5%
  - Very Much: 31.3%
  - Don't Know: 0.0%

- CSO/NGO
  - Fairly: 13.2%
  - Somewhat: 3.8%
  - Moderately: 30.2%
  - Very Much: 49.1%
  - Don't Know: 3.8%

- Others
  - Fairly: 4.2%
  - Somewhat: 5.4%
  - Moderately: 27.0%
  - Very Much: 16.2%
  - Don't Know: 0.0%

- TOTAL
  - Fairly: 17.3%
  - Somewhat: 17.3%
  - Moderately: 46.4%
  - Very Much: 30.1%
  - Don't Know: 2.1%
### 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</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>exportation activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Useful for resolving conflicts related to sovereignty (ASEAN can</td>
<td>• Good for travelling to other ASEAN member-states and finding work for high-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>serve as a “moderator”)</td>
<td>skilled workers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ASEAN can help in peace-building and in resolving problems</td>
<td>• ASEAN can serve as “an arena wherein member-states are able to be in sync</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>related to food security, hunger, and technology.</td>
<td>with one another”, economically and politically</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On territorial/maritime disputes: ASEAN is doing nothing to help</td>
<td>ASEAN should help the Philippines gain more ground in the issue of territorial</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the Philippines in its geopolitical tension with China on the</td>
<td>disputes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Philippine Sea. It is USA helping the country not ASEAN.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Why the Philippines should keep its ASEAN membership – Reasons given by the youth in the FGD

- Important for 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
Pressing problems of ASEAN today and until 2025
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 57 161 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
- Effectively protect human rights and minorities in the region. 8 32 90 118 38
- ASEAN pushes for equitable access to opportunities for its peoples. 5 16 65 156 45
- The ASEAN Community deeply engages and benefits its peoples. 3 20 69 147 47
- ASEAN people are deeply aware of the ASEAN Community and its... 9 31 57 145 43
- People and businesses can digitally interact and communicate... 18 31 161 87 56
- Easy to physically move around through roads, railways, air, 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 in... 6 38 172 71
Aspirations and Hopes by 2025

- **ASEAN deeply engages powers in the region and the world to effectively protect human rights and minorities in the region.**
  - Strongly disagree: 12
  - Disagree: 107
  - Neutral: 167
  - Agree: 0
  - Strongly agree: 1
  - Don't know: 0

- **ASEAN has a strong voice and is an important player in global governance.**
  - Strongly disagree: 11
  - Disagree: 100
  - Neutral: 174
  - Agree: 0
  - Strongly agree: 0
  - Don't know: 0

- **Very much able to anticipate, respond, and recover faster and better from shocks and crises.**
  - Strongly disagree: 115
  - Disagree: 111
  - Neutral: 162
  - Agree: 0
  - Strongly agree: 0
  - Don't know: 0

- **ASEAN major cities are less polluted and more liveable than they were in 2000.**
  - Strongly disagree: 3
  - Disagree: 27
  - Neutral: 145
  - Agree: 0
  - Strongly agree: 0
  - Don't know: 0

- **ASEAN and its member countries conserve and sustainably manage natural resources.**
  - Strongly disagree: 21
  - Disagree: 112
  - Neutral: 153
  - Agree: 0
  - Strongly agree: 1
  - Don't know: 0

- **Migrant and temporary workers from other countries in ASEAN find work in other countries easily.**
  - Strongly disagree: 6
  - Disagree: 23
  - Neutral: 150
  - Agree: 0
  - Strongly agree: 0
  - Don't know: 0

- **ASEAN pushes for equitable access to opportunities for its peoples.**
  - Strongly disagree: 14
  - Disagree: 121
  - Neutral: 151
  - Agree: 1
  - Strongly agree: 0
  - Don't know: 0

- **The ASEAN Community deeply engages and benefits its peoples.**
  - Strongly disagree: 18
  - Disagree: 119
  - Neutral: 148
  - Agree: 0
  - Strongly agree: 1
  - Don't know: 0

- **ASEAN people are deeply aware of the ASEAN Community and its achievements.**
  - Strongly disagree: 19
  - Disagree: 125
  - Neutral: 140
  - Agree: 0
  - Strongly agree: 0
  - Don't know: 0

- **People and businesses can digitally interact and communicate easily.**
  - Strongly disagree: 11
  - Disagree: 110
  - Neutral: 167
  - Agree: 0
  - Strongly agree: 0
  - Don't know: 0

- **Easy to physically move around through roads, railways, air, and sea.**
  - Strongly disagree: 14
  - Disagree: 111
  - Neutral: 162
  - Agree: 1
  - Strongly agree: 0
  - Don't know: 0

- **Good governance and significantly less corruption.**
  - Strongly disagree: 25
  - Disagree: 103
  - Neutral: 155
  - Agree: 1
  - Strongly agree: 0
  - Don't know: 0

- **Migrant and temporary workers from other countries in ASEAN find work in other countries easily.**
  - Strongly disagree: 16
  - Disagree: 116
  - Neutral: 153
  - Agree: 0
  - Strongly agree: 0
  - Don't know: 0

- **Skilled workers and professionals can easily find work in other countries.**
  - Strongly disagree: 11
  - Disagree: 115
  - Neutral: 159
  - Agree: 0
  - Strongly agree: 0
  - Don't know: 0

- **Goods, services, and businesses can move easily among countries.**
  - Strongly disagree: 13
  - Disagree: 110
  - Neutral: 163
  - Agree: 0
  - Strongly agree: 0
  - Don't know: 0
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.

2. On territorial disputes, conflicts in geopolitical jurisdiction could be won over through a unified stand and support for the concerned AMS.

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.
Summary of findings

- Filipinos have moderate awareness of ASEAN and moderate identification as ASEAN citizens.

- For the respondents, Philippine membership of ASEAN is beneficial for the country, albeit only moderate as well. The business sector has a lukewarm attitude toward ASEAN. This is indicative of the urgency to address AEC-related issues affecting the business sector (e.g., nontariff barriers).

- Media has low coverage of ASEAN.
Summary of findings

◦ The most pressing concerns being faced by the Philippines today are Internet connection, poverty, corruption, agriculture and food security, and energy provision and prices.

◦ The most pressing regional (ASEAN)-level concerns are climate change and natural disasters, territorial and maritime disputes, trade and investment issues, agriculture and food security, and income disparity and social inequality.

◦ Having livable cities and eradicating corruptions are two scenarios which, to the minds of the survey respondents and FGD participants, are difficult to achieve.
Summary of findings

- ASEAN Secretariat should beef up its capacity.

Upgrading the Capability of the ASEAN Secretariat
Some recommendations

1. **Have more dynamic and targeted communication and outreach activities**
   - Increase media coverage (TV, radio, and print) of ASEAN.
   - Partner with professional media organizations.
   - Maximize the use of social media to reach young people.
   - Tap student organizations as channels to educate young people about ASEAN.
   - Continue with activities for the youth like scholarships, exchange programs, and leadership programs.
   - Celebrate the ASEAN Day in public schools every year (like the UN Day).
   - 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.
2. Maximize schools as avenues to promote deeper understanding of ASEAN among the youth, educators, and other stakeholders.

Filipino students’ basic knowledge of ASEAN (2007 and 2014)

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

◦ 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)

“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).
Examples of current initiatives on ASEAN awareness raising (in line with the Philippines’ chairmanship)

GOVPH

DepEd, CSc work hand in hand to intensify ASEAN 2017 awareness-raising campaign

March 24, 2017 | Lourie L. Dadylo

MALABANCA CITY, Bukidnon (March 24) — for the country in hosting the year’s ASEAN summit, Department of Education (DepEd) and Civil Service Commission (CSC) are now joining hands to encourage different government agencies and the academe to take part in promoting understanding about the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Based on Division Memorandum No. 134 series of 2017, DepEd Malabon City Schools Division Superintendent Dr. L. Diplomatia urged both the public and private schools here to help in the government’s ASEAN awareness campaign in support of the Philippines’ hosting and chairmanship of ASEAN in 2017.

The Office on Asian private and public elementary and secondary schools here is to help in advancing the ASEAN 2017 awareness campaign through display of ASEAN Community banners in schools, inclusion of the singing of the Asean Anthem in the first flag ceremony of the month, sharing of circulars and press releases of ASEAN and other ASEAN-related activities especially during school programs and other events (Diplomatia said).

He added that the order was based on the DepEd and Civil Service Commission’s memorandum expiring the academe to support the government’s information, education, and communication (IEC) campaign on the Philippines’ Chairmanship of ASEAN in 2017.

The CSC’s directive, on the other hand, urged that government officials and employees are also encouraged to wear ASEAN inspired attire during the flag-raising ceremony, information materials on ASEAN as well as specifications and protocols on the use of the ASEAN flag and recording/visual score of the Anthem may be downloaded from the ASEAN website http://www.asiaone.org.

It is recalled that during the grand launch of the Philippines’ Chairmanship of ASEAN early this year in Davao City, Philippine President Rodrigo Roa Duterte had called on all Filipinos “to take an active and constructive part during the Philippines’ Chairmanship of ASEAN.”

The President said “as the nations of South East Asia, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam (the ASEAN-member countries) converges in the Philippines this year—everyone ought to remember that the future that’s at stake because the success of the ASEAN is the success of the Filipinos people.”

The ASEAN Community Awareness Campaign

The Civil Service Commission (CSC), through Memorandum Circular MCO No. 6 of 2016—Awareness Campaign in support of ASEAN 2017 and the Philippine Chairmanship of ASEAN 2017, issues mandate of agencies to help spread awareness on ASEAN by, among others, participating in the information campaign and the content of program and activities towards the latter, including the following:

1. Posting of the enclosed materials on ASEAN in their respective agency websites.
2. Display of ASEAN Community banner.
3. Inclusion in the singing of the ASEAN Anthem in the flag-raising ceremony of the agency.
4. Agencies are further reminded to observe and comply with the singing of the national flag. Considering that most office buildings have only one flag pole which is the Philippine flag, heads of offices are encouraged to raise instead the Philippine and ASEAN flags attached to separate poles with a flag for the flag ceremony. The ASEAN flag may be displayed in the northern side of the Philippine flag from the orientation aspect.
5. Sharing of information on ASEAN (e.g., updates on ASEAN-related activities, news, informative videos, etc.) during flag-raising ceremony and other employee forum to help spread awareness among their officials and staff. National information materials on ASEAN may be sourced from the ASEAN website, Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) ASEAN, the Philippine Communications Operations Office (PCO) through its official agencies the Philippine Information Agency (PIA) and the Philippine Broadcasting Service (PBS), and the People’s Television Network (PTV).

In addition, government officials and employees are encouraged to wear ASEAN-inspired attire, coinciding with the occasion of the flag-raising ceremony maintained silence.
Some recommendations

3. For the Philippines: Continue ASEAN community awareness campaigns in schools and government offices beyond 2017. Make these a regular activity. Do the same for local governments and other entities all over the country.

- Close coordination and partnership among relevant government agencies, such as:
  - Department of Foreign Affairs – Office of ASEAN Affairs (lead agency)
  - Presidential Communications Operations Office – Philippine Information Agency
  - Department of Education
  - Commission on Higher Education
  - Civil Service Commission
  - Department of the Interior and Local Government
  - Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (umbrella organization of all local government leagues and their elected officials)
Some recommendations

4. 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 the ASEAN Business Advisory Council and the Department of Trade and Industry
Thank you

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TWITTER: twitter.com/PIDS_PH

EMAIL: ssiar@mail.pids.gov.ph