

Mutual Perceptions of ASEAN and Korean Youth

SUMMARY

한국과 아세안 청년의 상호 인식



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KOREAN INSTITUTE OF
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FOREWORD

2017 is a milestone year for ASEAN and ASEAN-Korea relations, as it marks the 50th Anniversary of ASEAN and the ASEAN-ROK Cultural Exchange Year. ASEAN-Korea relations will further deepen, with the recent announcement of the Korean government to bring Korea's relations with ASEAN equivalent to the level of those with the four major powers. In such a significant year, I am delighted to present to you this publication, *Mutual Perceptions of ASEAN and Korean Youth*.

Since relations were first established in 1989, ASEAN and Korea expanded their cooperation in a wide range of areas. Their partnership was further solidified with the establishment of the ASEAN-Korea Centre in 2009, elevation of their relations to a Strategic Partnership in 2010, establishment of a Permanent Mission to ASEAN in 2012, and the inauguration of the Culture House in Busan in 2017. As of today, ASEAN is Korea's second largest trading partner, investment destination and overseas construction orders. It is also the number one travel destination for the Korean people, and the volume of people-to-people exchange between ASEAN and Korea reaches almost 9 million a year.

Over the past three decades of ASEAN-Korea relations, how has the perception of each other evolved? Just like personal relationships, finding out how the ASEAN and Korean people perceive each other could pave the way for a more genuine and long-lasting ASEAN-Korea partnership. Hoping for these results, this research was initiated in cooperation with the Korean Institute for Southeast Asian Studies (KISEAS), the prime research institution working on the Southeast Asian region in Korea. This research aims to examine the Korean youth's perception and awareness of ASEAN, as well as those of the ASEAN youth of Korea.

From this research, we acquired valuable and interesting results that can be considered in the efforts of enhancing ASEAN-Korea relations. We discovered that the youth of ASEAN and Korea have, overall, positive impressions toward each other and on ASEAN-Korea relations. They share

a common understanding that ASEAN and Korea can further cooperate and prosper together. We also confirmed an encouraging fact that the youth, who are future leaders of our region, are viewing ASEAN-Korea relations as an evolving partnership. Meanwhile, we also found that the issues of some prejudice and misunderstanding are challenges that need to be overcome.

In an effort to support ASEAN-Korea relations to continue to develop into a genuine and long-lasting partnership, this research should be conducted regularly once every 2-3 years. I hope that *Mutual Perceptions of ASEAN and Korean Youth*, conducted for the first time by the ASEAN-Korea Centre, will serve as a milestone in expanding the research to a region-wide level, encouraging more systematic research, and ultimately coming up with effective approaches and policies to strengthen the partnership between ASEAN and Korea.

Lastly, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Professor Yoon Jin-pyo of KISEAS, his research team, and to the ASEAN-Korea Centre's Information and Data Unit, for their devotion in making this research complete.

Kim Young-sun

Secretary General of
the ASEAN-Korea Centre

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Youngsun', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

1

INTRODUCTION

Objectives of the Research

Since the establishment of their relations in 1989, ASEAN and Korea have successfully expanded their cooperation to various areas such as trade and investment as well as socio-culture. But in order to establish a genuine and sustainable partnership, the very first step is to determine how people in both regions perceive each other. The main objective of this research is to find out the level of mutual perception between ASEAN and Korean youth. It also aims to provide comprehensive information that could be used as basis for the establishment of future-oriented ASEAN-Korea relations and policies. Furthermore, the research aims to distinguish the field of cooperation that needs to be reinforced and help draw a desirable measure to deepen the mutual understanding between people of ASEAN and Korea.

Research Method

Research methods used in this research were quantitative survey as well as qualitative focus group interview in order to upgrade the level of the analysis. The mutual perception survey of ASEAN and Korean youth was conducted with questions that were broadly divided into 3 parts: (1) experience and image, (2) relations and status, and (3) future prospects. The survey was composed of a total 25 open-ended and close-ended questions. The collected data were analyzed through frequency analysis and cross-tabulation analysis.

Composition of Respondents

The sample of the survey was composed of 1,004 Korean youths and 320 ASEAN youths studying in Korea, all ranging from 20 to 35 years of age. For the Korean respondents, 50% were selected from universities in metropolitan areas and the other 50% were from universities in provincial areas. Also, the distribution of the survey respondents indicated an 1:1 ratio between men and women. The total number of the ASEAN respondents was 320, comprising of 93 male and 181 female students (46 students unanswered). The following

is the number of students from each country: Brunei Darussalam – 15, Cambodia – 17, Indonesia – 69, Lao PDR – 18, Malaysia – 52, Philippines – 31, Singapore – 6, Thailand – 18, and Vietnam – 37 (57 students unanswered). The survey was administered from May to June 2017, and focus group interviews were conducted four times from July to August of 2017 with 13 Korean students and 15 ASEAN students.

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**KOREAN YOUTH'S
PERCEPTION
OF ASEAN**

1. Experience and Perception on ASEAN

• Visiting ASEAN

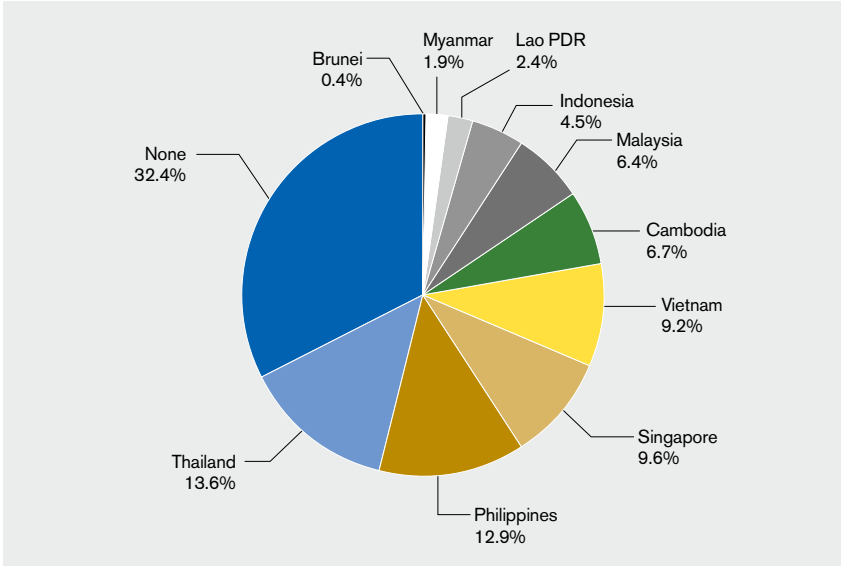
The respondents were asked which ASEAN country they had visited. Only 32.4% responded that they had never been to any ASEAN Member States while the rest (67.6%) said that they had visited ASEAN. The ASEAN countries that the students visited were ranked in the following order: Thailand (13.6%), Philippines (12.9%), Singapore (9.6%), Vietnam (9.2%), Cambodia (6.7%), Malaysia (6.4%), Indonesia (4.5%), Lao PDR (2.4%), Myanmar (1.9%) and Brunei (0.4%). For the purpose of visit, 'tourism and traveling' (62.4%) overwhelmingly ranked the highest, and it was followed by 'voluntary programs' (11.3%) and 'language study abroad' (8.7%).

The Korean youth's perception of ASEAN was measured through various questions such as methods of access to information, preference for food, preference for country, image of ASEAN, and the relationship between ASEAN and Korea. Firstly, the question "Where do you usually get information about ASEAN?" was answered in the following order: 'Internet (Social Media)' ranked first with 36.8%, followed by 'TV/Radio' (25.4%), 'friends' (12.9%), and 'class' (11.0%). Regarding the question, "Which country's food from ASEAN is your favorite?", male students responded in the following order: 'Vietnamese food' (34.2%), 'do not like ASEAN food' (24.8%), and 'Thai food' (21.3%). On the other hand, female interviewees responded in the following order: 'Vietnamese food' (40.5%), 'do not like ASEAN food' (21.8%) and 'Thai food' (21.1%). Regarding the question "Which is your favorite country in ASEAN?", both male and female respondents chose Singapore as their favorite country, followed by Thailand and Vietnam.

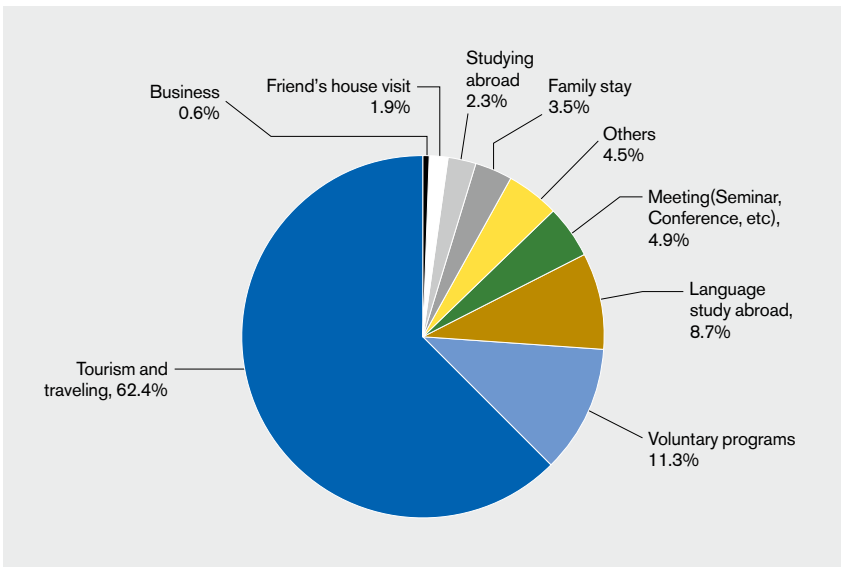
• Images of ASEAN and People from ASEAN Countries

In order to examine the Korean youth's perception of people from ASEAN countries, the questions were divided into two parts: (1) the perception

Which ASEAN country have you visited?



What was the purpose of your visit to the ASEAN country?



of ASEAN and (2) the perception of people from ASEAN countries. The recurring keywords describing their impression of ASEAN were ‘hot weather’, ‘developing countries’, ‘vacation spot’, ‘tourism’, and ‘travel’. There were some negative responses like ‘poor’, ‘underdeveloped countries’, and ‘poverty’. The Korean respondents’ impression on ASEAN nationals is a reflection of the images of ASEAN residents in Korea. Keywords like ‘foreign workers’, ‘labor workers’, and ‘marriages’ could be interpreted to mean migrant workers and marriage migrants from Southeast Asia. Some students also chose keywords like ‘dark-skinned’ and ‘dark’, pointing out the difference in appearances of ASEAN and Koreans. In terms of characteristics of people from ASEAN countries, keywords like ‘kind’, ‘innocent’, and ‘relaxed’ were seen, signifying that Korean youths perceive ASEAN people as relaxed and peaceful despite the economic difficulties in life.

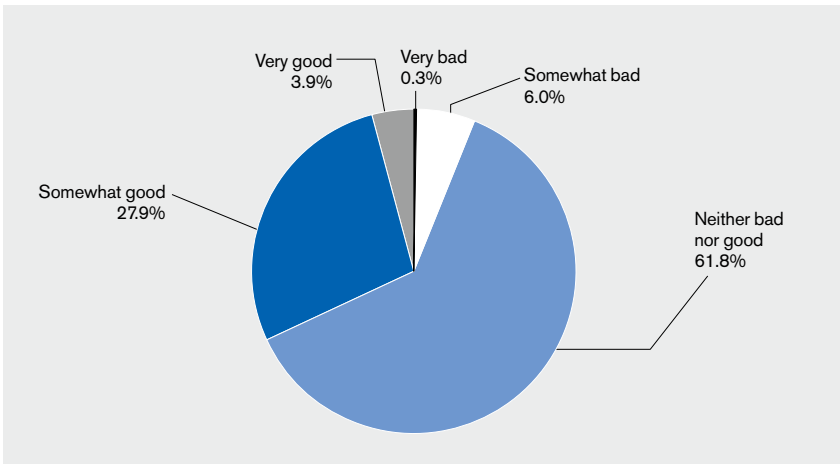
Image of ASEAN	Image of People from ASEAN Countries

2. The Perception of the ASEAN-Korea Relations

• Current Relations of ASEAN and Korea

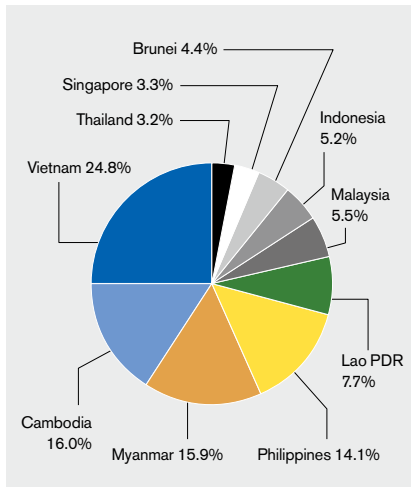
Based on the survey result, the Korean respondents have a more positive perception of the ASEAN-Korea relations. Most of the respondents answered ‘neither bad nor good’ (61.8%), followed by positive responses like ‘somewhat good’ or ‘very good’ (31.8%), which was much higher than negative responses (6.3%). The gender difference was statistically significant, and the result indicated that female students tend to think more positively about the relations between ASEAN and Korea than male students.

How do you think about the current relations between ASEAN and Korea?

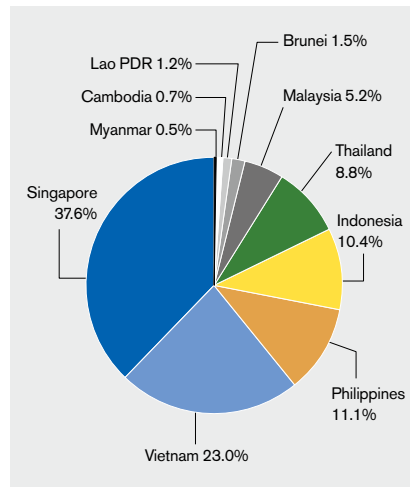


For the question “Among ASEAN countries, which country do you think needs the most assistance from Korea?”, the highest number of respondents said Vietnam with 24.8%, followed by Cambodia (16.0%), Myanmar (15.9%), and the Philippines (14.1%). In the same context, a question “Among ASEAN countries, which country do you think is the most helpful country to Korea?” was asked. The highest number of respondents answered Singapore with 37.6%, followed by Vietnam (23.0%), Philippines (11.1%), and Indonesia (10.4%).

Among ASEAN countries, which country do you think needs the most assistance from Korea?



Among ASEAN countries, which country do you think is the most helpful country to Korea?

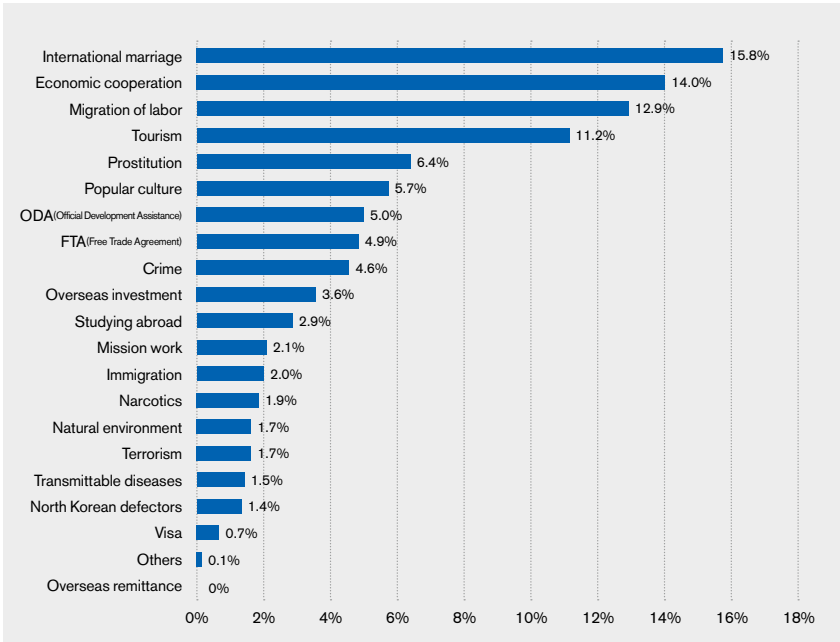


• Important Issues Surrounding ASEAN-Korea Relations

In terms of important issues surrounding ASEAN and Korea relations, the highest number of respondents answered 'international marriage' (15.8%). This was followed by economic cooperation (14.0%), migration of labor (12.9%), and tourism (11.2%). As many students responded that international marriage is the most important issue, it showed that many Korean students perceive ASEAN as a subject of human relationships, not a subject of materials.

A question whether ASEAN countries would be able to help improve the ties between North and South Korea was included as well. 42.9% of the respondents indicated 'strongly agree' or 'agree' whereas 22.1% of them indicated 'strongly disagree' and 'disagree.' This showed that the Korean youth's perception of the role of ASEAN in improving the relations between North and South Korea is very positive.

What do you think is the most important issue in the current ASEAN-Korea relations?



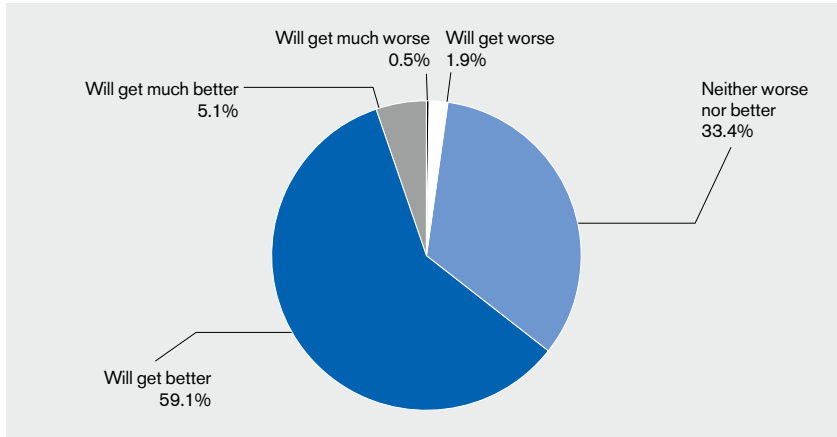
3. The Perception of the Future of ASEAN and Korea

• **Future of ASEAN and Korea Relations**

For the question “How do you think about the future of the ASEAN-Korea relations?”, 64.2% of the students responded positively. This figure shows that Korean students are very optimistic about the future of the ASEAN-Korea partnership.

The perception of the future of the ASEAN-Korea relations was also examined through questions about the establishment of the ASEAN Community and the possibility of creating an East Asian Regional Community. For the question “In terms of integration, how do you perceive the future of the ASEAN Community, which was established in 2015?”, 55.1%

How do you think about the future of the ASEAN-Korea relations?



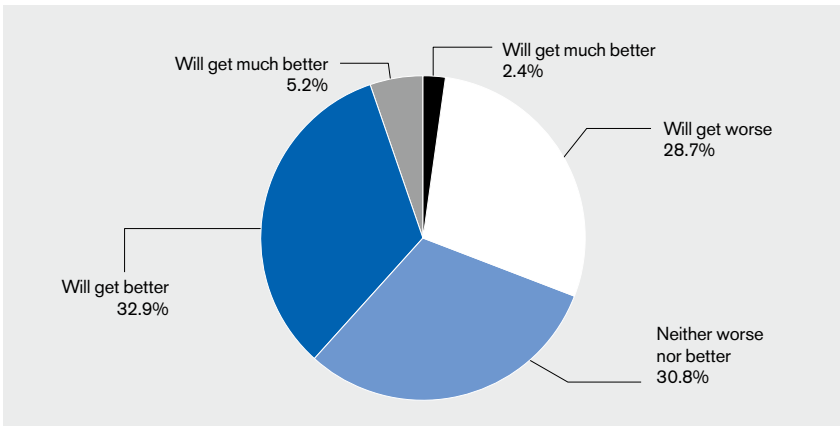
of the respondents expressed a positive view of the ASEAN integration, five times higher than the number of respondents who gave negative responses (11.2%). The result showed that Korean youth in general are highly positive about the formation of the ASEAN Community.

In a similar context, the question “How do you perceive the future of East Asia (ASEAN, Korea, China, and Japan) in terms of integration as a regional community?” was asked. 40.3% of the students gave a neutral response, 36.4% answered positively, and 23.4% negatively. These results showed that while Korean youth in general are positive about the establishment of the ASEAN Community, that might not be the case when it comes to integration of East Asian countries as a regional community.

The students who responded positively chose ‘geographical proximity’ (36.9%) and ‘economic interconnectedness’ (36.0%) as the factors that increased the possibility of establishing the community. On the other hand, the students who responded negatively chose ‘historical and territorial dispute’ (40.5%) and ‘difference in economic development level and interest’ (30.4%) as the obstacles for the community formation. It is remarkable to see that more female students generally have a positive impression on the formation of ASEAN community

than their male counterparts. 39.6% of female students responded positively, which was about 7% higher than male students (32.2%). Regarding the possibility of ASEAN as 'post-China market' for Korea, the ratio of positive and negative responses was similar. 38.1% responded 'very bright' or 'bright', 31.1% responded 'not bright at all' or 'not bright', whereas 30.8% responded 'neutral'.

Do you agree that ASEAN could become the post-China market for Korea?

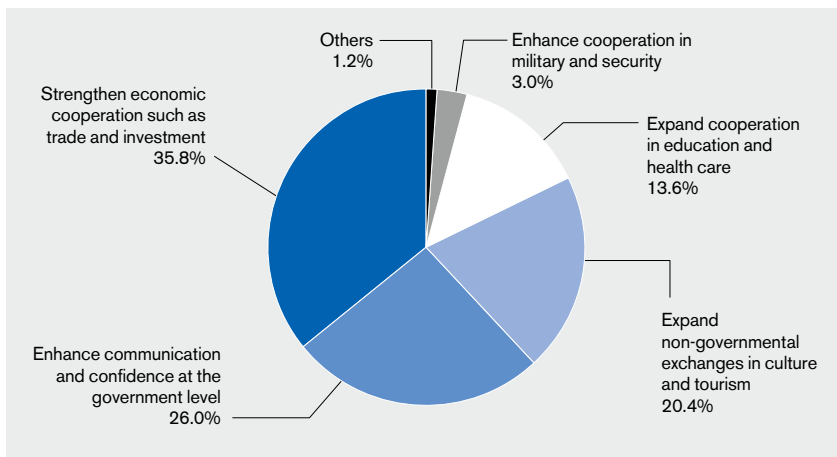


• The Role of the Korean Government

Regarding the question about the area of cooperation that requires the most efforts from the Korean government to further develop the relations with ASEAN, 35.8% responded 'strengthen economic cooperation such as trade and investment', followed by 'enhance communication and confidence at the government level' (26.0%), 'expand non-governmental exchanges of culture and tourism' (20.4%), and 'expand cooperation in education and health care' (13.6%).

The result signified the respondents' call on the government of Korea to put more efforts in economic cooperation and mutual exchange for improving ties with ASEAN. With the intention of working in the region, they particularly underscored the importance of focusing on people-to-people

What efforts should be made by ASEAN and Korea to further strengthen their ties?



exchanges to gain a better understanding of ASEAN. Furthermore, the issues that were considered important in the previous section like ‘international marriage’, ‘foreign workers’ and ‘tourism’ all fall under the category of people-to-people exchange. Therefore, while it is important for the Korean government to put more efforts in economic cooperation, Korean respondents believe that there is also a need for a formation of institutional foundation for a more vibrant people-to-people exchanges between ASEAN and Korea.

One of the interviewees commented, “it would be great if the cooperation of ASEAN and Korea could be exposed more in the media.” This reflected the importance of having greater access to information on economic cooperation, youth exchange, K-Beauty and more. Consistent promotion and support from the Korean public and private sectors are deemed to be necessary to provide opportunities for Koreans to understand more about ASEAN.

3

ASEAN YOUTH'S PERCEPTION OF KOREA

1. The Perception and Experience of Korea

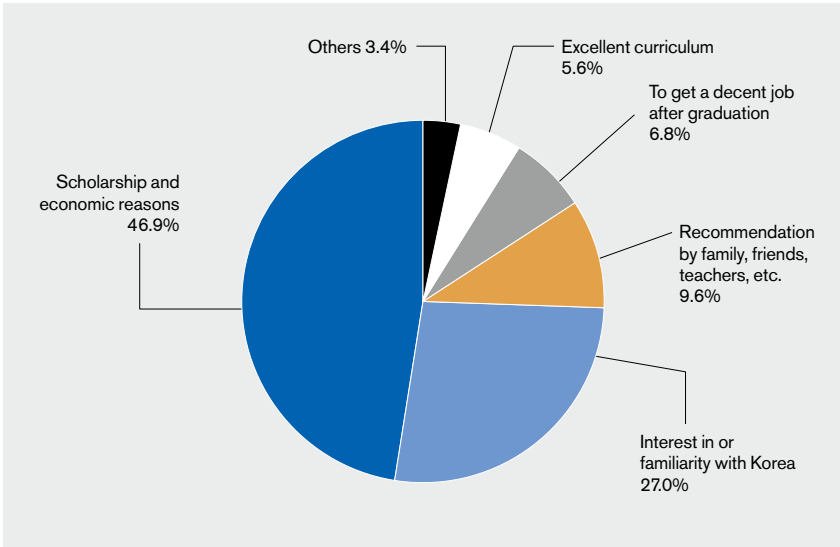
• ASEAN Students' Life in Korea

ASEAN youth's perception and experience of Korea was surveyed through questions asking why they chose to study in Korea and their level of satisfaction. For the question "What is your most important reason for choosing Korea as a destination for study abroad program?", 46.9% of the students responded 'scholarship and economic reasons', followed by 'interest in or familiarity with Korea' (27.0%), 'recommendation by family, friends, teachers, etc.' (9.6%), and 'to get a decent job after graduation' (6.8%).

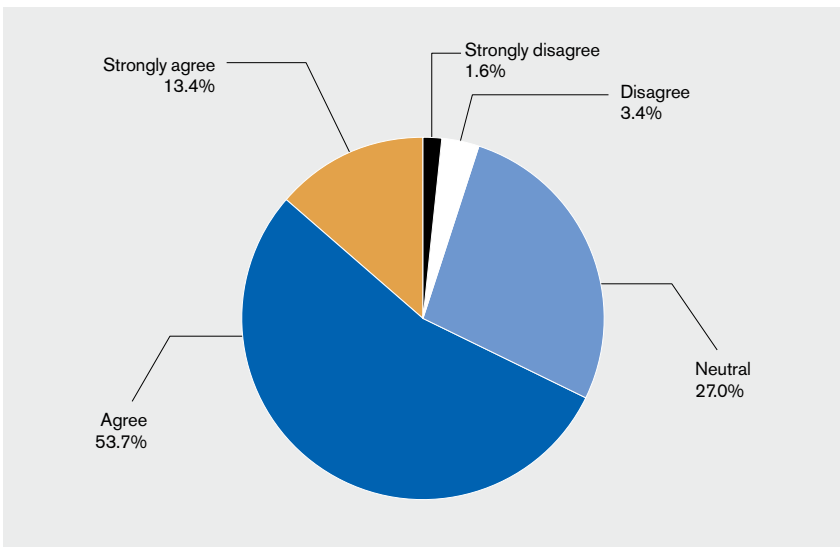
It is remarkable to see that the responses showed differences by nationality and gender. Both male and female respondents chose 'scholarship and economic reasons' as the main reason for coming to Korea but more male students (58.1%) chose Korea due to economic reasons than female students (39.2%). On the other hand, majority of female ASEAN students chose 'curiosity and familiarity of Korea' (35.9%) along with economic factors for the main reason for pursuing their studies in Korea. For the question "How are you paying your tuition fees in Korea?", 30.7% of students responded that they received 'scholarship from the Korean government and institutions', which was followed by 'university scholarship' (25.9%), 'scholarship from your government and/or institution' (15.9%), 'financial support of your parents' (11.2%) and 'money earned through part-time job in Korea' (7.1%).

For the question "Are you satisfied with your study abroad experience in Korea?", majority of the students gave a positive response (67.1%). On the other hand, merely 5% responded negatively about their life in Korea. For the question "What difficulties are you facing while studying in Korea?", 22.2% of the students chose 'academics', followed by 'adjustment' (15.9%), 'economic problems' (14.7%), 'building relationships' (9.4%), 'psychological problems' (9.1%), and 'practicing religion' (7.8%). In terms of extending their stay in Korea after their study, 41.6% responded that they plan to stay longer

What is your most important reason for choosing Korea as a destination for study abroad program?



Are you satisfied with your study abroad experience in Korea?



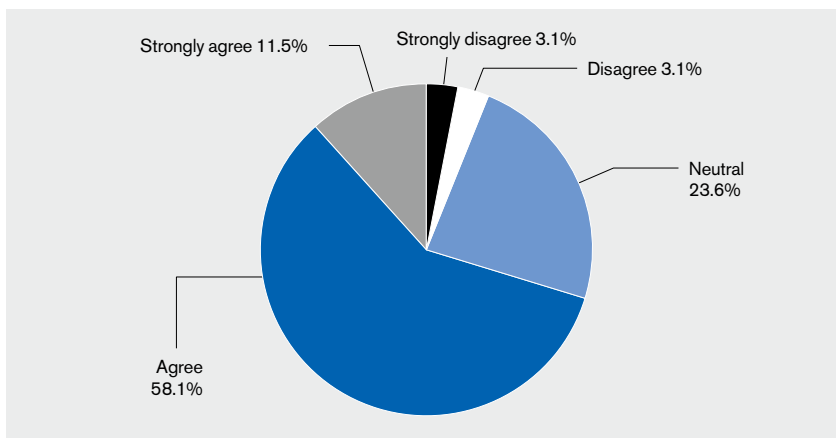
in Korea whereas 58.3% of the interviewees responded otherwise. Most of the reasons for their plan to stay in Korea were directly related to employment with keywords like ‘job’ and ‘working’.

• ASEAN Students’ Perception of Korea

The ASEAN students’ perception of Korea was examined through questions about the access to information and reliability of South Korea. For the question “Where do you usually get information about Korea?”, it was found that majority of the ASEAN students (46.1%) learn about Korea on the Internet (Social Media) as Korean students do. This was followed by ‘broadcasting - TV/ Radio’ (17.3%), ‘friends or family’ (12.6%), and ‘publications and books’ (8.3%).

The ASEAN students were also asked if they think Korea is a reliable country. 69.6% responded ‘Yes’ whereas 6.2% responded ‘No’. This shows that an overwhelming majority of students believe that Korea is a reliable country. However, the responses varied by the nationality of students. The Philippines and Brunei have the highest percentage of positive responses, indicating 87.1% and 80.0%, respectively, while Singapore and Thailand showed relatively low percentages of 66.7% and 61.1%, respectively. Percentage of approval by

Do you perceive Korea as a reliable country?



students from Indonesia (71.0%), Cambodia (70.6%), and Vietnam (70.3%) were within the same range as the average percentage of positive responses (70.0%).

• **Image of Korea and People from Korea**

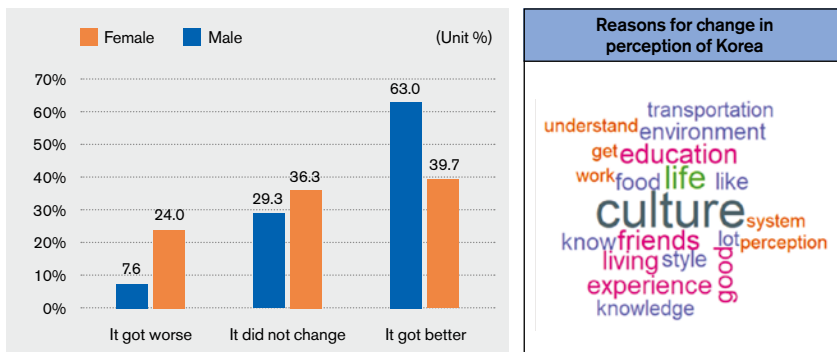
In order to examine the ASEAN students' impression of Korea, questions were divided into two parts: (1) image of Korea, and (2) image of Koreans. Firstly, the impression of Korea was broadly divided into (a) economic and technical images and (b) social and cultural images. Keywords like 'developed', 'advanced', 'economic', 'modern', and 'technology' signify that the respondents perceive Korea as an economically and technologically developed country. In terms of Korean culture and society, many responses were positive. Recurring keywords like 'safe', 'clean', 'environment', 'culture', and 'food' reflected that the ASEAN students view Korea positively from social and cultural perspectives.

Respondents also gave a positive impression of Koreans. Keywords like 'friendly', 'kind', and 'nice' signified that many of the students feel that Koreans are friendly. On the other hand, keywords like 'hard-working', 'busy', 'fast', and 'strict' showed the image of working environment and rigidity of Koreans.

Image of Korea	Image of Korean People

In terms of the question whether their impression of Korea changed before and after coming to Korea, 45.7% responded that it changed in a better way, 33.2% of them responded that it did not change, whereas 19.6% of them responded that their impression worsened. The students who responded negatively cited ‘culture’ and other keywords like ‘life’, ‘living’, ‘environment’, and ‘understand’ as a factor. The key terms respondents used like ‘work’, ‘education’, ‘friends’, and ‘experience’ signified that they are affected by the difficulties they face in Korea such as studying or having relationships with Koreans.

How did your perception of Korea change after your study abroad experience in Korea?



It is worthy to mention that the responses varied by gender and nationality. For male respondents, 63.0% said that the impression changed positively and only 7.6% said that it changed for the worse. In contrast, 39.7% of the female respondents agreed that their impression improved whereas 24.0% of them said that it changed for the worse. Male ASEAN students responded positively as they experienced economic and social development of Korea while many female ASEAN students’ responses reflected their disappointment with the reality of Korea.

In terms of the question whether their impression of Korea changed before and after coming to Korea, the responses varied depending on the

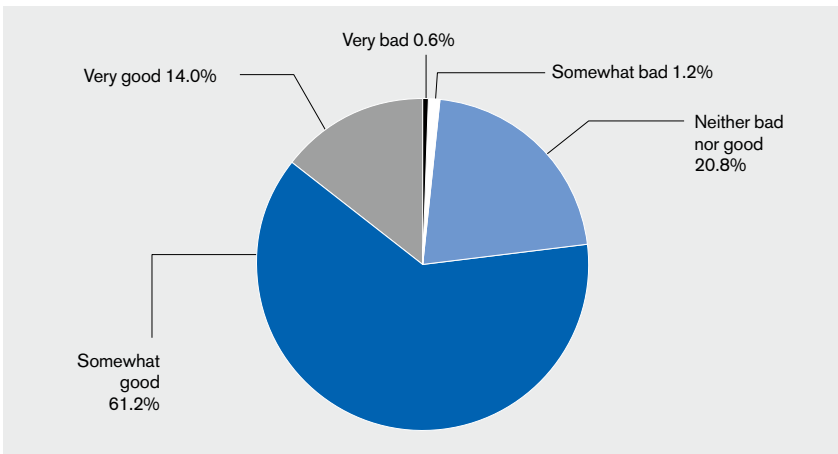
nationality of the students. Only about 5% of the students from Lao PDR, Vietnam, and Cambodia, respectively, answered that their impression changed negatively whereas Indonesia and Thailand showed 30.9% and 27.8%, respectively. Brunei, Malaysia, and the Philippines also responded that their image of Korea changed in a negative way, indicating negative response percentages of 13.3%, 17.6%, and 12.9%, respectively. It seems, for students from Lao PDR, Vietnam and Cambodia, the difference in the relative economic standing influences them to have positive impression, whereas for students from Indonesia and Thailand, it seems that they were relatively disappointed as many aspects of Korea are far from their expectations.

2. The Perception of the ASEAN-Korea Relations

• **Current Relations between ASEAN and Korea**

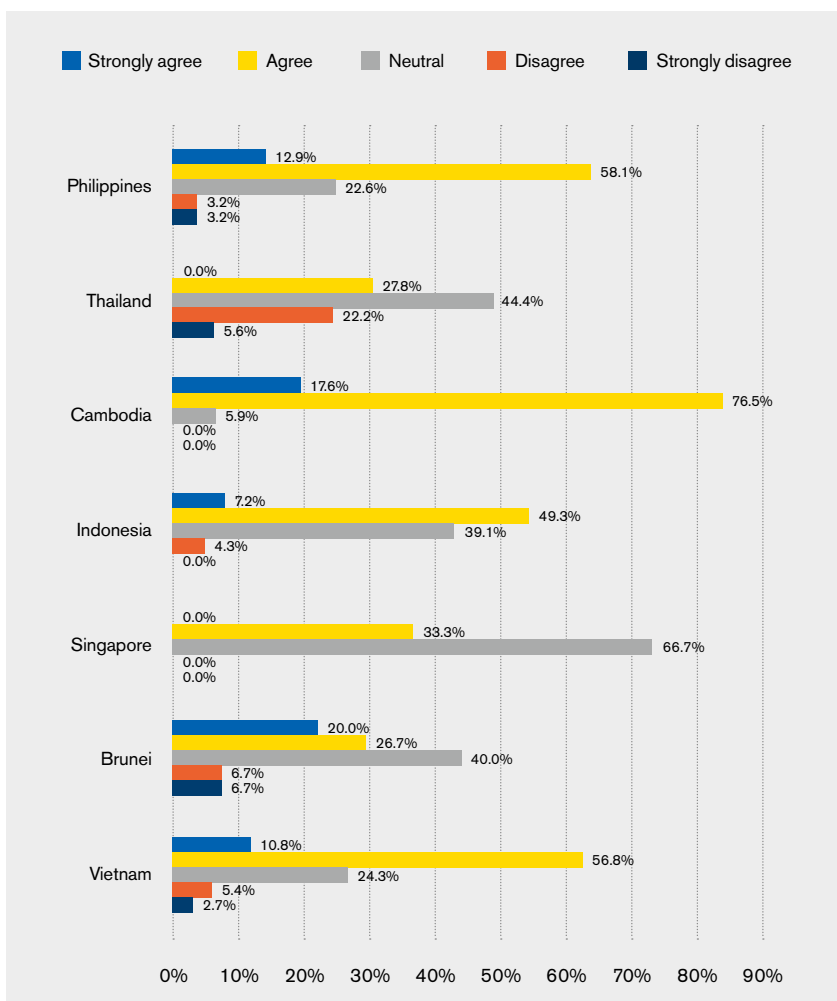
The general response of the ASEAN students on the current relations between ASEAN and Korea is positive. For the question “How do you think about the current relations between ASEAN and Korea?”, 61.2% of students responded ‘somewhat good’ and 14.0% of them responded ‘very good’ which makes

How do you think about the current relations between ASEAN and Korea?



75.2% of positive response in total and it is far higher than negative response of 1.8%. It is remarkable to see a high number of positive responses from students from Cambodia (88.2%), Malaysia (80.0%), Vietnam (75.0%), Brunei (73.3%), and Thailand (66.7%) whereas the students from Lao PDR (11.2%) and Singapore (16.7%) gave over 10% of negative responses.

Do you think Korea's contribution helps your country develop?



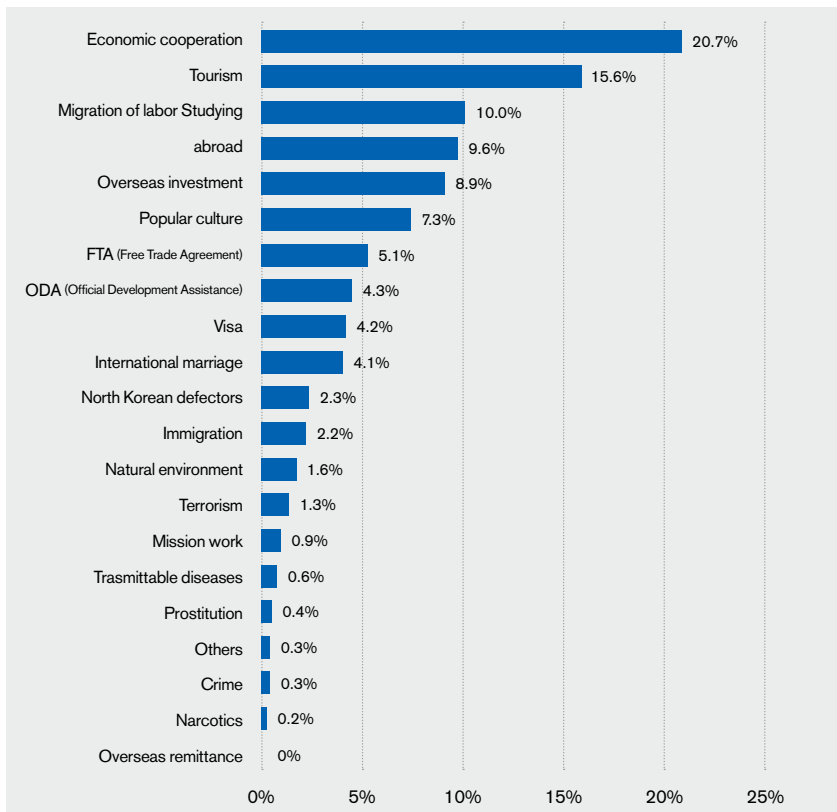
For the question “Do you think Korea’s contribution helps your country develop?”, 49.1% of students responded ‘agree’, which was followed by ‘neutral’ (32.6%) and ‘strongly agree’ (9.3%), and this makes the positive responses much higher than the negative responses (8.4%). The responses varied by nationality. Most students responded positively, but the rate of positive responses given by students from Brunei, Singapore and Thailand were very low. It is assumed that the reason respondents from these countries gave a relatively lower level of positive responses is that they consider the economic level of their countries do not need help from South Korea.

• **Important Issues Surrounding ASEAN-Korea Relations**

The respondents were asked what they think is the important issue in the relations between ASEAN and Korea. The highest number of students responded ‘economic cooperation’ (20.7%), followed by ‘tourism’ (15.6%), ‘migration of labor’ (10.0%), ‘studying abroad’ (9.6%), ‘foreign investment’ (8.9%), and ‘popular culture’ (7.3%). ‘Economic cooperation’, ‘migration of labor’, and ‘foreign investment’ are all related to economic cooperation whereas ‘tourism’, ‘migration of labor’, and ‘studying overseas’ are related to people-to-people exchange.

For the question “Do you think the relations between North and South Korea have implication for your country?”, 46.3% of students responded ‘neutral’, followed by 26.4% of ‘agree’. About 40-50% of students from Cambodia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Singapore responded ‘agree’ whereas students from Brunei and Indonesia showed a relatively lower percentage of ‘agree’ responses.

What do you think is the most important issue in the current ASEAN-Korea relations?



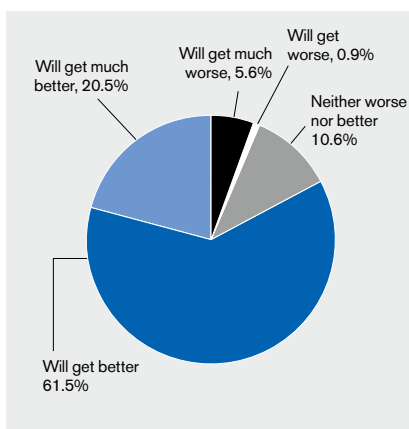
3. The Perception of the Future of ASEAN and Korea Relations

• Future of ASEAN-Korea Relations

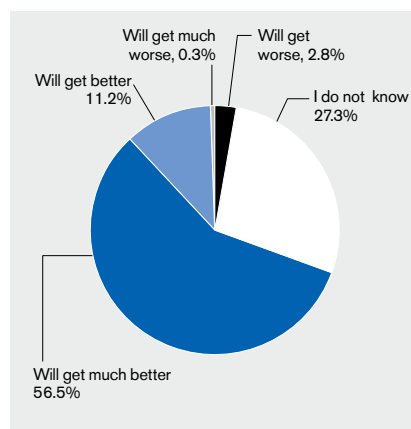
For the question about the future relations of ASEAN and Korea, 82.0% of the students responded positively while only 6.5% responses were negative. It is remarkable that Brunei, Cambodia, and the Philippines showed high percentage of positive response, indicating 93.4%, 94.1%, 93.6% respectively.

The perception of the future of the ASEAN-Korea relations was also

How do you think about the future relations between ASEAN and Korea?



How do you perceive the future of East Asia (ASEAN, Korea, China, and Japan) in terms of integration as a regional community?



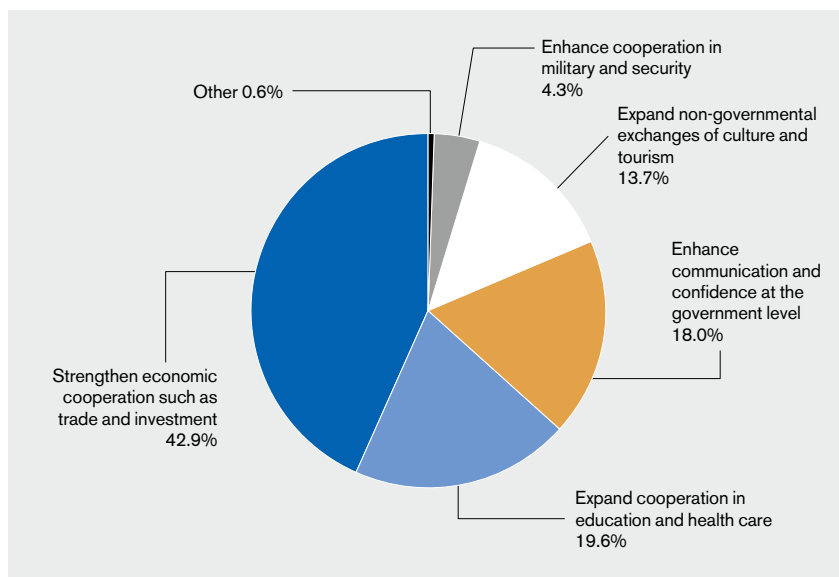
examined through questions about the formation of ASEAN Community and regional communities among East Asian countries. For the question “How do you perceive the future of ASEAN Community in terms of integration?”, it was found that the majority of the students (67.7%) felt positive, which is much higher than the negative responses (3.1%). In a similar context, for the question “How do you perceive the future of East Asia (ASEAN, Korea, China, and Japan) in terms of integration as a regional community?”, positive responses totaled to 54.6% whereas negative responses were 14.6%.

The result reflected that ASEAN students are optimistic about the possibility of forming a regional community among ASEAN and East Asian countries. Respondents from Brunei, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, and Vietnam perceive the formation of an East Asian Community as positive with respective percentages of 60.0%, 64.7%, 83.3%, 60.0%, and 70.3%, whereas respondents from Singapore and Thailand are less optimistic, only garnering 50% of positive responses. Even Indonesia showed a very low percentage of positive perception with 26.1%.

- **The Role of the ASEAN and Korean Governments**

For the question “What efforts should be made by ASEAN and Korea to further strengthen their relations?”, 42.9% of ASEAN students responded ‘strengthen economic cooperation such as trade and investment’, followed by ‘expand cooperation in education and health care’ (19.6%), ‘enhance communication and confidence at the government level’ (18.0%) and ‘expand non-governmental exchanges of culture and tourism’ (13.7%). The ASEAN students’ perception of the role of ASEAN and Korea in enhancing their relations vary by country. Most respondents chose ‘strengthen economic cooperation such as trade and investment’ as the most important area that ASEAN and Korea need to focus on. But majority of the students from Cambodia and the Philippines chose ‘enhance communication and confidence at the government level’ with 29.4% and 35.5% respectively, and 20.3% of Indonesian students chose ‘enhance communication and confidence

What efforts should be made by ASEAN and Korea to further strengthen their relations?



at the government level' as the area that governments of ASEAN and Korea need to work on.

A subjective question of whether the respondents have any request to the Korean government was also raised. The highest number of students said 'visa', which reflected the difficulties they face in getting a visa to study in Korea. Other than that, keywords like 'students', 'scholarship', 'opportunities' were used, reflecting the students' expectation in easily obtaining job and educational opportunities such as scholarships and grants.

4

COMPARISON AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE MUTUAL PERCEPTION

Mutual Perception

The result of the survey showed that the Korean youths tend to see ASEAN people through factual matters like vacation spots, hot weather, dark skin, relaxed atmosphere with the phenomenon of poverty and developing country. In addition to this, their perception of ASEAN is heavily influenced by the positive and negative aspects of migrant wives and workers in their country. On the other hand, majority of the ASEAN students have a positive perception of Korea. The economic development and advancement as well as the social images of safety and cleanliness are overlapping with the image of technologically and culturally advanced Korea. Regarding the image of Koreans, many of the results highlight the twofold aspects of Koreans as friendly and kind but, at the same time, workaholic and always in a hurry. However, most ASEAN students view Koreans as active and dynamic as the consequences of education, adding that they also want to follow such characteristics. It is encouraging to see that more than half of the students agreed that their image of Korea changed in a better way after coming to the country.

Routes of the Perception

Survey results showed that Internet and social media through smartphones are the most effective access points to information for both ASEAN and Korean students, showing that social media is highly influential in forming a perception among the people in general. Taking into consideration the effect of social media, such as blog and Facebook that youth have daily access to, it is important to point out the necessity of spreading accurate information. For the Korean youth, TV programs in which Korean celebrities visit ASEAN countries play an important role in determining their perception of ASEAN. For the ASEAN youth, K-Pop, K-Dramas, and other TV programs in which Korean celebrities appear shape their image of Korea. Due to the effectiveness of TV programs, an effort is needed to develop programs that share useful information

to both ASEAN and Korea and improve the perception of each other.

Korean Youth's Perception of ASEAN

For the question asking about the most preferred ASEAN country, the respondents, both male and female, chose Singapore as the country's GDP is twice higher than that of Korea. It is also perceived as an uncorrupt and clean. Thailand and Vietnam were chosen as second and third respectively and the reason is because of the consistent exposure of touristic sites of these countries to the media. Despite the strategic importance of Indonesia to Korea, the reason the country received a relatively lower preference could be because the information about the country was not practical enough. On the other hand, a high number of female students preferred Lao PDR, which could also be mainly because of the Korean TV programs.

As for the country that needs the most assistance from Korea, the Korean students responded in the following order: Vietnam, Cambodia, Myanmar, and the Philippines. As for the country that would provide assistance to Korea, the students responded in the following order: Singapore, Vietnam, the Philippines and Indonesia. Choosing CLMV (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Vietnam) in ASEAN indicated that Korean students are clearly aware of the countries that are in need of economic assistance from Korea. It seems that Singapore and Indonesia are on the list of assistance provider to Korea as they perceive the importance of economic cooperation such as trade and investment. It is important to pay attention to Vietnam as it is perceived to need assistance from Korea but at the same time, would provide assistance to Korea. The result signified that they have ambivalent perception of these countries. Young Koreans generally consider Vietnam as one of the 'poor countries' by merely looking at migrant wives and workers residing in Korea. On the other hand, they also consider that it is critical that Korea recognizes Vietnam as a new market for many Korean businesses and values it as a partner for active economic cooperation.

ASEAN Youth's Perception of Korea

From the survey, it was found that personal curiosity in Korea due to Korean wave as well as educational support and benefits such as scholarship are the most important factors for ASEAN students' decision to come to Korea. Those are the reasons why the ASEAN students request for more expansion of scholarship from the Korean government and universities in Korea. It is interesting to see that majority of male ASEAN students chose economic reasons while majority of female ASEAN students chose curiosity and familiarity of Korea along with economic reasons as the main reason in coming to Korea. Through the result of the survey, it was revealed that the general impression of Korea and the level of the students' satisfaction with their life in Korea are closely correlated with each other. The ASEAN students are satisfied with overall conditions of their lives in Korea but they chose 'academics', 'financial problems', and 'adjustment' as the difficulties they face in Korea. In terms of their plans to stay in Korea after they complete their studies, they responded that employment-related factors like company and salary are the most important considerations, which shows that the economic factors are important for the students' plans to stay in Korea.

One of the serious problems that ASEAN students face in Korea is direct or indirect discrimination. The ASEAN students feel extremely discriminated due to the prejudices of some Koreans who view male ASEAN students as migrant workers and female ASEAN students as migrant wives. There were a lot of cases when many English lectures in universities were either closed or not enough, when financial support was suddenly withdrawn, or when they were discriminated in dormitory and cafeteria, making the ASEAN students feel that those were all due to the fact that they come from ASEAN countries. They commented that they appreciate kind Koreans but prejudices appearing on Korean media are certainly reflective of their lives.

Perception of the ASEAN-Korea Relations

In terms of the perception of the ASEAN-Korea relations, the Korean students' positive responses were found to be five times higher than negative responses. It is also seen from the result that female students were more positive about the relations compared to male students. Regarding the question whether they think ASEAN is helpful in the development of Korea, the number of positive responses was much higher than negative responses for both male and female students. Such result reflected that Korean youth have good perception of the ASEAN-Korea relations in reality and at the same time, it reflected their hope that the relations between ASEAN and Korea will develop further for their future. It was found that the ASEAN students also have a positive perception on the relations between ASEAN and Korea. It was remarkable to see that they viewed the relations twice more positively than the Korean students. For the question asking whether they think Korea is helpful in developing their home country, the positive responses were overwhelmingly higher than negative responses. As the students are from ASEAN countries, there is a tendency that they would perceive the relations between ASEAN and Korea more positively.

Regarding the issues that are critical in the relations between ASEAN and Korea, the Korean students responded in the following order: 'international marriage', 'economic cooperation', and 'migration of labor'. The result reflected an important fact that many Korean students perceive ASEAN as a subject of human relations, not merely a place of material relations. On the other hand, ASEAN students responded the question in the following order: 'economic cooperation', 'tourism', 'migration of labor', 'studying abroad', 'foreign investment' and 'popular culture'. 'Economic cooperation', 'migration of labor', and 'foreign investment' are all related to economic cooperation whereas tourism, migration of labor and studying overseas are related to people-to-people exchange. Therefore, the result of the survey confirmed that, for both ASEAN and Korean students, economic cooperation and people-to-people

exchanges were the most important factors for enhancing the relations between ASEAN and Korea.

Prospects of the ASEAN-Korea Relations

In terms of the perception on the prospects of the ASEAN-Korea relations, more than half of the Korean students responded positively while there were only very few students who responded negatively. On the other hand, it was found that the ASEAN students have higher positive responses about the prospects of ASEAN-Korea relations. Although there was a slight difference, it could be considered that all students from ASEAN countries have positive perception on the future of the relations between ASEAN and Korea. The future generation of ASEAN and Korea having a bright perception is a sign of hope for both ASEAN and Korea.

For the question about the field that requires the most efforts in strengthening the relations between ASEAN and Korea, Korean students responded in the following order: 'strengthening economic cooperation such as trade and investment', 'enhance communication and confidence at the government level', 'promote culture and tourism' and 'expand cooperation in education and health care'. Even the ASEAN students think that 'strengthening economic cooperation such as trade and investment' is the most important field that ASEAN and Korea need to put efforts in. The rest of the order is similar to that of the Korean students. The Korean respondents' particular request to the Korean government to put more efforts in people-to-people exchange seems to have a direct relation to their expectation to work in ASEAN. Therefore, it is important for the Korean government to put more efforts in the formation of institutional foundation for people-to-people exchange and in the expansion of support to develop the ASEAN-Korea relations. On the other hand, the ASEAN students requested their government to solve visa problems and provide more opportunities for education and governmental scholarship.

5

THE SIGNIFICANCE AND SUGGESTION OF THE RESEARCH

The research on the mutual perceptions among ASEAN and Korean youth was conducted under the assumption that knowing one another's perception could build a strong foundation to better understand and develop the ASEAN-Korea relations. The survey and interviews provided enabled the discovery and verification of different information. In summary, the ASEAN and Korean youth have a positive perception of each other and share a common thought that they are good partners for mutual cooperation. However, the research also found negative aspects like the ASEAN students being discriminated due to the prejudices of Koreans. But the result of the research showed that both ASEAN and Korean youth have the willingness to overcome the negative aspects. The research is highly meaningful as the youth will be responsible for developing ASEAN-Korea relations in the future. The problems revealed by the research should be solved through the institutional and policy support of the government along with active efforts from all stakeholders.

The level of perception will keep on changing and the result of the efforts should be evaluated depending on the perception. It is recommended for ASEAN and Korea to regularly conduct a research, ideally once in every 2 or 3 years, on the perception of each other as true partners who seek to strengthen mutual cooperation. The accumulated result will serve as an indicator that reveals changes in perception. Based on this, it is anticipated that effective approaches and various policies for development would be practiced by consistently and closely checking the level of ASEAN-Korea relations. A regular, systematic research on the perception will become an important foundation that leads to a genuine and long-lasting ASEAN-Korea relations.

ANNEX

INFOGRAPHIC



MUTUAL PERCEPTIONS OF ASEAN AND KOREAN YOUTH

Survey
Sample



Korean youth
(University students)
1,004 people



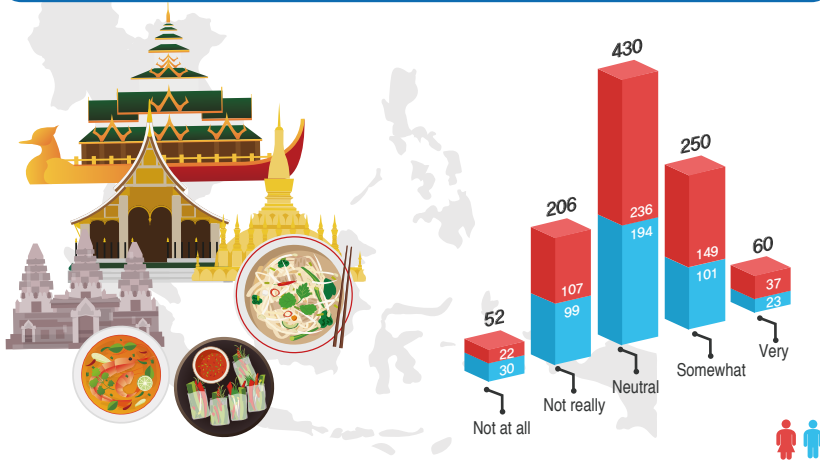
ASEAN youth
in Korea
320 people



50%

Korean Youth's Perception of ASEAN

Are you interested in ASEAN?



What are the images of ASEAN?

Hot

Developing country

Food

Cheap price

Vacation spot

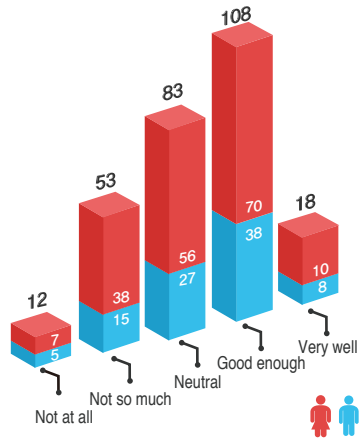
Kindness

Travel

Sightseeing

ASEAN Youth's Perception of Korea

How much do you think Koreans know about ASEAN?



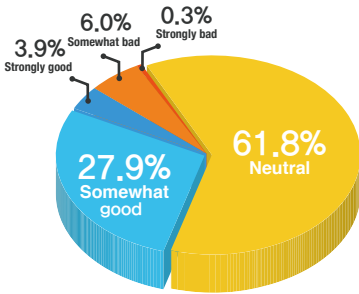
What are the images of Korea?



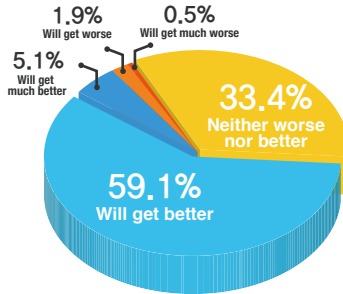
Korean Youth's Perception of ASEAN

How do you think about the relationship between ASEAN and Korea?

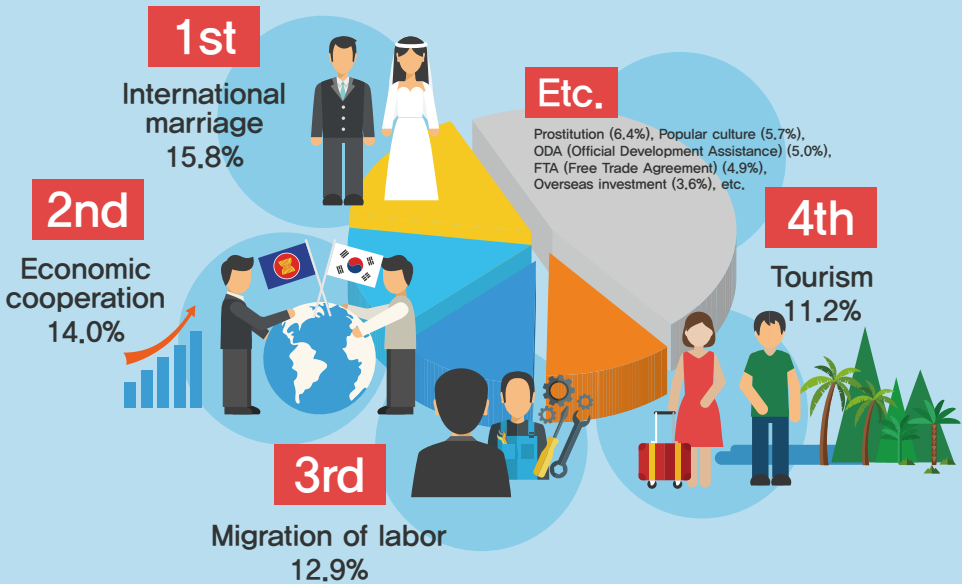
How do you think about the current ASEAN-Korea relations?



How do you think about the future of the ASEAN-Korea relations?

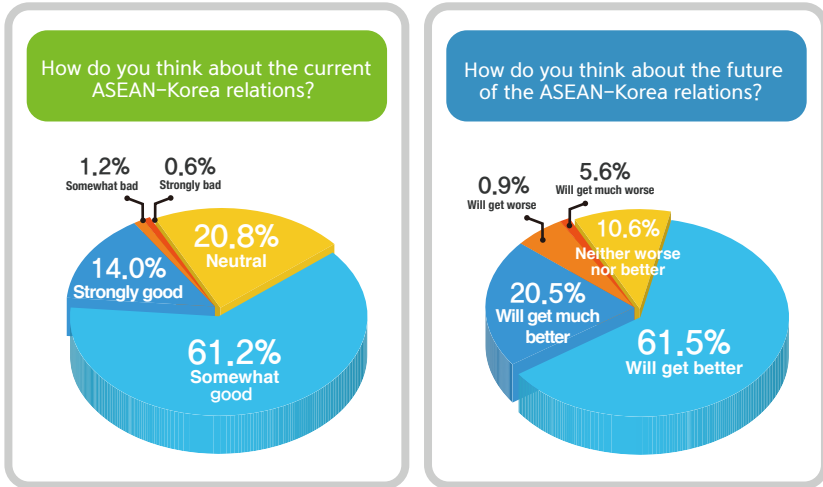


What do you think is the important issue in ASEAN-Korea relations?

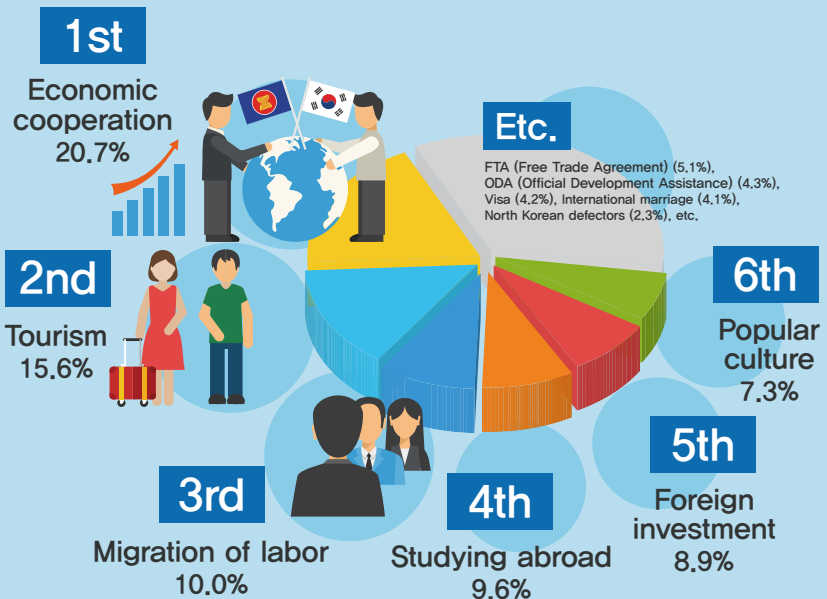


ASEAN Youth's Perception of Korea

How do you think about the relationship between ASEAN and Korea?

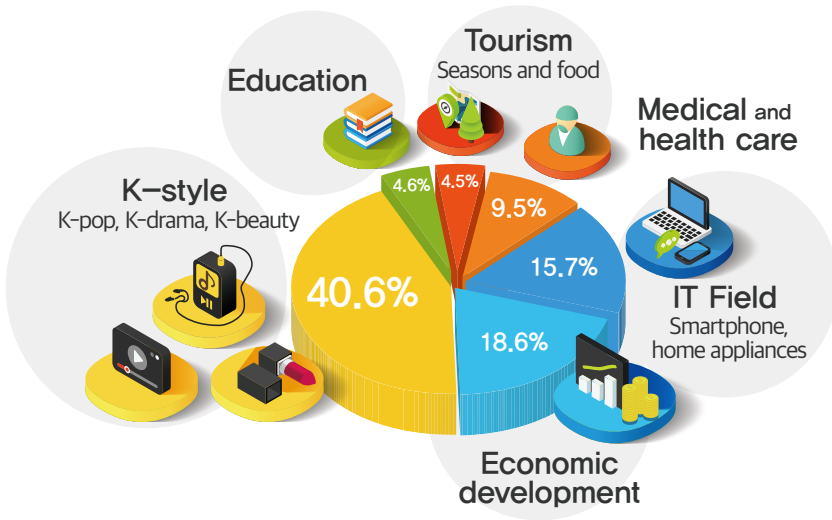


What do you think is the important issue in ASEAN-Korea relations?

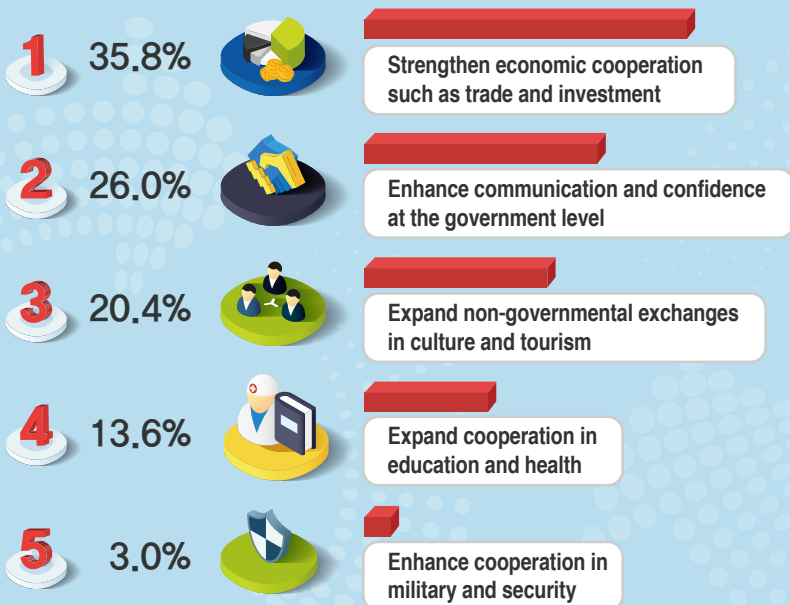


Korean Youth’s Perception of ASEAN

What do you think is the most attractive in Korea to ASEAN people?

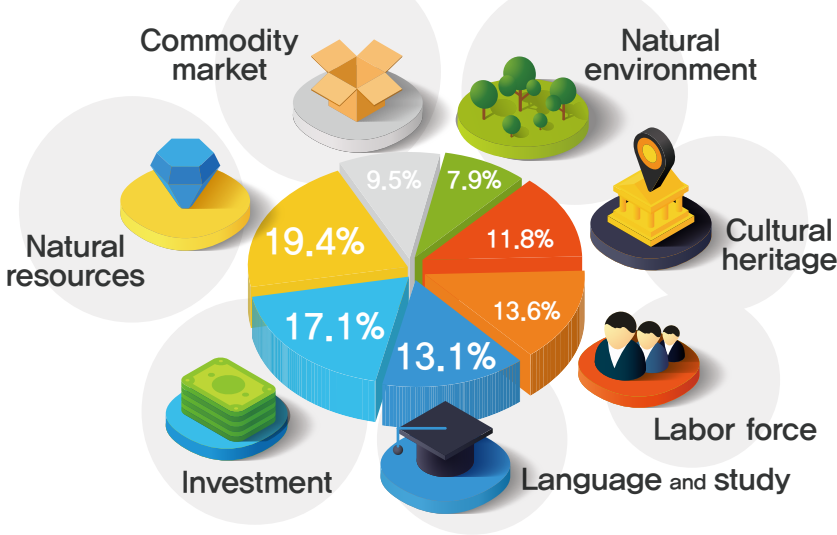


What efforts should be made by ASEAN and Korea to further strengthen their relations?

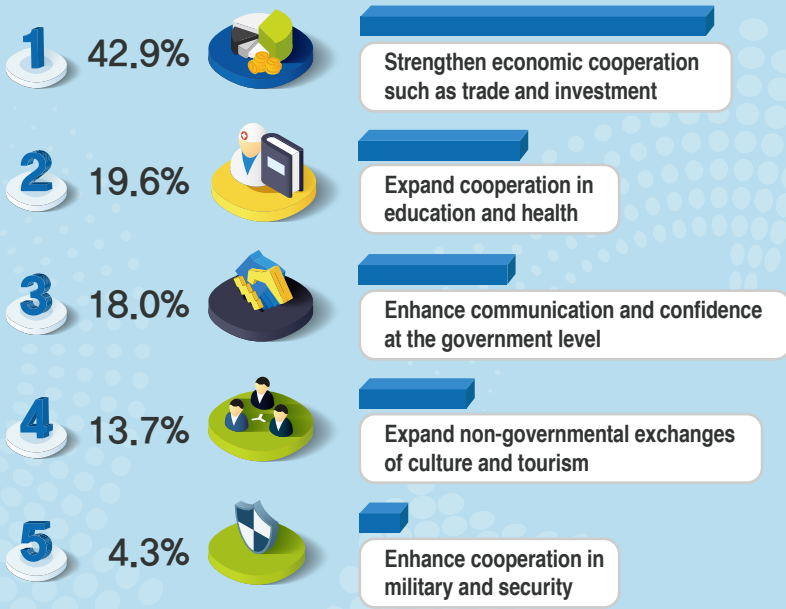


ASEAN Youth's Perception of Korea

What do you think is the most attractive in ASEAN to Koreans?



What efforts should be made by ASEAN and Korea to further strengthen their relations?



Mutual Perceptions of ASEAN and Korean Youth SUMMARY

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Finding out how ASEAN and Korean people perceive each other could pave the way for a better long-lasting ASEAN-Korea relations. Hence, as an effort for a lasting and genuine partnership, the ASEAN-Korea Centre presents you *Mutual Perceptions of ASEAN and Korean Youth*.

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