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**IMAGES AND PERCEPTIONS ON ASEAN IDENTITY
OF SELECTED FILIPINO STUDENTS**

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Abstract

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) advocates regional integration to delineate the concerted identities of its ten member-countries. Construed as ASEAN identity, this integration envisioned to bring ASEAN as a major economic and tourism force in Asia. Moved by subsequent measures in objectifying this vision, this study qualitatively examined the images and perceptions on ASEAN identity of selected Filipino students in the secondary education. It conferred how the concept of regional identity is strengthened to students, as motivated by the institutionalization of several agencies, particularly education. Using a qualitative approach, the study deduced the significant influence of education in building the concept of ASEAN identity. It likewise attested the insufficiency of educational factors in demonstrating authentic ASEAN identity. Students' images on ASEAN are only limited to familiarity to symbols, meanwhile, perceptions are generally posed by their inadequate knowledge and limited educational experience.

Keywords: ASEAN identity, regional integration, images, perceptions, role and influence of education

1.1 Introduction

The world is a stage of cultural diversity and multiplicity. This is possibly a true statement if the differences in every nation's wealth, economic solidity, resources, and socio-political stability will be mulled over. Ideological differences concerning perspectives to achieve development and progress are truly evident to many nations in the world. It seems that governments of every nation nowadays are greatly concerned with ways to achieve their respective economic and political strength by stressing out their culture's distinctiveness than to co-exist mutually with other countries. From the aforementioned statements, it appears that collective identity of nations belonging to a same geographic region or organization is not recognized as critical in achieving peace and regional development notwithstanding the findings of many studies like the one emphasized by the study on "Meeting the Challenges in an Era of Globalization by Strengthening Regional Development Cooperation" of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization – Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCO-ESCAP). This claim may be true to "Asia", where some developing countries are still striving on what their neighboring countries like Japan and China have done and achieved by now (OECD, 2013). More to this, it seems that harmony in this region is not that apparent due to the fact that some Asian nations have no clear characterization on what is their authentic identity, individually as a nation, and entirely as a region.

On the other view, during the years that the world has witnessed regional integration among nations, a different scenario is happening on the opposite side of the world. The European Union (EU) which is a confederation of twenty seven European entities has proven itself as the most thriving. Doubtless, in this little way, its member-nations have established a so-called regional identity and have proven to be the most successful example of regional

integration (Jonsson, 2008). Many might wonder why Europeans can do what seems to be impossible to others and how they come up with a plan that embraces perfect clarity of their identity as one region? Learning from the experiences of their European counterparts, Asians are gradually moving toward this path with Southeast Asian nations leading as evidenced by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) 2015 vision of ASEAN countries.

ASEAN has recently planned a regional integration of its ten member-nations and envisioned to emerge not just a major economic growth force but a haven of tourism in entire Asia by 2015. As presented during the 45th annual meeting of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) board of governors hosted by the Philippines, it can be attained through attracting investments from multinational companies. With an estimated 600 million people, ASEAN is expected to join other developed and industrialized Asian countries as major economic growth forces through structured and integrated economies and cultures. In attempt to discuss the ASEAN 2015 vision, we need to confront several concerns like: Is ASEAN capable of promoting regional integration that switches the thoughts of its people from a typical “nation-state mindset” into a “regional-collaborative outlook”? How this vision may endow all its member-nations of their historical ties and common cultural affiliation as one region? Do all ASEAN member-nations see the regional identity in a similar perspective? It gives the impression that the first step cogitate before this vision is to know the people’s idea and true awareness of a regional identity.

This study presents and describes the images and perceptions on the so-called “ASEAN identity” of selected Filipino students as conceived to be influenced by several educational factors. Operationally, ASEAN Identity is the authentic culture and identity of ASEAN based from various dimensions or themes of collective identity such as historical accounts, socio-cultural foundations, geographical landscapes, politics and government,

music and the arts, and economy and livelihood. Broadly, the study has four major constructs namely: students' images, students' perceptions, ASEAN Identity, and the role and influence of education to students' images and perceptions on ASEAN Identity.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The study is a suggested reference in designing an ASEAN curriculum that described the authentic identity of ASEAN based on its cultural background through the six themes of regional identity. As a source of data in making new pedagogies in teaching ASEAN culture and identity, the findings of the study can be a guide for book authors and educational material developers in determining the specific content to highlight that can contribute to a strong identity formation of ASEAN and can be a basis in authenticating the existing policies, modes, and ways of teaching Asian studies in both secondary and tertiary levels. Persistently, the study aims to:

1. Describe the images and perceptions of selected Filipino high school students on ASEAN identity
2. Determine the educational factors that shape and influence students' images and perceptions on ASEAN identity

1.3. Literature Review

Constructing images and perceptions:

As for the first two constructs on students' images and students' perceptions, Thomas (2009) explained the correlation between visual imagery and consciousness, with a major finding that imagery makes up the whole consciousness. Dizon (2012) explained that in making perceptions, the role of innate structures are very vital. This is similar to Cherry (2016) who

said that conclusions and judgements that we make about other people are based from our impression. Binns (2012) said that experience is the first element to consider in understanding how perceptions are formed. On the other hand, Dobkin & Pace (2006) studied the three general processes in forming perceptions namely: selecting, organizing, and interpreting that we often used simultaneously. Lastly, Carlson and Heath (2010) mentioned that the cognitive process of making perceptions is not just a process of a mere cognition. The process goes as far as one person's own understanding and own aspirations about the idea to be perceived.

The Concept of ASEAN Identity:

As for the third construct on ASEAN identity, Hiep (2015), Spykermon (2016), Dalimunthe (2016), & Pateña (2017), studied the vision and the process that needs to be done in creating a regional identity for ASEAN. Weatherbee (2014), Tolentino (2014), Pongsapich (2015), & Arifan & Arifin (2017) confronted several issues concerning the building of identity such as the gaps in the development among nations, community engagement, and regional diversity. In building the regional identity, Vu Duc (2013) & Yosephine (2016) mentioned that people, particularly the youth should be empowered. Kuroda (2012) said that Asian countries need to emerge as inclusive, green, and knowledge-based economies. Remo (2012) mentioned that ASEAN countries is expected to be major growth force in Asia. ASEAN have the capacity to attain this goal through regional integration and collective identity building. Furthermore, Waseem (2008) said that the community itself has a capacity to influence the person's identity. Several issues are need to be confronted before the creation of regional identity to take place. Jonsson (2008) said that stressing both the similarities and differences of ASEAN is needed. This can be done if the people will be educated enough about the value of unity and respect despite of diversities. Moreover, Sidjaja (2011), Chonkittavorn (2012),

Mikalauski (2012), & Garcia (2017) studied the issues such as cultural complexities and diversities as major concerns in building identity of ASEAN.

The Role and Influence of Education in Constructing Images and Perceptions:

As for the last study's construct on the role of influence of education in students' images and perceptions, Vega, Prieto, Carreon (2009) studied the role of multiculturalism in promoting social harmony with integrated identities. Vega et.al, (2009) and Aldrige and Goldman (2007) said that a comprehensive response to cultural diversity with educational mechanism is needed. Banks & Banks, 1995 (as cited in Vega et.al, 2009) said that equal opportunities for all people from a diverse society is essential for multiculturalism. The study's constructs were grounded on the general assertion of the study. The study premised that the knowledge on ASEAN Identity was motivated and driven by the societal building through the institutionalization by several agencies as described in the Theory of Social Construction of Reality (Berger & Luckmann, 2002). In the context of the study, education or school is the agency that is believed to be the major factor in developing the concept of ASEAN Identity among students. Primarily, it recognized the impact that various educational factors such as teacher, textbook, and curriculum can contribute in developing the notion of how ASEAN exists and functions in the society. How people confront and appreciate ASEAN identity may be amended by a certain indicative factors, since organizations have the capacity to create their own reality (Grybovski, Amancio, & Cunha, 2007).

2. Methodology And Design

2.1. Design

This study employed a phenomenological qualitative design. The descriptive phenomenological design guided this study to understand the role and influence of education in students' images and perception building on ASEAN Identity.

2.2. Selection and Study Site

A qualitative approach with three data collection techniques were utilized, namely: in-depth, open-ended interviews / focused group discussion (FGD), direct observation, and written documents (document and content analysis). The data was drawn from purposefully selected, relatively small but enough to give a rich data.

Primarily, there were two participating schools in this study. The researcher used a purposive sampling. The Araling Panlipunan (Social Studies) teachers of the student-respondents were interviewed to establish the second objective of the study which is to determine the educational factors that shaped images and perceptions. Specifically, the student-participants were selected third year (grade 9) high school students from a public-laboratory school in Manila and a private Catholic School in Las Piñas City. The data gathering was conducted in School Year 2013-2014. Seventy five students or thirty percent of the combined total were the actual respondents.

Additionally, direct observation, in-depth open-ended interviews, FGD, content analysis, and document analysis were the procedures done to determine the educational factors that shape and influence the image and perception on ASEAN Identity

2.3. Data Collection

The first step for the data gathering collection is the in-depth, open-ended interviews to ten experts and practitioners. This procedure determined the critical indicators that define ASEAN regional identity based from the practitioners' perspectives. These were the experts of anthropology, art studies, economics, ethnomusicology, geography, history, linguistics, political science, and sociology from two reputable universities in Manila. Their input resulted in determining the six themes or dimensions of collaborative identity or in the context of the study, the ASEAN Identity. These are historical accounts, socio-cultural foundations, geographical landscapes, politics and government, music and the arts, and economy and livelihood that cover the aspects of ASEAN culture that need to study and consider for the success of building a regional identity for all.

After this procedure and to gather the images on ASEAN Identity, the researcher asked the students to “draw or sketch” what comes into their minds when they hear ASEAN Identity. In a clean sheet of paper, students were asked to draw any picture or image that characterize ASEAN Identity for them. To explain the symbolisms in their drawing, the researcher interviewed the student individually. A focus group discussion (FGD) was conducted, followed by the in-depth interviews to the teachers of the students. After the interview, the researcher observed their classes. The observation was held during the time that the topic is about Southeast Asia or about regional organizations. This procedure is necessary to know how the value of a regional identity, specifically ASEAN identity is manifested in the teaching-learning process.

Additionally, content and document analysis were done. The analyses were used to the Araling Panlipunan (Social Studies) II textbooks of the participating schools and the Secondary Education Curriculum (SEC 2010) which is the curriculum that still covers the

student-respondents when they took the course Araling Asyano (Asian Studies). This step was operated to scrutinize the content-based standards and the ways ASEAN identity is manifested and reflected in both pertinent documents. Furthermore, a document or content analysis was conducted to look into the extent of how ASEAN identity is reflected in these documents. For the said data-gathering technique, the process of content analysis proposed by Krippendorff (1980 and 2004) was utilized.

3. Results And Discussion

In general, the analysis of data covers four phases: first is for the students' images on ASEAN identity; second is for the students' perceptions on ASEAN identity; third is for the educational factors that shape and influence these images and perceptions on ASEAN identity; and fourth is a synthesis of all data gathered from the previous phases and inference on the study's speculation derived from the operational theory.

3.1. Images and Perceptions on ASEAN Identity

There are critical indicators that influence students' construction of images and perceptions. In making images of ASEAN identity, students may be influenced by: "consciousness" or complete awareness and knowledge on the proceedings, advocacies, and significance of ASEAN; "own understanding" or self thinking on how ASEAN exists and functions in the present society; and "desired information" or students' own aspirations and hopes for the organization. Meanwhile, perceptions can be influenced by: "external stimuli" or environmental factors and dynamics; "inborn qualities" or one's personal character, upbringing, and innate quality; and "personal encounters" or own occurrence and influence to a person who is perceiving a notion. The in-depth interview to each student and the FGD

revealed the factor/s that influence the constructed images and perceptions of ASEAN identity.

Generally, the drawings or sketches that represent images on ASEAN identity were all patchwork of pictures. It means that varieties of pictures were drawn together in one to depict the image of ASEAN.

Filipino students expressed their complete awareness on ASEAN identity through the symbols of *hotel, theme parks, line graph, terms GNP and GDP, monetary (dollar) sign, vessel/boat, money bag, peace sign, door, people holding each others' hands, globe, jigsaw puzzle, two arrows meeting from contrasting directions, and ASEAN's official flag and motto*. Majority of the students were completely aware regarding: ASEAN's motto which is one vision, one identity, one community; the significance of tourism and international investments; diversities in culture, economy, and politics; giving of mutual aid during disasters; and the importance of peace. On the other hand, images based on "students' own understanding" were expressed through *ASEAN's emblem, flags of selected ASEAN member-nations, flags of non-ASEAN member-nations such as China, Japan, and South Korea, assembly (group) of people, eye, and a key*. The in-depth interviews and FGD respectively revealed some misconceptions about ASEAN. The *emblem of ASEAN* was thought to be a "golden goblet or cup" instead of "a ten bound stalks of rice". The flags of China, Japan, and South Korea were also drawn and mistakenly thought as members of ASEAN. Lastly, students' images based on their own aspirations and hopes were expressed through the use of the symbols of *heart, sun, church, crime scene, a girl, rainbow, and ghost*.

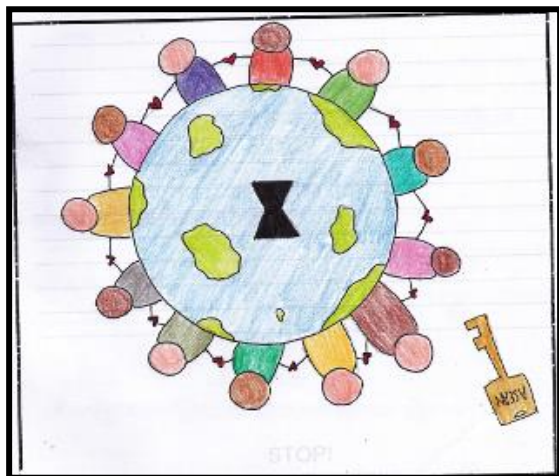
The respondents' interviews revealed that the news, internet, and education were the environmental factors that influenced their image and perception. Purposely, the news about ASEAN circulated through various forms of media particularly on-line sources influenced the

students in perceiving that ASEAN is an instrument to advocate interstate camaraderie. This perception revealed that ASEAN is considered as an important vehicle in extending assistance and support to its members. The pictures *people holding each other's hands, rainbow, sun, and heart* were the symbolisms used to illustrate this notion. Particularly, three students mentioned the significance of ASEAN in bringing help to the victims of the typhoon Yolanda in the Philippines. Interstate camaraderie means companionship in building a prosperous and stable community where every nation is all progressing.

Furthermore, ASEAN identity is about the spreading of peace, unity and resolving territorial disputes from an overwhelming sixty one students. This idea was further confirmed when seven students mentioned that ASEAN is like a door to the new world that opens its gate to those who would like to embrace the concept of peace, progress, and tranquility. The study revealed that majority of respondents thought that ASEAN member-nations are peace-loving and will not extend arms in resolving conflicts. The *peace sign, heart, and globe* are the images used by the students to depict their ideas.

On the other hand, ASEAN is not just an organization for Southeast Asian nations, but an organization that can be offered to the whole world. Two students mentioned that the organization can make a big part to the improvement of the world. Further, the importance of the Filipinos towards the attainment of the goals of ASEAN was likewise mentioned. Students who perceived this idea were influenced by the news about the ASEAN's collaboration with other world organizations and its advocacy to be united despite of diversities. The symbols of *door, key, and flags* were used to expressed these perceptions. One student said:

“ASEAN builds peace and unity within countries. We Filipinos, as one nation, should start to build the love and unity within us. We should start to build love and unity in all the ASEAN countries, so that we can make a big part in improvement of the world”.



*Figure 1:
Students' image of ASEAN
identity (key)*

Moreover, ASEAN is important in facilitating communication among its member-nations and be their voices to important matters worldwide. Students who perceived this admitted that they have limited knowledge about ASEAN. The only occurrences that they were exposed with are the ones being shown on television such as “the periodic meetings and assemblies of ASEAN”. When the students were asked, none of them gave a concrete explanation on the significance of these periodic meetings. Further, none can even give a single theme or resolution by previous or recent congregations of ASEAN. It represents a low-leveled awareness of the students to the advocacies and actions taken by ASEAN as well as the recent regional integration attempts by 2015. A picture that shows *an assembly of people* was the image portrayed for this notion.

In addition, a student perceived that ASEAN is doing well on tourism and economy, but needs to exert more effort on diplomatic relations and conflict resolutions. It was

expressed with the used of the symbols of *hotel*, *theme park*, and *church*. Similar to this, one student perceived that ASEAN is venturing for foreign investments to boost local economy at present. Money and trade seemed to be one of the most common thinking of the students when they hear ASEAN. A student mentioned that ASEAN will be a big help to uplift the struggling economies of its some member-nations. The pictures of a *money bag*, *monetary sign (dollar)*, *vessel/boat*, and *line graph* were the images that directly depicted these perception.

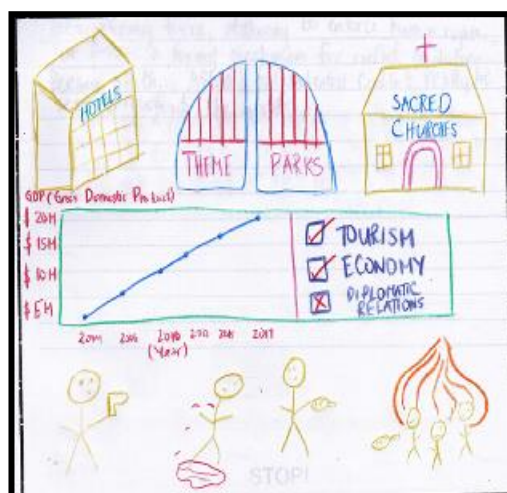


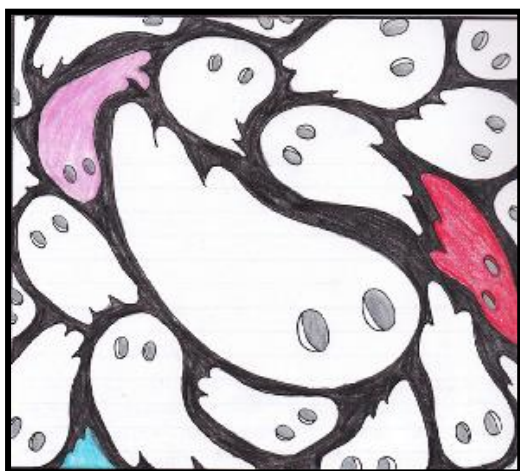
Figure 2:
Students' image of ASEAN identity
(hotel, theme park, sacred church)

Still driven by the same indicator, diversity is a common impression for others who claimed that ASEAN has differences in many cultural aspects, but bound to be as one. It is good that students can distinguish ASEAN as a community of both cultural similarities and diversities. *Jigsaw puzzle pieces* and the *emblem of ASEAN as conceived as a golden goblet* are the symbols used to depict this image. Similarly, one student perceived ASEAN identity in the midst of diversities as expressed through the image of a *rainbow*.

The second critical indicator that affects perceptions is personal encounters that denote ideas from personal experiences. From this indicator, students perceived that ASEAN

is a driving force in molding the youths of today. This perception is expressed through the image of a *globe and the inclusion of ASEAN's flag and its motto*. During the FGD in one participating school, students confirmed that it was only in 2013 when they finally felt the true meaning of ASEAN after a co-curricular program was held such as an ASEAN youth camp. This statement is almost similar to the idea that ASEAN should exert more effort to let their people feel its true presence and function in the society. One student drew a *ghost* to depict her image and perception and said:

"I view ASEAN as a ghost because I know that the organization exists, yet I can't feel its presence. I have some knowledge about some countries that are part of the org., but I don't really know a lot in terms of their culture. This is represented by the ghosts that have color. The largest ghost in the center symbolizes what ASEAN (in general) is, for me. It is this large group that my country is part of, but I can't really see it actively. The eyes of the ghosts are hollow because I know that those countries exist but I only know the information that you memorize. I have no deep understanding about the countries and the organization".



*Figure 3:
Students' image of ASEAN identity
(hotel, theme park, sacred church)*

Lastly, one student perceived that the terms Filipinos, Malaysians, or Thais will no longer be used as the integration attempt will bring its people into a "common identity" as

“people of ASEAN” and in pushing a regional integration, several local traditions maybe removed and that everything among its member-nations will be standardized.

3.2. The Role and Influence of Education in Students’ Images and Perceptions

Education attribute to the formation of students’ mindset about ASEAN identity. Teachers become a factor because the basic and concrete concept about ASEAN are learned inside the classroom in which the teacher is a major key player through the teaching and learning process. From the first argument given, sixty nine students said that they do not have prior knowledge about ASEAN before they learned it inside the classroom and they first encountered the term ASEAN in their fourth grade in primary level.

The study revealed that respondents have limited knowledge on ASEAN especially on matters concerning its functions, goals, vision, and identity. Fifty eight respondents directly blamed how the topic was taught to them. ASEAN as a topic does not have enough time to discuss thoroughly. Students said that lessons on current regional integration is not provided. Additionally, ASEAN is on the last part of the textbook and included in the general topic about “world’s regional organizations”, therefore students are learning it in a swift run through. The knowledge on ASEAN is limited only on meaning, member-nations, motto, and selected programs. During their secondary years, deeper but still insufficient notions were discussed such as the problems faced by ASEAN in the recent years, brief history on the establishment of ASEAN, the flags and basic information and trivias about “selected” ASEAN member-nations.

As presented earlier, “peace” is a dominant image of ASEAN identity, but some students pointed-out that its true meaning was not explained profoundly. The idea of “peace” is taught as a general objective of all regional organizations in the world. The degree of

understanding on the true notion of peace as an objective of ASEAN was not extensively discussed due to lack of time, placement of the topic to the textbooks, and too much emphasis on past events. It is a veracity that every organization is aiming for a positive result especially to its member-nations. Peace, progress, stability in economy and politics among others are just the typical objectives of every regional integration attempt in the world, but its degree or extent depends on the over-all direction and emphasis of the organization. This argument is also true in a sense that according to students, the teaching stressed more importance to United Nations than to ASEAN. Students were not that exposed to the significance of ASEAN in the society. They are actually seeing United Nations (UN) as more important organization than ASEAN because the latter receives detailed discussion since their elementary years. More to this, exceptional school-based programs and projects are annually conducted to celebrate the foundation of the UN that ASEAN doesn't have. Two students argued that United Nations is more familiar to them because of the special co-curricular activities to promote the foundation of this organization.

For nondiscriminatory inference in the study, an in-depth interviews were also conducted to the teachers of the student-respondents. All teachers have manifested an outstanding knowledge and understanding of ASEAN identity during interviews. Specifically, all teacher-respondents have pointed – out that unity and sense of belongingness is significant in establishing collective identity. One teacher mentioned that similarities should be studied, but diversities should likewise be acknowledged and respected for the integration to flourish.

Furthermore, one teacher suggested that the ASEAN identity will be completely grasped by the students if its entire concept and significance will be integrated to schools' mission and vision statements. It appears that teachers are recognizing the important role of

education to holistically shape the true identity of ASEAN. Teachers, textbooks, curriculum, and the entire educational setting should be equally encouraged to promote ASEAN identity as education significantly affects the formation of students' concept building especially during the basic education which is considered as formative years. This will be fully realized by the students if all educational institutions across ASEAN nations will integrate and stipulate the essentials of ASEAN identity in their philosophy, objectives, and mission and vision statements.

In general, the teachers viewed ASEAN identity as an interstate endeavor and that everyone should in the same way exert effort to achieve this. To complement all data, the classroom teaching of two teachers were observed. The topic is about ASEAN/Southeast Asia. Their approaches and strategies are good especially in promoting tourism in ASEAN. Students were given a performance task to make a brochure that could promote tourism of a certain ASEAN country. The topic was conferred by highlighting the forms of government and early systems of law, economic activities, system of beliefs, and wars took place in each settlement. Further, it is a positive note that teachers after giving the distinct characteristics per civilization let the students create a "matrix" that will compare and contrast the details taken. Likewise, one teacher discussed the present culture of ASEAN by showing some pictures of the modern-day rural setting in Malaysia and Indonesia, festivals in Thailand in honor of their gods, bayanihan of the Filipinos, heritage sites like Borobudur and Angkor Wat, and the Muslim women of Brunei, Indonesia, and Malaysia. As a synthesis, one teacher discussed briefly the role of ASEAN and other regional organizations in the modern-day ASEAN countries. In general, the teachers taught the topic excellently. The modern-day living, values, and the vision of the ASEAN people that were founded and strengthened by the past events and struggles they have encountered were truly the focus of discussion. The

observation revealed the contradiction to students' interviews that ASEAN is being discussed on a very swift run through.

On the other hand, textbooks were also determined as educational factor that shapes and influences students' images and perceptions on ASEAN identity. Profoundly, the content analysis reflect the adequacy of information about ASEAN identity that were provided by the textbook. Basic information about ASEAN was given, however no discussion was provided for the indicators and characteristics that define ASEAN identity.

Moreover, the curriculum which served as the backbone of the educational process is another factor that influences images and perceptions on ASEAN identity. The respondents of the study used the Secondary Education Curriculum 2010 (SEC 2010) of the DepEd. In this curriculum, ASEAN is in the fourth quarter expressed as *Ang Asya sa Kasalukuyang Panahon*. Its content-based standards aim the students to understand the importance Asian identity and regional cooperation in Asia despite of its difference in ideologies, culture, and changes in the present time. The content analysis revealed that the concept of regional identity and its importance in promoting peace, goodwill, and stableness were highlighted, however more emphasis was given in inculcating Asian identity than ASEAN identity. Further, the idea that regional integration can still be achieved despite of diversities is also pointed-out although, this study finds it a bit ambitious to long for "Asian identity". It is a big argument at this point if Asian identity can truly be realized by Asians and should be the focus of the Philippine educational landscape. If a regional outlook is an objective of this curriculum, then this study suggests a strong movement for the Filipino learners to know their identity both as Filipino and as a member of ASEAN. ASEAN member-nations are longing for a mutual identity, however the curriculum has no sufficient content for this vision. It does not include any call for a regional identity of the people, more so on their characteristics that

bounds for a strong societal integration. Further, no requirement was imposed for the learners to realize their value in the society and in creating a collaborative community.

4. Conclusion And Recommendations

4.1 Conclusion

Formation of ASEAN identity through institutionalization is found to be insufficient. The process of embedding the appropriate individuality of this collective community specifically its roots, nature, traditions, identity, distinctiveness and people's culture is not clear to students. Students lack the insight and depth understanding about ASEAN identity because of the limitations posed by their educational experience. Entrenching the significant social roles and modes in creating a collaborative identity is inadequate due to the following reason: (a) the study of Asian Studies centers mainly on the general history of Asia and not on diversities, collective culture, and mutual vision which were found to be indicators of authentic ASEAN identity; (b) teachers, textbooks, and curriculum are more detailed in matters that necessitate how each Asian nation evolved historically and the significance of the past events that took place in Asia. No discussion is provided to link these events and help students find meaningful connection to the cultural identity formation of the entire region and in formulating an identity that rallies each nation toward the development of a common regional outlook which in turn, will propel cooperation; (c) correlation between prior concepts or low-leveled information and the complex facts vis-à-vis ASEAN development is not elaborated; (d) discussion about ASEAN is found at the very last part of the scope and sequencing of topics that gives the students a swift run through of the subject; (e) only the basic knowledge about ASEAN are taught. Information is limited to the meaning of the

acronym, member-nations, motto, “selected” programs and advocacies, the problems faced by ASEAN in the recent years; brief history on the founding of ASEAN; flags and simple trivia about “selected” ASEAN member-nations; and (f) no co-curricular activities or programs are designed in school as a supplemental effort to instill the value of ASEAN integration.

4.2. Recommendations

School, as a setting for learning and internalizing ASEAN identity should profoundly engage in the following: (a) a balance curricular and co-curricular programs that will teach the students the apt ASEAN identity that highlights its diversities, convergences, and mutual vision; (b) development of both print and non-print materials to raise consciousness about what ASEAN identity truly is; (c) teachers to explore current, varied, relevant and creative modality in teaching ASEAN identity to students; and (d) learning experiences are provided to all students, which call for the development of their basic knowledge on their identity and vital role in inculcating such.

Also, further studies should be made to explore other factors that shaped and influenced the images and perceptions. As the data gathered from this study should become a guide for: (a) textbook writer in determining the specific content that can contribute a strong ASEAN identity formation; (b) school administrators to redefine the existing policies, modes, and pedagogies in teaching Asian Studies at all levels; and (c) curriculum planner in designing a detailed and structured Southeast Asian curriculum that authentically examines the significance of regional collaboration and integration. Further, the learning competencies and content-based standards of the curriculums of all ASEAN member-nations should be aligned with one another.

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