

What Does ASEAN Mean to ASEAN Peoples? Survey Findings from Indonesia*

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Background

The Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia, in partnership with The Habibie Center, initiated a survey followed by a series of in-depth focus group discussions (FGDs) in Indonesia between September and October 2016 to assess the aspirations, expectations, concerns, and hopes of people in Southeast Asia towards the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). This national-level exercise was part of a region-wide survey for the ASEAN@50: Retrospectives and Perspectives on the Making, Substance, Significance, and Future of ASEAN project.

The survey was conducted electronically through the Survey Monkey platform and was targeted at the Indonesian public in general. The survey drew participation from people from diverse professions, including labour, non-governmental organisation (NGO) employees, business professionals and entrepreneurs, academics, students, and government officials. A total of 19 questions were posed to respondents on issues ranging from their awareness of ASEAN all the way to respondents' aspirations and concerns for ASEAN.

Subsequently, a total of three FGDs were carried out with the following stakeholders: students (youth) (16 students, comprising three high school students and 13 university students); NGOs and those from academia (10 participants, comprising nine NGO

* All tables and figures in this chapter were derived from the survey data.

activists and one representative of a policy think tank); and businesses (seven business representatives). In the FGDs, stakeholders were asked to elaborate on their feedback on some of the key questions posed in the survey. Participants of the FGDs were also given the chance to complete the survey manually, and this was carried out prior to the FGDs.

Survey Outcomes

Survey participants: Distribution, characteristics, and background (Questions 1–5)

The survey drew participation from 302 respondents, of which 182 (60.26%) were aged 15–30, 103 (34.1%) were aged 31–49, and the remaining 17 (5.63%) were aged 50 or older (Figure 1). The gender distribution of the survey was relatively balanced, although the number of male respondents, totalling 166 respondents (54.97%), slightly exceeded the number of female respondents at 136 respondents (45.03%) (Figure 2).

Figure 1: Age Distribution of the Respondents

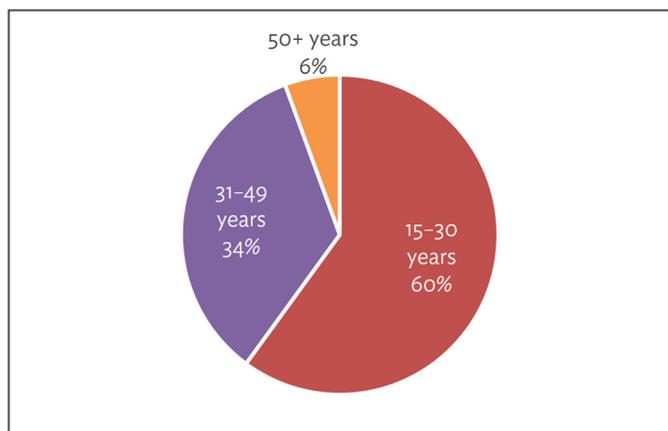
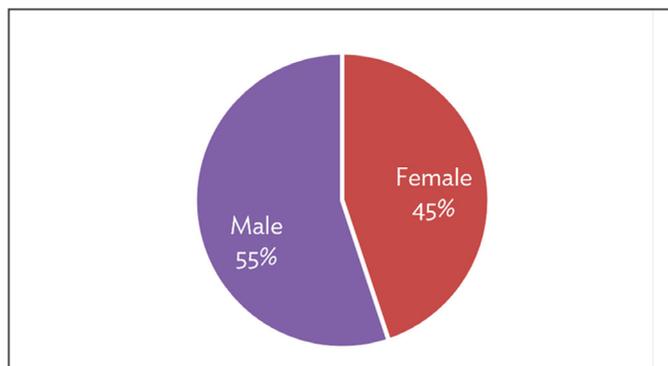
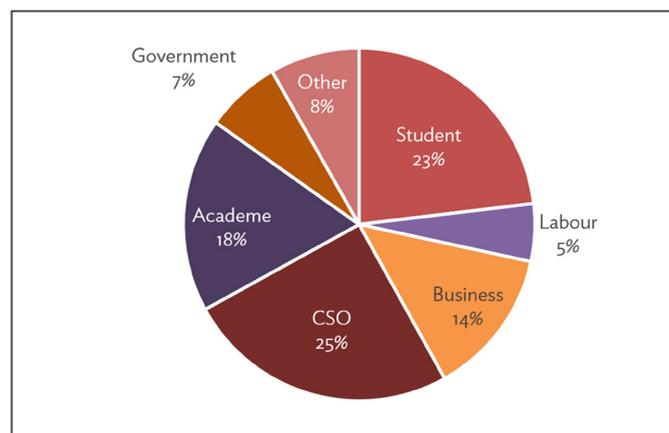


Figure 2: Gender Distribution of the Respondents



In terms of occupation, 76 respondents (25.08%) were from NGOs or civil society organisations (CSOs), 54 (17.82%) were from academia, 70 (23.10%) were students, 41 (13.53%) were business representatives, 21 (6.93%) were government officials, 16 (5.28%) were labour, and 25 (8.25%) were respondents with other occupations (Figure 3). Rather than classifying their occupations in the ‘business’ category, a large number of respondents opted for the ‘other’ category but stated their occupation as an ‘employee of a private sector organisation’. The survey team took the liberty of putting these respondents under the ‘business’ category in the final assessment of the survey. It is interesting to note that some respondents also listed their occupation as ‘housewife’, and one identified herself as a midwife, a possible indication that people from more diverse occupations are becoming at least more familiar with ASEAN.

Figure 3: Affiliations of the Respondents



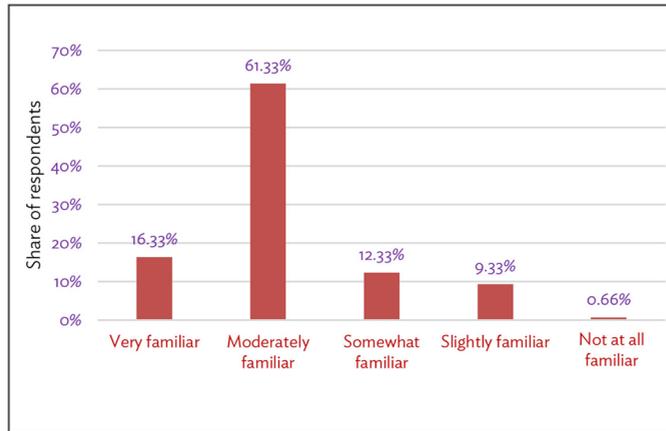
CSO = civil society organisation.

Voices of ASEAN

Awareness of ASEAN (Question 5)

Respondents were asked about their awareness of ASEAN. They were given five possible answers: ‘very familiar’, ‘moderately familiar’, ‘somewhat familiar’, ‘slightly familiar’, and ‘not at all familiar’. An overwhelming 184 respondents (61.33%) claimed they were moderately familiar with ASEAN (Figure 4). This was followed by 49 respondents (16.33%) who claimed they were very familiar and 37 respondents (12.33%) who were somewhat familiar with ASEAN. The responses for this question suggest that the majority of the Indonesia-based respondents were relatively familiar with ASEAN-related issues.

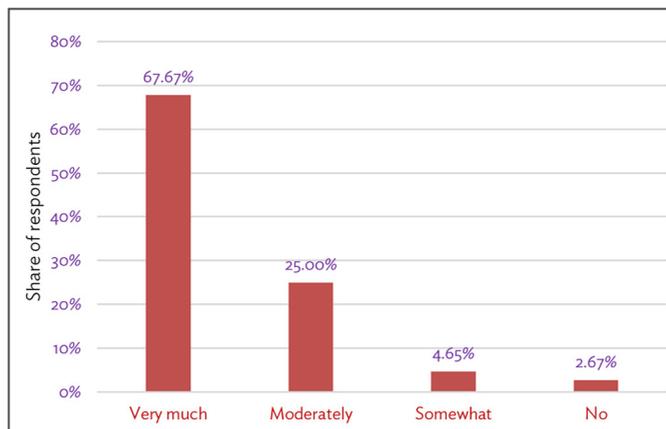
Figure 4: Awareness of ASEAN



Discussions carried out during the FGDs revealed that most basic information regarding ASEAN was made available during the respondents' school years, especially starting from secondary-level education onwards. However, most FGD participants also stated that their familiarity with ASEAN was limited to basic historical facts (i.e. about ASEAN's establishment, membership, and other basic facts). Some FGD participants argued that although there was significant media coverage of ASEAN, much of it remained superficial without going deeper into what really goes on in the association. Some NGO/CSO representatives also claimed that their familiarity with ASEAN was sectoral and primarily related to areas that coincided with their advocacy work (e.g. related to human rights).

Feeling of being an ASEAN citizen (Question 6)

Figure 5: Feeling of Being an ASEAN Citizen



Survey respondents were given the following statement: ‘I feel that I am an ASEAN citizen.’ They were then asked to choose their level of agreement from among four options: ‘very much’, ‘moderately’, ‘somewhat’, and ‘no’. Of the 302 participants, 300 answered this question. The majority, 203 respondents (67.67%), stated they felt ‘very much’ as ASEAN citizens, followed by 75 respondents (25.00%) who answered ‘moderately’ (Figure 5). Only eight respondents (2.67%) did not agree with the statement.

When asked to elaborate during the FGDs, participants generally felt that a sense of solidarity existed among the countries and citizens in the region. Some also emphasised their feeling of being better accepted in other ASEAN societies than in societies outside the region. Despite giving generally positive feedback, representatives from the NGO/CSO and business communities took a more cautious approach to the issue. Some of the NGO participants, for example, argued that their sense of belonging towards ASEAN depended on the extent to which the association could help advance their interests. Similarly, although accepting the idea of ASEAN citizenship, some of the business community representatives felt that a direct, positive impact of ASEAN cooperation had been largely absent.

Aspirations, concerns, and hopes for ASEAN (Question 7)

With simple ‘yes’ or ‘no’ options, respondents were asked whether they had any aspirations, concerns, or hopes for ASEAN. The respondents were also allowed to provide open-ended feedback.

An overwhelming 240 respondents (81.08%) answered ‘yes’ and gave feedback. Generally, their concerns, aspirations, and hopes can be summarised into five key areas: emerging regional issues (e.g. the South China Sea, terrorism, human rights violations, the consolidation of democracy in the region, the widening income gap, narrowing development gaps among and within ASEAN Member States, corruption, and sustainable economic growth)¹;

- the necessity for ASEAN to undertake major reforms, especially regarding its major principles (e.g. non-interference), often summed up as the ASEAN Way;
- the deepening of ASEAN integration (including making many of its agreements more binding), with many referring to the experiences of the European Union;

¹ One area of concern about the ASEAN Economic Community that often appeared in the feedback was the ‘free flow of labour’. This was linked to the argument that Indonesia lacks the capable human resources to compete with its counterparts in ASEAN.

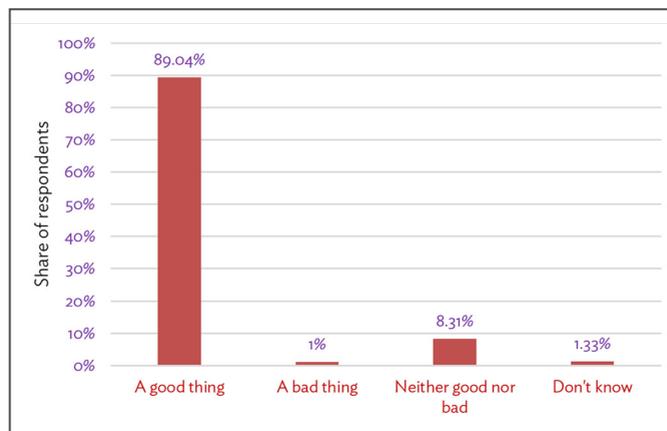
- ASEAN unity and centrality and ASEAN’s standing in the global community; and
- in-depth socialisation of ASEAN and its activities.

The outcomes of the FGDs also reflect the additional comments made by the participants. The FGD participants, especially those from NGOs, added that ASEAN lacked teeth in implementing its key agreements, such as the ASEAN Charter. They often referred to ASEAN’s inability to address, for instance, gross violations of human rights, such as those experienced by the Rohingya community in Myanmar.

Indonesia’s membership of ASEAN (Question 8)

Respondents were asked their opinion of their country’s membership in ASEAN. The four possible answers were ‘a good thing’, ‘a bad thing’, ‘neither good nor bad’ and ‘don’t know’. Of the 303 participants, 301 answered the question. Among these, 268 respondents (89.04%) considered Indonesia’s membership in ASEAN to be ‘a good thing’ (Figure 6). Only three respondents (1.00%) saw it as ‘a bad thing’, 25 respondents (8.31%) answered ‘neither good nor bad’, and four respondents (1.33%) responded with ‘don’t know’. The survey outcomes were consistent with the feedback received from the FGD participants.

Figure 6: Opinions on Indonesia’s Membership of ASEAN

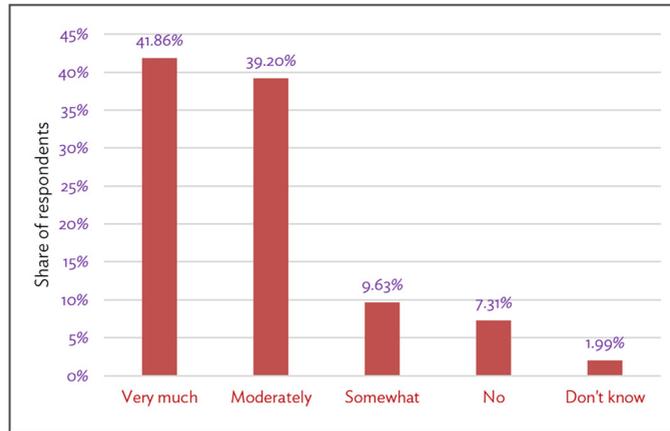


Benefit from being a member of ASEAN (Question 9)

Respondents were asked whether they thought Indonesia had benefited from being a member of ASEAN. The five possible answer choices were ‘very much’, ‘moderately’, ‘somewhat’, ‘no’, and ‘don’t know’. Of the 301 respondents who answered the question, 126 respondents (41.86%) stated the country had ‘very much’ benefited, whereas 118 (39.20%) answered ‘moderately’ (Figure 7). Another 29 respondents (9.63%) opted for ‘somewhat’, and 22 respondents (7.31%) opted for ‘no’. Only six respondents (1.99%)

answered 'don't know' to this question. These survey outcomes were consistent with the feedback received from the FGD participants.

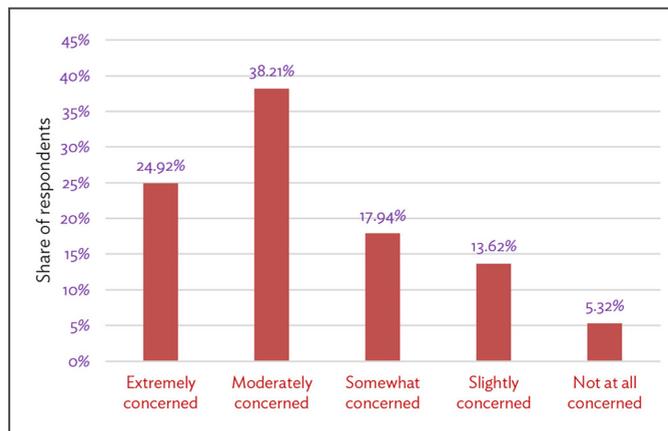
Figure 7: Has Indonesia Benefited from Being a Member of ASEAN?



Concern if Indonesia were to leave ASEAN (Question 10)

Respondents were asked how they would feel if Indonesia were to leave ASEAN. They could choose 'extremely concerned', 'moderately concerned', 'somewhat concerned', 'slightly concerned', or 'not at all concerned'. Of the respondents, 75 (24.92%) indicated they would feel 'extremely concerned' and 115 respondents (38.21%) stated they would be 'moderately concerned' (Figure 8). Meanwhile, 54 respondents (17.94%) answered 'somewhat concerned' and 41 (13.62%) replied 'slightly concerned'. Finally, 16 people (5.32%) said they would feel 'not at all concerned'.

Figure 8: Concern if Indonesia were to leave ASEAN



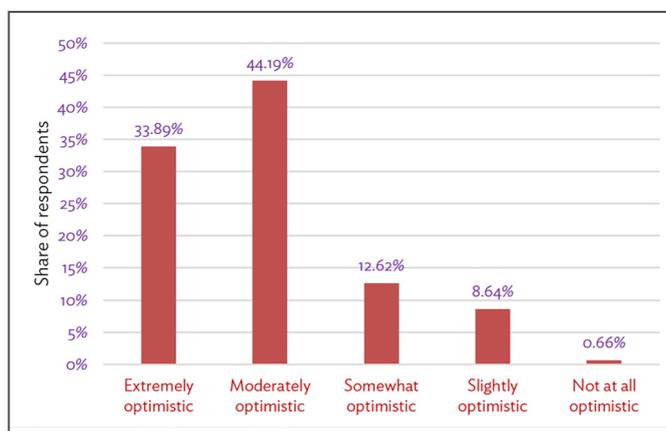
In response to the three questions above, most of the FGD participants believed that Indonesia's membership in ASEAN was good since it brought many benefits to the country. The participants saw that many opportunities had emerged from the membership, be they political, economic, or social benefits. With a population of more than 250 million people, Indonesia is considered to be the largest beneficiary of the regional cooperation. Therefore, participants said they would feel quite concerned if Indonesia were ever to leave ASEAN. According to them, the issue was not that ASEAN had not brought any benefits. On the contrary, they indicated that Indonesia should 'step up its game in order to get something out of ASEAN' and noted that Indonesian membership in ASEAN was a form of leverage that had not been utilised effectively. This view mostly came from the business community, who said they perceived Indonesia as an object or market instead of as a big player in ASEAN.

During the FGDs, there were also some dissenting voices. Some considered Indonesia's membership in ASEAN as something that was 'neither good nor bad'. This group of people thought that Indonesia would be able to stand alone since the country was not dependent on ASEAN. Accordingly, they said that if Indonesia were no longer a member of ASEAN, they would not lose anything.

Opinions on the future of ASEAN (Question 11)

Respondents were asked whether they were optimistic or pessimistic about the future of ASEAN. The five options were 'extremely optimistic', 'moderately optimistic', 'somewhat optimistic', 'slightly optimistic', and 'not at all optimistic'. Among the respondents, 102 (33.89%) were 'extremely optimistic', 133 (44.19%) were 'moderately optimistic', 38 (12.62%) were 'somewhat optimistic', and 26 (8.64%) were 'slightly optimistic' (Figure 9). Only two respondents (0.66%) said they were 'not at all optimistic'.

Figure 9: Optimism for the Future of ASEAN

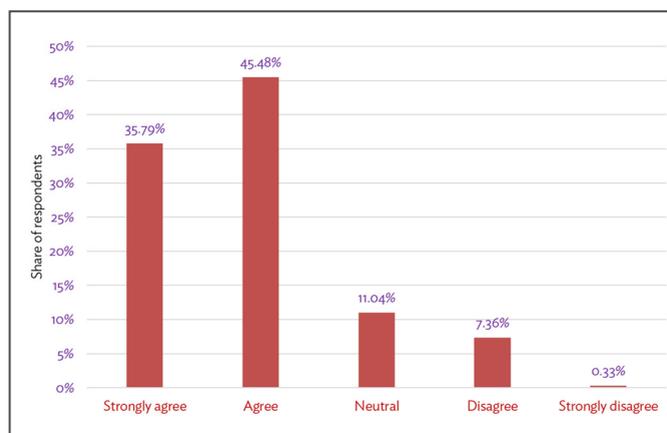


Some of the FGD participants who were optimistic about the future of ASEAN believed that ASEAN had potential, especially in its role as a regional economic bloc. However, those who were not optimistic said they were worried about the existing issues within ASEAN, which they thought would hamper the future of regional integration. Some of the issues mentioned were human rights, humanitarian crises, the non-punishment nature of ASEAN, economic disparity, and the lack of preparedness of ASEAN youth to compete in the ASEAN Economic Community era.

Media coverage of ASEAN (Question 12)

The survey respondents were next asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the following statement: ‘The media (newspapers, radio, television, and online news) does not have enough coverage of ASEAN’s progress, achievements, and challenges.’ The five possible responses were ‘strongly agree’, ‘agree’, ‘neutral’, ‘disagree’, and ‘strongly disagree’. Of the 302 respondents, 299 answered this question. In response, 136 (45.48%) agreed that the media did not have enough coverage of ASEAN. This was followed by 107 respondents (35.79%) who indicated ‘strongly agree’, 33 (11.04%) who chose ‘neutral’, and 22 (7.36%) who chose ‘strongly disagree’ (Figure 10). Only one respondent answered ‘strongly disagree’.

Figure 10: The Media Does Not Have Enough Coverage of ASEAN



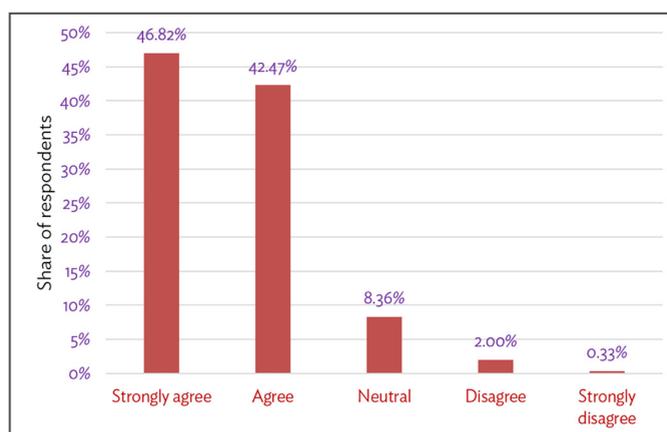
When asked more deeply about the issue during the FGDs, participants felt that the national media in Indonesia generally focused on domestic rather than regional issues. Moreover, the FGD participants added that given the need of the media to attract more readers or viewers, it tended to report sensational and often negative news. They noted that ASEAN was often considered to be not controversial enough by the media and so only received coverage when incidents occurred, such as those related to the South

China Sea or border conflicts. Consequently, the FGD participants felt that they did not know enough about the actual progress, achievements, and challenges faced by ASEAN.

Using school textbooks to socialise and educate youth (Question 13)

Respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the use of school textbooks to socialise and educate young people about ASEAN’s progress, achievements, and challenges. The five choices were ‘strongly agree’, ‘agree’, ‘neutral’, ‘disagree’, and ‘strongly disagree’. Of the 302 respondents, 299 answered this question. Of these, 140 respondents (46.82%) stated that they strongly agreed with using schoolbooks (Figure 11). Meanwhile, 127 respondents (42.47%) opted for ‘agree’, 25 (8.36%) chose ‘neutral’, and 6 (2.00%) chose ‘disagree’. Only one respondent answered ‘strongly disagree’.

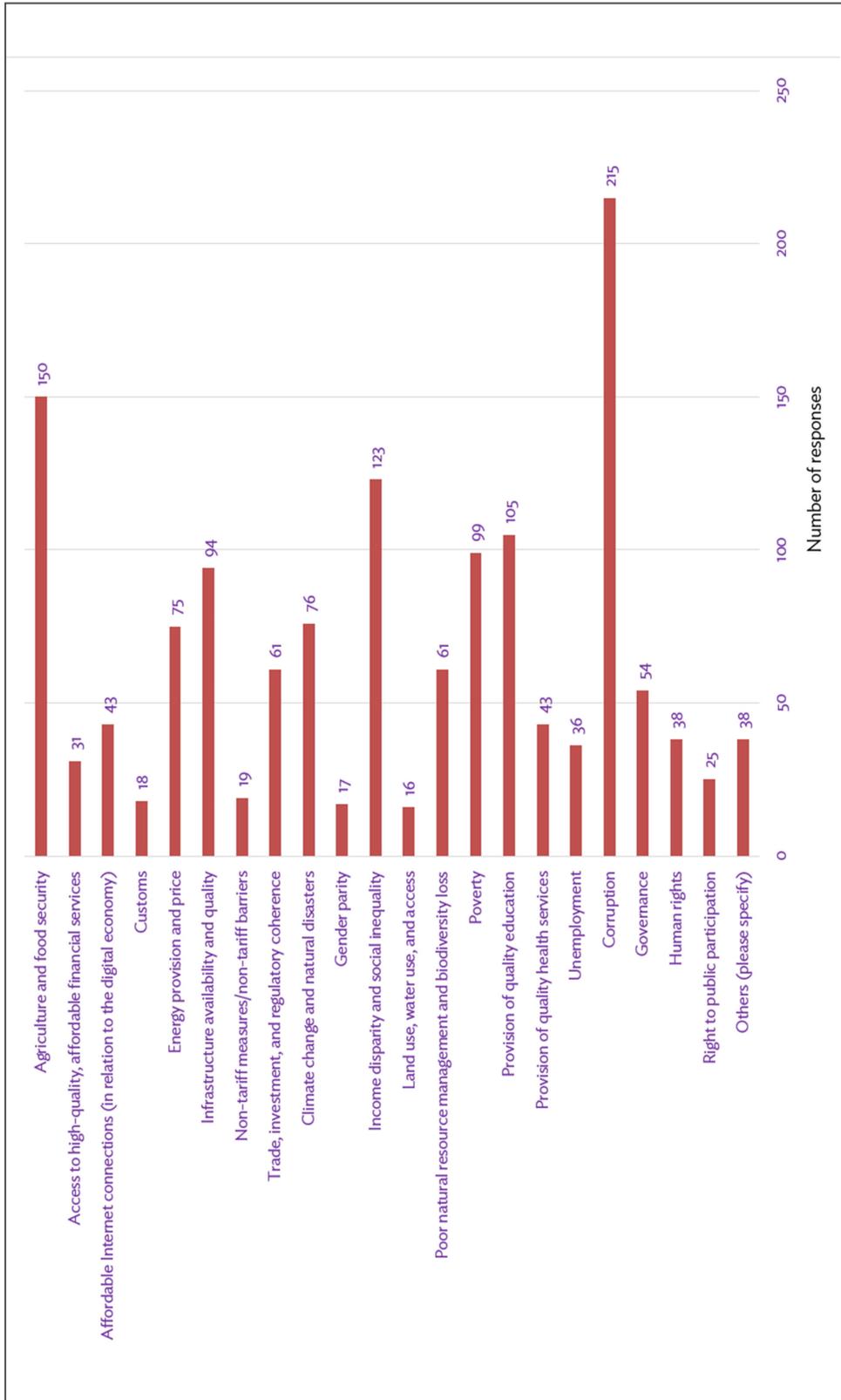
Figure 11: Using School Textbooks to Educate Young People about ASEAN



Top five pressing problems facing Indonesia at present and until 2025 (Question 14)

The survey respondents were next asked their opinions on the five most pressing problems facing Indonesia today and until 2025. Twenty-one pressing problems were available for respondents to choose from, and these were subdivided into three categories: economic issues (eight problems), sociocultural issues (nine problems), and governance and political issues (four problems) (Figure 12). Respondents were also given the choice of ‘others’, for which they were requested to provide details.

Figure 12: Top Five Pressing Problems Facing Indonesia until 2025



Of the 302 respondents, 215 selected corruption as one of the top five pressing problems facing Indonesia until 2025. This was followed by agriculture and food security, which was selected by 150 respondents; income disparity and social inequality by 123 respondents; provision of quality education; by 105 respondents; and poverty by 99 respondents. Only 16 respondents selected land use, water use, and access as one of their top five pressing problems. Meanwhile, 38 respondents chose ‘others’ and specified their own pressing problems. Prominent among these were the presence of internal conflicts and tensions not only within the country but also among government institutions; increasing issues related to ethnicity, religion, race, and intergroup relations; terrorism and radicalism; and immorality among the younger generation.

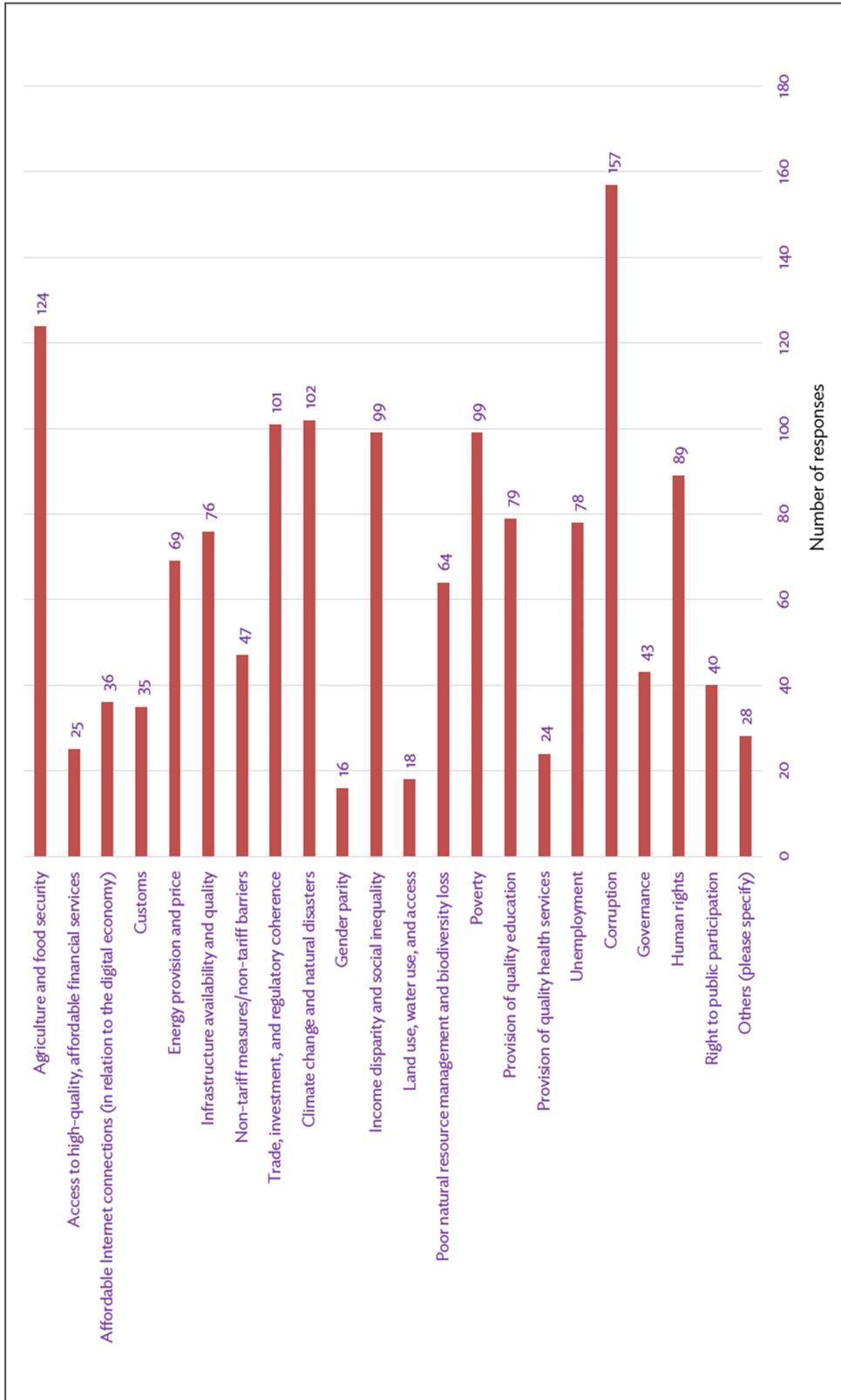
Deeper discussions during the FGDs revealed that with regard to agriculture and food security, participants felt the agriculture sector’s contribution to Indonesia’s gross domestic product was decreasing. It was further noted that this phenomenon was being seen not only in Indonesia and within ASEAN but around the globe. The FGD participants also emphasised corruption and governance issues, pointing out that the former had become widespread in Indonesia, while the latter was the key to eradicating corruption and human rights violations. Participants from the business sector were also keen for these issues to be addressed to encourage a more attractive business environment in Indonesia.

Top five pressing problems facing the ASEAN Community at present and until 2025 (Question 15)

Respondents were asked what they thought were the top five most pressing problems facing the ASEAN Community and region today and until 2025 that should be tackled collectively by all ASEAN Member States. As in the previous question, 21 pressing problems were available for respondents to choose from, and these were subdivided into three categories: economic issues (eight problems), sociocultural issues (nine problems), and governance and political issues (four problems). Respondents were again given the choice of ‘others’ and requested to provide details. All respondents answered this question.

Of the respondents, 124 selected agriculture and food security as one of the top five pressing problems (Figure 13). This was followed by corruption, selected by 157 respondents; climate change and natural disasters by 102 respondents; and trade, investment, and regulatory coherence by 101 respondents.

Figure 13: Top Five Pressing Problems Facing the ASEAN Community at Present and until 2025



The issue of poverty and the issue of income disparity and social inequality each received votes from 99 respondents, and thus stood equally as the fifth most pressing problems facing the region. Only 16 respondents listed gender parity, while 28 respondents selected ‘others’ and provided their own pressing problems, which included maritime and territorial border issues, mass immigration, terrorism, religious conflicts and tensions, and transnational crimes.

When asked more deeply about the issue during the FGDs, the participants suggested that better natural resource management would lead to exports of higher value products. The participants highlighted that agriculture and food security were important because the price of rice tended to fluctuate, and they mentioned there had been cases of starvation in remote rural areas due to these price fluctuations. Participants also felt that with regard to income disparity and social inequality, a lack of common perceptions on wages had led to greater income inequality, and this had then led to the emergence of an illegal workforce throughout the region.

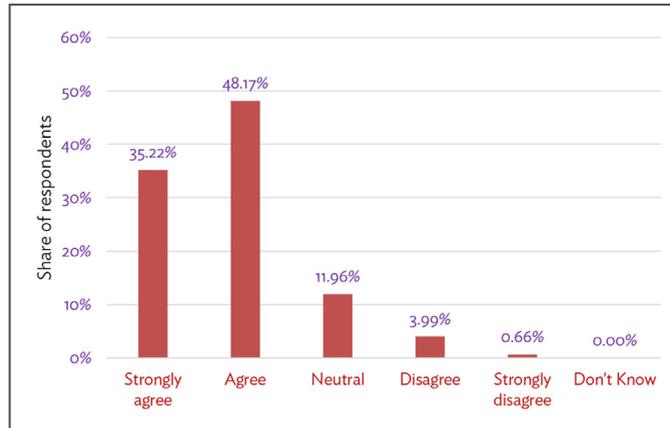
With regard to trade, investment, and regulatory coherence, the FGD participants from the business community noted the prevalence of overlapping regulations and the poor enforcement of regulations in Indonesia. Another issue raised by the FGD participants in general was poverty, and many urged ASEAN Member States to do more in terms of sharing best practices to address this issue.

Hopes and aspirations for ASEAN by 2025 (Question 16)

Respondents were asked for their opinions regarding what they hoped would actually happen in ASEAN by 2025. They were presented with 15 separate statements and for each statement were given the options ‘strongly agree’, ‘agree’, ‘neutral’, ‘disagree’, ‘strongly disagree’, and ‘don’t know’. Respondents were also given the choice of ‘others’ and were requested to provide details. All 302 respondents answered this question.

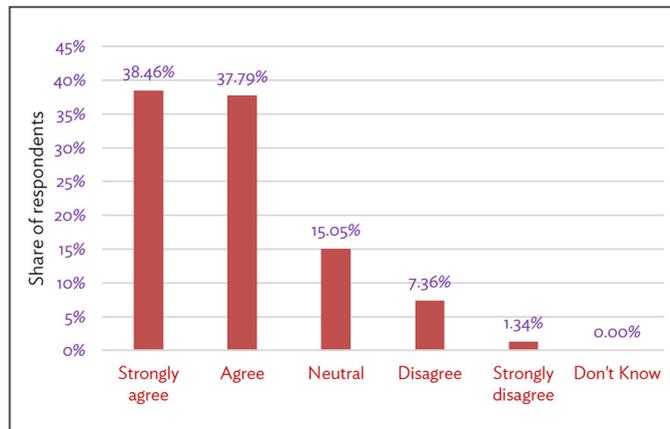
Statement 1 was: ‘ASEAN is a region where goods, services, and businesses can move easily among countries in the region.’ Of the respondents, 145 (48.17%) chose ‘agree’, 106 respondents (35.22%) answered ‘strongly agree’, and 36 respondents (11.96%) chose ‘neutral’ (Figure 14). Only two respondents selected ‘strongly disagree’.

Figure 14: ASEAN Is a Region Where Goods, Services, and Businesses Can Move Easily among Countries in the Region



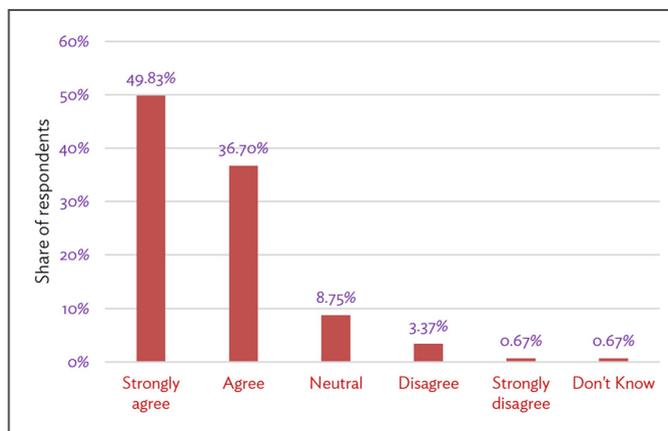
Statement 2 proposed: ‘ASEAN is a region where regulations and procedures make it easy for skilled workers and professionals to find work in other countries in ASEAN.’ For this statement, 115 respondents (38.46%) chose ‘strongly agree’, followed by 113 respondents (37.79%) for ‘agree’; and 45 respondents (15.05%) for ‘neutral’ (Figure 15). Only four respondents (1.34%) selected ‘strongly disagree’.

Figure 15: ASEAN Is a Region Where Regulations and Procedures Make It Easy for Skilled Workers and Professionals to Find Work in Other Countries in ASEAN



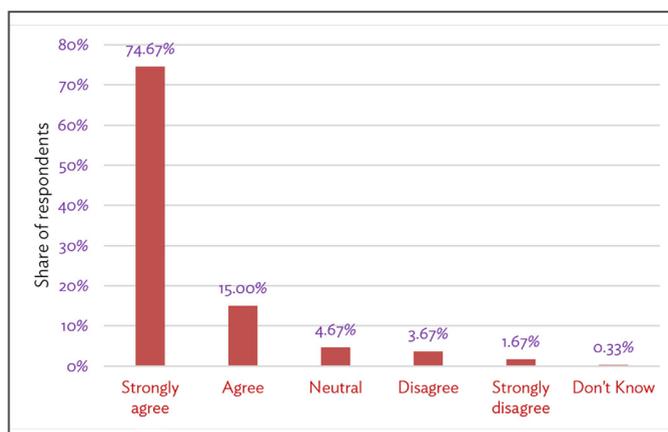
Statement 3 was: ‘ASEAN and its member countries provide basic social protection and health services to migrant and temporary workers from other countries in ASEAN’. For this statement, 148 respondents (49.83%) chose ‘strongly agree’, 109 (36.70%) chose ‘agree’, and 26 (8.75%) opted for ‘neutral’ (Figure 16). Only two respondents (0.67%) selected ‘strongly disagree’.

Figure 16: ASEAN and Its Member Countries Provide Basic Social Protection and Health Services to Migrant and Temporary Workers from Other Countries in ASEAN



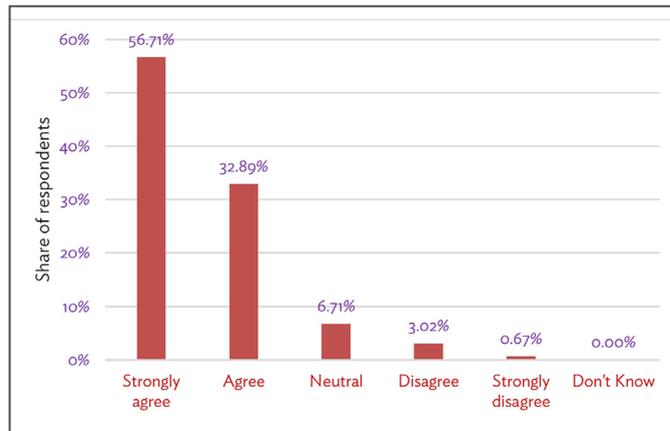
Statement 4 was: ‘ASEAN is a region of good governance and very much less corruption.’ An overwhelming 224 respondents (74.67%) opted for ‘strongly agree’ (Figure 17). This was followed by 45 respondents (15.00%) who answered ‘agree’ and 14 (4.67%) who chose ‘neutral’. Five respondents (1.67%) selected ‘strongly disagree’.

Figure 17: ASEAN is a Region of Good Governance and Very Much Less Corruption



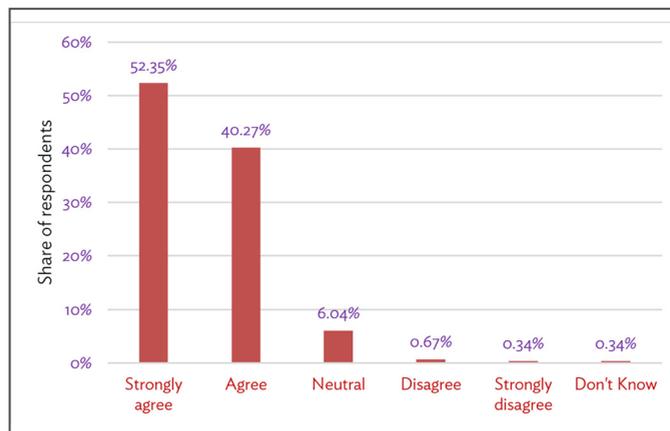
Statement 5 was: ‘ASEAN is a region where it is easy to physically move around by roads, railways, air, and shipping’. For this statement, 169 respondents (56.71%) chose ‘strongly agree’, 98 (32.89%) answered ‘agree’, and 20 (6.71%) chose ‘neutral’ (Figure 18). Two respondents (0.67%) answered ‘strongly disagree’.

Figure 18: ASEAN is a Region Where It Is Easy to Physically Move Around by Roads, Railways, Air, and Shipping



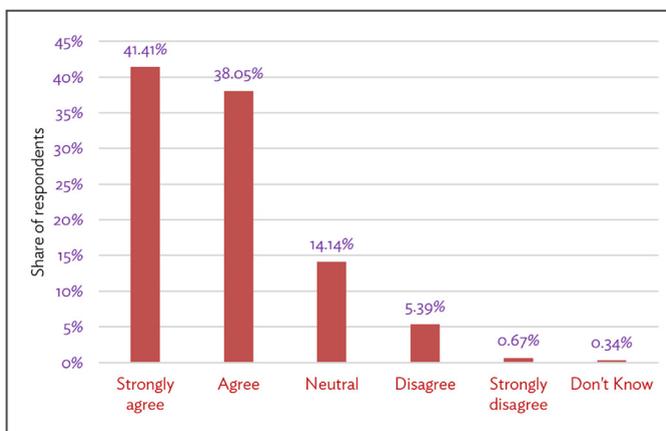
Statement 6 stated: ‘The ASEAN Community is a region where people and businesses can digitally interact and communicate easily with one another.’ Of the respondents, 156 (52.35%) strongly agreed with the statement. This was followed by 120 respondents (40.27%) who answered ‘agree’ and 18 respondents (6.04%) who opted for ‘neutral’ (Figure 19). Only one respondent selected ‘strongly disagree’.

Figure 19: The ASEAN Community Is a Region Where People and Businesses Can Digitally Interact and Communicate Easily with One Another



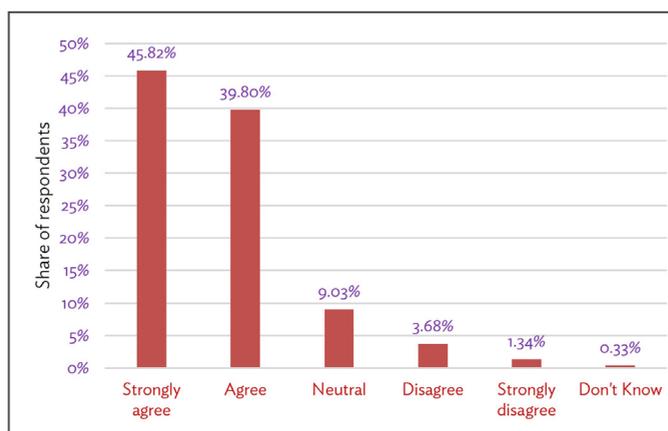
Statement 7 was: ‘ASEAN peoples are deeply aware of the ASEAN Community and its programmes.’ For this statement, 123 respondents (41.41%) strongly agreed, 113 respondents (38.05%) answered ‘agree’, and 42 respondents (14.14%) answered ‘neutral’ (Figure 20). Two respondents chose ‘strongly disagree’.

Figure 20: ASEAN Peoples Are Deeply Aware of the ASEAN Community and Its Programmes



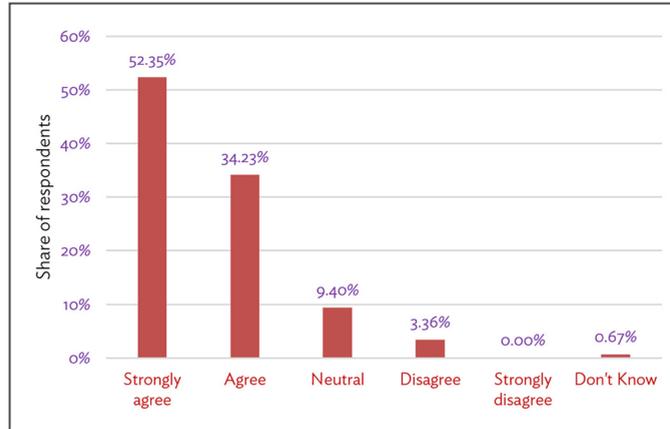
Statement 8 proposed: ‘The ASEAN Community deeply engages and benefits its peoples.’ Of the respondents, 137 (45.82%) strongly agreed, while 119 (39.80%) answered ‘agree’, and 27 (9.03%) answered ‘neutral’ (Figure 21). Only four respondents (1.34%) selected ‘strongly disagree’.

Figure 21: The ASEAN Community Deeply Engages and Benefits Its Peoples



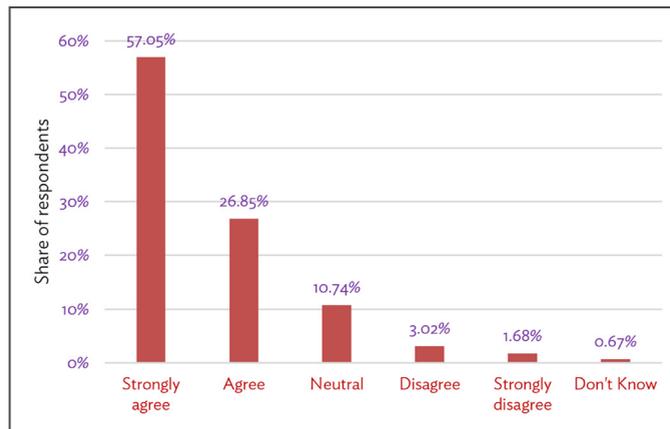
Statement 9 posited: ‘ASEAN pushes for equitable access to opportunities for ASEAN peoples.’ For this statement, 156 respondents (52.35%) strongly agreed, 102 (34.23%) answered ‘agree’, and 28 (9.40%) chose ‘neutral’ (Figure 22). None of the respondents selected ‘strongly disagree’, although 10 respondents (3.36%) chose ‘disagree’.

Figure 22: ASEAN Pushes for Equitable Access to Opportunities for ASEAN Peoples



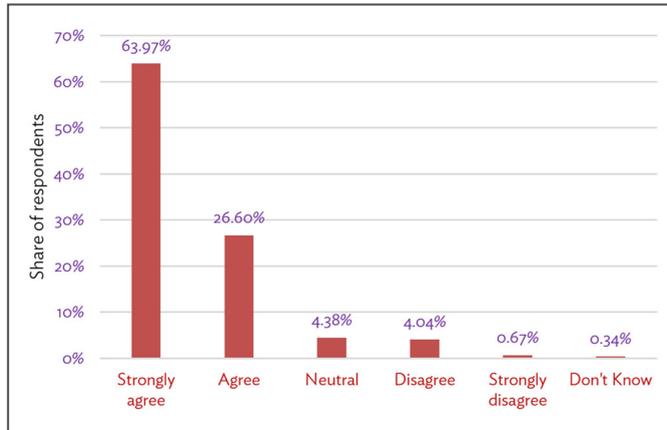
Statement 10 proposed: ‘ASEAN and its member countries effectively protect human rights and minorities in the region.’ Of the respondents, 170 (57.05%) strongly agreed with the statement, while 80 (26.85%) answered ‘agree’, and 32 (10.74%) opted for ‘neutral’ (Figure 23). Only five respondents (1.68%) selected ‘strongly disagree’.

Figure 23: ASEAN and Its Member Countries Effectively Protect Human Rights and Minorities in the Region



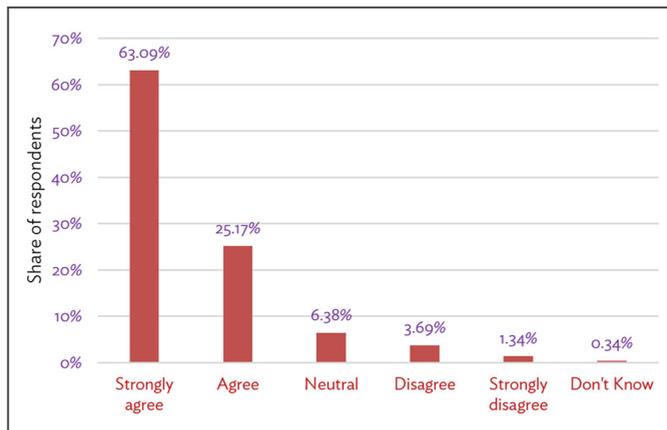
Statement 11 was: ‘ASEAN and its member countries effectively conserve and sustainably manage the region’s biodiversity and natural resources’. For this statement, 190 respondents (63.97%) strongly agreed, while 79 respondents (26.60%) answered ‘agree’, and 13 respondents (4.38%) answered ‘neutral’ (Figure 24). Two respondents (0.67%) selected ‘strongly disagree’.

Figure 24: ASEAN and Its Member Countries Effectively Conserve and Sustainably Manage the Region’s Biodiversity and Natural Resources



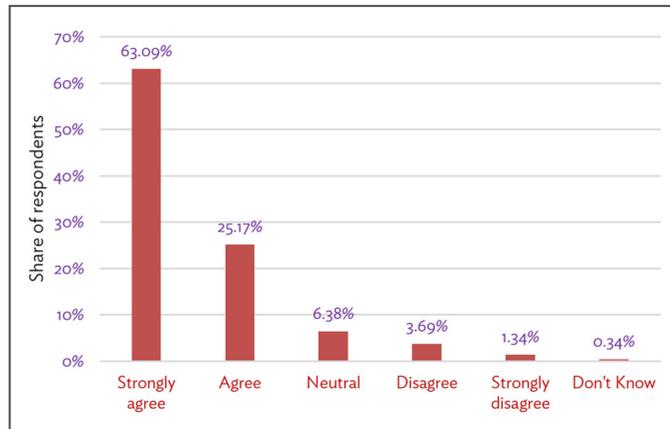
Statement 12 proposed: ‘ASEAN major cities are less polluted and more liveable than they are today.’ Of the respondents, 188 (63.09%) strongly agreed with the statement, 75 (25.17%) answered ‘agree’, and 19 (6.38%) answered ‘neutral’ (Figure 25). Only four respondents (1.34%) chose ‘strongly disagree’.

Figure 25: ASEAN Major Cities Are Less Polluted and More Liveable Than They Are Today



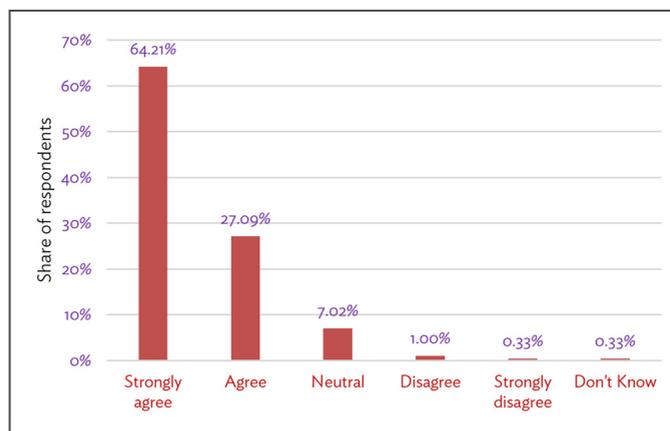
Statement 13 was: ‘ASEAN and its member countries are very much able to anticipate, respond, and recover faster and concertedly together from natural disasters and health hazards in the region.’ An overwhelming 167 respondents (56.04%) strongly agreed with this statement, while 109 respondents (36.58%) answered ‘agree’, and 12 (4.03%) opted for ‘neutral’ (Figure 26). Only one respondent (0.34%) selected ‘strongly disagree’.

Figure 26: ASEAN and Its Member Countries Are Very Much Able to Anticipate, Respond, and Recover Faster and Concertedly Together from Natural Disasters and Health Hazards in the Region



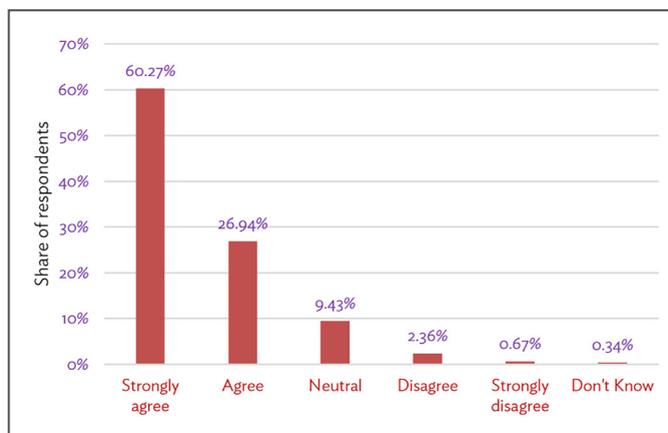
Statement 14 was: ‘ASEAN has a strong voice and is an important player in global negotiations and forums.’ As many as 192 respondents (64.21%) strongly agreed with this statement (Figure 27). Meanwhile, 81 respondents (27.09%) answered ‘agree’ and 21 (7.02%) answered ‘neutral’. One respondent (0.33%) answered ‘strongly disagree’.

Figure 27: ASEAN Has a Strong Voice and Is an Important Player in Global Negotiations and Forums



Lastly, statement 15 proposed: ‘ASEAN deeply engages powers in the region and the world to ensure peace in the region and the Asia-Pacific region.’ An overwhelming 179 respondents (60.27%) strongly agreed with this statement (Figure 28). This was followed by 80 respondents (26.94%) who answered ‘agree’ and 28 respondents (9.43%) who answered ‘neutral’. Only two respondents (0.67%) selected ‘strongly disagree’.

Figure 28: ASEAN Deeply Engages Powers in the Region and the World to Ensure Peace in the Region and the Asia-Pacific Region



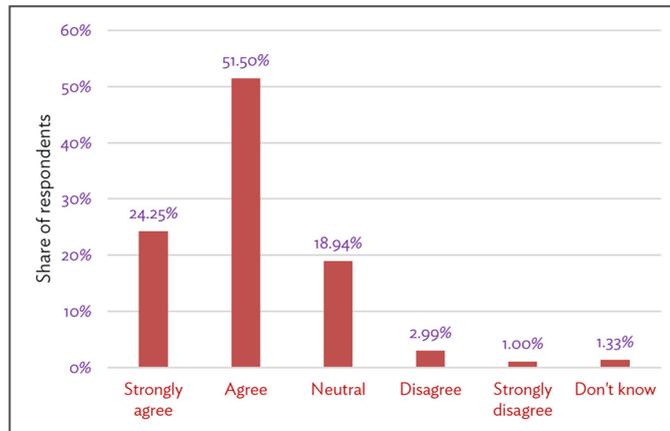
In the FGDs, the business group was most prominent with the hope that by 2025, ASEAN would have a strong voice and be an important player in global negotiations and forums. They also hoped ASEAN would become a region where goods, services, and businesses can move around easily. They were keen for ASEAN to become a commonwealth and argued that the region could become more prosperous if goods and services were more easily available. The discussion participants further expressed their hopes that by 2025, ASEAN would push for equitable access for all ASEAN citizens. They wanted more Indonesian businesses to explore ASEAN markets and urged for the acceleration of standardised accreditation systems to allow Indonesian professionals to move freely throughout the region.

What is likely to happen by 2025? (Question 17)

Respondents were asked for their opinions on what they believed and expected would actually happen in ASEAN by 2025. They were presented with 15 statements. For each statement, respondents were asked to choose ‘strongly agree’, ‘agree’, ‘neutral’, ‘disagree’, ‘strongly disagree’ or ‘don’t know’. They were also given the choice of ‘others’, for which they were asked to provide details. All 303 respondents answered this question.

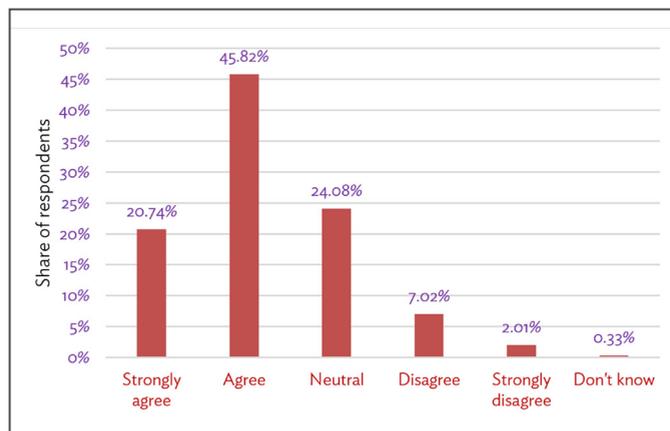
Statement 1 proposed: ‘ASEAN is a region where goods, services, and businesses can move easily among countries in the region.’ For this, 155 respondents (51.50%) answered ‘agree’ (Figure 29). This was followed by 73 respondents (24.25%) who answered ‘strongly agree’ and 57 (18.94%) who answered ‘neutral’. Three respondents (1%) chose ‘strongly disagree’.

Figure 29: ASEAN is a Region Where Goods, Services, and Businesses Can Move Easily among Countries in the Region



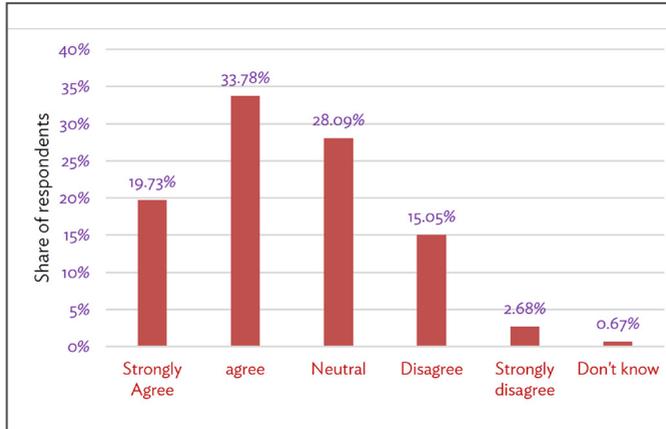
Statement 2 was: ‘ASEAN is a region where regulations and procedures make it easy for skilled workers and professionals to find work in other countries in ASEAN.’ Of the respondents, 62 (20.74%) answered ‘strongly agree’, 137 (45.82%) answered ‘agree’, and 72 (24.08%) answered ‘neutral’ (Figure 30). Six respondents (2.01%) chose ‘strongly disagree’.

Figure 30: ASEAN Is a Region Where Regulations and Procedures Make It Easy for Skilled Workers and Professionals to Find Work in Other Countries in ASEAN



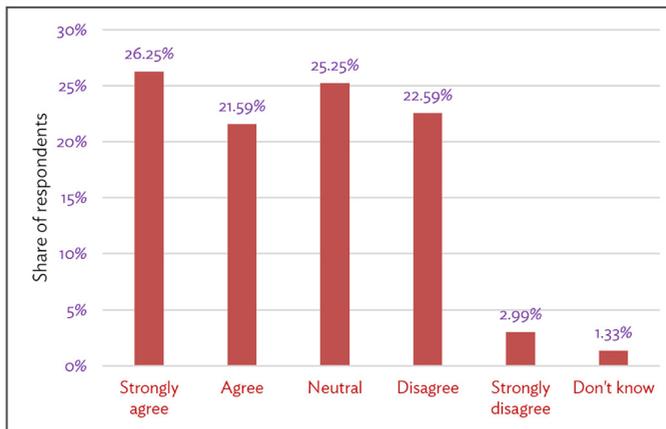
Statement 3 proposed: ‘ASEAN and its member countries provide basic social protection and health services to migrant and temporary workers from other countries in ASEAN.’ For this statement, 59 respondents (19.73%) replied ‘strongly agree’ (Figure 31). Meanwhile, 101 respondents (33.78%) answered ‘agree’, and 84 respondents (28.09%) answered ‘neutral’. Eight respondents (2.68%) selected ‘strongly disagree’.

Figure 31: ASEAN and Its Member Countries Provide Basic Social Protection and Health Services to Migrant and Temporary Workers from Other Countries in ASEAN



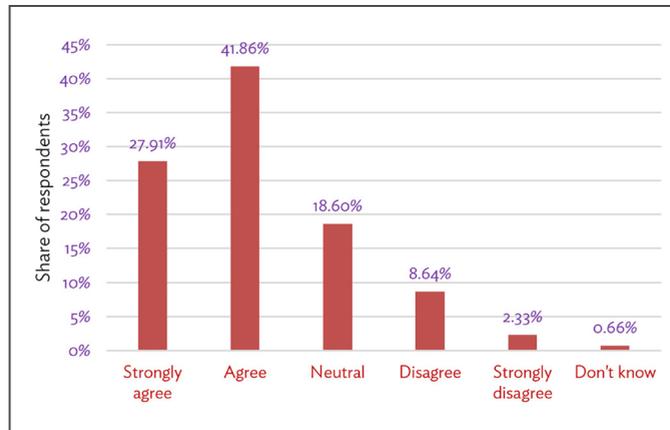
Statement 4 was: ‘ASEAN is a region of good governance and very much less corruption.’ Of the respondents, 79 (26.25%) strongly agreed (Figure 32). Meanwhile, 65 respondents answered ‘agree’ (21.59%), and 76 (25.25%) answered ‘neutral’. Nine respondents (2.99%) selected ‘strongly disagree’.

Figure 32: ASEAN Is a Region of Good Governance and Very Much Less Corruption



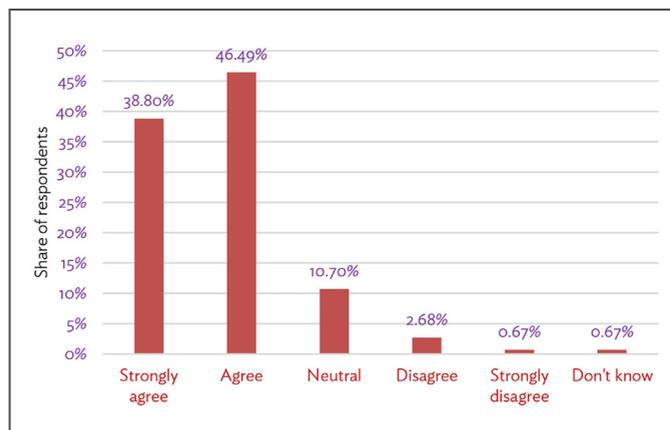
Statement 5 proposed: ‘ASEAN is a region where it is easy to physically move around by roads, railways, air, and shipping.’ Of the respondents, 84 (27.91%) answered ‘strongly agree’, 126 (41.86%) answered ‘agree’, and 56 (18.60%) answered ‘neutral’ (Figure 33). Seven respondents (2.33%) answered ‘strongly disagree’.

Figure 33: ASEAN Is a Region Where It Is Easy to Physically Move Around by Roads, Railways, Air, and Shipping



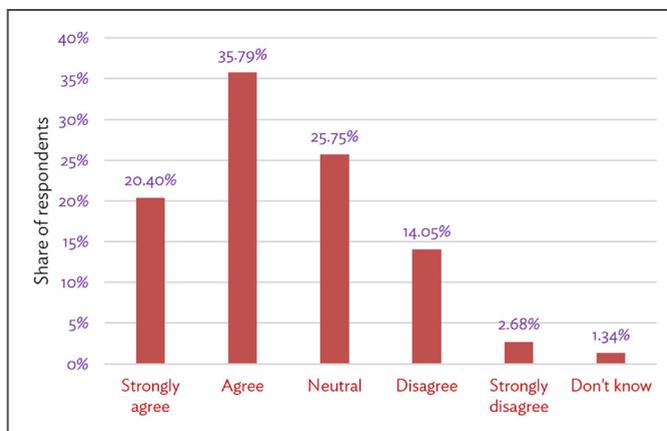
Statement 6 proposed: ‘The ASEAN Community is a region where people and businesses can digitally interact and communicate easily with one another.’ For this statement, 116 respondents (38.80%) strongly agreed (Figure 34). Meanwhile, 139 respondents (46.49%) answered ‘agree’, and 32 respondents (10.70%) answered ‘neutral’. Only two respondents (0.67%) selected ‘strongly disagree’.

Figure 34: The ASEAN Community Is a Region Where People and Businesses Can Digitally Interact and Communicate Easily with One Another



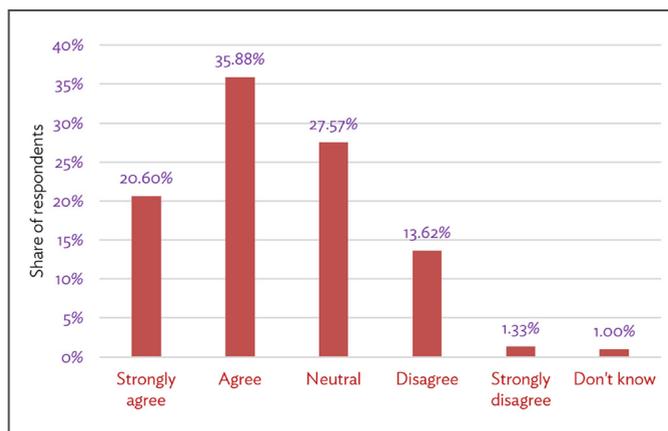
Statement 7 proposed: ‘ASEAN peoples are deeply aware of the ASEAN Community and its programmes.’ Of the respondents, 61 (20.40%) strongly agreed (Figure 35). Meanwhile, 107 (35.79%) answered ‘agree’, and 77 (25.75%) answered ‘neutral’. Only eight respondents (2.68%) chose ‘strongly disagree’.

Figure 35: ASEAN People Are Deeply Aware of the ASEAN Community and its Programmes



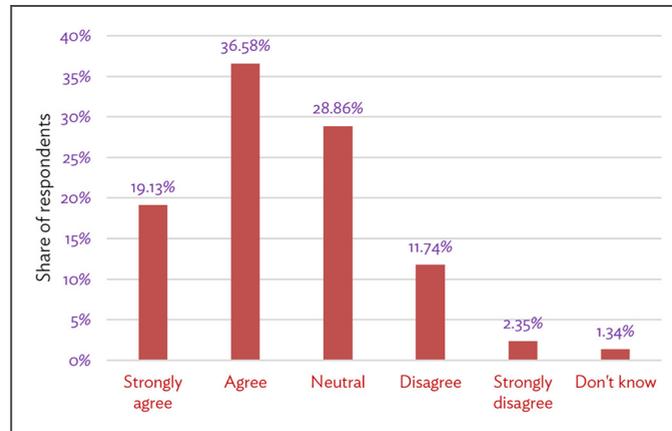
Statement 8 proposed: ‘The ASEAN Community deeply engages and benefits its peoples.’ For this statement, 62 respondents (20.60%) replied ‘strongly agree’, 108 respondents (35.88%) answered ‘agree’, and 83 respondents (27.57%) answered ‘neutral’ (Figure 36). Meanwhile, four respondents (1.33%) chose ‘strongly disagree’.

Figure 36: The ASEAN Community Deeply Engages and Benefits Its Peoples



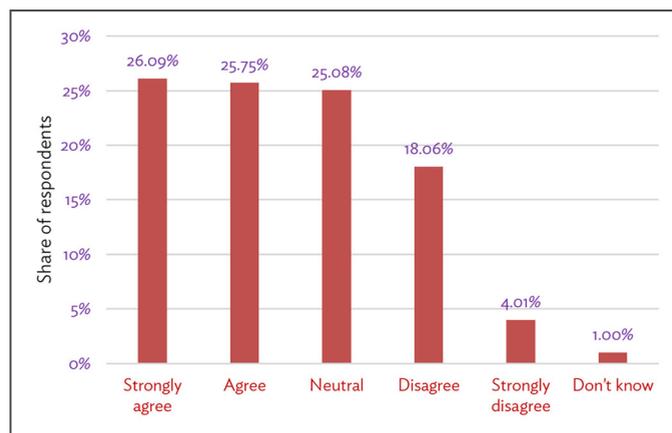
Statement 9 was ‘ASEAN pushes for equitable access to opportunities for ASEAN peoples.’ Of the respondents, 57 (19.13%) strongly agreed, while 109 (36.58%) answered ‘agree’, and 86 (28.86%) answered ‘neutral’ (Figure 37). Seven respondents (2.35%) selected ‘strongly disagree’ and 35 (11.74%) selected ‘disagree’.

Figure 37: ASEAN Pushes for Equitable Access to Opportunities for ASEAN Peoples



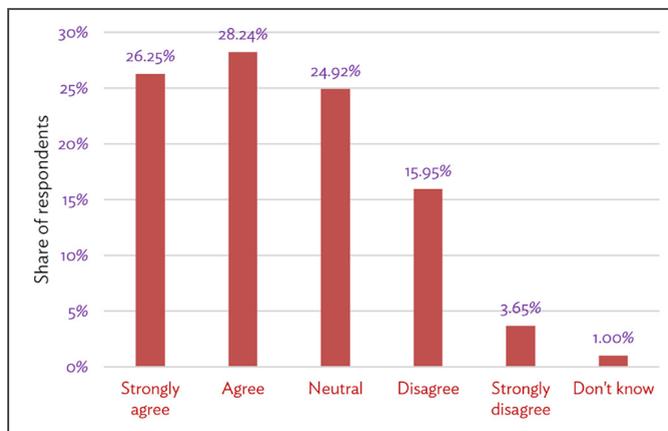
Statement 10 proposed: ‘ASEAN and its member countries effectively protect human rights and minorities in the region.’ Of the respondents, 78 (26.09%) strongly agreed with the statement, while 77 (25.75%) chose ‘agree’, 75 (25.08%) answered ‘neutral’, and 12 (4.01%) selected ‘strongly disagree’ (Figure 38).

Figure 38: ASEAN and Its Member Countries Effectively Protect Human Rights and Minorities in the Region



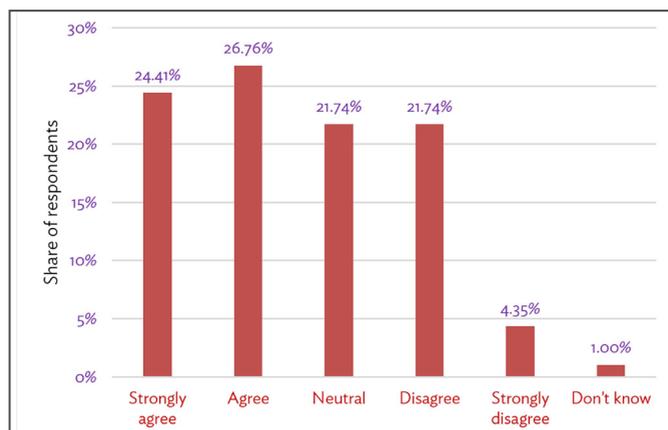
Statement 11 was: ‘ASEAN and its member countries effectively conserve and sustainably manage the region’s biodiversity and natural resources.’ Of the respondents, 79 (26.25%) strongly agreed, 85 (28.24%) answered ‘agree’, and 75 (24.92%) answered ‘neutral’ (Figure 39). Eleven respondents (3.65%) answered ‘strongly disagree’.

Figure 39: ASEAN and Its Member Countries Effectively Conserve and Sustainably Manage the Region’s Biodiversity and Natural Resources



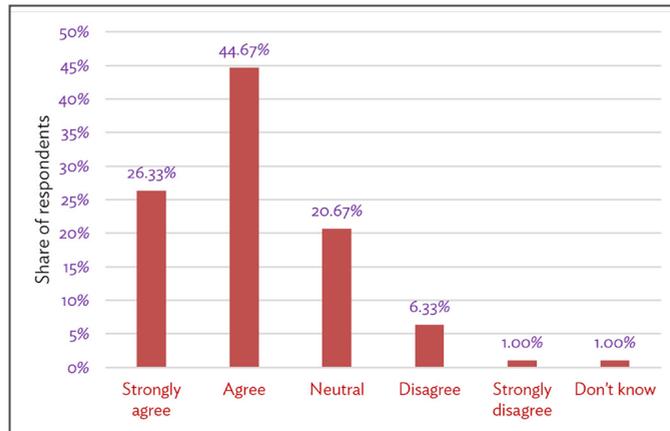
Statement 12 was: ‘ASEAN major cities are less polluted and more liveable than they are today.’ Of the respondents, 73 (24.41%) strongly agreed with the statement (Figure 40). This was followed by 80 respondents (26.76%) who answered ‘agree’ and 65 respondents (21.74%) who answered ‘neutral’. Only 13 respondents (4.35%) answered ‘strongly disagree’.

Figure 40: ASEAN Major Cities Are Less Polluted and More Liveable than They Are Today



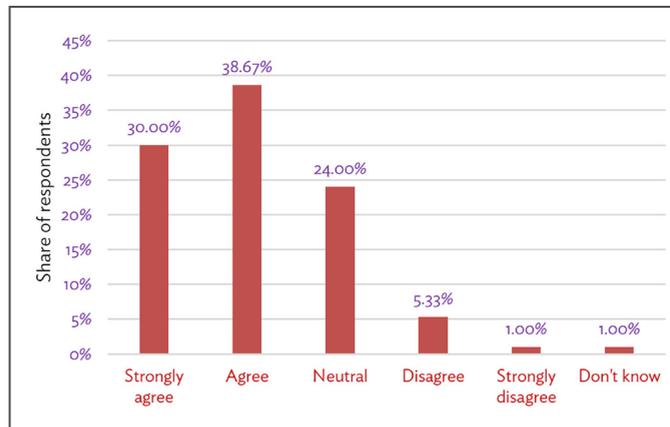
Statement 13 proposed: ‘ASEAN and its member countries are very much able to anticipate, respond, and recover faster and concertedly together from natural disasters and health hazards in the region.’ For this statement, 79 respondents (26.33%) answered ‘strongly agree’, 134 respondents (44.67%) answered ‘agree’, and 62 respondents (20.67%) answered ‘neutral’ (Figure 41). Three respondents (1%) chose ‘strongly disagree’.

Figure 41: ASEAN and Its Member Countries Are Very Much Able to Anticipate, Respond, and Recover Faster and Concertedly Together from Natural Disasters and Health Hazards in the Region



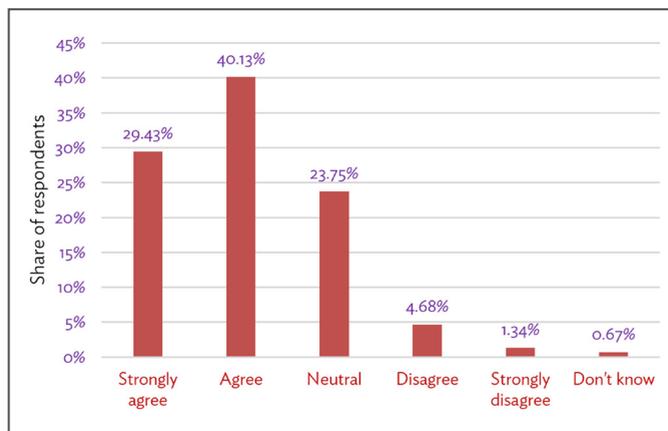
Statement 14 was: ‘ASEAN has a strong voice and is an important player in global negotiations and forums.’ Of the respondents, 90 (30.00%) strongly agreed, while 116 respondents (38.67%) answered ‘agree’, and 72 (24.00%) answered ‘neutral’ (Figure 42). Only three respondents (1%) selected ‘strongly disagree’.

Figure 42: ASEAN Has a Strong Voice and Is an Important Player in Global Negotiations and Forums



Lastly, Statement 15 proposed: ‘ASEAN deeply engages powers in the region and the world to ensure peace in the region and the Asia-Pacific region.’ For this statement, 88 respondents (29.43%) chose ‘strongly agree’, 120 respondents (40.13%) answered ‘agree’, and 71 respondents (23.75%) answered ‘neutral’ (Figure 43). Only four respondents (1.34%) answered ‘strongly disagree’.

Figure 43: ASEAN Deeply Engages Powers in the Region and the World to Ensure Peace in the Region and the Asia-Pacific Region

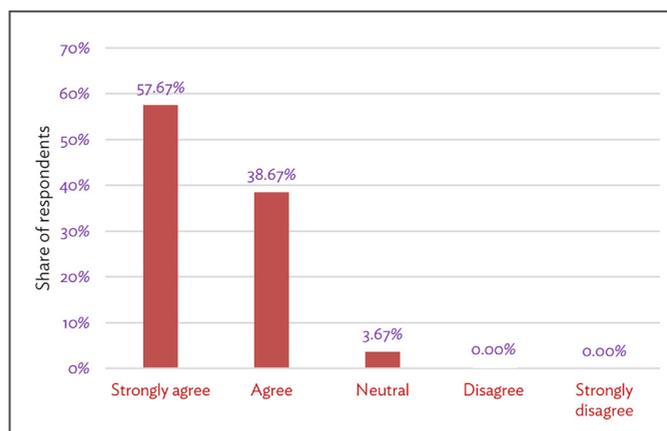


In the FGDs, the business group believed that the most important achievement by 2025 would be for ASEAN to be able to deeply engage powers in the region and the world to ensure peace in the region and the wider Asia-Pacific region. In addition, they believed that ASEAN would become a region where goods, services, and businesses move easily among countries. Meanwhile, they also thought that ASEAN was already a region where people and businesses were able to digitally interact and communicate easily with one another.

Upgrading the implementing and monitoring capabilities of the ASEAN Secretariat (Question 18)

Respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the idea of gradually upgrading the implementing and monitoring capabilities of the ASEAN Secretariat to meet its increasing challenges. The five possible answers were ‘strongly agree’, ‘agree’, ‘neutral’, ‘disagree’, and ‘strongly disagree’. Of the 302 respondents, 300 answered the question. The majority, 173 respondents (57.67%), answered ‘strongly agree’ (Figure 44). This was followed by 116 respondents (38.67%) who opted for ‘agree’ and 11 respondents (3.67%) who opted for ‘neutral’. None of the respondents answered ‘disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’.

Figure 44: Upgrading the Implementing and Monitoring Capabilities of the ASEAN Secretariat



When questioned more deeply about the issue during the FGDs, participants stated that it was important for the ASEAN Secretariat to have control and monitoring functions to ensure that ASEAN policies were being implemented. Some participants suggested that the ASEAN Secretariat's role should not only be limited to implementing and monitoring responsibilities but should also include initiating capabilities. When participants were informed that strengthening the role of the ASEAN Secretariat would mean greater financial contributions from the ASEAN Member States, they did not have a problem with this. However, some participants did attach a number of qualifications. For example, it was underlined that the secretariat should remain neutral, be transparent, and be focused on its tasks. One participant mentioned that greater financial contributions would be acceptable as long as there were real gains. Other participants, however, stated that the ASEAN Secretariat should instead look to working closer with and involving civil society more. Participants suggested that the role of civil society should be maximised so that ASEAN policies truly reflect the aspirations of the public. Meanwhile, one participant admitted that he/she was unaware of the role and functions of the ASEAN Secretariat.

