

## What Affects Korean Youth's Perceptions on ASEAN?

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### Abstract

This study investigates the influence of news media exposure and other factors on Korean youth's perception of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and its people. Despite positive views held by ASEAN youth towards South Korea, Korean youth often exhibit negative perceptions of ASEAN. I hypothesize that exposure to news media narratives affects youth's perceptions of the region, however, this effect varies based on individuals' firsthand experience and level of political awareness of ASEAN. My study involves a survey of perceptions among Korean youth, followed by statistical analyses including ANOVA analyses and regression models to explore correlations between media exposure and sentiments towards ASEAN. While limitations exist, such as sample size constraints, the findings emphasize media's potential, personal experiences as well as political awareness to shape perceptions. The study also addresses the importance of balanced media portrayals and direct interaction to foster mutual understanding between ASEAN and Korean youths. Ultimately, it advocates for collaborative efforts among media creators, academia and policymakers to promote accurate and empathetic storytelling that

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nurtures a sustainable ASEAN-Korea partnership.

**Key Words:** ASEAN-Korea, media, news coverage, firsthand experience, political awareness, perception

## 1. Introduction

The relations between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and Korea have developed rapidly for the past decade. Economically, ASEAN and Korea are invaluable trading partners to one another. In 2021, the two-way trade is reported almost close to \$200 billion. Korea is ASEAN's fifth-largest trading partner and seventh-largest source of FDI (The ASEAN Secretariat 2020). Meanwhile, ASEAN is Korea's second-largest investment destination and plays a significant role in the country's economy. The two parties have been actively undertaken and are continuing to expand the partnerships to various areas such as security, innovation, and green energy.

However, despite remarkable achievements in terms of economic cooperation, people-to-people exchange remains relatively low, while being one of the key poles of the ASEAN-Korean partnership. Especially, the level of mutual awareness among ASEAN and Korean youths is noticeably asymmetric. According to ASEAN-Korea Centre's 2021 Survey, ASEAN youths' impressions of Korea are described by positive words such as "pretty", "beautiful", "handsome", "polite", "friendly", "modern", and "developed". This can be explained by the spread of the "Korean Wave" or Hallyu that has captivated hearts

across Southeast Asian nations, where most characters in K-drama and K-pop products appear with good-looking appearances. Meanwhile, Korean youth's perceptions towards ASEAN appear to be characterized by stereotypes and misconceptions, where terms such as "poor", "dark-skinned", "lazy", "underdeveloped" and "hot" underscore a significant contrast (ASEAN - Korea Centre 2021). As youths are the future leaders of the ASEAN-Korea partnership, enhancing mutual trust and understanding between ASEAN and Korean youths is crucial for a sustainable partnership. It is within this context that my research attempts to answer the question "What affects Korean youth's perception on ASEAN?".

According to the survey by the ASEAN-Korea Centre, youths from both sides have access to information about each other mostly through online media. Particularly, Korean youth mainly access information and content related to ASEAN through traditional media outlets. This prompts me to explore the role of media in shaping Korean youth's perceptions of ASEAN. Therefore, I argue that the pronounced misconceptions of Korean youth towards ASEAN can be attributed, at least in part, to the interactive effects between the portrayal of ASEAN countries within the Korean media landscape and youth's firsthand experiences with ASEAN. An exploration of how Korean media depicts ASEAN countries becomes vital to unraveling this phenomenon. Due to the vast diversity of our world, few people have the chance to experience all countries firsthand. This is particularly true for young people, who are often financially dependent and may lack the resources or autonomy to engage in extensive international travel. Consequently, youth turn to news media as a primary source

of knowledge about foreign cultures and societies. Given this dependence, news media plays a critical role in shaping young people's perceptions of the world beyond their immediate surroundings. Against this backdrop, this study seeks to uncover how media narratives, together with youth's firsthand experiences, influence and shape the perspectives of Korean youth regarding ASEAN. By examining Korean media through which information about ASEAN is delivered, this study aims to shed light on the extent to which media narratives contribute to shaping positive or negative viewpoints of Korean youth towards ASEAN nations. Moreover, this study identifies the factors that mediate the connection between media exposure and perceptions, including the role of personal interactions and cultural exchange.

The findings suggest that exposure to media indeed influences on Korean youth's perceptions of ASEAN and ASEAN people. However, there is a positive-negative asymmetry effect on participants' impressions of ASEAN and ASEAN people. While negative news has a profound impact on youth's perception, the effect of positive news is not significant in shaping youth's perception of ASEAN and its people. These findings may offer insights into reshaping media narratives, bolstering people-to-people understanding and nurturing sustainable partnerships for a more interconnected and harmonious future between ASEAN and Korea.

This paper proceeds in four stages. I first discuss the literature on the effect of media coverage on public perceptions of foreign nations. Then, I present my hypotheses and describe the methodology of this paper. Next, I analyze the effects of various treatment conditions on

Korean youth's perceptions of ASEAN. I conclude with a discussion of the findings and limitations of this paper, as well as offer some implications to correct Korean youth's misconceptions of ASEAN.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Three pathways through which media influences public's perceptions of foreign countries

Existing literature has found that media coverage affects public perceptions of foreign nations. As the world is too complicated and not many people have direct experience with foreign affairs, their images of foreign actors and international events are heavily and unavoidably dependent on media. Scholars have agreed that news media can influence public's perceptions of foreign countries through three main routes, namely framing, agenda-setting and priming.

Firstly, media could influence public's attitudes toward foreign countries through framing, a pathway of "selecting some aspects of a perceived reality and making them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation" (Entman 1993). Generally speaking, framing guides people the way they should understand and evaluate the world. For instance, a news story framing a country as the hub for illegal drugs might lead people to negatively perceive that country as a drug trafficker.

Secondly, media coverage could affect public opinion through agenda-setting, the pathway in which mass media makes a certain issue saliently in public eyes and influences the way people perceive that issue. By emphasizing specific issues over others, the media can shape individual's perceptions of relative importance and salience of these issues (Moy et al 2016). Agenda-setting consists of two levels: first-level agenda-setting, the process of manipulating public salience of issues through the amount of coverage; and second-level agenda-setting, the process of transmitting the issues' attribute salience to shaping public's opinion about the issue. An issue can be depicted repeatedly in positive, negative or neutral tones. Through this mechanism, media coverage shapes public opinion on various issues. For example, Maheim and Albritton (1984) indicate that the signing contracts between various governments (Republic of Korea, the Philippines, Mexico, etc) with American public relations firms to influence the flow of information about those countries to the United States do improve the images of these countries among US citizens compared to the images during noncontract period.

The third way in which news media influences people's attitudes toward an object is through priming paradigm. In the first step of priming, preexisting associated knowledge is activated after readers receive information delivered by media coverage. This activated information forms a potential to bias the way readers process incoming information. Over time, frequency of priming of a certain issue creates biased judgments of that issue (Dixon & Maddox 2005; Sheaffer & Weimann 2005; Moy et al. 2016). In other words, media priming affects the criteria that people use to judge an issue. For

example, repeated exposure to media portrayals of Blacks as the perpetrators of crime may contribute to the formation and maintenance of prejudices and stereotypes about Blacks and therefore, create a negative judgment of Blacks.

## 2.2 News valence and its political effects

In the realm of politics, researchers have paid attention to the effect of news valence (whether the news has positive, negative or neutral tone) on citizens' political behavior. Scholars have found that news valence influences public opinion on various political aspects. For example, news valence has stable effects on voters' evaluation of candidates in an election campaign and people would rely heavily on negative information when making inferences about a politician (Guillory & Geraci, 2016). In addition, valenced news frames significantly affect public support for EU and EU enlargement (de Vreese & Boomgaarden 2003).

Through an analysis of the relationship between the US news coverage of foreign nations and the US citizens' perceptions of other nations, Wanta et al (2004) address that the increased negative media coverage of a nation formed greater negative attitudes towards the country. In investigating the impact of media salience, public opinion and policy agendas on the perceptions of foreign countries in the United States, Zhang and Meadow III (2012) suggest that media valence (positive and negative information) of the countries is positively related to the attitudes toward the countries in public opinion. By analyzing the correlation between the frequency of

negative coverage of a foreign country and public's attitude toward the country, the authors found that the more negative news coverage a foreign country received, the more negatively the public would perceive the nation. Muller (2013) argues that as news media contain information that potentially shapes the image of foreign nations, foreign nations are often depicted more negatively while their nation is portrayed more positively. Broadly, McComb et al (1997) test the impact of agenda-setting on Spanish voters' images of political candidates during the 1995 regional and municipal elections in Spain. In this election, the news media select attributes of candidates to construct their images and depict them with different tones. The authors found that news media does influence how voters picture the parliamentary and mayoral candidates. The tone of voters' descriptions of candidate corresponds with the information they receive about the candidate through news coverage.

From the basis of these literature, my study emphasizes the potential interaction of news valence and media influence pathways that can shape and/or strengthen Korean youth perceptions of ASEAN. The interplay between news coverage tone and media influence pathways may create an accumulated impact on youths' impression of ASEAN. For example, repeated positive tone reinforces positive framing, such as portraying ASEAN as a "strategic partner" of Korea, elevating ASEAN's important role and creating a more favorable image of the region among Korean youth. Conversely, repeated negative tone intensifies negative framing, such as labeling Southeast Asia countries as countries of origin for migrant workers, amplifying prejudices and misconceptions about Southeast Asia.



Similarly, positive portrayals of ASEAN prime positive associations, making youths receptive to future positive information about the region. Negative priming creates a bias where even neutral information is interpreted negatively. Neutral priming, to some extent, has a less immediate effect, but it can influence how youths process future information based on their existing knowledge related to ASEAN. For instance, news outlets often focus on sensation stories about Southeast Asian marriage immigrants, highlighting problems or conflicts rather than positive aspects of multicultural families. Subsequently, frequent negative media portrayals can reinforce existing stereotypes about Southeast Asian women, such as being primarily mail-order brides or a burden on society. My research aims to test this potential interaction effect of media on Korean youth's attitude towards ASEAN.

### 3. Firsthand experience and political awareness as mediating factors influencing the effect of media exposure on youth's perceptions

On May 17th, 2024, a popular South Korean daily newspaper, *Hankook Ilbo*, posted an article regarding the murder of a Korean tourist in Pattaya, Thailand by a fellow Korean. The issue might not have become so controversial if the article had not issued a travel warning for Southeast Asia and listed other countries like the Philippines. It addressed Southeast Asia's gambling and nightlife

culture, suggesting it makes the region a dangerous area rife with crime such as drug trafficking, gun violence, and extortion, and that foreigners like Koreans are increasingly becoming victims. Under the article, a reader left a comment showing his concern over this issue, stating: “So crazy. In this context, travel to a country known for its politeness, like Japan, is the right answer.”<sup>1)</sup> This comment received six reactions. The article was translated into English and posted on The Korea Times, a sister publication of Hankook Ilbo, as well as its official Instagram account with the title: “Travel warning issued for SE Asia after murder of Korean tourist in Pattaya.” However, even though the victim was killed by another Korean, the article focuses on portraying Southeast Asia in a negative light, suggesting it is a dangerous region due to its gambling and nightlife. A comment from a Korean resident of Thailand for more than 6 years expressing concern about the article's credibility hits 43 reactions. The commenter stated, “I'm a Korean living in Thailand for more than 6 years and almost a decade in the region. This claim made on this post makes absolutely no sense and there is zero evidence on them. Sadly, things like this will make it to national news and only cause fear among those back home. Sad.”

This is but one example of how news media outlets portray Southeast Asia in an unfavorable light. Noteworthy, we can see how readers who have and have not had firsthand experience with the region perceived the information differently: one poses a concern about traveling to Southeast Asia, one raises voice to protect the

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1) Original text in Korean language: “미치겠다. 그 중에 동방예의지국 일본여행이 정답이다.”

region and criticizes the news outlet. We may see from the example above how media exposure affects readers' perception of an issue, and how firsthand experience serves as a moderator for the media exposure effect. In his most influential book about mass opinion, "The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion," Zaller (1992) contends that citizens are not simply passive receivers of media communications. In the process of forming political opinions on specific issues, their willingness to accept or resist media narratives is influenced by their interests, values, and experiences. In what he calls the "resistance axiom," Zaller argues that people tend to resist information that conflicts with their political predispositions if they have sufficient contextual information to perceive the relationship between the message delivered by the media and their predispositions.

In the context of this study, as explained above, youth who lack firsthand experience rely heavily on media to form their perceptions of ASEAN. Therefore, they do not have an objective basis for comparison when evaluating information they are exposed to in media narratives. As a result, while the valence of news can actually affect youth's sentiment on ASEAN, this effect varies based on people's direct experience related to the issue. Against this backdrop, I suggest the following hypotheses:

**Hypothesis 1.** Exposure to positive news narratives regarding ASEAN tends to improve Korean youth's perceptions of ASEAN and its people, while exposure to negative news narratives tends to undermine these perceptions.

**Hypothesis 2.** The strength of this influence is mediated by youth's firsthand experience with an ASEAN country and its people.

Specifically, Korean youth with more firsthand experience with an ASEAN country and its people will exhibit a weaker response to news narratives about ASEAN compared to those without such experience.

Another important factor to consider is political awareness, defined by Zaller (1992) as “the extent to which an individual pays attention to politics and understands what they encounter.” Individuals with high political awareness, even lacking firsthand experience with ASEAN, might be less susceptible to the negative influence of news narratives about the region. This is because political awareness fosters a knowledge foundation for critically evaluating information. People with higher levels of political awareness are more likely to possess a broader understanding of international politics, including the growing role of ASEAN. This knowledge base allows them to critically assess news narratives about ASEAN, potentially recognizing potential biases or seeking out additional information to form a more rational perspective. Therefore, I posit my third hypothesis as follows:

**Hypothesis 3.** The influence of news narratives on youth's perceptions of ASEAN and its people is less pronounced for those with higher levels of political awareness.

#### 4. Methodology

To measure the effect of media exposure on Korean youth's impression of ASEAN and ASEAN people, I conducted an online survey among 300 Korean youths nationwide through a survey

company in March 2023. The final sample includes 149 males and 151 females, with ages ranging from 19 to 34. This specific focus on youth in this range of age is in accordant with the definition of youth under Korea's Framework Act on Youth, which defines youth as a "young male and female older than 19 years old and younger than 34 years old" (Framework Act on Youth, Article 3, Item 1). Participants from all major geographical regions of South Korea are represented in the sample.

The survey consists of three sections. In the first section, respondents are asked about their demographic information, including age, gender and location of residence. Section two investigates participants' personal experiences related to Southeast Asia, such as travel experiences or interaction with people from ASEAN. In the third section, after being asked about demographic information and personal experiences with ASEAN, participants are randomly assigned to one of three conditions: control group, positive group and negative group, each group has 100 participants. The data shows a balanced participant pool with nearly equal numbers of females (151) and males (149). The average age is 25.45 years old, with the youngest participant being 19 and the oldest 34. 203 out of 300 participants reside in Seoul metropolitan area (including Seoul, Incheon and Gyeonggi Province). Regarding visiting to Southeast Asia in the past year, 113 participants did not visit ASEAN countries, while 187 reported that they did. Among those who visited, 102 reported that they spent less than a week in Southeast Asia, 49 spent 1-4 weeks, 13 spent 1-3 months, and 23 spent more than 3 months staying in the region. In terms of personal connections, 97 participants

reported having acquaintances, while 203 did not. Awareness of ASEAN was divided, with 96 participants never having heard of it and 204 having heard of it. The detailed information is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of respondents

Characteristic	Control, N = 100 <sup>1</sup>	Negative, N = 100 <sup>1</sup>	Positive, N = 100 <sup>1</sup>	p-value <sup>2</sup>
Gender				0.4
Female	55 (55%)	51 (51%)	45 (45%)	
Male	45 (45%)	49 (49%)	55 (55%)	
Age	25.3 (4.7)	25.8 (2.7)	25.4 (4.1)	0.2

<sup>1</sup> n (%); Mean (SD)

<sup>2</sup> Pearson's Chi-squared test; Kruskal-Wallis rank sum test

In control group, participants are not exposed to any news articles about ASEAN and simply proceed to the attitude measurement section. Within the positive and negative treatment groups, participants were presented with summaries of three Korean-language news articles on the ASEAN economy. These articles addressed the World Bank's 2023 growth prediction for ASEAN economy, Laos' 2023 inflation rate, and the increase in card spending by Vietnamese tourists in Korea. The presence of information about ASEAN as a whole, Vietnam - a relatively popular country among Korean youth and Laos - a less popular country aims to provide various information about Southeast Asian countries and prevent participants' bias in the feeling rating process. As detailed in Table 2, the wording within these summaries was strategically manipulated to convey either a

positive or negative tone toward ASEAN. For instance, the positive treatment group presents information about ASEAN's "high growth trend," whereas the negative condition described a "0.2% decrease compared to last year".

Table 2. Treatment Materials

Positive Treatment Group	Negative Treatment Group
The World Bank, in its latest report in April 2023, predicted that the ASEAN economic growth rate for 2023 would be 4.9%, and <b><u>it is expected to continue its high growth trend.</u></b>	The World Bank, in its latest report in April 2023, predicted that the ASEAN economic growth rate for 2023 would be 4.9%, <b><u>a 0.2% decrease compared to last year.</u></b>
According to the latest inflation indicators released by the Central Bank of Laos, inflation has risen compared to the previous year, but <b><u>economists are optimistic that the Laos economy will record a relatively high growth rate of 4.5% in 2023.</u></b>	According to the latest inflation indicators released by the Central Bank of Laos, inflation has risen compared to the previous year, <b><u>showing signs of worsening economic conditions in Laos.</u></b>
According to the Korea Tourism Organization, the average per capita card spending of Vietnamese tourists this year increased by 89% compared to the previous year. <b><u>This amount, 197,000 won, is higher than the average spending of tourists from the United States, China, and Japan.</u></b>	According to the Korea Tourism Organization, the average per capita card spending of Vietnamese tourists this year increased by 89% compared to the previous year. <b><u>However, this amount was only 197,000 won.</u></b>

The selection of economic information as the experimental focus stemmed from the observed disparity in Korean youth's knowledge of Southeast Asia. While tourism in the region receives considerable attention, socio-economic issues remain less explored. This knowledge gap is further substantiated by the survey conducted by the ASEAN-Korea Centre, where "developing country" and "poor"

were the most frequent associations Korean youth made with ASEAN. Additionally, employing traditional news media, such as newspapers, as the information source aimed to enhance the information's credibility and potentially influence the participants' evaluation process.

To mitigate potential issues arising from inattentiveness, participants were required to engage with the assigned materials for at least 30 seconds. Subsequently, a 4-point Likert scale question (“Very unlikely” to “Very likely”) assessed their prior exposure to similar information, aiming to activate participants’ preexisting knowledge of the issues. Next, all participants were asked to generate three words that came to mind when considering ASEAN and its people respectively. Finally, the primary dependent variables - attitude towards ASEAN and attitude towards ASEAN people - were measured using 10-point thermometer scales ranging from 0 (very negative) to 10 (very positive).

The collected data will be analyzed using various statistical methods. To test the main hypotheses, an independent ANOVA test will be conducted to compare the mean attitude scores towards Southeast Asia and its citizens between three groups. If the results indicate significant differences in feelings across three groups, further analyses such as post-hoc comparisons and linear regression may be conducted to explore specific nature and potential effects of various factors.

## 5. Findings

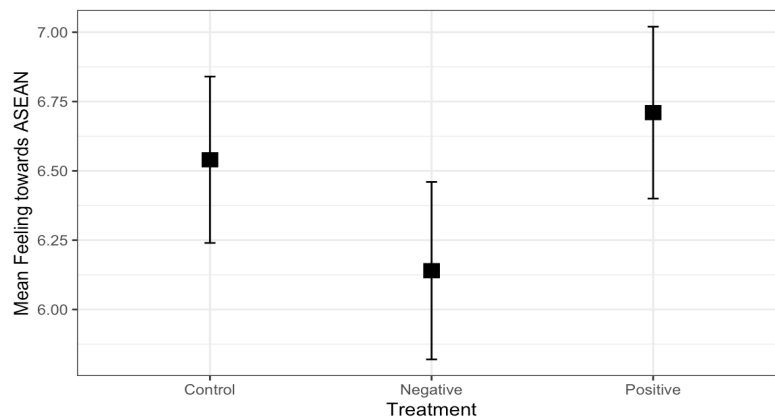


### 5.1. The influence of media and the mediating effect of firsthand experience on Korean youth's perception of ASEAN

To assess the effects of treatment groups on Korean youth's perception of ASEAN, I compare respondents' feelings towards ASEAN and ASEAN people in each treatment group. I interpret decreased mean feeling as Korean youth's feelings towards ASEAN. Figure 1 illustrates the difference in mean feelings towards ASEAN between respondents from three experiment groups.

On average, participants in the control group reported a feeling towards ASEAN of 6.54 on a ten-point scale. Compared to the control group, participants in positive treatment group reported a slightly higher feeling towards ASEAN, with a mean of 6.71. Meanwhile, the

Figure 1. Mean Feeling towards ASEAN by Treatments



mean feeling towards ASEAN drops significantly in the negative

treatment group compared to the control group, with a mean of 6.14 points.

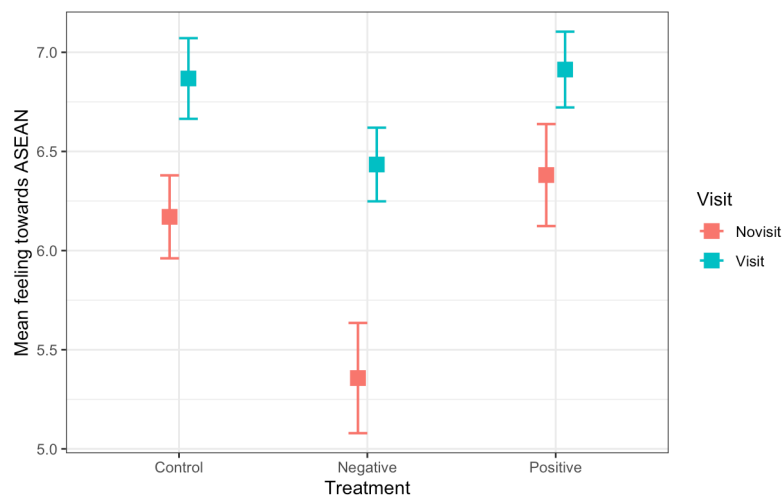
I conducted an ANOVA analysis to examine the overall effect of exposure to different types of news narratives on perceptions of ASEAN among Korean youth. The results from Figure 1 suggest a significant overall effect of exposure to news on feelings towards ASEAN ( $p < 0.03$ ). This indicates that exposure to different news valence has a significant impact on respondents' impression of ASEAN. Next, I performed Tukey's post hoc test to determine the specific differences between treatments. The post hoc test shows that there is no statistically significant difference in feelings towards ASEAN between respondents who were exposed to negative news and those in control group ( $p = 0.18$ ). Similarly, reading positive news does not necessarily affect respondents' perception of ASEAN compared to those who did not read such news ( $p = 0.71$ ). However, the results from the post hoc comparison between people exposed to positive and negative news regarding ASEAN show a statistical difference in mean attitude towards ASEAN between the two groups ( $p = 0.02$ ). The significant difference between positive and negative treatment groups suggests that exposure to different news valence influences Korean youth's perception of ASEAN, supporting hypothesis 1 and hypothesis 2 to some extent.

Next, I attempt to investigate the mediating impact of firsthand experience on the perceptions of Southeast Asians among three groups. In this study, I consider prior visits to the region and having Southeast Asian acquaintances as participants' firsthand experience. I hypothesize that individuals lacking travel experience are more

susceptible to news influence and hold more negative views of Southeast Asia compared to those who have visited.

To examine this hypothesis, I divided the sample into two categories based on the “Visit” variable. Respondents who answered that they have never visited an ASEAN country are coded 0, while those who answered that they have visited are coded 1. Subsequently, I compared the average sentiment towards ASEAN and its people between these two groups. The change in these mean scores will then be used to represent the differential impact of news valence on individuals with and without travel experience across the three treatment groups. Figure 2 illustrates the variations in respondents’ sentiment towards ASEAN based on prior travel experience.

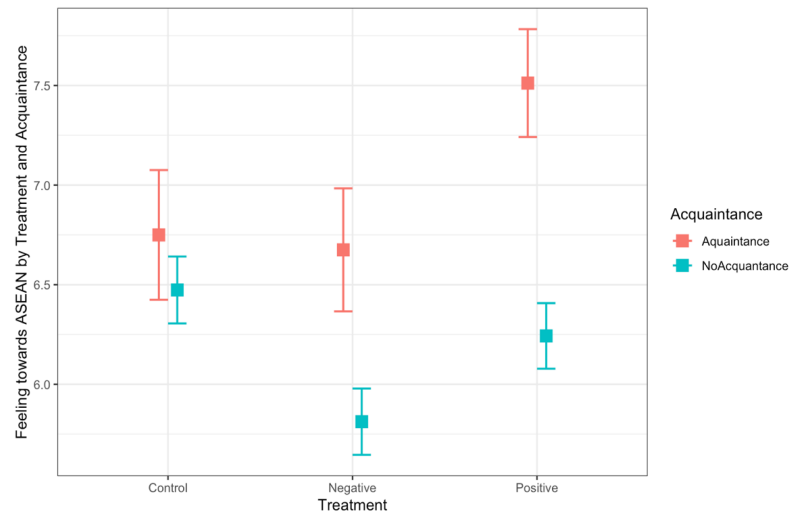
Figure 2. Feeling towards ASEAN by Treatments and Visit Status



The results reveal a consistent trend across both visit and no-visit groups. However, a significant gap in mean feeling is observed between respondents with and without prior visits to ASEAN countries across the three treatment groups. When exposed to no news coverage of Southeast Asia, the visit group exhibits demonstrably more positive perceptions ( $\mu=6.86$ ) compared to the no-visit group ( $\mu=6.17$ ). Similarly, for those exposed to positive news, the average impression remains relatively high for those who have visited the region ( $\mu=6.91$ ). However, this score decreases by 0.53 points for those who have not visited ( $\mu=6.38$ ). Notably, the visit group rates their average sentiment towards the region at 6.43 after having been exposed to negative news. This number decreases significantly to 5.35, representing a difference of 1.08 points.

Building upon the analysis of travel experience, this section investigates whether possessing acquaintances from Southeast Asia acts as a mediating factor influencing the impact of news valence on youth perceptions of the region. I posit that individuals lacking acquaintances from Southeast Asia will exhibit a stronger negative perception shift after exposure to negative news narratives compared to those with acquaintances. The data on acquaintance status was obtained through a survey question “Do you have any acquaintances from Southeast Asia?” and the analysis method replicates the approach used for the travel experience variable. Figure 3 shows the difference in youth’s perceptions of ASEAN across treatment groups while taking “Acquaintance” variable into account.

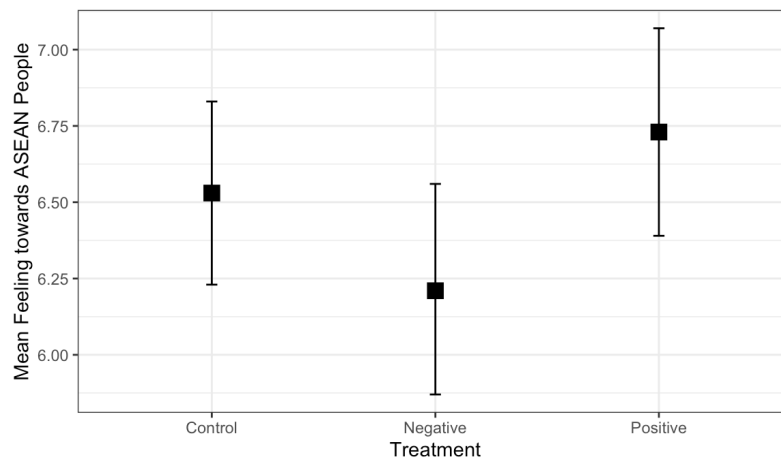
Figure 3. Feeling towards ASEAN by Treatments and Acquaintance



The results depicted in Figure 3 show a significant difference in perceptions of ASEAN between the groups defined by the acquaintance variable. As hypothesized, respondents lacking acquaintances from Southeast Asia exhibited a more negative perception of the region after exposure to negative news narratives ( $\mu=5.81$ ) compared to their counterparts with acquaintances ( $\mu=6.67$ ). This difference represents a statistically significant decrease of 0.86 points. Similarly, in the control group, respondents with acquaintances from Southeast Asia exhibited a slightly more positive perception ( $\mu=6.75$ ) compared to those without such acquaintances ( $\mu=6.47$ ). While positive news exposure increased perceptions for both groups ( $\mu=7.51$  for those with acquaintances and  $\mu=6.24$  for those without), the effect was notably stronger for those with acquaintances, with a significant decrease of 1.27 points for those without acquaintances.

This pattern aligns with the findings for travel experience, suggesting that possessing firsthand connections with Southeast Asia mitigates the negative influence of negative news narratives on perceptions.

Figure 4. Mean Feeling towards ASEAN People by Treatments



Next, I investigated whether exposure to news affects participants' attitudes towards ASEAN people. As shown in Figure 2, overall participants in the control group exhibited a mean feeling towards ASEAN of 6.53 on a ten-point scale. On the other hand, participants in positive treatment group demonstrated a higher mean feeling of 6.77 compared to control group. Conversely, compared to control group, individuals exposed to negatively framed news reported a somewhat lower mean feeling of 6.23.

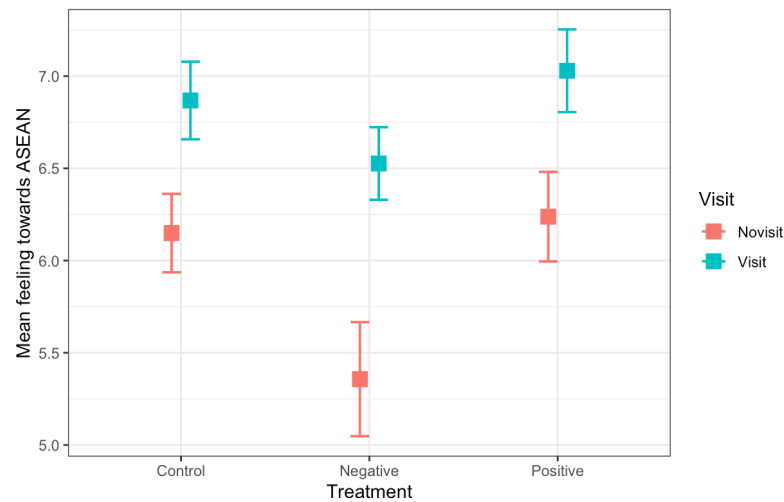
I further conduct an ANOVA test to investigate the impact of different news valence on respondents' impression of ASEAN people. Overall, the results in Figure 2 provide some evidence for my

hypotheses that exposure to different types of news has a potential impact on respondents' feelings toward Southeast Asian people, ( $p=0.08$ ). To examine the difference in specific groups, a Tukey post hoc test is performed. Results from the post hoc test suggest that exposure to positive news regarding ASEAN does not lead to a significant increase in feelings towards ASEAN people among Korean youth ( $p=0.6$ ), which does not fully support hypothesis 1. Similarly, the comparison between respondents exposed to negative news narratives and those who are not exposed to such news about ASEAN does not show a statistically significant difference in mean feelings towards ASEAN people ( $p=0.3$ ). However, in line with the previous test, there is a significant difference in mean feelings towards ASEAN people between people who read positive news and those who read negative news related to this region ( $p=0.06$ ). This suggests a potential difference in the impact of positive and negative news narratives on respondents' attitudes towards ASEAN people, which aligns with the expectations of hypothesis 1 and 2.

In this section, I investigate the mediating effect of firsthand experience on the impact of news exposure on youth's perceptions of its people. Similar trends are observed in feelings towards ASEAN people from two groups across three treatment groups. Figure 4 demonstrates the mean differences in feelings towards ASEAN people based on their exposure to news valence and their experience visiting ASEAN.

A noticeable difference in mean sentiment between those with and without prior visits to ASEAN countries persists across the three treatment groups. In the control group, the visit group holds a more

Figure 5. Feeling towards ASEAN People by Treatments and Visit Status



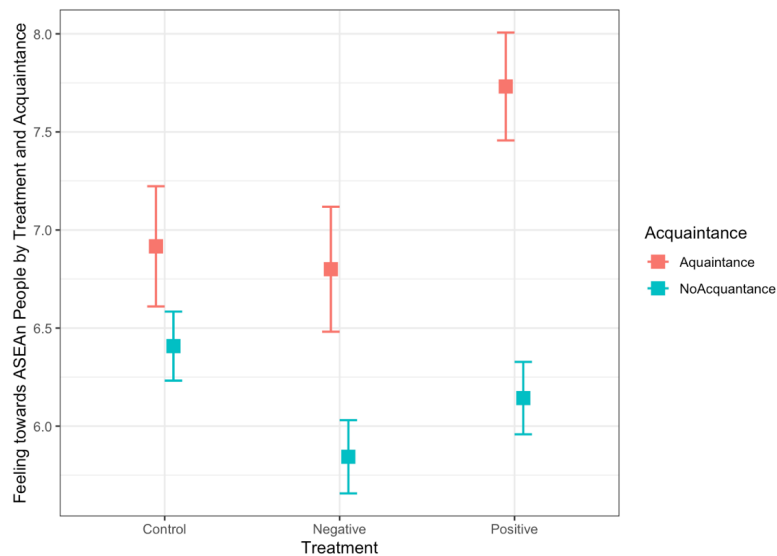
positive perception of Southeast Asian ( $\mu=6.86$ ) compared to no visit group ( $\mu=6.14$ ), replicating the pattern for overall sentiment towards the region. Consistent with results from Figure 2, the mean feeling difference between visit and no-visit groups is noticeably high, which is 1.17 points different, as mean feeling towards Southeast Asian of those who have visited ASEAN is 6.52 and of those who have not is 5.35. The highest average feeling towards ASEAN people is observed among respondents in the visit group who are exposed to positive news ( $\mu=7.02$ ). However, this score decreases by 0.79 points for those in no-visit group who read positive news ( $\mu=6.23$ ).

The influence of news exposure on Korean youth's perceptions of Southeast Asians was further investigated through the mediating effect of possessing acquaintances from the region (Figure 6). Within the control group (no news exposure), respondents with Southeast Asian



acquaintances exhibited a significantly more positive perception ( $\mu=6.91$ ) compared to those without such acquaintances ( $\mu=6.40$ ). This pattern of acquaintance-based perception persisted even when exposed to positive news narratives. Exposure to negative news resulted in a more pronounced decline in perception for those lacking acquaintances. The average perception score for this group decreased by 0.96 points (from 6.80 to 5.84) compared to those with acquaintances. These findings suggest a potential mediating effect of having Southeast Asian acquaintances, buffering the negative influence of negative news narratives on Korean youth's perceptions of Southeast Asians. Interestingly, positive news had a stronger positive effect on those with acquaintances compared to those

Figure 6. Mean Feeling towards ASEAN People by Treatments and Acquaintance



without. Youths with acquaintances from Southeast Asia maintained a notably higher positive perception ( $\mu=7.73$ ) relative to their counterparts lacking such connections ( $\mu=6.14$ ).

Overall, the findings support the notion that exposure to news narratives significantly influences Korean youth's perceptions of ASEAN and its people. However, the results also suggest that this influence is not straightforward. The data aligns with the revised hypotheses, indicating that the level of firsthand experience (travel or acquaintances) acts as a mediating factor. Youths with a stronger connection to Southeast Asia, through travel or personal acquaintances, exhibit a weaker response to news narratives compared to those lacking such connections. This suggests that firsthand experience provides a foundation that shapes how Korean youth interpret news media portrayals of ASEAN.

## 5.2 Political awareness as a moderator of the relationship between news exposure and Korean youth's perceptions of ASEAN

This section explores the potential influence of political awareness on the relationship between news exposure and Korean youth's perceptions of ASEAN. Here, I examine whether political awareness moderates the impact of news valence on perceptions. I posit that individuals with higher levels of political awareness are less affected by news narratives about ASEAN compared to those with lower political awareness as they possess enough information to evaluate the accuracy and credibility of news. The data on political awareness

was obtained through a survey question asking if participants had ever heard of the word “ASEAN” before. While this may not be the most comprehensive measure of political awareness, it provides an initial indication of exposure to information related to the region. Having heard of “ASEAN” suggests at least some minimal awareness, even if the depth of understanding is unclear. News coverage about Southeast Asia often uses the term “Southeast Asian” in a negative light, while news about ASEAN itself tends to be more positive, focusing on economic cooperation or diplomatic relations with Korea. Therefore, those who have heard of “ASEAN” might possess some basic knowledge that could influence how they process news narratives, potentially leading to a moderating effect on the impact of news valence.

Figure 7 illustrates the difference in Korean youth's perceptions of ASEAN across treatment groups, while considering their level of political awareness. As expected, participants who have never heard of the term “ASEAN” exhibit a lower baseline perception of the region compared to those who are aware ( $\mu=5.43$  and  $\mu=6.82$  on a 10-point scale). However, there is a significant increase in feelings towards ASEAN among those with higher level of political awareness. Exposure to positive news narratives leads to a slight increase in positive sentiment compared to the control group ( $\mu=7.09$  and  $\mu=6.82$ ). However, exposure to negative news still results in a decrease in positive feelings, although the magnitude of this decrease is smaller compared to those unaware of ASEAN ( $\mu=6.45$ ). Overall, Figure 7 suggests that political awareness moderates the impact of news exposure on Korean youth's perceptions of ASEAN. While

negative news has a negative influence on all groups, its impact is weaker for those with some level of political awareness.

Figure 7. Mean Feeling towards ASEAN by Treatments and Level of Political Awareness

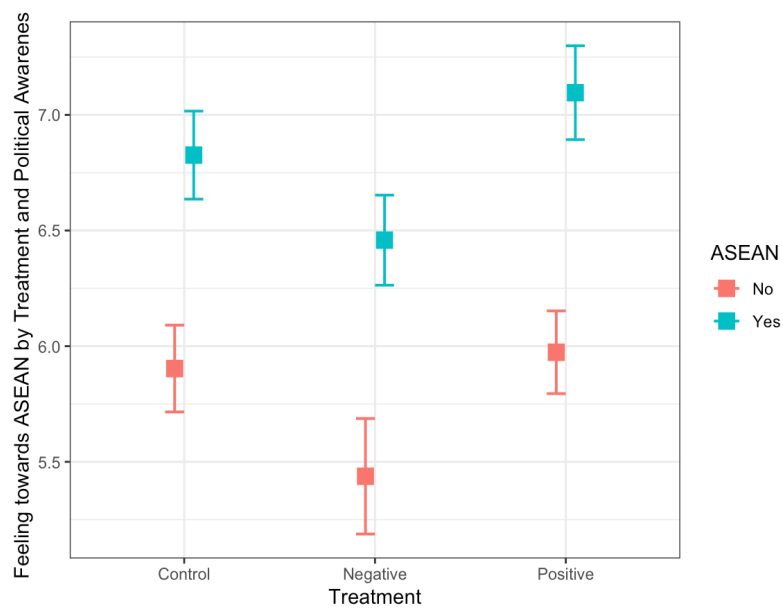
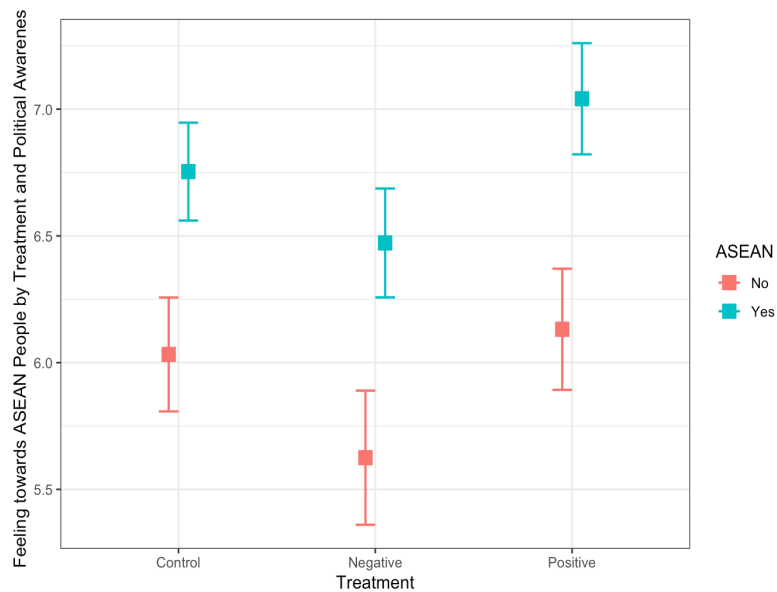


Figure 8 builds upon the findings of Figure 7 by exploring the potential mediating role of political awareness on the relationship between news exposure and Korean youth's perceptions of people from Southeast Asia. As expected, participants with higher political awareness (having heard of 'ASEAN' before) consistently exhibit more positive baseline perceptions of Southeast Asians compared to those with lower awareness (never heard of 'ASEAN'). The control group shows a mean score of 6.75 for high awareness and 6.03 for

low awareness. The pattern persists within both positive and negative treatment groups. While exposure to news narratives does influence perceptions, the impact is less pronounced for those with higher political awareness. For example, within the positive news group, the difference in perception scores between high and low awareness is smaller (0.91 points) compared to the control group (0.72 points).

Figure 8. Mean Feeling towards ASEAN by Treatments and Level of Political Awareness



This pattern aligns with the idea of political awareness as a moderator. Those with higher awareness possess a foundation of knowledge that might make them less susceptible to negative portrayals in news narratives and potentially allow them to form more rational perceptions of Southeast Asian people.

### 5.3 Robustness Check

The complexity of the findings prompts me to further explore into potential influencing factors, including individual differences, and external variables shaping Korean youth attitudes toward Southeast Asia and its people. To more systematically examine these findings, I employ ordinary least squares models (OLS) to test their statistical significance. I regress Korean youth's feelings towards ASEAN and ASEAN people (measured on a ten-point scale) on experimental conditions. In addition to variables intended to capture respondents' impressions of ASEAN and ASEAN people, three additional variables are included:

- Duration:** The length of time spent residing in ASEAN countries may impact how Korean youth perceive the region and its people. This is because extended stays facilitate direct interaction with ASEAN culture and people. Furthermore, longer durations allow for deeper exploration and understanding of the region. This variable is coded on a scale of 0 to 4, with 0 representing no visits to ASEAN countries, 1 representing stays less than a week, 2 representing stays of one to four weeks, 3 representing stays of one to three months and 4 representing stays exceeding three months. I hypothesize that longer durations of stay in ASEAN will correlate with a more positive impression of the region and its people.
- Acquaintance:** Having ASEAN acquaintance is another possible factor that affects Korean youth's feelings towards ASEAN. Direct interactions and deeper understanding facilitated by such

friendships can positively impact sentiment. This variable is coded 0 if respondents have no friends from Southeast Asian countries and is coded 1 if they do. I argue that having ASEAN acquaintances may positively affect Korean youth's feelings towards ASEAN people.

- ASEAN:** As the term "ASEAN" is often associated with positive news coverage, such as economic cooperation with Korea and diplomatic affairs, having familiarity with or having heard about ASEAN may positively influence Korean youth's perceptions of ASEAN and its people. This variable is coded 0 if respondents have not heard about the word ASEAN and is coded 1 if respondents have heard about this word. I hypothesize that familiarity with the term will be associated with a more positive perception.

The results of Model 1 of the regression analysis presented in Table 1 provide insights into the relationship between news exposure and participants' feelings towards Southeast Asia, while accounting for the above-mentioned control variables. The results show that exposure to positive news narratives about ASEAN does not significantly increase feelings towards ASEAN compared to control group ( $p=0.7$ ). This result suggests that while positive news may have some impact, it may not be sufficient to significantly affect Korean youth's perceptions of ASEAN. Meanwhile, participants from negative treatment group have, on average, a feeling towards ASEAN that is roughly 0.58 points lower than participants in the control group, holding all other variables constant. This difference is statistically

significant ( $p = 0.005$ ), suggesting that exposure to negative news may have an impact on the perceptions of the region.

Table 3. Regression Results

	Feeling towards ASEAN (1)	Feeling towards ASEAN People (2)
Negative	-0.582*** (0.206)	-0.529** (0.224)
Positive	0.078 (0.204)	0.092 (0.222)
Duration	0.412*** (0.077)	0.427*** (0.083)
Acquaintance	0.361* (0.193)	0.613*** (0.210)
ASEAN	0.813*** (0.182)	0.559*** (0.197)
Constant	5.509*** (0.195)	5.600*** (0.212)
Observations	300	300
R <sup>2</sup>	0.225	0.203
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.212	0.190
Residual Std. Error (df = 294)	1.436	1.559
F Statistic (df = 5; 294)	17.080***	15.022***
<i>Note:</i>		* $p < 0.1$ ; ** $p < 0.05$ ; *** $p < 0.01$

Furthermore, I also find that duration of stay in ASEAN has a significant positive impact on Korean youth's feelings towards ASEAN ( $p < 0.01$ ). From the findings, we can interpret that individuals



who have spent longer periods in Southeast Asia tend to develop more positive perceptions of the region. One possible explanation is that longer duration of stay in ASEAN leads to a deeper cultural understanding and firsthand experiences. "Acquaintance" variable has a marginally positive effect on Korean youth's perception of ASEAN ( $p < 0.1$ ). Respondents who said that they have friends from Southeast Asia tend to hold 0.36 points higher feelings towards the region than those who do not have a Southeast Asian friend. These findings provide further insights into the potential mediating effects explored in the revised hypotheses. The positive influence of both duration of stay and having acquaintances aligns with the idea that stronger firsthand connections with the region can lead to more positive perceptions. Moreover, in line with my argument, respondents who are familiar with the term "ASEAN" show a more positive attitude towards the region, as respondents who have heard about the word "ASEAN" have a 0.8 points higher feeling towards this region than those who have not ( $p < 0.001$ ). This positive impression may be drawn from the fact that the term "ASEAN" frequently appears in positive information. Perhaps, exposure to positive news about economic cooperation or diplomatic affairs may positively influence Korean youth's perception of ASEAN.

Building upon the initial findings of Model 1, Model 2 explores how news exposure interacts with other factors influencing Korean youth's perceptions of Southeast Asian people. While positive news exposure again showed no significant impact ( $p = 0.6$ ), the negative effect of negative news exposure ( $p < 0.01$ ) reinforces Hypothesis 2. However, the key question lies in how firsthand experience might

influence these relationships.

In addition, there is a significant positive effect of duration of stay in ASEAN on respondents' perception of the region ( $p < 0.001$ ), as those who have spent longer periods in ASEAN countries have 0.4 points better impression of their people. Similarly, ASEAN variable also performs a significant effect ( $p < 0.01$ ). The coefficient for the Acquaintance variable is statistically significant ( $p = 0.003$ ), suggesting that participants who have Southeast Asian acquaintances tend to report nearly 0.6 points higher feelings towards people from the region. These results again support the notion that firsthand experiences can lead to more favorable perceptions. Respondents who have heard the word "ASEAN" before tend to have 0.5 points higher feelings towards people from Southeast Asia. Exposure to news related to ASEAN economic growth or engagement also has a significant positive impact on Korean youth's attitude towards Southeast Asian.

Overall, the results provide partial support for my hypotheses. While exposure to negative news narratives significantly decreases feelings towards ASEAN among Korean youth, exposure to positive news does not yield significant changes. The results suggest that negative media portrayals may have a more profound impact on shaping perceptions of ASEAN among Korean youth. This finding is accordant with literature on negativity bias, which refers to the act of giving greater weight to negative information relative to equally extreme and equally likely positive information in various judgment and information processing tasks (Meffert et al. 2006). Negativity bias underlines stronger responsiveness to proximate negative than

proximate positive or neutral stimuli (Cacioppo et al. 1997; Kanouse & Hanson 1972). This bias influences people's impression formation as well as the evaluation process through a psychological effect in which people are more attracted by negative stimuli (Rozin & Royzman 2001). Compared to positive stimuli, negative stimuli receive greater weight and are recalled more frequently when people make evaluations. In addition, Pratto and John (1996) found that people tend to be more attracted to and better remember negative information even when they do not intentionally pay attention to the valence of information. In this sense, the initial bias impression, together with the negativity bias, can explain the significant effect on respondents' impression towards ASEAN compared to the positive treatment group.

These results become even more interesting when considering the potential mediating effect of firsthand experience. The regression analyses highlight the importance of firsthand experiences with Southeast Asia and its people in shaping Korean youth's perceptions of the region. This suggests the complex interaction between media portrayals, firsthand experiences, and other factors in shaping Korean youth's perceptions of Southeast Asia.

## 6. Conclusion

This study investigates the influence of news media exposure on Korean youth's perceptions of Southeast Asia and its people and firsthand experience as well as the level of political awareness as mediating factors of this influence.

The findings provide partial support for my hypotheses. Exposure to negative news articles significantly decreased Korean youth's feelings towards both ASEAN and its people and these effects vary based on participants' firsthand experience and level of political awareness. Additionally, the finding suggests that negative portrayals of ASEAN may potentially lead to less favorable views of Southeast Asia and its people among Korean youth. This finding aligns with pre-existing literature on negativity bias, which explains that negative information holds greater weight in shaping perceptions and judgments (Cacioppo et al. 1997; Meffert et al. 2006). This profound impact of negative information over positive ones has been well addressed in preexisting literature. For instance, scholars have found that while people prefer positive information about themselves, they pay more attention to negative information about external environment and factors (Johnson & Tierney 2018). Therefore, according to them, in international relations, due to the effect of negativity bias, states often prioritize negative information over positive information. This bias can lead to overestimating threats and underestimating capabilities, increasing the potential for conflict. Similarly, Meffert et al (2006) found that in political campaigns, voters tend to utilize negative information to evaluate opponent candidates.

Interestingly, positive news exposure does not improve Korean youth's feelings towards ASEAN compared to the control group. This unexpected finding suggests that positive news alone may not be sufficient to counteract existing negative biases or limited knowledge about ASEAN and ASEAN people. However, this could be explained by the fact that the short-term effect of positive news exposure within

the context of this research is not yet enough to improve the Korean youth's deep-rooted stereotypes of Southeast Asia. Furthermore, the content of the positive news articles used in the study might not have resonated strongly with the participants' interests or addressed their specific knowledge gaps.

Results from regression models also provide better understanding of the impacts of other potential factors on shaping Korean youth's impressions of ASEAN and the people from the region. This study finds that travel experience emerges as a crucial factor in shaping youth's perceptions of the region. Korean youth who have previously visited an ASEAN country hold more positive views of the region compared to those who have not. In addition, for those who have visited ASEAN, the longer duration of stay significantly improves their attitude towards the region. Having Southeast Asian friends and familiarity with the term "ASEAN" also positively influences Korean youth's perceptions of ASEAN and ASEAN people. These findings suggest that firsthand experience can mediate the influence of media exposure. Deeper cultural understanding and interpersonal relationships gained through travel likely contribute to more positive perceptions.

While not directly explored in this study due to limitations in the measure of political awareness, the analysis suggests potential for moderation. Future research with more comprehensive measures of political awareness could investigate how it moderates the influence of media exposure. Those with higher levels of political awareness might possess a knowledge base that allows for more critical evaluation of news narratives, potentially leading to weaker effects

of news exposure (especially negative news) on their perceptions. While this is the initial study to elucidate the joint effects of media exposure, firsthand experiences and level of political awareness on Korean youth's perceptions of ASEAN, the findings align with Zaller's (1992) previous study on political awareness and public opinion. In particular, he argues that political awareness is crucial in shaping public opinion. Individuals with higher political awareness are more likely to have consistent and stable opinions, as they are exposed to a wider range of information and can better process it. Furthermore, they are more likely to filter information through their existing beliefs and values, leading to more considered opinions.

This research is not without limitations. First, the sample size is relatively small compared to other relevant research. Second, self-reported survey method is susceptible to bias. Third, the specific content of news articles used in the survey, which is focused only on economy, might also influence the results. In addition, future research could employ more comprehensive measures of political awareness, such as surveys assessing knowledge about current events or regional politics in Southeast Asia. This would allow for a more intensive exploration of how political awareness moderates the influence of media exposure on Korean youth's perceptions. Addressing these limitations through larger and more diverse datasets will further enhance the credibility and robustness of my findings.

Further research could explore the long-term effects of media exposure on Korean youth's perceptions of ASEAN and ASEAN people. Investigating the role of social media, online platforms and films in shaping these impressions is also vital. Analyzing the content

of Korean media coverage related to ASEAN to identify potential biases would also provide valuable insights for promoting balanced narratives.

The findings from this study suggest some important implications for policymakers, educators and media outlets. As negative news exposure has a significant impact on youth's perceptions of ASEAN and its people, media outlets can strive for more balanced coverage that showcases the region's diverse cultures, economic development and positive social aspects. Encouraging educational and cultural exchange programs between Korean and ASEAN youths can foster understanding of the region's diverse culture and people. By acknowledging these complexities and promoting balanced media coverage alongside exchange programs between youth from two parties, we can build stronger bridges of understanding between Korean and ASEAN youths, facilitating the foundation for sustainable ASEAN-ROK relations.

## APPENDIX

### Questionnaire

동남아에 대한 한국 청년의 인식을 바꾸기 위해 미디어의 역할 조사

문1. 귀하의 성별은 어떻게 되십니까?

- (1) 여성 (2) 남성

문2. 귀하의 연령은 어떻게 되십니까? 만 \_\_\_\_ 세

문3. 귀하의 고향은 어느 지역인가요? \_\_\_\_\_ 시/도

문4. 귀하는 동남아 국가를 방문한 경험이 있습니까?

- (1) 있음 (2) 없음

문5. 귀하가 동남아 국가에 얼마나 머물렀습니까? (문4의 1번 응답자만)

- (1) 일주일 이하  
(2) 1~4주 이하  
(3) 1~3개월 이하  
(4) 3개월 이상

문6. 귀하가 알고 지내는 사람 중에 동남아 사람이 있습니까?

- (1) 있음 (2) 없음

문7. 귀하는 “아세안”이라는 단어를 들어본 적이 있습니까?

- (1) 있음 (2) 없음

문8. 아세안 회원국은 몇개입니까? (문7의 1번 응답자만) \_\_\_\_ 개



[통제 집단]

문9. 아세안 하면 떠오르는 단어는 무엇입니까? (최대 3개의 단어)

- (1). \_\_\_\_\_  
 (2). \_\_\_\_\_  
 (3). \_\_\_\_\_

문 10. 다음 평가 수준을 참조하여 “아세안”에 대한 감정을 0에서 10중에서 표시해주십시오.

0	3	5	7	10
대단히 부정적	어느 정도 부정적	호의적이지도 부정적이지도 않음	어느 정도 호의적	대단히 호의적

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

문 11. 아세안 사람 하면 떠오르는 단어는 무엇입니까? (최대 3개의 단어)

- (1). \_\_\_\_\_  
 (2). \_\_\_\_\_  
 (3). \_\_\_\_\_

문 12. 위 평가 수준을 참조하여 “아세안 사람”에 대한 감정을 0에서 10중에서 표시해주십시오.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

[긍정적 집단]

•아래 신문 기사를 읽은 후 다음 질문에 답해주세요.

1. 세계은행은 2023년 4월 최신 보고서에서 2023년 아세안 경제성장률을 4.9%로 예측하며, 높은 성장세를 이어나갈 것으로 전망했다.

2. 라오스 중앙은행이 최근 발표한 인플레이션 지표에 따르면 전년 대비 인플레이션이 상승하지만 경제학자들은 라오스 경제가 2023년 4.5%의 비교적 높은 경제 성장률을 기록할 것이라 낙관한다.
3. 한국관광공사에 따르면 올해 베트남 관광객의 1인당 카드 평균 사용 금액은 전년 대비 89% 증가했다. 그 금액은 19만7천 원으로 미 중일 관광객 평균보다 높은 수치이다.

#### [부정적 집단]

•아래 신문 기사를 읽은 후 다음 질문에 답해주세요.

1. 세계은행은 2023년 4월 최신 보고서에서 2023년 아세안 경제성장률을 4.9%로 예측하며, 작년 대비 0.2% 낮아질 것으로 전망했다.
2. 라오스 중앙은행이 최근 발표한 인플레이션 지표에 따르면 전년 대비 인플레이션이 상승하면서 라오스의 경제 사정이 악화될 조짐이 보인다.
3. 한국관광공사에 따르면 올해 베트남 관광객의 1인당 카드 평균 사용 금액은 전년 대비 89% 증가했다. 그러나 그 금액은 19만7천 원에 불과했다.

문. 나는 아세안에 대한 이러한 정보를 들어본 적이 있다.

- (1) 매우 그렇지 않다
- (2) 약간 그렇지 않다
- (3) 약간 그렇다
- (4) 매우 그렇다

문 10. 다음 평가 수준을 참조하여 “아세안”에 대한 감정을 0에서 10중에서 표시해주십시오.

0		3		5		7		10		
대단히 부정적		어느 정도 부정적		호의적이지도 부정적이지도 않음		어느 정도 호의적		대단히 호의적		
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

문 11. 아세안 사람 하면 떠오르는 단어는 무엇입니까? (최대 3개의 단어)

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_
- (2) \_\_\_\_\_
- (3) \_\_\_\_\_

문 12. 위 평가 수준을 참조하여 “아세안 사람”에 대한 감정을 0에서 10 중에서 표시해주십시오.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\*\*\*\*\*응답해 주셔서 대단히 감사합니다\*\*\*\*\*

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(2024.06.22. 투고, 2024.07.18. 심사, 2024.08.01. 게재확정)

<국문초록>

## 아세안에 대한 한국 청년의 인식은 어떤 요인으로부터 영향을 받는가?

Trang LE  
(고려대학교)

본 논문은 미디어가 한국 청년들의 동남아시아국가연합(ASEAN)과 그 국민에 대한 인식 형성에 미치는 역할을 조사한다. 아세안 청년들이 한국에 대해 긍정적인 인식을 가지고 있음에도 불구하고, 한국 청년은 아세안에 대한 부정적인 인식을 보이는 경우가 많다. 본 연구에서는 미디어 보도가 이러한 인식 차이에 대해 중용한 역할을 한다고 가정한다. 본 연구는 한국 청년의 인식조사 및 ANOVA 분석과 회귀모델을 포함하는 통계 분석을 통해 미디어 노출과 아세안에 대한 한국 청년의 감정 사이의 상관관계를 분석했다. 작은 표본크기와 같은 한계에도 불구하고, 연구 결과는 미디어 뿐만 아니라 개인적인 경험 또한 인식 형성에 영향을 미칠 수 있음을 강조한다. 또한 본 연구는 아세안 청년들과 한국 청년 사이의 상호 이해를 촉진하기 위해 균형 잡힌 미디어 보도와 직접적인 교류의 중요성을 주장한다. 마지막으로 본 연구는 미디어 제작자, 학계 및 정책 기획자 간의 협력을 통해 정확하고 공감대를 형성하는 사실관계에 부합한 스토리텔링을 장려하여 지속 가능한 한-아세안 파트너십을 촉진할 것을 주장한다.

**주제어:** 한-아세안, 미디어, 뉴스 보도, 직접경험, 정치적 의식, 인식

