

FORMING ASEAN COMMUNITY OF PEOPLE THROUGH INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Paula Grace M. Muyco^{1*} and Benjamina Paula G. Flor, PhD.²

¹ University of the Philippines Open University (Philippines)

² University of the Philippines Los Baños (Philippines)

*Corresponding Author: paulagrace.muyco@upou.edu.ph

ABSTRACT – The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) aims to develop a community among its people. However, the current setup of ASEAN reflects a community of nations instead. Guided by Deutsch's Transactionalism theory which sees sense of community as the continuous process of communication and interaction, the study examined intercultural communication competence and its relationship with building a sense of community. Intercultural communication competence refers to the acquisition of knowledge, skills and motivation that result to appropriate and effective behavior and communication with people from different cultures.

Respondents of the study were 71 ASEAN international graduate students enrolled in the first semester of AY 2017-2018 at the University of the Philippines Los Baños. Results of the respondents' intercultural communication competence showed that they are knowledgeable about general ASEAN information, motivated to communicate and are respectful of people from other cultures but their communication skills provide a challenge during interaction due to language diversity. In relation to their sense of community, intercultural effectiveness and motivation to communicate revealed significant relationships while knowledge did not. The study recommends increased familiarization with all countries of the ASEAN regardless of the mainland and insular division. ASEAN may provide more opportunities and collaborations for intercultural interactions that will immerse people in different cultures and languages of the region and not just those of the most progressive member countries.

Keywords: Sense of community, language diversity, UPLB, Deutsch Transactionalism Theory

Introduction

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was established on August 8, 1967 and is composed of Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar and Cambodia ("Establishment", n.d.). The countries' experiences during and in the aftermath of World War II led to regional division and suspicion towards foreign countries. By achieving regional integration, countries believed that it will deter regional disputes, encourage economic and political coordination as well as facilitate cooperation in research and education (Ito, 1988). The region perceived integration as a viable solution to disputes as it is in favor of and supports community building which facilitates and encourages the development of a collective identity among the member nations (Rumelili, 2007).

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Most definitions of regional integration see its actors as countries rather than individuals. This study provided an alternative view to regional integration by using Karl Deutsch's Transactionalism theory or the idea of integration as the achievement of a "sense of community" among the people. He describes sense of community as the continuous process of communication, interaction, mutual attention, and perception of each other's needs in terms of decision making (Deutsch et al., 1957). The main hypothesis of the theory suggests that "sense of community among states is a function of the level of communication between states." Karl Deutsch views communication as central to facilitate the process of shared identity, trade, migration, tourism, culture, and educational exchanges to develop an organized and interdependent community. To achieve integration, peace, and mutual responsiveness, there is a need for trust as well as loyalty which are all functions and are facilitated by communication (Rosamond, 2000). Indicators for successful integration in this approach hinges upon "contacts, interchange, and communication between peoples" (Cantori & Spiegel, 1973).

Communication is a basic mechanism for people's integration to a new community as they would need to experience rituals facilitated by communication before they can socialize with the rest of the group (Flor, 2015a). Using ritual to describe the communication process in a society provides an alternative to the transmission model of communication where messages pass from source to receiver with the dominance of the former sustained through discourses of modernization and state ruling. In contrast, the ritual view sees communication as a way to maintain the community through a collective act that holds significance to the people (Craig, 2013).

Instead of communication in general, the study specifically examined intercultural communication competence given the diversity of community members. In the case of international students, communication was not seen as the problem but it was their interaction, influenced by both language and culture, which became an obstacle (Swan, 1978). Zheng (2014) likewise suggested that with increasing contacts among people from diverse culture, intercultural communication competence is essential.

The study's objective was to describe the intercultural communication competence of ASEAN graduate students at the University of the Philippines Los Baños and determine if this is related to their sense of community. It was guided by the question: What is the intercultural communication competence of ASEAN graduate students in UP Los Baños and is this related to their sense of community?

Intercultural communication competence was examined using three constructs: knowledge, skills and motivation, following the definition of Spitzberg (2000) which refers to intercultural communication competence as the acquisition of knowledge, skills and motivation that result to appropriate and effective behavior and communication with people from different cultures. Wiseman, Hammer, and Nishida (1989) defined knowledge in intercultural communication competence as knowledge about another culture, language, values, beliefs and ideologies which can be used to understand the behavior of other people. Skills refer to intercultural effectiveness or an individual's ability to communicate as well as enact verbal and nonverbal behaviors which result to appropriate and effective interaction and the achievement of communication goals (Portalla & Chen, 2010). Motivation is defined as an individual's intrinsic or extrinsic desire to encourage intercultural interactions (Martin & Nakayama, 2010). Morreale (2007) suggests that motivation requires that an individual actually wants to communicate and interact with people from other cultures.

To describe sense of community at an individual level rather than from state to state actors, the study adapted McMillan and Chavis (1986) four elements of "sense of community" which includes individual feelings of membership, influence, reinforcement, and shared emotional connection. Membership refers to the feeling of belongingness among people or how individuals relate to others on a personal level. Influence pertains to an individual's feeling that he or she matters in a group and that the group likewise matters to the individual. People prefer communities that make them feel that they are influential. Reinforcement refers to the feeling that needs are or will be met upon joining the group and a community can sustain its togetherness if it continues to fulfill the needs of the members. Shared emotional connection pertains to the notion of sharing a common history, experience, time and place. In terms of connection, increased interaction also increases the chance that members become close with one another while their bond becomes stronger with continued positive experiences and relationships (McMillan & Chavis, 1986).

Methodology

This section discusses the sampling scheme, study site, research design, data gathering method, and statistical treatment used. The study examined intercultural communication competence and its relationship to sense of community. While the study is relevant to the educational institution where it was conducted, it does not necessarily reflect the intercultural communication competence and sense of community of Southeast Asian students from primary to tertiary levels. Moreover, not all countries from the ASEAN were included in the study as some nations such as Singapore and Brunei did not have students in the study site while there was only one graduate student from Malaysia.

Respondents and Study Site

Respondents were ASEAN international graduate students of UP Los Baños for the 1st semester of AY 2017-2018. Complete enumeration was the sampling method used as the number of foreign students on campus from ASEAN member nations is not very big. There were 94 foreign graduate students officially enrolled during the study, but only 71 agreed to participate.

Research Design

The study used a survey research design. For the cognitive dimension of intercultural communication competence, knowledge was measured by adapting the Ten Nation Survey on ASEAN used by Thompson and Thianthai (2008). The variable refers to the respondents' score on (1) identifying and locating the ten ASEAN member nations in a blank map, (2) identifying the ASEAN flag, and (3) identifying the founding year of the organization. Correctly answering 2-3 items from the 3 general questions about ASEAN indicates high knowledge while correctly answering only one item to none indicate low knowledge. Through self-reporting, the respondents indicated their level of familiarity with ASEAN using a 4-point scale with 1 indicating that the respondents are not at all familiar with ASEAN and 4 indicating that they are very familiar with the organization.

For the behavioral dimension, skill was measured through the Intercultural Effectiveness Scale by Portalla and Chen (2010). The instrument is composed of 20 statements covering intercultural effectiveness constructs such as behavioral flexibility, interaction relaxation, interactant respect, message skills, identity maintenance, and interaction management. The variable was measured through a Likert type scale from 1 to 5 (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=uncertain, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree) and a high rating in the scale indicates effective skills during intercultural interactions.

For the affective dimension, motivation was measured using the Motivation Scale by Arasaratnam (2004). The instrument consists of 6 statements such as "I enjoy initiating conversations with someone from a different culture" and measured through a 7-point scale (1=strongly disagree and 7=strongly agree). A high rating in the scale signify the respondents' willingness to communicate in different situations with different people from different cultures

Lastly, sense of community was measured using the Sense of Community Index Version 2 (SCI-2) based on McMillan and Chavis (1986) four elements of sense of community measured through a four-point scale with 0 indicating that statements do not represent their feelings about the community and 3 indicating that statements completely represent their feelings (Chavis et al., 2008). The community referent was specifically identified as the ASEAN community. A high rating for membership refers to respondents' feeling that they belong and that they are connected with other members of the community. For the subscale reinforcement, a high rating indicates that the respondents feel that his or her needs will be met as a member of the community. A high rating for shared emotional connection refers to respondents' feeling that he or she shares common history or experiences with other members of the community. For the subscale influence, a high rating reflects the respondents' feeling that he or she matters and that the community likewise matters to them.

Data Gathering

Permission was obtained from the SEARCA Residence Hotel and University Housing Office of UP Los Banos for access to ACCI Dormitory and International House. In addition, permission was also sought from the leader of IMSA Jammi Al-Khair Islamic Center where some of the Muslim international students converge as well as the professors of some graduate courses that the students were taking for 1st semester AY 2017-2018.

Once approval from the residential buildings was received, the students were contacted through their room telephones and approached in common areas such as the living room, study area, and kitchen. Students not residing inside UP Los Banos campus were approached in the IMSA Jammi Al-Khair Islamic Center and their classes.

An English questionnaire divided into three parts was used with a consent declaration form in the first page indicating the purpose of the study, duration, procedure, risks and benefits of participating, confidentiality, and the respondents' right to refuse or withdraw. The first part of the questionnaire included demographic characteristics of the participants. The second part of the questionnaire measured the intercultural communication competence of the students based on their knowledge, motivation and skills. The last part of the questionnaire measured the students' ASEAN sense of community based on their feelings of membership, influence, reinforcement and shared emotional connection.

Statistical Treatment

Descriptive statistics were used to determine frequency counts, mean, and standard deviation for all variables. Chi-square test was used to determine the relationship between knowledge and sense of community. Pearson r correlation was used to determine relationships between sense of community and intercultural effectiveness and motivation.

Results and Discussions

This section discusses the respondents' intercultural communication competence as described by their cognitive (knowledge and orientation towards the ASEAN region), behavioral (intercultural effectiveness) and affective (motivation to communicate) dimensions as well as their sense of community as described by their feelings of membership, influence, reinforcement, and shared emotional connection.

Intercultural Communication Competence

Intercultural communication is concerned with the interpersonal interaction of people with diverse knowledge, cultures, attitudes, and beliefs (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009). As a field of study, intercultural communication examines the interactions of individuals from diverse cultural and ethnic background and compares communication patterns of different cultures (Zhu, 2011). The advent of multicultural societies made studies on intercultural communication competence relevant (Arasaratnam, 2007). Likewise, globalization's effect on society made studies on intercultural communication competence significant (Portalla & Chen, 2010).

The term intercultural communication competence is made up of intercultural competence and communication competence (Lin, 2012). Berardo (2005) defines intercultural competence as an individual's capacity for effective and appropriate interaction in diverse intercultural contexts by using one's own intercultural resources such as knowledge, skills, awareness, and attitudes. Exhibiting intercultural competence enables a person to develop and solve challenges brought by cultural differences.

The second concept, communication competence, pertains to the capacity for effective and appropriate communication behavior depending on the interaction context. Having high communication competence means that a person shows appropriate communication behavior to facilitate interaction. It does not only involve the ability to speak and understand many foreign languages but also the ability to exchange and respect cultural symbols and norms (Lin, 2012).

When combined, intercultural communication competence refers to the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and motivation that result to appropriate and effective behavior and communication with people from diverse cultures (Spitzberg, 2000).

Knowledge and Orientation

Results show that the respondents were most knowledgeable about the symbol of ASEAN (flag) but they were less able to correctly identify the founding year. In addition, their cartographic knowledge of the region showed that students in the mainland are best in identifying other mainland nations while insular students can identify other insular countries best. These results were similar to the findings of Thompson and Thianthai (2008) where respondents were able to correctly identify a symbolically significant object compared with historical information. According to Luhmann (2000), symbols distinguish the familiar and unfamiliar. It is used to communicate information and it is easy to recognize and utilize compared with words (McDougall, Curry, and de Bruijn, 1999). The ASEAN flag and its logo are considered as symbols of a common identity which are explicitly expressed to the public (Karuppanan, 2006). Concrete symbols such as these are seen as more familiar compared with abstract symbols because these represent objects found in reality which adds to its significance (McDougall et al., 1999). Using padi stalks to represent the countries is also significant given the prominence of rice in ASEAN. In addition, McDougall et al. (1999) cited that familiarity pertains to the frequency of encountering symbols and citizens might have been more exposed to the flag compared with historical information (Thompson et al., 2016). Overall, results follow similar studies where students were able to answer general questions that are believed to be common knowledge about the organization (Siraprasiri & Chanintira, 2016). Table 1 presents the data.

Table 1. Knowledge about ASEAN's symbol, founding year, and member nations.

Question	Number of respondents who answered correctly
Identify the ASEAN flag	67
Identify the year of ASEAN's founding	53
Identify the ASEAN member countries in the map	36

Source: Unpublished statistical data from the Deportation and Implementation Unit, Bureau of Immigration – Philippines.

Looking at the cartographic knowledge of respondents about the ASEAN member countries revealed the tendency of adhering to the insular and mainland divisions of the region. The mainland and insular classification of ASEAN is based on its geographical location and characteristics. Mainland countries are situated in the Mekong sub-region and are landlocked. These include Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, and Cambodia. Insular countries, on the other hand, are archipelagic land masses such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Brunei, and the Philippines (Mahiwo et al., 2013). Thompson and Thianthai (2008) noted in their study that students tend to follow the mainland and insular division of Southeast Asian countries when identifying other member nations.

As 53 of 71 respondents were from mainland Southeast Asia, those who were not able to identify all ASEAN countries and their location in the map were able to correctly identify fellow mainland nations such as Thailand, Vietnam, Myanmar, Cambodia, and Laos. Mainland respondents also have difficulty identifying the rest of insular Southeast Asia as indicated in Table 2. Moreover, in a study conducted by Marwan, Ya'akub, and Aini (2016), it was found out that while majority were able to identify the ASEAN countries, it was still comparatively low. In terms of locating the member countries in the map, respondents were able to locate their home country as well as fellow insular nations: Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei, and the Philippines but only partially located those from the mainland countries: Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, and Vietnam.

Table 2. Number of respondents who correctly identified the country in the unlabeled map.

Countries to be identified in the unlabeled map	Number of students
Cambodia	1
Myanmar	1
Thailand	1
Laos	2
Vietnam	4
Did not identify/locate any country	7
Philippines	10
Malaysia	11
Singapore	11
Brunei	14
Indonesia	18
Total	71

Intercultural Effectiveness

Results showed that the highest mean rating was under interactant respect ($M=4.09$; $SD=.65$) which refers to the level of value an individual gives to another person who is from a different culture during interaction (Portalla & Chen, 2010) while the respondents' lowest mean rating was under message skills ($M=3.08$; $SD=.73$) which was defined by Chen (2007) as the capacity of individuals to use another culture's language through verbal and non-verbal behaviors during an interaction.

The low mean rating for message skills can be attributed to the lack of common language within ASEAN. Malaysia, Brunei, Singapore, and Indonesia can speak Bahasa Malayu, Thailand and Laos can converse well with each other, but Myanmar, Cambodia, Vietnam, and the host country Philippines are not well versed with these languages (Flor, 2015b). While English was identified as the working language of the organization, citizen's use of English varies within the region. Kirkpatrick (2012) cited Kachru (1985) when he classified nations that were colonized by English speaking countries such as Brunei, the Philippines, Singapore, and Malaysia as "outer circles" which maintained the use of English. While Myanmar was also colonized by an English speaking nation, its long standing closed door policy eliminated the prominence of English within its institutions. Indonesia, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam were considered as "expanding circle" where English is treated in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) but this idea has been changing with the growing prominence of English when communicating with other countries (Kirkpatrick, 2012).

The high mean rating for interactant respect can be attributed to Southeast Asian values which give importance to respect and can be seen in people's practices and language. Vietnamese, Khmer, Lao, and Thai languages use status pronouns and honorific terms to show respect. In Cambodia, "making merit", a concept in Theravada Buddhism, extends to respectful actions which in turn will influence their moral and religious standing. Thailand practices kalatesa or giving importance to actions and speech according to place, time, and context. Respect is related to kalatesa where respecting those who are older, teachers, and friends is part of being "Thai". Nonverbal actions such as bowing with the hands pressed together for the Lao, Thai, and Cambodians also reflect the culture of respect in Southeast Asia (Bankston & Hidalgo, 2006). Table 3 describes the subscales of respondents' intercultural effectiveness.

Table 3. Intercultural Effectiveness of ASEAN graduate students

SUBSCALE	M	SD
Behavioral Flexibility	3.23	.55
Interaction Relaxation	3.59	.64
Interactant Respect	4.09	.65
Message Skills	3.08	.73
Identity Maintenance	3.42	.64
Interaction Management	3.53	.75

Motivation

According to Spitzberg (2000), increase in motivation leads to an increase in competence where people offering good impression and effective communication are seen as competent. This increase in motivation is also influenced by confidence built through experience and influenced by factors such as familiarity, anxiety, and importance of the interaction. This was exhibited in their low mean rating for the statement "In a party, if I have a choice between conversing with someone from my own culture or someone from a different culture I would probably choose the first option." (M=3.86; SD=1.54) and "I mostly associate with people from my own culture because I find it easier than trying to figure out the right way of interacting with someone from a different culture." (M=4.21; SD=1.48). Their disagreement to these statements reflects their confidence in communicating and their lack of anxiety when interacting with culturally different individuals.

Motivation is likewise influenced by perceived benefits in relation to the perceived costs (Spitzberg, 2000). This was reflected in the high mean rating for the statement "I would seek out friendships with people from different cultures in order to learn about their culture." (M=5.59; SD=1.25). Learning may be considered a benefit of interacting or building intercultural friendships. Arasaratnam, et al. (2010) further suggested that individuals with positive experience in intercultural interactions tend to have positive attitude towards those from another culture which leads to motivation. This was reflected in the highest mean rating for their agreement to the statement "I always like to experience new things, including meeting people of different cultures." (M=5.74; SD=1.16), followed by "I enjoy initiating conversations with someone from a different culture." (M=5.60; SD=1.11). These positive experiences lead to further motivation for communication.

In relation to intercultural competence, Arasaratnam & Banerjee (2011) noted that motivation to communicate with individuals from another culture and positive attitudes towards them have a positive relationship with intercultural competence. The idea of competence linked with motivation was also cited by White (1959) who highlighted the importance of effectance motivation in competence. According to him, competence is when an organism effectively interacts with its environment. Table 4 describes the motivation of respondents (M=5.04; SD=.77).

Table 4. Motivation of ASEAN graduate students.

STATEMENT	M	SD
Motivation	5.04	.77
I would seek out friendships with people from different cultures in order to learn about their culture.	5.59	1.25
I enjoy initiating conversations with someone from a different culture.	5.60	1.11
I always like to experience new things, including meeting people of different cultures.	5.74	1.16
In a party, if I have a choice between conversing with someone from my own culture or someone from a different culture I would probably choose the first option.	3.86	1.54
I mostly associate with people from my own culture because I find it easier than trying to figure out the right way of interacting with someone from a different culture.	4.21	1.48
When I meet someone from a new culture I am very interested in finding out more about their culture.	5.21	1.26

Sense of Community

Sarason (1974) first introduced psychological sense of community under the fields of community psychology and social psychology. Within community psychology's core values is advancing sense of community and the importance of human diversity. The field promotes both individual and collective well-being in the midst of increasing diversity among communities (Townley, Kloos, Green, & Franco, 2011).

Literature on the definition of sense of community shows similarities referring to the concept as a feeling of belonging and connectedness, of having trust, interacting, sharing values, objectives, histories, spirit, and expectations (Rovai, 2002). Sense of community is a vital factor of community life and is associated with positive mental health, participation, and connectedness (Townley et al., 2011). A widely used definition of sense of community is by McMillan and Chavis (1986) which refers to it as the feeling of individuals that they belong, that they matter to each other and to the community as a whole and an encompassing belief that each other's' needs will be fulfilled due to their affiliation to the community. They proposed four elements to the perception of sense of community such as membership, influence, reinforcement, and shared emotional connection.

In terms of respondents' sense of community, 'reinforcement of needs' (M=2.04; SD=.52) and 'shared emotional connection' (M=2.04; SD=.53) have the highest mean rating, while 'membership' (M=1.85; SD=.54) has the lowest mean rating. This low mean rating can be attributed to the large size of ASEAN community and their participation level which influenced their feeling of belongingness.

Studies have shown that citizens from the ASEAN showed a strong sense of support in the creation of the community but were not actively included in the formation process or given information about the organization (Benny et al., 2015; Benny & Abdullah, 2011; Kruajeenteng & Yousapronpaiboon, 2015). The organization's relationship with the people was also seen as low despite numerous opportunities of jointly addressing the region's well-being and security (The Habibie Center ASEAN Studies Program, 2016) which led to an elitist image and lack of public participation (Benny et al., 2015).

The high mean ratings for reinforcement of needs and shared emotional connection reflect the results of Benny et al's., (2015) study where positive perception towards ASEAN community's benefits is linked to people's perception of the formation process. Benny and Abdullah (2011) likewise indicated that attitudes towards the perceived benefits of the community were also positive. They believed that this would lead to "dynamic developments and caring societies" in the region. Table 5 describes the ASEAN sense of community of respondents according to its four subscales.

Table 5. ASEAN graduate students' sense of community.

SUBSCALE	M	SD
Reinforcement of Needs	2.04	.52
Membership	1.85	.54
Influence	1.86	.50
Shared Emotional Connection	2.04	.53

Relationship between Intercultural Communication Competence and Sense of Community

This section discusses the relationship between intercultural communication competence variables: Knowledge, Intercultural Effectiveness, and Motivation with Sense of Community.

Knowledge and sense of community

There was no significant relationship between knowledge and sense of community. This suggests that knowledge about general ASEAN information may not influence the respondents' overall sense of community. Wasko and Faraj (2000) noted that sense of community sees knowledge as a public good that belongs to and is sustained by the members. However, the questions asked were considered to be common knowledge about the ASEAN which non-members may know (Table 6).

Table 6. Relationship between knowledge and sense of community.

SENSE OF COMMUNITY	χ^2	df	p value
Reinforcement of Needs	6.83	3	.08
Membership	5.51	3	.14
Influence	.98	3	.71
Shared Emotional Connection	1.93	3	.59

* correlation is significant at $p \leq .05$

Intercultural effectiveness and sense of community

Results showed that there were significant relationships between membership and behavioral flexibility ($r=.47, p \leq .05$), interaction relaxation ($r=.45, p \leq .05$), identity maintenance ($r=.41, p \leq .05$), and interaction management ($r=.44, p \leq .05$).

The relationship between membership and behavioral flexibility can be associated with personal investment or the notion that an individual has earned the right to become a member. By adapting to the given context and being flexible during interaction, an individual is investing himself or herself towards his or her membership in the community (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). Interaction relaxation’s relationship with membership can be attributed to respondents being more at ease with individuals who belong to the ASEAN member countries. Wu (2013) suggested that the attractiveness of studying within the region can be due to the historical links among countries, proximity of nations, and cultural aspirations which provide a sense of familiarity. The relationship between membership and interaction management can likewise be attributed to similarity, affinity, and proximity among the ASEAN member nations. These enabled them to manage their interaction with other people since they are familiar with the culture and practices. The relationship between membership and identity maintenance can be attributed to the emotional safety that membership brings (McMillan & Chavis, 1986) which in turn allows members to freely express their identities regardless of differences.

Results also showed that there was a significant relationship between influence and interaction management ($r=.24, p \leq .05$) which can be attributed to the individual’s concern regarding the interest and orientation of the other person which would assist in sustaining the procedural aspect of an interaction (Portalla & Chen, 2010). Concerned individuals are more influential as opposed to those who do not show concern in the community (McMillan & Chavis, 1986).

Other significant relationships include shared emotional connection and interaction management ($r=.44, p \leq .05$), interaction relaxation ($r=.33, p \leq .05$) and identity maintenance ($r=.29, p \leq .05$). Interaction management’s relationship with shared emotional connection suggests that as individuals manage their intercultural interactions effectively this would lead to positive experiences which would result to stronger bonds within the community. Interaction relaxation’s relationship with shared emotional connection suggests that those in the community who share similar experiences are more likely to bond which would result to the feeling of ease during interaction (Portalla & Chen, 2010). Identity maintenance’s relationship with shared emotional connection can be attributed to identifying with the history of others. This history makes up a person’s identity which is maintained and supported as the members identify with it (Table 7).

Table 7. Relationship between intercultural effectiveness and sense of community.

SUBSCALES	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Intercultural Effectiveness										
1. Behavioral Flexibility	-	-	-	-	-	-	.14	.47*	.14	.17
2. Interaction Relaxation	-	-	-	-	-	-	.09	.45*	.20	.33*
3. Interactant Respect	-	-	-	-	-	-	-.07	.09	.04	-.03
4. Message Skills	-	-	-	-	-	-	.08	.22	-.02	.14
5. Identity Maintenance	-	-	-	-	-	-	.15	.41*	.20	.29*
6. Interaction Management	-	-	-	-	-	-	.17	.44*	.24*	.44*
Sense of Community										
7. Reinforcement of Needs	.14	.09	-.07	.08	.15	.17	-	-	-	-
8. Membership	.47*	.45*	.09	.22	.41*	.44*	-	-	-	-
9. Influence	.14	.20	.04	-.02	.20	.24*	-	-	-	-
10. Shared Emotional Connection	.17	.33*	-.03	.14	.29*	.44*	-	-	-	-

* correlation is significant at $p \leq .05$

Motivation and sense of community

Significant relationships between motivation and membership ($r=.28$, $p\leq.05$), and influence ($r=.31$, $p\leq.05$) surfaced in the study. This result follows Gudykunst (2005) idea that motivation to communicate stems from the feeling of acceptance where an individual is more motivated to communicate if he or she would like to be included in the group. Similarly, the relationship between motivation and membership follows the interpersonal communication motives model with inclusion pertaining to the need for companionship to lessen loneliness and foster positive reinforcement (Rubin, Perse, & Barbato, 1988). The relationship between motivation and influence shows that individuals are also motivated to communicate if it will result in increasing their influence in the community. As well, Rubin et al.'s (1988) six motives, control, refers to the need to achieve something such as becoming influential in the community or the community influencing the members to achieve consensus (Table 8).

Table 8. Relationship between motivation and sense of community.

SENSE OF COMMUNITY	r	p value
Reinforcement of Needs	.15	.21
Membership	.28*	.02
Influence	.31*	.01
Shared Emotional Connection	.24	.05

* correlation is significant at $p\leq.05$

Implication to ASEAN Integration's Three Pillars

From the variables examined in the study, intercultural communication competence and sense of community's membership and reinforcement of needs may be able to contribute to the three pillars of ASEAN integration. The organization established three pillars in line with creating an ASEAN Community such as the ASEAN Economic Community, ASEAN Socio Cultural Community, and ASEAN Political-Security Community ("2003 Declaration of ASEAN Concord II", 2003).

Following the aftermath of World War II and after gaining political independence, nations in Asia were then faced with developing their countries economically (Chu, 1974). Among the three pillars towards ASEAN integration, the ASEAN Economic Community embodies the regional economic integration of the member states towards shared prosperity. It aims to develop a sustainable community that is economically integrated with each other and with the world ("ASEAN Economic Community", n.d.).

Intercultural communication competence is essential for the ASEAN Economic Community building as nations today face increasing economic interdependence with other countries. This international system of economic interdependence is characterized by both developed and developing nations interacting in order to satisfy the needs of each other. The integration of the world economy has resulted in increased interconnectedness which is at the center of globalization. As a result, this created an environment where people from diverse cultures interact with each other and a need to accommodate diverse cultural norms through knowledge of effective intercultural communication and interaction (Ildiko, 2013). In addition, for communication to contribute to economic growth, it must be used to accomplish essential changes such as the acquisition of a feeling of nationhood where members are willing to work towards the objectives of the nation above their personal goals (Chu, 1974). This feeling of nationhood is embodied in the conceptualization of "sense of community" where there is a feeling of belongingness among the members (McMillan & Chavis, 1986).

The importance of communication was highlighted by Deutsch et al. (1957) as it facilitates the process of shared identity and culture towards an organized and interdependent community which is a goal of the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC). The ASCC aims to advance people's quality of life through "people-oriented, people-centered, environmental friendly" activities and promotes sustainable development that fosters resiliency ("ASEAN Socio – Cultural Community", n.d.) and encourages "human development, social justice and rights, social protection and welfare, environmental sustainability, ASEAN awareness, and

narrowing of the development gap" (ASEAN Secretariat, 2016). It aims to build a peaceful community with a common identity as well as create a caring and sharing society to cultivate human, cultural and natural resources ("ASEAN Socio – Cultural Community", n.d.).

The last pillar, ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC), aims to create a democratic and peaceful region where citizens may live amicably. This community advances peace in terms of resolving conflicts and differences as well as treating security for the region as a whole since the member countries have common visions and objectives as well as located in proximity with each other ("ASEAN Political Security Community", n.d.). This idea is resonant of McMillan and Chavis' (1986) reinforcement of needs where individuals who share values find that they also have the same needs, priorities, and goals which lead to the belief that being together in one community will enable them to fulfill their common needs and the reinforcement they seek. This provides an impetus for cohesive communities. The idea of fostering a peaceful community where people may live amicably is likewise resonant of Deutsch' notion of sense of community as the establishment of security communities where peaceful change is possible among citizens (Deutsch et al., 1957) since they agree to settle common social issues amicably. This way, violence will be eliminated as a way of resolving issues (Tripathi, 2015).

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study examined intercultural communication competence and its relationship with building a sense of community. Results showed that among the variables of intercultural communication competence, intercultural effectiveness and motivation to communicate have significant relationships with the creation of a sense of community while knowledge did not.

The respondents' knowledge about ASEAN indicated that they were aware about general information such as the organization's symbol. However, their knowledge about fellow member nations and the location in the map showed their tendency to follow the mainland and insular classifications where mainland respondents were more familiar with fellow mainland nations and vice versa. Having no significant relationship with building a sense of community can be associated with the questions being too common that even non-members may know since sense of community considers knowledge to be owned by and is sustained only by its members (Wasko & Faraj, 2000).

In terms of their intercultural effectiveness, results showed that they were respectful of people from other cultures but their communication skills provide a challenge during interaction though their motivation to communicate showed that there was high agreement towards meeting, initiating conversations, and seeking friendships with people from a different culture. Having significant relationships between these two variables of intercultural communication competence and sense of community showed the importance of respect in the ASEAN region and its significance in building a sense of community given its pervasiveness in Southeast Asian culture and practices while individuals are seen as more motivated to communicate if they would like to be a part of the group (Gudykunst, 2005) and if they would like to gain influence among the members (Rubin et al., 1988)

As the study revealed the respondents' struggle with identifying all member countries and its geographic location as well as their message skills given the lack of common language in the region, the study recommends for ASEAN to provide more opportunities for collaborations that will immerse people in the local culture of ASEAN member countries. The organization may likewise create a platform which is accessible to all and is responsive to the evolving media landscape of each region and of each community sector to disseminate information about the member countries including the different languages. Activities to include the citizens of each country and their opinions in ASEAN should be continuously developed to foster the feeling of belongingness and for community building to become participatory as the study reflected the lowest rating for feeling of membership similar to the idea that ASEAN is a community of nations instead of people (Benny, Yean, & Ramli, 2015).

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