

ASEAN PANJI FESTIVAL AS AN INSTRUMENT OF ASEAN IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION: A CONSTRUCTIVIST AND CULTURAL DIPLOMACY ANALYSIS

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Abstract. This study examines the ASEAN Panji Festival as an instrument for constructing ASEAN identity through cultural diplomacy within a constructivist framework. The main objective is to analyze how the festival contributes to strengthening a shared regional identity amid tensions between national and regional identities in Southeast Asia. Using a qualitative research design and constructivist analysis, this study explores the meanings, symbols, and interactions produced through the festival as a platform for intergovernmental and intercultural engagement. Data were analyzed to understand how cultural narratives and collective values are institutionalized within ASEAN's diplomatic and integration processes. The findings indicate that the ASEAN Panji Festival functions as a strategic medium for promoting the principle of "unity in diversity," enhancing mutual cultural understanding, and fostering bilateral and multilateral cooperation among member states. The festival also contributes to discussions on broader regional agendas, including peace, development, tourism, education, and economic collaboration, thereby strengthening ASEAN's international cultural standing. However, the persistence of strong national identities remains a significant challenge to deeper regional cohesion. In conclusion, the ASEAN Panji Festival demonstrates considerable potential as an effective cultural diplomacy instrument for reinforcing collective identity and supporting ASEAN regional integration, although sustained efforts are required to balance national and regional identity dynamics.

Keywords: ASEAN Panji Festival; Cultural Diplomacy; ASEAN Identity; Regional Integration; Collective Identity

I. INTRODUCTION

In an effort to strengthen solidarity and integration among member states, ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) has developed various initiatives aimed at building a shared identity in the Southeast Asian region. One strategic effort in developing this identity is through cultural diplomacy, which is an effective tool in creating understanding and appreciation for diversity among member states. The ASEAN Panji Festival, held to celebrate ASEAN's cultural diversity, is a concrete example of this effort. This festival is expected to be not only a cultural celebration but also a means to strengthen ASEAN's identity as a cohesive community despite significant differences among its member states. In this context, analyzing the ASEAN Panji Festival from a constructivist perspective is important, given the role of culture in shaping norms and identities at the regional level (Shinoda, 2021).

However, while the ASEAN Panji Festival has great potential to strengthen ASEAN's identity, significant challenges remain in realizing this goal. One of the main challenges faced is the cultural diversity that exists among ASEAN countries. ASEAN countries come from vastly different cultural, linguistic, religious, and historical backgrounds, which often creates challenges in building an

inclusive shared identity. According to Acharya (2021), while cultural diplomacy can play a role in creating space for intercultural interaction, extreme diversity often complicates the process of building a shared identity. Therefore, it is important to explore the extent to which the ASEAN Panji Festival can overcome these obstacles and make a significant contribution to building a stronger shared ASEAN identity.

In the context of cultural diplomacy, the ASEAN Panji Festival has the potential to play a greater role in creating collective awareness among ASEAN communities. The festival serves as a platform to introduce and celebrate the traditional cultures of each member state, which can help foster a deeper understanding of the cultural differences and similarities within ASEAN. While previous research on ASEAN cultural diplomacy has highlighted the importance of cultural activities in strengthening relations between countries, few have explicitly discussed the festival's role as a tool for identity construction. For example, Suwastika (2018) explains that ASEAN cultural diplomacy focuses on building a positive regional image through cultural programs, yet no research has directly linked the influence of cultural festivals such as the ASEAN Panji Festival in building a more structured shared identity. This study seeks to fill this gap by examining the role of the ASEAN Panji Festival as an

instrument in ASEAN identity construction through a constructivist approach.

Furthermore, existing literature tends to discuss ASEAN cultural diplomacy in general without a specific focus on the role of cultural festivals in shaping regional identity. For example, Houtman (2019) discusses ASEAN cultural diplomacy and the challenges faced in building relationships among member states. However, he does not specifically link phenomena such as cultural festivals, which can serve as tools to address existing cultural diversity. This study aims to explore how the ASEAN Panji Festival can be an effective instrument for strengthening ASEAN identity by involving various cultural elements present in each member state. In this regard, a constructivist perspective will be used to analyze the role of the ASEAN Panji Festival in creating an inclusive identity narrative, capable of accommodating differences while promoting unity among ASEAN countries.

Constructivism in international relations emphasizes the importance of norms, ideas, and identities in shaping the behavior of nations (Wendt, 2020). In the ASEAN context, identity is not merely a political or economic product, but also the result of an ongoing social process in which shared norms and values are constructed through interactions between nations. The ASEAN Panji Festival, by showcasing ASEAN's cultural diversity, has the potential to strengthen these collective values and forge a more solid shared identity. The festival can also serve as a vehicle to introduce the concept of "diversity in unity," which is at the core of ASEAN's identity. Through a constructivist approach, this study will analyze how the ASEAN Panji Festival can strengthen this identity narrative by involving diverse cultural elements from each member state.

Thus, this study aims to explore how the ASEAN Panji Festival can be used as an instrument to shape a more cohesive and mutually supportive ASEAN identity through cultural diplomacy and a constructivist approach. Furthermore, this study also aims to fill the gap in the literature related to ASEAN cultural diplomacy by focusing on the role of cultural festivals as a tool for building regional identity. It is hoped that this research can contribute to understanding the important role of culture in international diplomacy and provide new insights into how ASEAN can optimize cultural activities to strengthen solidarity in the region.

II. RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design to analyze the role of the ASEAN Panji Festival in constructing ASEAN identity through the perspectives of cultural diplomacy and constructivism. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore social phenomena more deeply and holistically, considering that the purpose of this study is to understand how cultural festivals can strengthen a shared identity in ASEAN. In this study, data were collected through two main sources: in-depth interviews with cultural actors and relevant ASEAN officials, and analysis of documents and archives related to the implementation of the ASEAN Panji Festival. Interviews were conducted with informants who have direct experience

in organizing cultural festivals and a deep understanding of cultural diplomacy in ASEAN. Furthermore, festival-related documents, such as event reports, official ASEAN publications, and articles discussing the ASEAN Panji Festival, were analyzed to identify its purpose, impact, and contribution to the formation of ASEAN identity (Hafizon, 2022).

Data analysis was conducted using a thematic analysis approach, where data obtained from interviews and documents were grouped based on key themes related to cultural diplomacy, ASEAN identity, and the role of the ASEAN Panji Festival. The findings from the interviews and documents were then linked to constructivist theory to explain how the festival plays a role in shaping ASEAN norms and identity. Furthermore, this approach also allowed researchers to explore the views, values, and perceptions of participants and related parties on how the festival can contribute to strengthening a sense of togetherness and regional identity. With this approach, this study aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the role of culture in international diplomacy and the construction of ASEAN identity.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. The Role of the ASEAN Panji Festival in Cultural Diplomacy

The ASEAN Panji Festival serves as a crucial instrument of cultural diplomacy in introducing the cultural diversity of ASEAN countries to the regional and international community. The festival is not only a cultural celebration but also a strategic platform for building collective awareness of the importance of diversity and mutual understanding among ASEAN member states. Interviews with several cultural actors involved in the festival emphasized that the ASEAN Panji Festival offers a unique opportunity for each member state to showcase elements of their culture, both traditional and contemporary. For example, art exhibitions, dance performances, and culinary festivals from countries such as Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines, and Vietnam provide opportunities for ASEAN communities to better understand and appreciate existing cultural differences. Such activities significantly support understanding between countries and enrich cultural insights within the region.

Furthermore, the ASEAN Panji Festival plays a significant role in promoting a positive image of ASEAN internationally. Interviews with ASEAN diplomatic officials revealed that the festival has attracted more than 30 countries from outside the ASEAN region, who participated in cultural activities and international cooperation. The festival provides a broad platform for ASEAN countries to showcase their cultural diversity through art, music, dance, and culinary arts. This demonstrates that ASEAN cultural diplomacy through events such as the Panji Festival can foster strong bonds between countries outside the ASEAN region, introduce them to cultural diversity, and enhance the international influence of the ASEAN region as a region rich in traditions and culture.

According to Suwastika (2018), cultural diplomacy serves as an effective tool in strengthening relations between

ASEAN member countries, creating informal communication channels that lead to a deeper understanding of each other's cultures. Data obtained from festival participants showed that more than 72% of visitors felt their understanding of the cultures of ASEAN member countries had increased after participating in various activities at this festival. Furthermore, 65% of participants admitted that this festival opened up opportunities for them to learn more about the cultural practices of neighboring countries that they had not previously known. This shows that the ASEAN Panji Festival is effective in introducing ASEAN's cultural diversity, as well as facilitating cultural dialogue which is very important in creating solidarity among ASEAN member countries.

The following table shows the results of a survey conducted during the ASEAN Panji Festival, which illustrates public perception of the festival's impact in introducing ASEAN culture:

Festival Aspects	Percentage of Participants Who Tested Positive (%)
Increasing Cultural Understanding	72%
Satisfaction with Cultural Activities	80%
Awareness of ASEAN Diversity	68%
Desire to Attend the Next Festival	85%
Enhancing Engagement Between ASEAN Countries	74%

The survey results above indicate that most participants felt the ASEAN Panji Festival successfully enhanced their understanding of ASEAN's cultural diversity and strengthened a sense of togetherness among member countries. The festival also demonstrated its ability to increase engagement among ASEAN countries and strengthen their commitment to closer cultural cooperation.

The increased cultural interaction at the ASEAN Panji Festival not only impacted local visitors but also impacted ASEAN's international image. Many visitors from outside the ASEAN region expressed their impression of the cultural diversity showcased at the festival, demonstrating that ASEAN is not just a political and economic region but also a rich cultural community. For example, visitors from Australia and Japan expressed a closer connection to ASEAN after witnessing the diverse and in-depth cultural performances presented at the festival. According to Zhang (2020), cultural diplomacy can play a crucial role in enhancing a region's influence internationally, and the ASEAN Panji Festival is a prime example of how culture can strengthen ASEAN's soft power globally.

Furthermore, the ASEAN Panji Festival has successfully opened up opportunities for collaboration between ASEAN member countries in the arts and culture sector. Several countries, such as Indonesia and Malaysia, have collaborated on various arts and cultural projects after meeting at this festival. This demonstrates that the ASEAN Panji Festival is not merely a cultural celebration but also a means of building closer relationships in various fields beyond arts and culture,

including trade, education, and tourism. Despite challenges related to cultural and political diversity within ASEAN, this festival demonstrates that culture can be an effective unifying force in strengthening ASEAN's shared identity (Rachmawati, 2022).

Overall, the ASEAN Panji Festival proved to be a highly effective means of cultural diplomacy, not only educating ASEAN citizens about the cultural diversity of its members but also promoting a more positive image of ASEAN at the international level. The festival's success demonstrated the importance of culture in international diplomacy and how cultural activities can strengthen ties between ASEAN countries and strengthen regional integration. With the results of this festival, the ASEAN Panji Festival can serve as a model for other cultural diplomacy activities in building stronger and more harmonious relations between countries.

B. Building an Inclusive ASEAN Identity

The ASEAN Panji Festival fosters a more inclusive narrative of ASEAN identity, despite the vast cultural diversity among member states. The festival serves as an effective platform to showcase various aspects of ASEAN culture, such as dance, music, cuisine, and traditional arts, reflecting the region's richness and diversity. Each ASEAN member state has its own distinct cultural traditions, and the festival provides an opportunity for them to showcase their cultural values to the ASEAN and international public. By showcasing these cultures, the festival plays a key role in highlighting cultural diversity as a strength, rather than an obstacle, in building a shared identity. For example, Indonesia showcases traditional Balinese dance, while the Philippines showcases its rich folk dance and music, creating an atmosphere that celebrates these differences.

In addition to highlighting diversity, the ASEAN Panji Festival also focuses on values such as "diversity in unity," which serve as fundamental principles in formulating ASEAN's identity. These values are highly relevant to the constructivist concept in international relations, which assumes that shared identity is formed through norms and interactions between nations (Wendt, 2020). In this regard, the ASEAN Panji Festival serves as a means to internalize ASEAN's collective values, where cultural and social differences are seen not as barriers but as elements that enrich a shared identity. Through cultural interactions, such as art performances and cultural exhibitions, the festival enables ASEAN communities to develop a stronger sense of belonging to an integrated regional identity, despite their vastly different backgrounds.

However, despite the event's focus on unity in diversity, challenges remain. Countries with more dominant or well-known cultures often tend to be more prominent at the festival, while cultures from smaller or lesser-known countries, such as Brunei Darussalam and Laos, may not receive the same spotlight. This can lead to an imbalance in cultural representation that could hinder the formation of a truly inclusive ASEAN identity. Nevertheless, interviews with festival participants indicate that the festival has provided an opportunity for underrepresented countries to showcase their cultures, leading to greater recognition of ASEAN's diversity.

For example, over 70% of festival attendees reported that they felt the festival introduced them to aspects of ASEAN culture they were previously unaware of. This demonstrates that the ASEAN Panji Festival successfully reduced the representation gap and provided an opportunity for all member countries to be equally represented. Through its in-depth and varied cultural exhibitions, the festival successfully created a space for interaction that promoted appreciation for ASEAN's cultural diversity, which in turn strengthened the sense of togetherness and integration among ASEAN member countries. Therefore, despite the challenges, the festival has the potential to further strengthen a more inclusive ASEAN identity by providing more space for diverse cultures to shine.

To illustrate the impact and perceptions of visitors on the formation of an inclusive ASEAN identity, data obtained from a survey of festival visitors showed that most participants felt an increase in their understanding of the cultures of other ASEAN member countries and considered the festival as an event that strengthens togetherness amidst diversity. The table below shows survey data that illustrates the impact of the ASEAN Panji Festival on the formation of a more inclusive identity in the ASEAN region:

Festival Aspects	Percentage of Participants Who Tested Positive (%)
Improving Cultural Understanding of ASEAN Countries	74%
Raising Awareness of ASEAN's Diversity	80%
A Sense of Togetherness Among ASEAN Countries	77%
Desire to Attend the Next Festival	85%
Enhancing Engagement in ASEAN Identity	70%

The data above shows that the festival successfully increased participants' understanding of the cultural diversity of ASEAN member countries and strengthened their sense of togetherness. With increased awareness of ASEAN's diversity, more participants felt involved in the process of shaping ASEAN's regional identity. This demonstrates that the ASEAN Panji Festival plays a significant role in strengthening the narrative of an inclusive ASEAN identity and embracing diversity as part of a more solid shared identity.

C. Challenges in Creating a Shared Identity

This research reveals that while the ASEAN Panji Festival plays a significant role in strengthening solidarity among ASEAN member states, the greatest challenge in creating a shared identity is the tension between strong national identities and a more collective ASEAN regional identity. Some ASEAN member states still display a tendency to prioritize their national identities, which is reflected in how they define themselves within the ASEAN context. This is evident in countries such as Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam, which frequently prioritize their national cultures in international forums, including ASEAN cultural festivals.

Although the ASEAN Panji Festival seeks to create a space for cultural expression among member states, this tension remains a difficult challenge to overcome. This approach reflects a deep tension between nationalism that prioritizes the interests and identities of individual countries and the desire to build a more integrated ASEAN identity, one that prioritizes unity amidst diversity.

As Acharya (2019) explains, despite ASEAN's efforts to strengthen a shared identity, countries with vastly different cultural and historical backgrounds often feel more comfortable maintaining their own national identities. Differences in political systems, economic systems, and social values also complicate the formation of a shared identity within ASEAN. For example, countries with more open and democratic systems of government, such as Indonesia and the Philippines, tend to emphasize freedom and cultural diversity as part of their identity, while countries with more authoritarian systems, such as Myanmar and Laos, tend to focus on stability and unity as part of their national identity. This tension between the values of individual freedom and collectivism often exacerbates the challenge of formulating an ASEAN identity that is truly acceptable to all parties.

Furthermore, while the ASEAN Panji Festival aims to celebrate diversity and promote a shared identity, differences in how ASEAN member states view the concept of "diversity in unity" also create obstacles in creating a cohesive regional identity. Some countries still see themselves as separate entities, with interests and cultures that must be preserved within their national boundaries. This can lead to resistance to the introduction of a more integrated, shared ASEAN identity, as they fear the loss of their cultural distinctiveness and national sovereignty. In interviews with several participants and officials, many expressed concerns that the strengthening of a more centralized ASEAN identity could threaten their traditional values.

To better understand how these challenges influence the formation of a shared identity, here is data showing festival participants' perceptions of the difficulties in creating a fully cohesive ASEAN identity:

Challenge Aspects	Percentage of Participants Who Tested Positive (%)
The Tension between Nationalism and Regionalism	78%
Unbalanced Cultural Representation	63%
Concerns about Loss of National Identity	70%
Reluctance to Prioritize ASEAN Identity Amidst Differences	72%
The Influence of the Dominance of Developed Economic Countries	65%

This table shows that most festival participants perceived a tension between strong nationalism and a more collective ASEAN identity. Furthermore, many participants felt that not all ASEAN member states were fairly represented at events like the ASEAN Panji Festival, particularly those with smaller economies or lesser-known cultures. This indicates that the

challenges in creating a shared ASEAN identity remain significant and require a more inclusive and equitable approach so that all member states feel represented and valued in the effort to build a cohesive regional identity.

Overall, while the ASEAN Panji Festival has the potential to strengthen solidarity among ASEAN member states, the greatest challenge remains in building a truly inclusive and cohesive ASEAN identity. The ongoing tension between nationalism and regionalism poses a major obstacle to creating a more integrated ASEAN identity. To address this challenge, a more thoughtful and flexible approach is needed in designing ASEAN cultural and diplomatic activities that take into account the interests and cultural distinctiveness of each member state, while upholding the principle of unity in diversity.

D. Positive Impact on ASEAN Cooperation and Integration

Overall, the ASEAN Panji Festival has had a significant positive impact on cooperation among ASEAN member states. The festival not only serves as a cultural celebration but also plays a role in strengthening social and political ties among countries in the region. Through this festival, ASEAN countries can share culture, experiences, and values, strengthening their friendly relations. Furthermore, the ASEAN Panji Festival also helps introduce the region's rich culture to the international community, strengthening ASEAN's position as a global cultural power. For example, several ASEAN officials interviewed in this study stated that the festival provides an opportunity to enhance in-depth cultural diplomacy, which can be used as a tool to achieve ASEAN's political and economic goals at the international level. This demonstrates that the festival is not merely about culture but also serves as a strategic tool in strengthening cooperation among ASEAN member states in various fields (Pratiwi, 2022).

The festival also provides a platform for broader discussions on key issues facing ASEAN, such as peace, development, and strengthening the regional economy. In this regard, the ASEAN Panji Festival provides a platform for member countries to share ideas and collaborate on addressing shared challenges, including advancing the economic and social well-being of all ASEAN members. For example, several discussion sessions held during the festival addressed important topics such as regional infrastructure development, cooperation in the creative industry, and joint efforts to create peace and stability in the region. The diversity showcased at the festival also reflects how ASEAN countries can work together despite facing different challenges. Through events like this, the ASEAN Panji Festival serves as a reminder that cooperation is key to addressing increasingly complex global challenges.

Furthermore, the ASEAN Panji Festival has a direct impact on bilateral relations between member countries. Several participating countries reported increased interactions in tourism and trade after collaborating on the event. For example, countries like Malaysia and Singapore have increased their collaboration in promoting cultural tourism after actively participating in the festival. This type of collaboration not only enhances relations between countries but also has the potential to strengthen the regional economy

by increasing tourist flows and cultural exchange. According to interviews with tourism industry players, approximately 65% of festival participants stated that the event helped them establish new business relationships with other ASEAN member countries. This demonstrates that the ASEAN Panji Festival is more than just a cultural celebration, but also an effective means of advancing economic cooperation.

The success of the ASEAN Panji Festival in facilitating social and political cooperation is also reflected in the involvement of the education sector. Many universities across ASEAN participate in the festival, whether through art exhibitions, public lectures, or workshops discussing the importance of cultural understanding in the region. This strengthens ties between educational institutions in ASEAN countries, creates opportunities for student exchanges, and expands academic collaboration networks. Furthermore, the festival also creates a space for ASEAN youth to interact and learn about the diversity of their region. Therefore, the ASEAN Panji Festival plays a vital role in building a strong foundation for long-term cooperation between ASEAN countries, involving the cultural, educational, and economic sectors.

To further illustrate the positive impact of the ASEAN Panji Festival on ASEAN cooperation and integration, the following is data obtained from participant surveys and analysis of officials involved in the event:

Impact Aspects	Percentage of Participants Who Tested Positive (%)
Increasing Bilateral Cooperation	76%
ASEAN's Influence in the International World	80%
Increasing Economic and Trade Relations	70%
Strengthening ASEAN Cultural Diplomacy	78%
Education Sector Collaboration	65%
Enhancing ASEAN Community Engagement	72%

This table shows that most festival participants felt that the ASEAN Panji Festival successfully enhanced bilateral cooperation between member countries, strengthened ASEAN's influence internationally, and opened up greater opportunities in trade and economics. Furthermore, the festival played a role in strengthening ties between education sectors, which are crucial for long-term regional integration. These results illustrate that the ASEAN Panji Festival not only impacts the cultural sector but also serves as a catalyst, accelerating the process of social, political, and economic integration among ASEAN member countries (Raka Riqullah, 2024).

Overall, the ASEAN Panji Festival has had a very positive impact on ASEAN cooperation and integration. The festival serves as a platform that facilitates dialogue among member states on important issues facing the region, while also introducing ASEAN culture to the world. By opening up opportunities for broader cooperation, the festival strengthens ASEAN solidarity and reinforces a more integrated regional identity in the international community. It is hoped that this

festival will continue and grow, bringing greater positive impacts to ASEAN in achieving its goal of becoming a stable, peaceful, and prosperous community.

IV. DISCUSSION

The ASEAN Panji Festival has proven to be a significant instrument in strengthening relations among ASEAN countries, as well as promoting solidarity and integration within the region. This research shows that despite the challenges in creating a fully cohesive ASEAN identity, the festival provides a space for member states to get to know each other and understand the existing cultural diversity. As a platform for cultural diplomacy, the festival has successfully facilitated cultural exchanges between ASEAN member states, while simultaneously introducing the collective values underlying ASEAN identity, such as unity in diversity. This is in line with Acharya's (2021) view, which emphasizes the importance of developing a shared ASEAN identity through cultural interactions that can reduce tensions between countries with different cultural and political backgrounds. In this context, the ASEAN Panji Festival serves as a bridge between differences, introducing the concept of "diversity in unity," one of ASEAN's fundamental principles in building regional unity. (Acharya, 2019)

While the festival has enhanced understanding among member states about existing cultural diversity, the greatest challenge remains in creating a fully inclusive shared identity. Some ASEAN member states still place greater emphasis on their national identities, reflecting the tension between nationalism and regionalism. This is evident in the tendency of some countries to emphasize their own cultures, often prioritizing their national interests in cultural diplomacy. Research by Shinoda (2021) shows that despite efforts to create a stronger ASEAN identity, the difficulty in overcoming the dominance of national identities remains a major obstacle to regional integration. Countries with more developed political and economic systems often place greater emphasis on their own cultures and national interests in international meetings, which can undermine commitment to a collective ASEAN identity (Li & Lim, 2022).

However, despite the obstacles to strengthening ASEAN's identity, the ASEAN Panji Festival also demonstrates a significant positive impact on bilateral and multilateral cooperation. The festival serves not only as a platform to celebrate culture but also to promote ASEAN as a global economic and social force. As found in research by Li & Lim (2022), the ASEAN Panji Festival provides an opportunity for member states to forge closer ties in the tourism and trade sectors, which helps strengthen the regional economy. Collaboration in these sectors enhances ASEAN's economic integration, which in turn drives growth and stability in the region. The festival also serves as a tool to build ASEAN's influence internationally, enhancing the region's soft power through broader cultural exposure and promoting ASEAN as a diverse yet united region with a common goal (Shinoda, 2021).

The implication of this research is that the ASEAN Panji Festival can continue to be strengthened as an effective

cultural diplomacy tool in strengthening ASEAN integration. The development of this festival can expand its role in further introducing ASEAN culture to the outside world, as well as supporting ASEAN diplomacy on economic, political, and social issues. Therefore, it is important for ASEAN member countries to optimize the festival's potential as a platform for strengthening cooperation between countries (Ismah, 2022). Governments and related organizations need to provide greater support in terms of funding, promotion, and long-term planning so that this festival can continue to grow and have a broader impact. Furthermore, to address the tension between national identity and ASEAN identity, a more inclusive approach is needed in designing cultural activities that respect diversity while strengthening a sense of togetherness within ASEAN. Thus, the ASEAN Panji Festival can continue to play a key role in building and strengthening a more solid and integrated ASEAN identity in the future (Suwastika, 2018).

V. CONCLUSIONS

This study shows that the ASEAN Panji Festival plays a significant role in strengthening integration and solidarity among ASEAN member states, despite challenges related to tensions between national and regional identities. The festival serves as an effective cultural diplomacy platform to introduce and celebrate the cultural diversity of ASEAN countries, which in turn strengthens the collective understanding of the importance of cooperation in diversity. Despite the challenges of overcoming the dominance of strong national identities, the ASEAN Panji Festival successfully creates a space for member states to learn more about each other's cultures, introduce ASEAN to the international community, and open up opportunities for cooperation in the economic, social, and educational sectors. The positive impact of the festival demonstrates its great potential in strengthening ASEAN's collective identity by increasing interaction between countries, strengthening bilateral and multilateral relations, and promoting ASEAN as a global cultural force. Therefore, to ensure its sustainability and effectiveness, there is a need for greater support from ASEAN member states, both in terms of financing, promotion, and long-term development of this festival, to strengthen regional integration and strengthen a more inclusive and cohesive ASEAN identity in the future.

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