

Public opinion and media narratives on the motivations behind the ASEAN declaration on technology-based human trafficking

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Article Info

Article history:

Submission: 2025-09-27

Accepted: 2026-03-10

Published: 2026-03-26



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ABSTRACT

The 2023 ASEAN Summit in Labuan Bajo, Indonesia, issued a declaration to combat technology-based trafficking across the ASEAN region. The emergence of this declaration is an immediate response of ASEAN members, especially Indonesia, to current cases of human trafficking in which perpetrators have utilized technology. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, criminal syndicates are forcing hundreds of thousands of people into online criminal activities in Southeast Asia, ranging from illicit gaming to cryptocurrency fraud and romance investment schemes. Individuals who are compelled to labor in these fraud operations are subjected to inhuman treatment while being made to commit crimes. This article aims to investigate the motivation behind the declaration through social media users and online news publishers. The collected data is from selected online news sources: Antara News, Jakarta Globe, Kompas, Reuters, Tempo.co, The Diplomat, and Viva.co.id, along with comments from YouTube and Instagram. Following that, data analysis is conducted using NVivo 12. The paper applies Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory. The declaration was motivated by observational learning and self-efficacy. Then, public opinion, in the context of social cognitive theory, is understood as a form of social persuasion.

Keywords:

human trafficking; ASEAN declaration; social cognitive theory

Please cite this article in APA style as:

Anam, M. Z., & Sari, M. D. (2026). Public opinion and media narratives on the motivations behind the ASEAN declaration on technology-based human trafficking. *Jurnal Inovasi Ilmu Sosial dan Politik (JISoP)*, 8(1), 68-81. <https://doi.org/10.33474/jisop.v8i1.24300>

INTRODUCTION

Southeast Asia is a region that comprises the countries of destination, origin, and transit for human trafficking, a form of organized transnational crime. Southeast Asian borders, notably those between Thailand and Cambodia, are frequently a site of child trafficking (Sankharat, 2013). In addition, child traffickers can now recruit and transport children online due to the rapid advancement of internet-based communication technologies

(Kranrattanasuit, 2024). Nevertheless, the technology has the potential to assist survivors, victims, and law enforcers in setting the trafficking (Goh et al., 2018). Then, fast economic development in Vietnam leads not only to a positive impact on education and infrastructure but also to drawbacks to corruption, human trafficking, the kidnappings of children, and labor exploitation (Hoa & Valco, 2018).

ASEAN had a strategy and regime to combat trafficking in persons. ASEAN formulated a convention, namely, the ASEAN Convention on Trafficking in Persons (ACTIP) (Huong & Vu, 2023). Jaya et al. (2023) argue that the community, as well as the federal and local governments, are responsible for handling and preventing human trafficking. The ACTIP Convention governs these regulations by forming different task forces to carry out the prevention and control of human trafficking. On the other hand, numerous obstacles must be overcome to implement ACTIP effectively (Jaya et al., 2023).

At the ASEAN Summit in Labuan Bajo, Indonesia, in 2023, ASEAN agreed on a new technology-based anti-trafficking declaration, titled the Declaration on Combating Trafficking in Persons Caused by the Abuse of Technology. The emergence of this declaration is an immediate response of ASEAN members, especially Indonesia, to current cases of human trafficking in which perpetrators have utilized technology. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, criminal syndicates are forcing hundreds of thousands of people into online criminal activities in Southeast Asia, ranging from illicit gaming to cryptocurrency fraud and romance investment schemes (Shamdasani, 2023). Individuals who are compelled to labor in these fraud operations are subjected to inhuman treatment while being made to commit crimes (Shamdasani, 2023).

The purpose of this article is to investigate the government of Indonesia's motivations regarding the creation of a declaration against technology-based human trafficking. This study also elaborates on the narratives the community has addressed through comments on YouTube and Instagram, as well as those created by the government. The perspectives of social cognition theory—which introduced self-efficacy, social persuasion, and observational learning—as presented by Albert Bandura will be used to categorize these narratives.

While some scholars have written about technology-driven human trafficking, few have connected public opinion with the ASEAN declaration against technology-driven human trafficking. Researchers who have connected public opinion to combating human trafficking include Anam, Putri, Sari, and Lestari, who discuss the reasons why Indonesian digital public opinion supports the Indonesian government's moratorium policy in response to the Malaysian online recruitment system (Anam et al., 2024). The study, including Wahid's work on employment fraud through web platforms (Wahid, 2023). However, it did not mainly address the reasons behind the ASEAN anti-trafficking declaration or the level of popular support for it.

In terms of theoretical frameworks, publications that employ Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory to examine the ASEAN declaration opposing severe technology-based human trafficking are few. According to the social cognitive theory, people can think, act, and learn differently after observing the behavior of others (Dreer, 2023). Therefore, the behavior of other actors, whether state or non-state, influences how the state formulates policy and strategic action. This article employs three elements of the Social Cognitive Theory: observational learning, self-efficacy, and social support or citizen attitudes. Observational learning illustrates how the Indonesian government emphasizes the significance of the ASEAN declaration, drawing on knowledge acquired from diverse sources. Similarly, Lu et al. (2021) find that social platforms drive people's behavior, preferences, and knowledge.

Self-efficacy is the second component of the theory examined in this article. Miles & Vela (2022). Researchers who study students' self-efficacy argue that self-efficacy describes people's confidence in their ability to succeed in a specific task or field. Furthermore, Omotoy points out that the theory implies that more self-efficacy raises motivation and improves performance (Omotoy, 2023). Lee & Littles (2021) subsequently state that people's intentions to engage in cooperative activities within groups and their collective self-efficacy are influenced by a visible group on social media. Hoffman and Lutz's research on the political involvement of younger and older generations in Germany reveals that younger generations' online political participation is influenced by the efficacy of social media. The educated older generation prefers offline political involvement in the meantime (Hoffmann & Lutz, 2021).

In the Social Cognitive Theory, social support is a factor influencing people's behavior (Ong & Thakumar, 2022). In the case of Chinese adolescents with epilepsy, as studied by Cui et al. (2023), social support has played a significant role in increasing self-management among Chinese adolescents with epilepsy. In the education field, Yu & Zhou (2025) argue that social support is a salient facilitator of self-regulated learning, including online self-regulated learning. Another case related to dietary behavior among Malaysian adults shows that social support contributes positively to healthy eating habits (Ong & Thakumar, 2022). Therefore, social support expressed in social media comments justifies the ASEAN declaration.

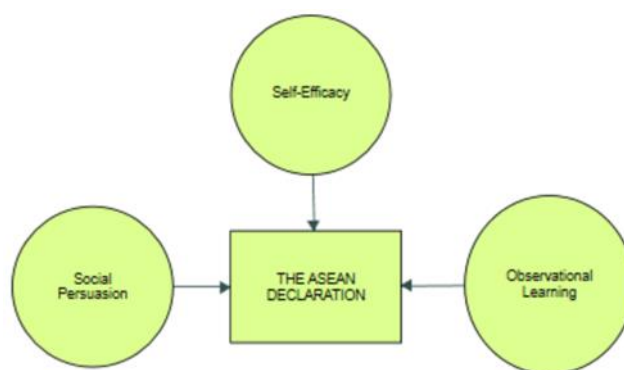


Figure 1. Theoretical framework
Source: Analysis by author, 2024

METHOD

This article employs an explanatory qualitative approach to investigate the motivations underlying the establishment of the ASEAN declaration. Despite the frequent use of quantitative methods, this research adopts a qualitative approach, drawing on Social Cognitive Theory, and employs NVivo 12 Plus. Three elements of the theory under investigation are observational learning, self-efficacy, and social persuasion.

The data used for this article are secondary. It is primarily sourced from the Indonesian government's website, specifically the website of the Secretary of State of Indonesia and the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology of Indonesia. It is also reported in English-language online news sources, including Antara News, Jakarta Globe, Kompas, Reuters, and Tempo.co, The Diplomat, and Viva.co.id. Other news publishers include national online news sources in Indonesian: Antaranews, Hukumonline.com, Kompas.com, Liputan6.com, Media Indonesia.com, Times Indonesia, Tribunnews.com, and VOA Indonesia. The article uses two social media platforms, such as YouTube and Instagram, as sources of data.

Three components of the social cognitive theory—observational learning, self-efficacy, and social support—are used to classify data from online news sources, both in English and Bahasa Indonesia, as well as comments from YouTube and Instagram. This article uses NVivo 12 Plus software to classify and analyze data by coding specific data sources. In addition, this paper uses software for content analysis in order to identify the fundamental cause for the creation of the ASEAN declaration.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Media Coverage and Online Public Opinion on the ASEAN Summit and Declaration

Online public opinion, as reflected in YouTube comments, shows either negative or positive reactions to hosting the ASEAN Summit of 2023 in Labuan Bajo. Nvivo 12 Plus indicates that there have been 18 positive reactions in total, with 5 very positive and 13 moderate on Instagram. Extremely positive reactions on Instagram from netizens in East Nusa Tenggara about Labuan Bajo being selected as the summit venue. On YouTube, another netizen argues that the Summit promotes places to visit beyond Bali Island. YouTube users predict greater cooperation from ASEAN leaders during their meeting in Labuan Bajo (Figure 2).

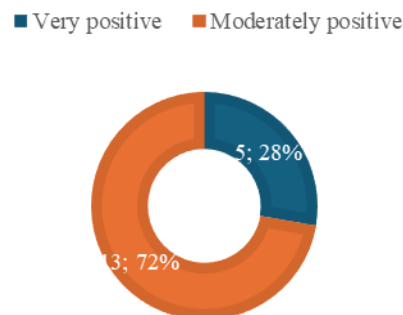


Figure 2 YouTube user reactions to the ASEAN Summit 2023
Source: Author's analysis, 2024

The President of Indonesia, Joko Widodo, was the target of most of the slightly positive remarks. According to YouTube users, ASEAN leaders are increasingly admiring Indonesia's vast area and natural beauty. The natural beauty of Labuan Bajo inspires ASEAN leaders to step up international collaboration, particularly in the fight against human trafficking. This comment also emphasizes the likelihood of improved bilateral ties between Indonesia and Malaysia under Joko Widodo for Anwar Ibrahim, the elected prime minister of Malaysia and a symbol of political reform in that country.

A number of YouTube users also expressed critical reflections regarding regional dynamics within ASEAN. Some comments highlight concerns about the potential vulnerability of the region if ASEAN leaders fail to maintain unity and cooperation. According to these views, a lack of cohesion among member states could create opportunities for external powers to interfere in regional affairs, particularly in matters related to security and political stability. Therefore, strengthening solidarity and shared commitment among ASEAN leaders is considered essential to preserving regional autonomy and stability.

In addition, several users emphasized the importance of mutual support among countries, including ASEAN member states, in achieving self-sufficiency in fulfilling basic societal needs. From this perspective, cooperation that enables nations to independently provide essential resources for their populations is seen as a pathway toward reducing exploitation, domination, or harm between nations. The idea reflects a normative aspiration

that international relations should be based on mutual respect and collective progress rather than competition or oppression.

Furthermore, some comments underline the need to build a cohesive ASEAN community supported by leaders who share a common vision of regional unity and stability. Within this discourse, solidarity among ASEAN countries is perceived as crucial not only for preventing conflict but also for maintaining regional security from external interference. Such views also extend to the call for inclusive regional relations, illustrated by suggestions that neighboring countries, including Timor-Leste, should be embraced within a spirit of regional brotherhood and cooperation.

Instagram users address a range of responses and thoughts regarding the ASEAN Summit and Declaration, in contrast to sentiment analysis for YouTube comments. Then, the significant themes shown on Instagram are leader, state, human trafficking, and perpetrators of human trafficking.

Regarding the subject of human trafficking, Instagram users have supported Indonesia in its efforts to stop human trafficking since it violates human rights. The ASEAN Declaration against technology-based human trafficking is an underlined topic that Instagram users are interested in. The users believe that Indonesia, one of ASEAN's founding members, has a more significant role to play in preventing human trafficking and urge other ASEAN nations to follow suit. On Instagram, proponents of the declaration encourage others to stand with ASEAN in combating human trafficking. After the ASEAN member nations approved the declaration, a number of Instagram users expected that human trafficking would no longer occur in the ASEAN region.

Instagram users express expectations that the state plays an active role in preventing human trafficking. Indonesia, in particular, is viewed as a country that should not only protect its citizens but also represent a respected and leading nation within ASEAN. Many users emphasize the importance of creating adequate employment opportunities as a preventive strategy, suggesting that governments should collaborate with the private sector to expand job availability and reduce economic vulnerabilities that often lead to trafficking.

In addition, users highlight the fundamental responsibility of the state to ensure the protection of its citizens from human trafficking. This protection is expected to be realized through effective policies, regulations, and law enforcement mechanisms. At the regional level, Instagram users also stress the importance of cooperation among ASEAN countries. Given the transnational nature of human trafficking, coordinated efforts and collaboration among ASEAN leaders are considered essential to effectively prevent trafficking and protect potential victims.

Meanwhile, regarding observational learning, the Indonesian Ministry of State Secretariat is one government agency that has looked into it more closely. On the other hand, the press from the Indonesian Ministry of Communications and IT needs to pay more attention to observational learning. The following illustrates the different focuses of two government media outlets on observational learning.

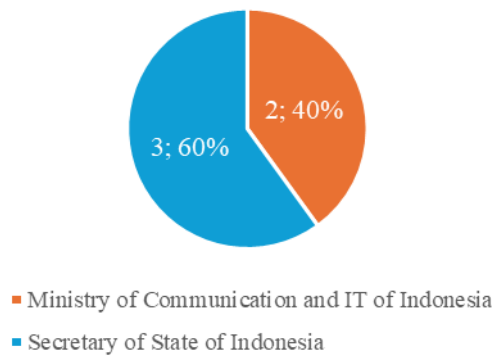


Figure 3. Observational learning from government media
Source: Author's analysis, 2024

The Indonesian government's experiences and reports regarding victim rescue were the reason the Secretary of State concentrated on observational learning. Eighty-three percent of women in Southeast Asia are victims of trafficking, primarily for sexual exploitation. In comparison, eighty-two percent of men are trafficked for forced labor, according to a report by the UN's International Labor Organization (ILO). Furthermore, due to a shallow level of internet literacy, human trafficking victims are widespread in Bangladesh and India. In addition, human trafficking networks recruited Thai youths who were searching online for part-time labor during the COVID-19 outbreak. Both Laos and Cambodia bought them out to be sold into forced labor.

The human trafficking task force in Indonesia was notified of 757 cases involving a variety of methods of exploitation, such as coercing victims into becoming ship crew, commercial sex workers, illegal migrants, and child laborers. Indonesians were forced to work as internet scammers in 2023 to defraud other Indonesians. They were initially duped into acting as fraudsters after being promised jobs as call center employees in Cambodia. Similarly, the Ministry of Communication and IT of Indonesia successfully released twenty Indonesian victims of human trafficking who were employed in online scams and brought out of the conflict area in Myanmar. The victims were held captive, subjected to abuse, and used as slave labor in Myanmar prior to their release. After working 17 hours a day, their remuneration was a mere 17 million IDR.

An illustration of self-efficacy from the Indonesian government's media is shown below.



Figure 4. Self-efficacy from the government media
Source: Author's analysis, 2024

Human trafficking, according to the State Secretariat media, is a transnational crime that needs to be combated with international collaboration. The ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons (ACTIP) is the international legal framework that ASEAN now has in place to combat the crime of trafficking in persons. ASEAN created the ASEAN Plan of Action against Trafficking in Persons, Especially in Women, in 2016 in an attempt to carry out

ACTIP. To effectively address shared obstacles to preventing human trafficking, the ASEAN Plan of Action aims to provide a detailed plan of action within the national laws and policies of ASEAN Member States.

The ACTIP commenced operations in 2017. Indonesia, in particular, has passed Law No. 12 of 2017 to ratify the ACTIP. Due to the complicated and varied jurisdictions in ASEAN, comprehensive coordination among members is necessary to prevent people trafficking as a transnational crime. Moreover, as the ASEAN Chair in 2023, Indonesia encouraged the issuance of the ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Combating Trafficking in Persons Caused by the Abuse of Technology at the 2023 ASEAN Summit. Through this declaration, ASEAN countries are encouraged to enhance their external cooperation with UN agencies and ASEAN Dialogue Partners, as well as strengthen their internal multilateral collaboration. The Coordinating Minister for Political, Legal, and Security Affairs, Mahfud MD, then calls on foreign ministers of ASEAN member states to support the implementation of commitments in the Leaders' Declaration and ensure prevention efforts, prosecution of perpetrators, and victim protection at the 27th ASEAN Political-Security Community Council Meeting, which is part of the series of the 43rd ASEAN Summit in September 2023.

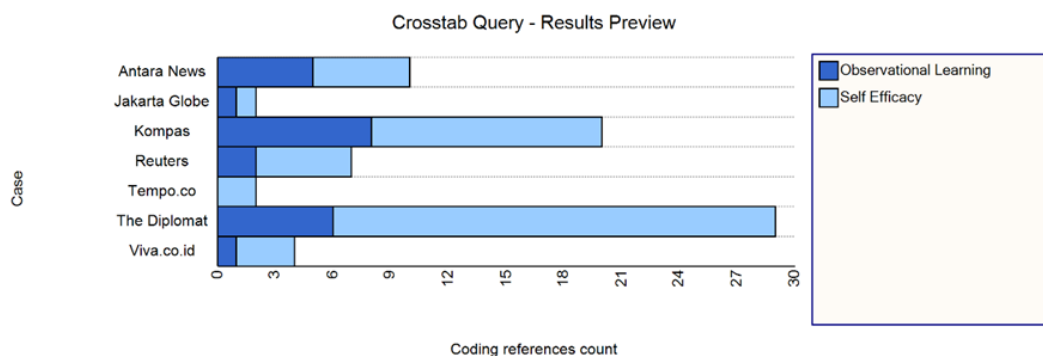


Figure 5. Self-efficacy and observational learning are covered by English-language Indonesian and overseas media
Source: Author's analysis with Nvivo 12 Plus, 2024

When discussing technology-driven human trafficking related to self-efficacy, the Ministry of Communications and IT of Indonesia frequently adopts an international partnership narrative. According to the Secretary-General of ASEAN, all ASEAN members have a responsibility to prevent human trafficking. As a result, members should fight crime collectively rather than individually. As many ASEAN citizens, especially Indonesians, have fallen victim to human trafficking via technology (online scams), the ASEAN leaders' commitment to working together to combat this issue is critical. Therefore, the ASEAN Summit adopts a mutual collaboration document among ASEAN members to combat technology-based human trafficking. Indonesia, according to the Secretary General of ASEAN, played a significant role in coordinating with ASEAN member countries to eradicate trafficking in persons caused by the abuse of technology.

English-language media, whether Indonesian or foreign, narrate self-efficacy far more than observational learning. This article examines several Indonesian online media outlets, including Antara News, Jakarta Globe, Kompas, Tempo, and Viva.co.id. Reuters and The Diplomat are two international media sources that highlight self-efficacy. The following is a horizontal bar chart comparing observational learning and self-efficacy across those media.

The Diplomat, Kompas, and Antara News were the top three media sources that covered self-efficacy. Moreover, Kompas, The Diplomat, and Antara News were the three news agencies that most frequently covered observational learning. The phrases that appear to represent self-efficacy in The Diplomat refer to international partnerships, such as "joint

forces,” “collective action,” “cooperation,” and “collaboration.” Such multilateral collaboration can facilitate joint investigations, intelligence operations, and the sharing of best practices and strategies. The ASEAN countries pledge to enhance their domestic laws, bring them into compliance with global norms, and ensure that they are effectively enforced by signing the ASEAN declaration.

The Diplomat notes that the declaration provides ASEAN nations with the opportunity to develop a multifaceted strategy to combat technology-driven human trafficking, including a forum for ongoing communication, coordination, and progress monitoring. The Diplomat makes the case that ASEAN leaders ought to give victims of human trafficking substantial consideration by granting them access to social services, legal assistance, medical treatment, and rehabilitation initiatives. Additionally, since they are more likely to be exploited than other groups, ASEAN should focus more on protecting vulnerable populations like women, children, migrants, and refugees. As far as safeguarding marginalized populations is concerned, ASEAN has the power to prosecute offenders.

Every online media outlet in Indonesia demonstrates that self-efficacy is covered in a way that goes beyond simple observational learning. The following bar chart illustrates that three of eight online platforms in the Indonesian language, namely Antara News, VOA Indonesia, and Media Indonesia, address self-efficacy more than the others. As seen in the figure below, news items in Antara News that contained self-efficacy were 20, followed by VOA Indonesia at 15 and Media Indonesia at 9.

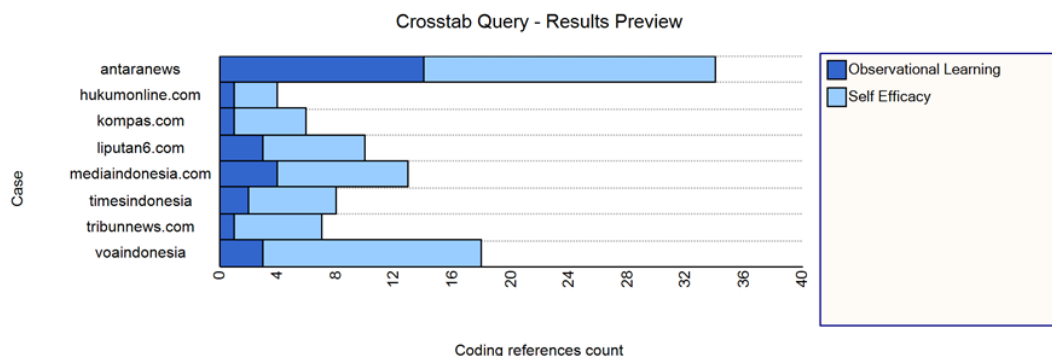


Figure 6. Media covers self-efficacy and observational learning in the Indonesian language
Source: Author's analysis with NVivo 12 Plus, 2024

According to Antara News, there is a growing number of victims, which highlights the need for a regional agreement among ASEAN member nations on combating technology-based human trafficking crimes. Based on data from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, Antara News reported that the Indonesian government has successfully resolved up to 1,841 incidents of online scams. Under Indonesia's leadership, the country calls on ASEAN to further cooperate in order to combat internet-based human trafficking immediately. The ASEAN declaration reached at the 2023 ASEAN Summit, according to Antara News, calls for strengthening the ability of each ASEAN member's law enforcement and legal institutions to investigate, gather data, identify victims, prosecute crimes, and use technology. It also entails working together to investigate, prosecute offenders, and exchange expertise, information, and experience. Furthermore, ASEAN countries collaborate on border management, victim repatriation, rehabilitation, and reintegration. Antara News reports that Indonesia has prepared a number of measures to combat technologically driven human trafficking, such as launching a public awareness campaign, enhancing digital technology proficiency, elevating migration and border management, and strengthening the labor inspection system.

VOA Indonesia said that human trafficking is an industry that keeps up with the times, including the use of advanced technology. This medium conveyed criticism from academic Dafri, who stated that ASEAN had issued numerous declarations, including the 2007 Declaration on the Protection of Migrant Workers. However, the declaration, which was born at the ASEAN Summit in Cebu, Philippines, has yet to yield results. Therefore, Dafri, according to VOA Indonesia, urges Indonesia to translate the declaration into a regional instrument that can prevent and regulate trafficking crimes. An advocacy practitioner from the Zero Human Trafficking Network Institute, Gabriel Goa, also conveyed the same message. ASEAN can follow up on the declaration by establishing an ASEAN task force for migrant worker protection, prevention, and handling of human trafficking. Regarding the task force, Gabriel proposed two measures. The first is the persecution of intellectual actors in the country where he leads his operations, not just field operators. The second is for victim protection.

Several terms related to social support among Indonesians on social media, particularly Instagram and YouTube, also emerged in the discussion. One prominent keyword is the role of the state. Social media users emphasize that the government has a fundamental responsibility to protect its citizens, including from crimes such as human trafficking. This expectation reflects public awareness that technological advancement, while providing many benefits, can also increase the risk of deception and exploitation. Consequently, users stress that the state must ensure stronger protection mechanisms to safeguard citizens from such threats.

In addition to protection, users also express aspirations for Indonesia to become a strong and respected nation within the ASEAN region. Some comments highlight the hope that Indonesia will play a central and influential role in ASEAN, reflecting national pride and expectations of regional leadership. Within this discourse, the creation of employment opportunities is frequently mentioned as a crucial strategy for strengthening the nation. Users suggest that the government should collaborate with the private sector to expand job opportunities for citizens, thereby improving economic resilience and reducing vulnerabilities that may lead to exploitation.

Another key term that appears in social media discussions is human trafficking. Many Instagram users express hope that cases of human trafficking will decline or even disappear following the ASEAN declaration in 2023 addressing this issue. Social media discourse indicates an understanding that human trafficking constitutes a serious violation of human rights. Users therefore emphasize the importance of collective commitment among ASEAN member states to address and eliminate this crime through regional cooperation and stronger policy implementation.

The Driving Factors of the ASEAN Declaration

ASEAN has established conventions to address situations of human trafficking within the area, as previously discussed in this article. Even though Indonesia acknowledges that there are currently several ASEAN treaties against human trafficking, in light of the recent growth of digital trafficking, it nevertheless suggests that ASEAN nations reaffirm their commitment to combating human trafficking through a new declaration. The ASEAN declaration is explained in detail from a social cognitive theory perspective. Observational learning, self-efficacy, and social support are three theoretical components that are pertinent to the ASEAN statement.

Self-Efficacy

The fundamental objective of the significant developments in ASEAN human trafficking rules in recent years has been to enhance regional collaboration in the fight against this

transnational crime (Priyono & Sudiro, 2020). The 2015 signing of the ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women, and Children (ACTIP) was one of ASEAN's primary initiatives (Yusran, 2018). The Convention places a strong emphasis on member states of ASEAN working together to combat human trafficking, prosecute offenders, and protect victims. The ASEAN Plan of Action Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (APA), which ASEAN also endorsed, aims to provide member states with strategic direction while implementing the ACTIP (Kumar, 2018).

Southeast Asian nations that accept foreign labor, like Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand, have enacted laws and policies aimed at combating human trafficking. Malaysia, in particular, has a legal framework to prevent human trafficking, namely the Anti-Trafficking in Persons and Anti-Smuggling of Migrants Act 2007 (Ismail et al., 2017). Afterward, the Malaysian government has made several efforts to deal with trafficking in persons: the establishment of the Council for Anti-Trafficking in Persons and Anti-Smuggling of Migrants (MAPO), the Anti-Trafficking in Persons and Anti-Smuggling of Migrants Act (Amendment) 2022 (Act A1644), the introduction of the National Action Plan on Anti-Trafficking in Persons (2010-2015), the National Action Plan on Anti-Trafficking in Persons (2016-2020), and the National Action Plan on Anti-Trafficking in Persons 2021-2025 (NAPTIP 3.0) (Rahman et al., 2023).

The global anti-trafficking campaign notably influences Singapore's regulations pertaining to sex workers (Chapman-Schmidt, 2015). According to Chapman-Schmidt (Chapman-Schmidt, 2015) the regulatory system of Singapore for sex workers comprises two: the first is informal rules, and the second is protections concealed under official legal institutions. In Singapore, as mentioned by Chapman-Schmidt, establishing and owning brothels is illegal. However, the ownership and establishment of brothels in Singapore are regulated by an informal, extra-legal agreement between law enforcement, sex workers, and brothel owners. In addition, the Singapore Immigration Act permits the deportation of prostitutes and forbids their entry into Singapore (Chapman-Schmidt, 2015). In the meantime, although brothels are not legally recognized, police in Singapore accept the presence of brothels in red-light districts.

Thailand developed specific measures to combat human trafficking. Boonderm et al. (2017) argue that a DNA database was established by the Central Institute of Forensic Science (CIFS) in 2004. Initially, law enforcement organizations investigated organized crime in Thailand's Deep South, utilizing information obtained from the DNA database. Furthermore, Thai NGO lawyers play an active role in human rights advocacy for human trafficking victims, although courts offer minimal access and supervision (Munger, 2015). In an effort to stop child trafficking, the Thai government has partnered with national and international NGOs to implement Communication for Development (C4D) and connect with children looking for work in secure online environments (Kranrattanasuit, 2024). The Thai government also launched the Thai Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Act of 2008, which is one of Southeast Asia's most robust legal systems, in response to the UN Palermo Protocol (Chantavanich, 2020).

Indonesia, an exporting migrant country in Southeast Asia, has a similar concern about creating efforts to eradicate human trafficking and enacting laws regarding anti-trafficking. Azizurrahman et al. (2023) argue that Indonesia constructs an early warning system to detect human trafficking. In order to prevent these issues of trafficking in persons, the Indonesian government has created and put into effect a number of employment protection laws and rules. They consisted of Law No. 13 of 2003 on Employment, Law No. 11 of 2020 on Job Creation, and Law No. 39 of 2004 on the Placement and Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers (TKI) Overseas. Furthermore, efforts have been made to protect people's

online privacy under Law No. 11 of 2008 concerning Electronic Information and Transactions (Wahid, 2023).

Despite the existence of anti-trafficking laws, challenges persist in ASEAN countries, including high demand for cheap foreign migrant workers, economic disparities among ASEAN members, and inadequate law enforcement. Apart from its internal collaboration, ASEAN engages in active cooperation with non-governmental organizations and international partners to support victims of human trafficking, exchange information, and provide training. Due to its self-efficacy, Indonesia presented the ASEAN declaration against technology-based human trafficking, and despite the current difficulties, it is hopeful about a favorable response from ASEAN nations.

Observational Learning

Traffickers often exploit vulnerable groups in Southeast Asia for several reasons. In Indonesia, in particular, the conversion of agricultural land causes farmers to lose their livelihoods, which in turn has implications for vulnerability (Rochadi et al., 2022). The global pandemic has become a factor in trafficking in persons. In Indonesia, traffickers are capitalizing on the momentum of the global COVID-19 pandemic, when many people lost their jobs, with a multi-level marketing modus operandi involving a network of companies whose licenses have been revoked by the Indonesian government. In this condition, families and government employees are unknowingly involved as perpetrators of human trafficking crimes (Khuluq et al., 2022).

The continued existence of human trafficking can also be attributed to regulatory factors concerning the advancement of digital technologies. This technology facilitates the international and black market for sex workers. Technologically-based sex trafficking includes leaks of adult content and the production of material that abuses children and adolescents (Benavides & López, 2022). In order to combat digitalized sex trafficking, several nations lack the necessary legal framework. Thus, the president of Indonesia stated at the ASEAN Summit in 2023 that a large number of ASEAN citizens were victims of technology-based trafficking. He suggested that ASEAN issue a declaration pledging to fulfill earlier anti-trafficking agreements and to react swiftly to trafficking involving sophisticated technologies.

Social Support

One crucial factor in reducing trafficking is social support. In China, where there is insufficient social support, incidents of trafficked women with disabilities are rampant (Zhao & Fu, 2024). The public can support or oppose the government's efforts to combat human trafficking using a variety of social media sites. For example, social media users in Indonesia expressed support for the government's embargo on Malaysia's Maid Online System (Anam et al., 2024). In India, social workers work closely with the police to support the fight against human trafficking offenses (Shetye, 2019). Botha & Warria (2021) point out that social workers face a number of difficulties while providing social assistance to victims of human trafficking, including complex trauma, security concerns, and mistrust.

Despite the advantages of information sharing, social media irresponsibility is closely associated with social vices like terrorism, violence, and child pornography (Mugari, 2020). However, social media is also helpful in fighting against human trafficking (Goswami & Pandey, 2017; Motseki, 2020). Instagram users in Indonesia overwhelmingly support the ASEAN declaration aimed at preventing the misuse of advanced technology. Netizen advocates for Indonesia to become a leading country in ASEAN, work with the corporate

sector, and offer complete protection against all forms of trafficking to vulnerable populations.

CONCLUSION

The ASEAN region has long struggled with the issue of human trafficking. In addition to crises brought on by war, natural disasters, and infectious diseases, people in the area have mobilized for political, economic, and cultural reasons. However, economic mobility does not always help migrants; in fact, it might result in human trafficking, which is the exploitation of migrants. To combat this crime, ASEAN and its member states have set guidelines. The development of computer technology has made crimes involving human trafficking easier to commit. The majority of contemporary communication devices are connected to the internet, which enables offenders to target potential victims directly. The ASEAN rules do not expressly regulate information technology-based human trafficking. As a result, Indonesia issued a new proclamation that targets this new paradigm. The driving force behind Indonesia's proposal is self-efficacy, or the conviction that the strength and legal resources of ASEAN nations are adequate to combat human trafficking.

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