

The Impact of Indonesia-South Korea Cooperation as Evidence of Effective Bilateral Cooperation in the Asia Pacific Region

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Abstract— Indonesia-South Korea cooperation in various fields, including economy, technology, culture, and defense, is one example of effective bilateral relations in the Asia Pacific. This relationship not only contributes to increased trade and investment volumes, but also supports the development of cutting-edge technologies and strengthens social ties through cultural exchanges. In defense, the two countries have established a strategic partnership, including collaboration in defense equipment development and joint military training, which plays an important role in maintaining security stability in the region. This study aims to analyze the influence of the bilateral relationship on regional stability, economic growth and security of both countries. Using a literature review-based qualitative analysis method, this research shows that this bilateral relationship is instrumental in building a strong foundation for sustainable regional cooperation. The results also highlight that collaboration in various sectors, including defense, has a significant positive impact, making this relationship a model of cooperation that can be adapted by other countries in the Asia Pacific region.

Keywords—Indonesia-South Korea, Evidence, Bilateral, Asia Pacific

I. INTRODUCTION

International cooperation plays a pivotal role in fostering stability and promoting development in the Asia-Pacific region. Among the many bilateral partnerships within the region, the relationship between Indonesia and South Korea stands out as a prime example of a rapidly evolving and multifaceted collaboration. According to Kim and Choi (2021), bilateral partnerships like the Indonesia-South Korea relationship contribute significantly to regional economic resilience and security. What initially began with a focus on economic cooperation has now expanded to include technology, cultural exchanges, and defense strategies. This partnership is rooted in shared aspirations for political stability, economic growth, and sustainable security within the region [1]. By leveraging their complementary strengths, both nations aim to address mutual challenges while contributing to the overall prosperity of the Asia-Pacific.

In the economic sector, the partnership between Indonesia and South Korea has led to significant breakthroughs, particularly through the implementation of the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA). CEPA has facilitated trade liberalization and boosted investment flows between the two countries, as noted in Bila and Wijayati (2002) This agreement has not only increased trade volume but has also attracted substantial direct investments that drive industrial development[2]. For instance, Hyundai's production of electric vehicles (EVs) in Indonesia marks a milestone that synergizes economic progress with environmental responsibility. Research in highlighting Hyundai's contribution to Indonesia's industrial modernization while aligning with global goals to reduce carbon emissions. This collaboration has also enhanced Indonesia's capacity for sustainable manufacturing, showcasing how economic cooperation can support both industrial and environmental objectives[3].

In the realm of technology, the Indonesia-South Korea partnership has been a cornerstone for advancing innovation and addressing contemporary challenges. Collaboration in renewable energy and Industry 4.0 adoption highlights the dynamism of their relationship. South Korea's expertise in clean technology and digital transformation has been instrumental in supporting Indonesia's transition to a greener and more digital economy. Projects such as the solar power plant in South Sulawesi exemplify the role of technological innovation in driving energy sustainability and achieving digital transformation. Research by Susanto and emphasizes how such initiatives enhance Indonesia's infrastructure while addressing global challenges, including climate change, by promoting environmentally conscious development[4].

Cultural and educational exchanges also form a critical pillar of this partnership, reflecting the deepening social ties between the two nations. The Korean Wave has had a profound impact on Indonesian society, fostering greater mutual understanding and appreciation between citizens of both countries[5]. The popularity of K-pop, Korean dramas, and culinary culture has strengthened people-to-people relations. On the educational front, scholarship programs and university collaborations provide opportunities for human resource development and intellectual capacity building. As noted by Tarigan(2023), such programs cultivate innovation and creativity while preparing the next generation of leaders in both nations to navigate an increasingly interconnected global environment[6].

Defense cooperation adds yet another strategic dimension to the bilateral relationship. Collaborative projects, such as the development of the KFX/IFX fighter aircraft, are milestones in bilateral defense technology cooperation. Research by Navalino (2015) underlines the importance of shared expertise in enhancing the defense capabilities of both nations. Furthermore, regular joint military exercises underscore the significance of security coordination in addressing regional threats such as terrorism, maritime disputes, and other geopolitical tensions[7]. This partnership contributes not only to the security of the two countries but also to regional stability in the Asia-Pacific, a region often marked by strategic competition and security challenges[8].

The positive impact of this bilateral relationship extends beyond the two countries and resonates at the regional level. Both Indonesia and South Korea actively engage in multilateral forums such as ASEAN and APEC, promoting economic integration and addressing global security challenges. According to Tobing and Aristama (2023), their shared commitment to peace and proactive role in addressing international issues highlight the importance of cooperation in an interconnected world. By working together, Indonesia and South Korea set a model for how strategic partnerships can drive sustainable development and political stability in the Asia-Pacific region[9].

An analysis of these various dimensions of cooperation—economic, technological, cultural, and defense—demonstrates the robustness and strategic significance of the Indonesia-South Korea partnership. Research by Michalski and Pan (2017) emphasizes that this interconnection forms a solid foundation for long-term bilateral sustainability. Moving forward, opportunities to expand collaboration in digital economy, green technology, and advanced manufacturing present immense potential. By building on their successes, Indonesia and South Korea can further strengthen their ties, ensuring mutual prosperity and regional stability for years to come[10].

II. RESEARCH METODOLOGY

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a literature study method. The data sources used include official government documents, international organization reports, journal articles, as well as secondary data from related institutions. The method of analysis used is thematic analysis, which allows researchers to identify and explore the main themes relevant in Indonesia-South Korea bilateral relations.

The first step was to collect data related to economic, technological, cultural, and defense cooperation between the two countries. Next, the data was analyzed based on thematic categorization to find patterns that illustrate each sector's contribution to regional stability and economic growth. The analysis also took into account the historical context and current challenges in the bilateral relationship.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Economic Cooperation

Economic cooperation between Indonesia and South Korea has shown significant development in recent years, providing real benefits for both countries. According to data from the Indonesian Ministry of Trade, the total value of bilateral trade reached USD 20.8 billion in 2023, with South Korea becoming the 8th largest export destination and the 6th largest import source for Indonesia. This increase was largely influenced by the implementation of the Indonesia-Korea Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (IK-CEPA), which has opened up opportunities for South Korean investment in strategic sectors in Indonesia, such as manufacturing, infrastructure, and renewable energy[2].

One real example of this collaboration is Hyundai's investment in the construction of an electric vehicle factory in Bekasi. This project not only supports Indonesia's efforts to reduce carbon emissions but also increases the competitiveness of Indonesian manufactured products in the global market. In addition, this investment contributes to job creation and technology transfer, which are important for the development of the national automotive industry. The Indonesian government hopes that this kind of collaboration can make Indonesia a manufacturing hub in Asia[11].

In addition to the automotive sector, South Korea has also shown great interest in investing in the new and renewable energy sector in Indonesia. Both countries have synergized in utilizing this energy in the manufacturing industry, which is in line with global commitments to achieve environmental and sustainability targets. This collaboration includes the development of clean energy infrastructure and high technology, which is expected to increase energy efficiency and reduce dependence on fossil fuel sources[3].

Overall, economic cooperation between Indonesia and South Korea is not only focused on increasing trade volume, but also on developing strategic sectors that can drive sustainable economic growth. With agreements such as IK-CEPA and the commitment of both countries to continue strengthening bilateral relations, it is hoped that this collaboration will bring long-term benefits to the economy and welfare of the people of both countries.

Technology and Innovation Cooperation Between Indonesia and South Korea

The technology sector is one of the strategic pillars in bilateral relations between Indonesia and South Korea, which continues to grow along with the needs of both countries to improve economic competitiveness and sustainability. This cooperation covers various fields, from the development of new and renewable energy to digital transformation based on Industry 4.0 technology. Through this partnership, Indonesia and South Korea not only strengthen bilateral relations, but also contribute to solutions to global challenges such as climate change and the technology gap[12].

One concrete example of this cooperation is the solar power plant project in South Sulawesi, which is a model for the development of new and renewable energy (EBT) in Indonesia. This project involves cutting-edge technology from South Korea and aims to support the renewable energy mix target of 23% by 2025 in accordance with the National Energy Master Plan (RUEN). A report from the International Renewable Energy Agency noted that this project also contributes to reducing carbon emissions, in line with global commitments in the Paris Agreement. With the adoption of South Korean technology, this plant is able to produce clean energy that is efficient and sustainable[13].

In the manufacturing sector, the adoption of Industry 4.0 technology is the main focus of cooperation between the two countries. Technologies such as automation, Internet of Things (IoT), and artificial intelligence (AI) have been integrated into the automotive, electronics, and agricultural industries. For example, through collaboration with Hyundai, Indonesia has succeeded in building an electric vehicle factory that utilizes advanced technology, while supporting the national strategy to increase green industrialization. Research from the Asian Development Bank [14] shows that the adoption of Industry 4.0 technology in Indonesia has increased productivity by up to 20% in several sectors. This collaboration not only strengthens Indonesia's competitiveness but also accelerates the country's transition to a knowledge-based economy.

South Korean technology giants such as Samsung and LG also play a significant role in the development of digital infrastructure in Indonesia. Through investments in the development of 5G networks in several major cities such as Jakarta, Surabaya, and Medan, these companies are helping to accelerate digital transformation in Indonesia. According to a report from GSMA, the development of 5G networks not only increases digital accessibility but also opens up new economic opportunities by creating an ecosystem that supports innovation in fintech, logistics, and healthcare. This transformation is expected to have a significant positive impact on digital inclusion in previously underserved areas[15].

Technology cooperation also includes the development of smart infrastructure, including smart cities in Indonesia. South Korea shares its expertise in smart city technology through projects such as the construction of smart cities in Bandung and Makassar, which integrate data technology, digital security, and IoT-based traffic management. According to a study by the World Bank, the implementation of smart cities can increase governance efficiency by up to 30% and significantly reduce local government operational costs. This cooperation reflects the success of technology transfer from South Korea that can be applied locally to meet Indonesia's needs [16].

Through these initiatives, technology and innovation cooperation between Indonesia and South Korea creates mutually beneficial opportunities. The focus on renewable energy, adoption of Industry 4.0 technology, and development of digital infrastructure not only strengthens bilateral relations but also supports the global agenda for sustainable development. In the future, both countries have the potential to expand their collaboration to other strategic areas, such as ethical artificial intelligence, blockchain technology, and the green digital economy. With this approach, Indonesia and South Korea can continue to be strategic partners in driving inclusive and sustainable growth in the Asia-Pacific region.

Cultural and Educational Cooperation Between Indonesia and South Korea

In the field of education, South Korea has become one of the popular study destinations for Indonesian students. The Global Korea Scholarship (GKS) provided by the South Korean government has provided thousands of Indonesian students with the opportunity to continue their education at renowned universities in South Korea. This program not only provides academic benefits, but also improves cross-cultural skills and builds professional networks across countries. Data from the Korean Educational Development Institute shows that the number of Indonesian students in South Korea has increased by 15% per year over the past decade, reflecting the growing appeal of South Korean education [17].

In addition, collaborations between universities in Indonesia and South Korea are deepening academic ties. For example, the University of Indonesia and KAIST (Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology) are collaborating on research focused on nanotechnology, renewable energy, and biotechnology. These projects not only enhance academic competitiveness but also create globally relevant innovations. For example, collaboration in nanotechnology has produced prototypes of new materials for the electronics industry that are more environmentally friendly. Lee stated that this partnership is a successful model of cross-border knowledge and technology transfer [18].

Educational cooperation also includes the development of dual-degree programs involving top universities in both countries. Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) and Korea University, for example, offer a dual-degree program in information technology and business management. The program is designed to produce globally competitive graduates who are able to face the challenges of the international job market. According to a report by the Asian University Network, such programs help strengthen the competitiveness of the Indonesian workforce while promoting academic cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region [19].

Not only at the level of higher education institutions, cooperation also involves the primary and secondary education sectors. Through the Korean Language Center program established in several major cities in Indonesia, such as Jakarta and Surabaya, Indonesian students are introduced to the Korean language and culture from an early age. This program helps broaden cultural understanding while opening up career opportunities in the future. According to a report from the Korean Foundation for International Cultural Exchange (KOFICE), this initiative has contributed to the increasing interest of the young generation of Indonesia in learning more about Korea [20].

Overall, cooperation in the fields of culture and education between Indonesia and South Korea has created a wide positive impact, not only in strengthening bilateral relations but also in increasing human resource capacity and deepening cross-cultural understanding. By continuing to expand scholarship programs, collaborative research, and cultural exchanges, the two countries have the potential to strengthen their relations and contribute to sustainable development in the Asia-Pacific region.

Defense and Security Cooperation

Defense cooperation between Indonesia and South Korea is one of the main pillars of bilateral relations between the two countries. The KFX/IFX (Korean Fighter experimental/Indonesian Fighter experimental) fighter aircraft development project is an important milestone that demonstrates strategic collaboration in the defense sector [7]. This program, which began in 2011, not only aims to increase Indonesia's military capacity but also creates opportunities for technology transfer for the national defense industry. Indonesia gains significant benefits from involvement in the design and production of this 4.5 generation fighter aircraft, including the development of a highly skilled workforce in the military technology sector.

In addition to the KFX/IFX program, Indonesia and South Korea are also collaborating in modernizing defense equipment. One example is Indonesia's purchase of the Chang Bogo-class submarine, built by Daewoo Shipbuilding & Marine Engineering (DSME). This submarine is designed to enhance Indonesia's maritime defense capabilities in securing strategic Nusantara waters. This collaboration allows Indonesia to have cutting-edge technology and enhance domestic expertise in the maritime industry.

Cooperation is not only limited to technological development, but also includes joint military exercises. Programs such as Exercise Sea Garuda, involving the navies of both countries, focus on enhancing interoperability and readiness in dealing with maritime security threats. The exercise includes war simulations, rescue operations, and joint maritime patrols to deal with threats such as piracy and transnational crimes. Such exercises strengthen bilateral relations while contributing to the stability of maritime security in the Asia-Pacific region. In addition to operational cooperation, Indonesia and South Korea also focus on improving cybersecurity. In the digital era, threats to cyber infrastructure are one of the main challenges for both countries. Through strategic dialogue and joint training programs, Indonesia and South Korea work together to strengthen national cyber capabilities. This collaboration helps both countries detect and respond to cyberattacks more effectively, including protecting critical data related to defense.

This growing defense collaboration not only provides direct benefits for Indonesia and South Korea but also has a broader positive impact on the Asia-Pacific region. Maintaining security stability allows for the creation of an environment conducive to economic growth and regional development. By expanding cooperation in defense technology, joint exercises, and cybersecurity, the two countries can continue to strengthen their relationship and make significant contributions to peace and stability in the region. Intelligence cooperation is also an important component of bilateral defense relations. Indonesia and South Korea routinely share information related to regional security threats, including terrorism, arms smuggling, and cross-border crime. With increasing geopolitical tensions in the Asia-Pacific region, this intelligence exchange plays a crucial role in mitigating potential risks and maintaining regional stability. This cooperation allows both countries to respond to threats in a more proactive and coordinated manner.

Table 1. Table results of recent cooperation

Field	Type	Year	Description
Economic Cooperation	CEPA Implementation	2020	Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement to enhance free trade and investment.
	Manufacturing Investment	2019	Hyundai electric vehicle plant built in Bekasi to support industrialization and green energy initiatives.

	Boosting Indonesian Exports	2022	Increased exports of agricultural products, textiles, and footwear through CEPA.
Technology and Innovation	Renewable Energy Technology Transfer	2018	Solar power plants developed in South Sulawesi through collaboration with South Korea.
	Digital Infrastructure	2020	Implementation of 5G networks by Samsung and LG in major Indonesian cities.
	Industry 4.0	2021	Collaboration in the manufacturing sector for adopting automation and digitalization technologies.
Culture and Education	Cultural Exchange (Hallyu)	2000s	Korean cultural wave through K-Pop and dramas strengthened people-to-people ties.
	Educational Scholarships	2015	South Korean government provides scholarships for thousands of Indonesian students annually.
	University Collaboration	2022	Research partnership between Universitas Indonesia and KAIST in nano technology and renewable energy.
Defense and Security	KFX/IFX Fighter Jet Development	2010	Joint development of 4.5 generation fighter jets with military technology transfer.
	Joint Military Exercises	2015	Sea Garuda exercises to enhance the interoperability of both nations' armed forces.
	Cybersecurity	2021	Collaboration in tackling cyber threats through technology sharing and intelligence exchange.

Regional Stability Effect

Cooperation between Indonesia and South Korea plays a strategic role in supporting political and security stability in the Asia Pacific region. Against the backdrop of regional challenges such as maritime conflicts in the South China Sea and rising geopolitical tensions, relations between the two countries are an important anchor in maintaining regional balance. Joint military exercises, such as Sea Garuda, and regular strategic dialogues have made a major contribution to enhancing military interoperability and strengthening synergies in dealing with cross-border threats, such as terrorism and smuggling. These exercises not only strengthen military readiness but also build trust between the two countries, which is an important element in maintaining regional stability.

The active involvement of Indonesia and South Korea in multilateral initiatives such as ASEAN and APEC also contribute positively to regional stability. Through ASEAN, both countries promote a multilateral approach to resolving regional disputes and strengthen cooperation in the field of security, including maritime and cyber security. In addition, their participation in the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) shows a commitment to deepening regional economic integration, which is an important foundation for long-term stability. A study by the Journal of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation shows that economic integration can reduce the risk of conflict by increasing economic interdependence between countries [21].

Collaboration in maritime security is one of the main focuses of this relationship, especially given Indonesia's strategic position as an archipelagic country located on international shipping lanes. The two countries cooperate in maritime security operations to reduce the risk of piracy, human trafficking, and arms smuggling in regional waters. In addition, they are also developing satellite-based surveillance technology to improve maritime monitoring. This partnership supports Indonesia's vision as a Global Maritime Fulcrum and helps South Korea protect its global supply chain, given its economic dependence on maritime trade.

Another positive effect of this relationship is the strengthening of preventive diplomacy mechanisms through forums such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). Preventive diplomacy allows both countries to contribute to preventing conflict escalation through dialogue, transparency, and confidence-building measures. According to a report by the Center for Strategic and International Studies, this approach has helped create a more stable environment in the Asia Pacific, especially amidst increasing competition between major powers such as the United States and China. Thus, the bilateral relationship between Indonesia and South Korea not only provides direct benefits to both countries, but also becomes a model of strategic cooperation that can be adopted by other countries to support regional peace and stability [22].

IV. CONCLUSION

The partnership between Indonesia and South Korea highlights the vital role of bilateral cooperation in fostering stability and sustainable growth within the Asia-Pacific region. Effective collaboration between nations not only enhances their internal capacities but also contributes to regional equilibrium in an area marked by dynamic geopolitical and economic challenges. The enduring success of their partnership reflects a broader principle: stable and resilient cooperation is achievable when countries prioritize mutual respect, shared objectives, and proactive engagement in addressing global and regional challenges. The cooperative frameworks established by Indonesia and South Korea demonstrate how targeted collaboration can enhance economic interdependence, technological advancement, and security readiness, all of which are essential for maintaining peace and stability in the region.

To optimize stability in the Asia-Pacific, countries should invest in multilateral frameworks that encourage transparency, inclusive economic integration, and collective security measures. Enhanced cooperation in emerging areas such as cybersecurity, climate resilience, and maritime governance will help mitigate contemporary threats and ensure equitable development. Additionally, fostering people-to-people connections through education and cultural exchanges can strengthen the social foundation for long-term partnerships. By aligning national and regional interests with global sustainability goals, Asia-Pacific nations can secure a future marked by peace, prosperity, and resilience.

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