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# The Chinese Ethnic Culture Orientation and Discrimination Experience

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## ABSTRACT

The experience of discrimination was received continuously by the Chinese ethnic in Indonesia. This issue has never been solved even today. The experience of ethnic Chinese discrimination is an unequal treatment based on ethnicity, related to personal, social and citizenship matters. The study was conducted using qualitative methods. Data obtained through interviews, data analysis is done by compiling verbatim transcription, open coding, axial coding and selective coding. Participants in the study were three people who lived in Jakarta, Medan and Yogyakarta. In this study, it was revealed that there was a relationship between cultural orientation and discrimination in personal, social and citizenship. Participants consider that self-identity becomes important as part of the culture that needs to be passed on to the next generation.

**Keywords:** *cultural orientation, discrimination, Chinese ethnic*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Self identity is needed by every human being, tribe and even society. Identity refers to the reflection of oneself and other people's perceptions of the individual. The reflection can be obtained from the family, culture, ethnicity, and socialization process. Identity can change because it depends on other people's views of him; and the process of socialization which presupposes the existence of an individual's relationship with the environment. Likewise, the ethnic Chinese in Indonesia have self-identity. Chinese ethnics can be defined as members of blood ethnic/Chinese descent born in Indonesia. Labels as ethnic Chinese are related to self-identity, which differ from one another because of their religious background, family, area of origin, or language (Christian, 2017).

Every individual has an identity. Identity is a distinguishing characteristic of individual or group characteristics, where the distinguishing character is very meaningful/meaningful to them. The main sources of identity include gender, sexual orientation, nationality/nationality, ethnicity or social class (Giddens, 2009). Furthermore, Giddens (2009) explains about self-identity is the process of self-development and definition of personal identity

through the way when someone formulates the uniqueness of himself and one's relationship with the world around him.

With the differences in each individual there will be differences in identity. Identity is a project, a process not something that is frozen and fixed, does not change (Giddens, 2009). Thus it can be said that identity never stops but is formed continuously. The formation of this identity depends on many things inside and outside the individual. Christian (2017) said the determinants of cultural identity are dialect, domicile, clan, political and generation.

Ethnic identity is a feeling (emotional significance) from someone to share (sense of belonging) or affiliated with a particular culture. Identity is a product of one's membership in a group (Ting-Toomey, 1999). According to Giddens (2009), ethnic identity is understood as cultural values and norms that distinguish members from existing groups from other groups.

Apart from ethnic identity there is also national identity. National identity is the psychological identification of individuals or communities of some significant characteristics in sharing life together, which shows their association

with political constitutional and power delegation (Hussain & Miller, 2006).

The identity crisis was experienced by the Chinese because it was never fully accepted as an Indonesian, despite all the efforts. Thus, this identity crisis has not ended with the emergence of rejection for the sake of rejection from one period to the next.

The differences between the Chinese and the indigenous ethnic groups never stop even after Indonesia's independence. Various attempts have been made, including banning the use of Chinese names and other cultural identities, restrictions on employment and domicile (Government Regulation no 10 of 1959). But coercion assimilation still does not occur, rejection for the sake of rejection continues to be experienced by ethnic Chinese. Demonstrations and destruction of property owned by ethnic Chinese continued, the last and the biggest was the "May 1998 Riot Tragedy".

According to Dawis (2012) "the environment" has never been friendly to the ethnic Chinese in Indonesia. The ethnic Chinese in Indonesia have lived in complex social, political and historical conditions for generations. During the Dutch East Indies occupation, they were placed in social segregation separate from ethnic (considered) natives. At that time the ethnic Chinese were considered different from the indigenous people.

The experience of discrimination is continually accepted by the Chinese in Indonesia, this problem has never been resolved (Ezmieralda, 2013). Trinugraha's study (2013) conducted in the Surakarta area highlighted the discrimination that had taken place and explained the environment that was not friendly to ethnic Chinese.

Discrimination that occurred in Indonesia during the New Order period was noted by Fitrya and Purwaningsih (2013). For example, banning the use of Chinese names (during the New Order), restrictions on places of business (PP 10 of 1959). Changes have taken place after the reformation period in 1998, among others in the fields of politics and law, as revealed by Chong (2017). But the changes that occur are not accompanied by low enforcement, good government. As a result, the environment where the ethnic Chinese are relatively unchanged.

The legality of discrimination has been officially revoked with the issuance of the Anti-Discrimination Act in 2008. However, discriminatory treatment of ethnic Chinese still exists. Practically the problem of discrimination should not happen again especially with the existence of a legal citizenship status. Legally recognized citizens should have the same rights and obligations, but still be treated

differently from other ethnicities in Indonesia. For example in matters of self-identity administration such as ID Card, birth certificate, marriage certificate (Korstchak, 2012; in Burhan & Sani, 2013). The Chinese are also less interested in going to public universities, because of the fear of prejudice and discrimination that will be experienced (Butarbutar, 2012; in Burhan & Sani, 2013). During this discrimination treatment is associated with the orientation of ethnic Chinese who are considered different from the others.

From what was stated above there are at least three things that can be noted. First, the experience of discrimination was received continuously by the Chinese ethnic in Indonesia. This issue has never been solved even today. The reality is that the ethnic Chinese group still survives, exists and lives side by side with the Indonesian people. Second, perceptions/experiences of discrimination will differ depending on differences in age, conditions and situations faced by the ethnic Chinese. Third, identity as ethnic Chinese is given in given because it is obtained based on their descendants, but identity can also occur because it is formed by social construction. Ethnic Chinese in Indonesia not only have an identity because of their race or physical characteristics, but more often receive discrimination because of social construction that follows the situation and conditions at a certain time. For example, during the Dutch colonial era, Chinese were considered as intermediaries, during the New Order era they were considered as economic rulers. As expressed by Bronfenbrenner (2004) each individual grows and develops by being influenced and shaped by his environment and this process takes place both ways and continuously.

According to Suryadinata (2003), the experience of ethnic Chinese discrimination is an unequal treatment based on ethnicity. The treatment because of its ethnicity is related to personal, social and citizenship matters. According to Theodorson and Theodorson (1979) discrimination is an unequal treatment of individuals or groups based on something, usually categorical, or distinctive attributes, such as based on race, ethnicity, religion, or membership of social classes. Discrimination in the context of cultural psychology can occur in the area of apperception (meaning).

Discrimination is related to ethnic identity. Ethnic identity becomes important when they become immigrants in one country. Orientation on ethnic identity dampens the level of discrimination (Brown & Chu, 2012). Berry and Sabatier (2010) said that respondents who have orientation to ethnic

identity and national identity are more positive about their psychological well-being; they are also better able to adjust to school and the community.

Ethnic identity is used as a stress buffer and will affect the intensity and recovery from daily discrimination (Torres & Ong, 2010). In Liebkind's research, Jasinskaja-Lahti, Solheim (2004) it is said that discrimination can be mitigated by supporting systems. Respondents feel disadvantaged by discrimination, but with the support of parents has a positive impact on the adjustment of respondents at school.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODS

The research method used is qualitative research. The qualitative approach used here is generic qualitative research. The choice of using generic qualitative research will give a descriptive description.

Participants in this study amounted to three people. Characteristics of participants are the ethnic Chinese who experienced discrimination in national events (including racial riots in 1998).

Sampling using the criterion sampling technique. Based on the criteria of the national event. Participants were obtained through the Indonesian Chinese Association ("perkumpulan Indonesia Tionghoa" INTI) in Jakarta, then introduced to the Branch Managers in Medan and Yogyakarta to get participants in the city. Participants are active INTI management. Participants are people who are not known by researchers, but a brief introduction is delivered by the INTI management who participated in the field visit.

Data obtained through in-depth interviews using interview guidelines. Completeness of data collection, each participant was asked for willingness to be interviewed and signed an informed consent. During the interview process, voice and image recording with video with an audio camera was carried out. For the sake of

confidentiality, this documentation was made for research purposes only and the names of the participants were written with the initials in this report.

Data processing is carried out in several stages. First do the verbatim transcription of the results of the interview. Verbatim transcription is made coding through open coding, axial coding and selective coding. Through this selective coding, themes of the concepts designed at the beginning of the research will be found.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### RESULTS

Discussion and interpretation of the results of the data obtained are made sequentially in accordance with the table containing the coding of the interview results.

From the data on table 1, the ethnic identities of the three participants were revealed in terms of names and culture. The expressions of the LT participants were: "I am clearly Chinese, as in general Chinese in Medan, communication in the family uses Hokkien. Given the name Chinese." The use or naming of mandarin is also recognized by HN and IP participants. All three participants stated that their ethnic identity was attached to their name and culture.

Culture is represented through the use of language and names as expressed by participants in line with the opinion of Ting-Toomey (1999), identity is a product of one's membership in a group. The cultural values of the participants distinguish the members of the existing group from other groups, according to the opinion of Giddens (2009).

Participants said that national identity refers to a place to live. National identity can be obtained through association

such as being active in organizations, as experienced by LT participants. Experiences about something outside of him related to social action, such as the experience of HN participants. Meanwhile, IP considers national identity related to legality aspects (see table 2.).

Participants said that their national identity was shaped by the environment, the formation of that identity depends on many things inside and outside the individual. This is in line with the opinion of Giddens (1999), that identity is a process not something that is frozen or fixed.

Experience in education varied with three participants. Participants who attend public schools show that they can finish it well because they do have the ability and are personally competent. This experience was undertaken by participants of LT and IP, while HN did not have the experience of attending a public school (see table 3).

All three participants thought they needed to adjust to the environment in which they lived, including when they were educated. The environment that is accepted by the participants shapes them for the future. This condition is in line as stated by Bronfenbrenner (2004) that each individual grows and develops influenced and shaped by their environment and this process takes place reciprocally (both directions) and continuously.

As active people, participants also actively organize or want to organize. But obstacles because of their ethnic elements are still experienced by them. HN Partisan can not be an administrator in the mass organization that it chooses. The experience is different from that of LT participants who organize through political parties. LT was received relatively well, as he said, "I am actively organizing, after the reformation of the ethnic Chinese began to be active in community organizations. I became a

member of a political party, and sat as a member of the DPRD for two terms". IP participants are actively involved in activities in their environment, through sports activity groups (see table 4).

The experience of discrimination or not being accepted in the environment began to diminish, especially after the reformation period, participants began actively organizing also after 1998. This was revealed by Chong (2017) after the reformation period in 1998 there had been changes, among others in the political and legal fields. Thus, the opportunity to get involved in the political sphere is already open.

Discrimination against ethnic Chinese has diminished after the 1998 reform period, as expressed by participants that there has been an opportunity in the realm of politics and other political or community organizations. This condition is likely to occur with the repeal of the anti-discrimination law. However, it is still felt that opportunities for ethnic Chinese are not evenly distributed. In this section, participants express their hopes for the future.

Both LT and IP participants shared that personal integrity is important in determining success in relationships. However, a person's personal situation, even though his personal integrity is good, still requires the availability and opportunities for self-development. Broader opportunities certainly require the authority of the ruling party in this case the state or government (see table 5).

The experience of discrimination in Indonesia is different from other countries in that there is a role for the state, as Suryadinata (2003) said, namely the state's treatment of ethnic Chinese. Thus, it is true that participants expect that the state needs to provide opportunities and play a more optimal role.

## DISCUSSION

Identity must be owned by individuals, but identity is also attached to the state of the environment and other individuals. As Ting-Toomey (1999) said, identity is a product of one's membership in a group. Chinese identity is related to the group. When someone relates to his group, norm values will emerge which will characterize the individual or group. Then comes ethnic identity which is understood as cultural values and norms that distinguish members from existing groups from other groups (Giddens, 2009).

For certain communities, ethnic identity may be the same as national identity, but this is not the case for the Chinese in Indonesia. The national identity of ethnic Chinese is also always being questioned, because ethnic Chinese are migrants in Indonesia, even seen from certain physical characteristics that are different from other ethnic groups in Indonesia. The difficulty of showing national identity for ethnic Chinese is clearly evident because national identity is a psychological identification of individuals or communities of some significant characteristics in sharing life together, which shows their relationship with political constitutional and power delegations (Hussain & Miller, 2006). Referring to the opinion clearly becomes difficult for Chinese ethnic to show national identity. Ethnic identity and national identity, more or less can trigger discrimination that occurs in various layers and at various times.

The experience of discrimination used here is the experience of discrimination received by the Chinese in Indonesia. The definition of discrimination proposed by Suryadinata (2003), even though it is in line with Theodorson and Theodorson (1979), but there is an additional about citizenship which is actually the state's treatment of the

ethnic Chinese. Chinese ethnic in Indonesia often experience discrimination from the state. For example, during the New Order, ethnic Chinese were required to have a Republic of Indonesia Citizenship Certificate (SBKRI) as their own record. This SBKRI ownership issue is related to other identities such as ID Card (KTP), Passport. Whereas in an individual relationship with an individual, a harmonious relationship within the social order, social groups, and even religious groups has been seen.

This study has limitations in the use of theories and concepts that are not yet complete. Writing and disclosing verbatim data does not experience deep interpretation due to lack of time during data collection.

## 4. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

### CONCLUSIONS

Ethnic identity for ethnic Chinese is related to name, culture and religion. Meanwhile National Identity is personal self-contribution to countries / communities outside of their ethnic groups. National identity is something outside itself that is related to social actions that can be obtained through social and cultural activities. Personal integrity is very necessary in association, involvement in organization and career development. Personal integrity can be formed when a person is aware of his ethnic identity.

The experience of discrimination of each participant is different, but there are parts that all of them share, namely in educational opportunities. Discrimination experienced by the Chinese varies depending on the environment and era, although now it is felt that opportunities for self-development are more open, but participants expect discrimination not to occur again especially for the future. Hopes

to eliminate discrimination running on both sides, ethnic Chinese show personal integrity and the state opens opportunities for ethnic Chinese to be involved in various fields.

### SUGGESTIONS

Participants in this study were three people who were determined by the criteria of having experienced discrimination, because of limited time for interviews to be conducted only once. The experiences revealed may not be entirely, because new researchers are acquainted with participants and have not revealed deeper experiences. The analysis in this study was felt not to be exhaustive, because of inadequate data for further testing.

Ethnic identity becomes something important for someone because it can build good personal integrity. With good integrity, every individual can be recognized and respected. Recognition from the state becomes important especially to get equality as a society.

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Table 1. Ethnic Identity

Subject	Participant 1 (LT)	Participant 2 (HN)	Participant 3 (IP)
Data	I am clearly Chinese, like most Chinese in Medan, communication in the family uses Hokkien. Given the name Chinese.	I am Chinese. Where I live in a shopping area. Given the name Chinese.	I am Chinese, my parents own a shop, but we live in suburban settlements with poor educational and economic conditions. It was given a Chinese name, and the nickname was still using the Chinese name.
Open coding	Chinese as a personal identity	Chinese as a personal identity	Chinese as a personal identity
Axial coding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- self recognition</li> <li>- Use of Chinese names</li> <li>- Use Hokkien in the family</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- self recognition</li> <li>- Use of Chinese names</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- self recognition</li> <li>- Use of Chinese names</li> </ul>
Selective coding	Name and culture	Name and culture	Name and culture

Table 2. National Identity

Subject	Participant 1 (LT)	Participant 2 (HN)	Participant 3 (IP)
Data	I was born in Medan. Indonesia is my homeland.	I did not understand why the Chinese were not liked by the natives. Then I became involved in an organization	I hang out with Javanese friends, my mom's Muslim family. At first my parents and I didn't have SBKRI then there was a renewal

		whose majority were indigenous	of the deed, so I had SBKRI
Open coding	Refer to place of birth in Indonesia	Not understanding Chinese is not liked	Hang out with people in the neighborhood
Axial coding	Indonesia is my homeland.	Learning through organizations	Legality is important
Selective coding	Personal	Social activities	Legality aspect

Table 3. Experience of discrimination in education

Subject	Participant 1 (LT)	Participant 2 (HN)	Participant 3 (IP)
Data	I went to undergraduate and doctoral degree at state tertiary institutions, everything was fine, graduating well too. But we have to be really smart to be accepted in public schools	I study in a predominantly Chinese environment.	I went to junior high school and went to state school. Middle and high schools around the house there are only public schools. Studying at PTN is proud because only a few Chinese students are accepted.
Open coding	Schools are completed well, they must be smart to be accepted at PTN.	Do not feel there are difficulties because the school is always in a private school.	Schools in public schools have no difficulties because the environment is only public schools.
Axial coding	Get along well with the environment	Similar environment	Receive the existing environment
Selective coding	Adjust to the existing environment	Choose a similar environment	Receive the existing environment

Table 4. Experience of discrimination in Organization

Subject	Participant 1 (LT)	Participant 2 (HN)	Participant 3 (IP)
Data	I was active in organizing, after Chinese ethnic reforms began to be active in community organizations. I became a member of a political party, and sat as a member of the DPRD for two terms.	I studied in organizations, professional organizations, youth, society, social, and political parties. Incidentally never become chairman, always a secretary.	My parents have a badminton and football club, so I am also involved in sports groups with residents in the area around the house.
Open coding	Active in the organization	Active in organizing as a learning process	Doing activities together with people in the environment
Axial coding	Got pride in organizing	Associating and learning through organizations	Can be accepted by the environment through joint activities
Selective coding	The environment provides opportunities	Learning through organizations	Learn through joint activities

Table 5. Hopre for the future

Subject	Participant 1 (LT)	Participant 2 (HN)	Participant 3 (IP)
Data	Hopefully the government opens opportunities and opportunities fairly, wider, children of the current generation can feel and enjoy	I saw the importance of ethnic Chinese mixing with other tribes. So what I emphasize my hope for the future is integration,	Personal integrity and good reputation become important in daily life and relationships.

	<p>everything together there are no ethnic differences anymore, so that children can be proud to be Indonesian.</p> <p>Everyone can play a role in developing the country and nation in accordance with their respective competencies.</p>	<p>education. Education can change the mindset</p>	
Open coding	<p>The state (government) provides equal opportunities for all competent people</p>	<p>Assimilation and development of education</p>	<p>Maintain good name and personal integrity</p>
Axial coding	<p>The government provides open opportunities</p>	<p>Education plays a major role in reducing discrimination</p>	<p>Increased personal abilities</p>
Selective coding	<p>The role of the state is more optimal</p>	<p>Provides opportunities</p>	<p>Personal integrity</p>