Chinese Indonesian Cultural Orientation Analysis

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Abstract— **Each individual has an identity. Identity is a differing character from individual characteristics or group characteristics of which the divergent element is very meaningful for them. Indonesia is known as a plural country with various ethnicities. Beside the diverse ethnicity composition, Indonesia also has ethnic Chinese who are largely perceived as 'immigrant' since the Dutch colonial era. For generations the Chinese has been living with a lot of issues, particularly its relations with the Indonesian society in general. These Chinese descendants have suffered from identity crisis due to the rejection to become part of the larger Indonesian community, despite the effort to assimilate them. Although identity as an individual is attached, environment and nationhood character contribute significantly to its development. Against this background, this study analyses the cultural orientation of Chinese Indonesians to understand the dynamics of their identity development.**

Keywords: cultural orientations, identity, Chinese Indonesians

I. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is well known as a plural country that consists of various ethnicities. Besides the diverse ethnicities, Indonesia also has Chinese descendants who have been labelled as 'immigrant' since the Dutch colonial era. Chinese Indonesian is Indonesia's largest non-indigenous ethnic. Its existence has been included in numerous Indonesian society activities in general. Although the Chinese Indonesian largely has been accepted and acknowledged as part of Indonesian society, the ethnic group still has cultural aspects which exclusively belong to it and differ from other cultures.

Chinese Indonesian has been affected by many issues, particularly its relations with the general Indonesian society. Discrimination and exclusion to get equal treatment in the country turn out to be the ethnic group's primary issues. According to the history, the social environment has never been kind to the Chinese Indonesian, since the Dutch colonial period and the last one May 1998 Riot [1]. The label of Chinese Indonesian is closely related to an identity that differs from one to another due to religious, family, origin, or language background [2]. Identity crisis of Chinese Indonesian occurred due to rejection to be part of Indonesian community, though efforts to mend the issue has been done. Therefore, the identity crisis is far from over with the appearance of the exclusion from time to time.

Chinese Indonesian can be defined as Chinese descendants who are born in Indonesia. Related to Bandura's 'Triadic' model, [1] noted the complex relations in regards of self-identity or the Chinese Indonesian identity, particularly about 'environment' (one of the 'Triadic').

According to Dawis [1], 'environment' is never kind to ethnic Chinese in Indonesia which can be seen clear in the country's history. Chinese Indonesian has been living under complicated social, political, and historical circumstances for many generations. During the Dutch colonial period, these Chinese descendants were placed in a separate social segregation which differed from the indigenous people or '*pribumi*'. Under this condition, Chinese Indonesian's social position was perceived differently with the indigenous populations.

Indonesia's independence in 1945 did not abolish the segregation between the Chinese Indonesian and the country's *pribumi*. Various efforts to abolish the gap have been done, including the ban on the use of Chinese name and other cultural identities, profession and residence limitation (Government Regulation No. 10 Year 1959). Engineered assimilation is however failed to produce fruitful outcomes. Exclusions against Chinese Indonesian kept happening.

The violence against Chinese Indonesian is never completely gone, with the May 1998 Riot in Jakarta as the latest and biggest one. The riot did not only spark controversy amongst the local populations, but also international community. The destruction scale of the unrest crippled the capital city's activities for several days. It was also a wake-up call that what Leo Suryadinata, Singapore's based scholar, as '*masalah Cina*' (Chinese issue) still persisted. Since then, reconciliation efforts have been initiated by the Chinese Indonesian civil society organizations and the Indonesian government to tackle this issue.

About two decades after the bloody riot, Chinese Indonesians have yet encountered any racial riots like the 1998 case. Nonetheless, there is a new generation of Chinese Indonesian living in the globalised era that does not experience discrimination. This new generation's view towards identity and cultural orientation of ethnic Chinese requires further research. The generation is surrounded by cutting-edge technology, thinking globally, but living with the parents or older generations that experienced discrimination. The difference in experience and generation but living in the same country with similar nationhood thinking becomes the vocal point to further analyse the cultural orientation of this new generation. The identity as an individual will be attached to someone, but its development is influenced by the surrounding environment

and the nationhood identity. The cultural orientation of these Chinese Indonesian becomes an interesting topic to discuss.

Research about Chinese Indonesian identity is generally done to those who were born after G30S/PKI in 1965. The early generation of Chinese Indonesia is mainly people that experienced discrimination under the Dutch colonial era. The next generation is those who faced discrimination during Soekarno period (PP10) or early Soeharto era (Malari), living during the era of 'ban against any Chinese culture' and also 'May 1998 Riot'. PP10 prohibited non-indigenous people to live and do business under the municipality level (*kabupaten*). Although the PP10 did not state blatantly towards Chinese Indonesians, the regulation was actually intended to do so as many Chinese Indonesians at that time did not have a proper citizenship status. This caused a massive exodus of Chinese Indonesians from villages and sub-districts to the city area.

One of the previous studies who supported our research is Trinugraha's research about Chinese Indonesians in Surakarta city [4]. An article written by Thung [5] on heterogeneity issue revealed the necessity to find new variants to understand the current condition and technology development.

The appearance of a few historical events of ethnic Chinese in Indonesia gave us a question on what kind of identity that Chinese Indonesian has? An identity is pretty much related with the culture that belong to someone. This circumstance became interesting as Chinese Indonesians were forced to abolish their identity. The New Order regime (1966-1998), led by authoritarian leader Soeharto, forced all Chinese Indonesians to adopt Indonesian names and forgo their cultures. As a result, many of those Chinese Indonesians celebrated Lunar New Year in secrecy during the authoritarian era. Moreover, many of them lost their ability to speak mandarin or dialect.

If we take a look on the classic literature that extensively discussed the influence of changing social environment to human being, then we can draw several preliminary understandings. This study employs Antony Giddens's thinking on sociology studies. The way of life is changing because of outsides influences, their traditional patterns of social life are still evident [3]. Social constructivists believe that what individuals and society perceive and understans as reality is itself a construction of individuals and groups [3].

Culture as all the modes of thought, behavior, and production that are handed down from one generation to the next by means of communicative interaction – language, gestures, writing, building, and all other communication among humans – rather than by generic transmission, or heredity [6].

Identity: The distinctive characteristics of a person's character or character of a group which relate to who they are & what is meaningful to them. Self-identity: the ongoing process of self-development and definition of our personal identity through which we formulate a unique sense of ourselves and our relationship to the world around us. Social-self: the basis of self-consciousness in human individuals, according to the theory of GH. Meads. The social self is the identity conferred upon an individual by reactions of others. A person achieves self-consciousness by becoming aware of the social identity [3].

Based on these backgrounds, this research enquiries: how Chinese Indonesian's cultural orientation is shaped vis a vis nationhood thinking in the era of globalisation?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Every individual has an identity. Identity is a differing characteristic from individual or group characteristics whereby the deviant element is very meaningful for them. The primary source of the identity consists of gender, sexual orientation, nationality, ethnicity or social class [3]. Giddens [3] furthermore defined identity as self-development and personal identity development as a way when someone formulating her or his uniqueness and relation with the surrounding environment.

The existence of distinction on every individual created identity differences. Identity is a project, a process, not something frozen and static, not change [3]. Therefore, it can be said that identity never stops evolving. The formation of identity depends on many things inside and outside the particular individual. Christian [2] said the determinant of cultural orientation is dialect, residence, family name, politics, and generation.

Personality theories introduced us with learning theories. One of them is Bandura's social cognitive theory (in Dawis [1]. There are several basic assumptions in this theory.

First, the primary characteristic of an individual is plasticity. This plasticity allows a person to learn flexibility under various circumstances. This learning process can be

obtained from somebody else. An individual generally will gain a reward from the learning.

Second assumption, an individual can gain the ability to form his or her world through *triadic reciprocal causation model* (behaviour, environment and personal factor). An individual evaluates social and cultural environment through some relatively consistent ways.

Third, human can control their environment and life quality. People are producers as well as products of social system.

Fourth, people determine their behaviour through external and internal factors. External factors are physical and social environment, while internal factors are self-evaluation, measurement and self-reaction.

Fifth, when an individual is in a moral ambiguity situation, there will be various adjustments. For example, changing behaviours, distorting due to behaviours, blaming and playing victim, and spreading the responsibility.

Based on the above discussion, individual personality is something that actively formed in an individual (who owns plasticity and hoping for reward) in the 'triadic' relation model (behaviour, environment, and personal factor).

An individual's identity can adapt with the environment. This argument is known as plasticity, as mentioned by Myers and Twenge [7] 'plasticity related with the ability to learn and adapt'.

An individual's plasticity will change identity, particularly due to every individual needs to adapt with the environment where they live. The environment can be a physical one, or social cultural and political. This environment is not static, but dynamic and even receptive with influences from all over the world. According to Chong [8], Chinese Indonesian's environment is always changing. This environment is political environment with changing leaders or political orientation. Moreover, change that happened is not always accompanied with law enforcement, good governance. As a result, Chinese Indonesian's environment is relatively unchanged. This means the stereotype that attached to the Chinese Indonesia remains.

Environmental change is relatively fast. The technology development supporting the change causes society becoming heterogenic, including Chinese Indonesian. Ethnic Chinese heterogeneity can be seen from ethnic, religious and job backgrounds. Those categories consist new variants that influenced by the recent development that supported by technology advancement [5].

Research on Chinese Indonesian identity that related with personality, cultural orientation and environment has been done extensively. These are some of them. A study from Christian found that Chinese Indonesian's cultural orientation is not homogenic due to various determinants. Those determinants are dialects, residence, family name, politics, and generation [2].

Chong [8] argued Chinese Indonesian's environment is always changing. For example, the post-

reform era produced openness, but not accompanied by law enforcement and good governance. Thus, Chinese Indonesian's environment is relatively unchanged. The stereotype in the pre-reform era also remains. Trinugraha [4] did a study on environment and stereotype. Trinugraha [4] used Surakarta as the case study to observe stereotype which occurred and explained about hostile environment against Chinese Indonesian. The result showed that those Chinese Indonesian's cultural orientation is also varied.

Chinese Indonesian's unhomogenised cultural orientation resulted in a view that there is a problem of heterogeneity. As mentioned by Thung [5], the problem of Chinese Indonesian heterogeneity is mainly seen as a simple issue, due to the general impression of ethnics, religions, and professions. Those categories however contain new variants resulted from the recent development that also supported by technological advancement.

Many of young Chinese Indonesians are no longer attached with their ancestral culture and environment and living under the post-1998 reform environment. The change appeared not only at the national politics level, but also Chinese Indonesian's position (socially and politically) amongst Indonesian society in general.

One of the most fundamental changes in the national politics level was President Abdurrahman Wahid (1999-2001)'s Presidential Instruction No. 6 Year 2000 which annulled the ban on Chinese culture in the public space which firstly introduced in 1967 [9].

Besides that, under Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono presidency (2004-2014), Yudhoyono promulgated a new citizenship law (Law No. 12 Year 2006). This law places Chinese Indonesian in an equal position with other Indonesian citizens. This means the segregation between *pribumi* and non-*pribumi* is no longer valid [10]. Previously, in 2002, President Megawati Soekarnoputri (2001-2004) ratified Presidential Decree No. 19 Year 2002 which made Chinese New Year as national holiday [9].

At the Chinese Indonesian society level, there is political excitement or awareness revival. For example, a few Chinese Indonesian parties were formed, such as Parti (Indonesia's Chinese Indonesian Reform Party) and Parpindo (Indonesia's Integration Party). In addition, some Chinese Indonesian civil society organisations emerged, namely INTI (Chinese Indonesian Association) and PSMTI (Chinese Indonesian Social Family Association) that has thousands of members in 2008 (Budianto in Dawis [1]).

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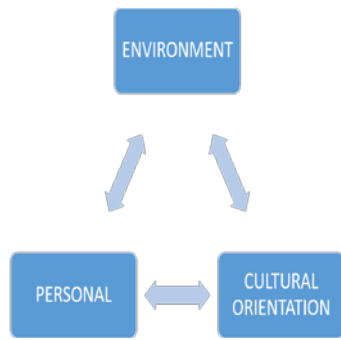
RESEARCH DIAGRAM

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

We employ both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies for this study. The quantitative method is done by spreading questionnaires in three cities, Medan, Jakarta, and Yogyakarta. This study opted those cities because they have a few of Chinese-Indonesian youth organizations. Then we will hold a focus group discussion (FGD) based on the collected questionnaires and invite some participants as our resources for in-depth interviews.

We plan the questionnaires' conceptual framework to cover three basic concepts:

PERSONAL which has these dimensions:

- Value
- Self-evaluation
- Self-reflection
- Self-reaction

ENVIRONMENT has subvariants of physical and social/culture/politics:

Physical has dimensions as follow:

- Dialects
- Region
- Family name

Social/Politics/Culture has these dimensions:

- Discrimination/stereotype
- Generation
- Religion
- Event

CULTURAL ORIENTATION, has dimensions as follow:

- Nationalism
- Ethnicity
- Professionalism
- Social Organization
- Mass and social media
- Leisure activity

In addition, we employ questionnaire to gain the data of this paper. The form will reflect each of the above-mentioned dimensions. Furthermore, the form consists of agreement from the participants which included in the 'informed consent' part. They must show their agreement

for the use of the answers for this research. In addition, our findings will be used by INTI organisations as well as other Chinese Indonesian youth institutions that have been working with us for this project.

We plan to distribute the questionnaire in various Chinese Indonesian youth organizations in Jakarta, Yogyakarta, and Medan. The selection of these three cities is due to those places have been bases for Chinese Indonesian youth organizations in the country. The respondents of the questionnaire are young Chinese Indonesians who are actively involved in civil society organizations. By filling the questionnaire, the authors hope to grasp the respondents' thinking about several elements.

Personal experience will be our first target to be elaborated by the questionnaire. Their perception of the changing social environment is our next target. The last objective will be the participants' cultural orientation. By focusing on these elements, the result of the questionnaire will be adequate to provide a better understanding on the subject of this paper.

Prior to distributing the questionnaire, we are going to run a try out by choosing respondents who share the same background with our potential participants. The method will use only 30 people as we assume the number is sufficient enough to validate the findings. As this is a test, we will choose Jakarta as the place of the trial due to close proximity with the authors.

We offer several variables to be answered by our potential respondents. Personal category has 20 items. Meanwhile in the environment and cultural orientation group, they have 20 and 22 items respectively. Following the try out, we can get the valid and reliable items that will be distributed to the real respondents.

Below are the items that will be employed in the try-out version questionnaire.

Personal

1. I am willing to learn when facing new challenges.
2. I am fine with new things in my life.
3. I am easy to adapt with new environment and friends.
4. I am willing to learn good things from others.
5. I am happy to appreciate others.
6. I am willing to adjust my behaviour with the environment.
7. I am willing to accept changes in the environment around me.
8. I became myself because of my family.
9. I became myself because of my environment.
10. I have a strong character because of hard environment.
11. I am actively involved in my big family.
12. I am actively involved in my society.
13. I have a quality life because of my environment.
14. I can give something to my family, so they have a better life.
15. I contribute to the society surrounding me, so they become good.

16. I realize that my behaviours are influenced by my living place.
17. I realize that my behaviours are influenced by my family values.
18. I realize the importance of social environment in shaping someone's personality.
19. I believe the necessity of self-evaluation of someone's behaviour.
20. I realize every person must be responsible for her or his actions.

Environment

1. I know Chinese Indonesian is a heterogenic society.
2. I realize that difference on Chinese Indonesians' living places causing their diverse characters.
3. I believe the important use of family name.
4. I have experienced a discrimination as a Chinese Indonesian.
5. I have experienced an unpleasant discrimination.
6. I know unpleasant discrimination on Chinese Indonesian story from my parents.
7. I know unpleasant discrimination on Chinese Indonesian story from my friends.
8. I feel uncomfortable with the discrimination experience that happened to me.
9. I know my parents' discrimination experience is unpleasant.
10. I know my friends' discrimination experience is unpleasant.
11. I believe an important event that experienced by someone will shape his or her personality.
12. I believe someone's discriminated experience will impact his or her life.
13. I feel different compared to other ethnics.
14. I feel the need of a law-based equality.
15. I think ethnic equality needs to be thought by family.
16. I think the society needs to give an example on ethnic equality.
17. I feel more comfortable living in a same-ethnic environment.
18. I feel more comfortable working with my own ethnic.
19. I feel comfortable having a relative from different ethnic.
20. I think disagreement because of ethnic difference is harder to handle than other disagreements.

Cultural orientation

1. I am willing to do Defend the State program.
2. I believe the importance of self-resilience against foreign values.
3. I feel foreign values are bad.
4. I believe the importance to preserve local values.
5. I believe our ancestors' values are better than outside values.
6. I feel closer with friends who have the same cultural background with me.
7. I feel more comfortable talking in local language.
8. I feel local languages are richer than Indonesian language.
9. I believe traditional wears needed to be preserved.
10. I believe the necessity of preserving local cultures.
11. I feel the necessity to work hard in preserving local cultures.
12. I feel more comfortable if dealing with friends with the same job.
13. I feel profession organization is important.
14. I believe my existence depends on my profession.
15. I believe in keeping professional values in high regard.
16. I gain knowledge from the mass media.
17. I gain information from the mass media.
18. I gain knowledge from social media.
19. I gain information from social media.
20. I feel holiday is an important activity.
21. I think everyone needs a hobby.
22. I think hobby is useful for life balance.

IV. CONCLUSION

The abolishment of discriminative rules that preserved the gap between Chinese-Indonesians and the so-called indigenous Indonesians (*pribumi*), definitely changed the view of those Indonesians of Chinese descendants who did not experience the regulations. Those Chinese-Indonesians who did not posses the bad memory of discrimination are the younger generation, though their parents have gone through such experience. The social environmental change and difference of their life will affect people's way of thinking and behaviours as well as the cultural orientation. Furthermore, it is possible that those youths have a new view to the changing social environment which is different with their parents.

This background has led us to some questions. What are the differences between these younger generation Chinese Indonesians compared to the previous? What kind of differences? Are there any similarities between the different generations? What elements contribute to the change? What kind of behaviours that are the characteristics of the difference?

As this study is still at the preliminary stage, we have not yet shown any data and results from the field research in the article.

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