

# The Line Stickers as the Youngsters Ethnic Identity and Media Representation

Elda Franzia<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Visual Communication Design, Faculty of Art and Design, Universitas Trisakti, Jakarta, Indonesia.

\*Corresponding author. Email: eldafranzia@gmail.com

## ABSTRACT

The communication nowadays has mediated by onLine application in cellular phone known as apps. The Line apps are the most popular messenger application among youngsters, because stickers are available in the apps which is opens up opportunities for their user to design and sell their own stickers in the LINE Sticker Shop. The LINE stickers became the media of communication and representation of identity for their users. There are various kind of stickers in the LINE Sticker Shop that represent certain identity including ethnic identity. The stickers made by independent creator that registered and published their stickers in the LINE Sticker Shop. This paper presents how LINE stickers became the media representation of ethnic identity of the youngsters and marks their social learning process in the digital world. The data collecting method is observation and observation to the creators' stickers of The LINE Sticker Shop. Visual data were analysed with content analysis and visual culture theories. The result is The LINE sticker can become a model of how a certain ethnic character looks like by identifying their visual representation through the figures, fashion styles, attributes, and colours and also become a model of how their ethnic community communicate to each other by identifying the way the visual character speaks through text that embedded to it.

**Keywords:** LINE sticker, Youngster, Ethnic identity, Media, Representation

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The communication nowadays has mediated by online application in cellular phone known as apps. Messenger apps such as LINE, Whatsapp, and Telegram became popular and each of them develop stickers to attract more user. Users has flexibility to choose the most suitable apps for their communication. The LINE apps are the most popular messenger application among youngsters. The LINE apps features a character stickers that lets users easily create (design) and sell their own stickers in the LINE Sticker Shop. A preliminary survey to 45 respondents between the ages of 13-25 was conducted to found facts that all respondents used the LINE apps for their daily communication, and only one respondent that did not use LINE stickers in communication [1].

The LINE stickers became the media representation of identity for their users. There are various kind of sticker in the LINE Sticker Shop divide in 25 categories which are Animated, Cute, Gorgeous, Cool, Warm and Fuzzy, Dialects and Slang, Wacky/Weird, Humorous, Greetings, Polite Language, Seasonal, Speech Balloons, Male Characters, Female Characters, Families and Couples, Cats, Rabbits, Dogs, Bears, Birds, Pandas, Seals, Food,

Names, and Other [2]. Each of them made by independent creator that registered and published their stickers in the LINE Sticker Shop.

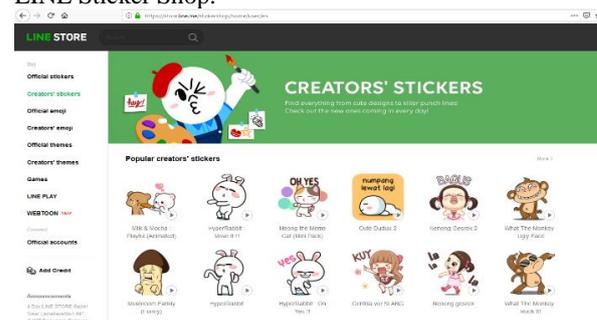
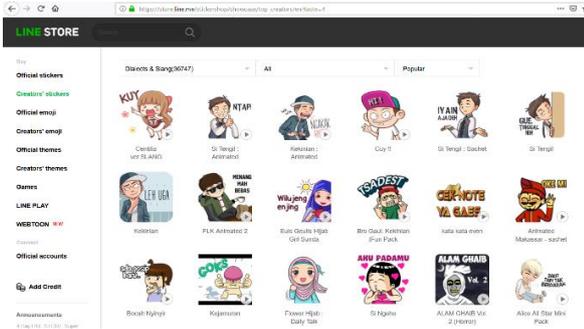


Figure 1 The LINE Creator's Sticker Store



**Figure 2** The Dialects and Slang Sticker Category

The Dialects and Slang sticker category indicates the specific character based on communities and ethnic identity. The character in the LINE stickers is an online model for the youngsters behavior learning process. This paper presents how LINE stickers became the media representation of ethnic identity of the youngsters and marks their social learning process in the digital world.

**2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Cyberspace is an interaction space where a person can constructs the identity in virtual world. Virtuality is an image or space that is not real but appears to be [3]. Virtual world become closer to everyday life as an impact of modernity and digital technology. Human experience now is more visual than ever mediated by image in everyday media. Media of communication nowadays open the gap between real life communication to virtual communication. The need and interaction between individuals through image are expand. Image made its affect in a global culture and digital world.

Virtual identity is a personal identity built in cyberspace. Virtual identity can form as avatar, profile picture, or even sticker represented as the speaker in online communication. Cyberspace considered as a space where identity is valued as persona beside race, ethnic, or gender. The new persona is online persona. On the other hand, online persona can made as emphasized race, ethnic, or gender of an individual. The virtual identity is well tailored to meet the expectations of online user in cyberspace. It was made and use by choice. The online persona is a way of being in virtual world.

Ethnicity is the related notions of race, nation, and culture [4]. Ethnicity defined as shared cultural or shared biological, therefore self-ethnicity inherited from nature and culture. As human, individual shared ethnicity from family related community. As a persona, shared ethnicity from tradition and cultural community and society. The media are agents of socialisation, a carrier of culture, and a way of communicating ideology. The media seen as important vehicles in giving construction, images and representation of discourses around issues of ethnic identity [5].

According to Bandura, social learning process proceed by observing the behaviour of others. People assimilate and imitate the behaviour, especially if their observational experiences are positive ones or include rewards related to the observed behaviour. Observational learning may take place at any age. The second stage of social learning is

imitation and behaviour modelling, will occur if a person observes positive outcomes in the first stage. The three basic models of observational learning are (1) a live model, which involves an actual individual demonstrating or acting out a behaviour, (2) a verbal instructional model, which involves descriptions and explanations of a behaviour, and (3) a symbolic model, which involves real or fictional characters displaying behaviours in book, film, television, programs, or onLine media [6]. Acceptance of behaviour by playmates or social community can be positives outcomes.

**3. METHOD**

The method is qualitative to describe the youngster identity represented in LINE sticker by independent creator. The data collected by observation of the LINE apps and documentation of the Dialects and Slang category in creator’s LINE Sticker Shop. The varieties of ethnic identity represented in Dialects and Slang category found by observe the popular stickers in the category and searching specific ethnic in the LINE Sticker Shop.

A sample data of Line stickers from 5 largest Indonesia’s ethnic groups which are Javanese, Sundanese, Betawi, Minangkabau, and Batak as the object of study was analyzed. The selected stickers represent each ethnic from their name and visual characters. Data were analysed with content analysis and visual culture theories. The content analysis is a way to understanding the symbolic qualities of texts, by which means the way that elements of a text refer to cultural contexts [7]. The content described in (1) Sticker’s name, (2) Words use in stickers to communicate, and (3) Sticker’s visual character. Content analysis used to discover the creator’s LINE stickers in the LINE Sticker Shop that indicate the ethnic identity.

**4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Indonesia is known as a country that has many ethnicities. There are over 500 ethnic groups in Indonesia [8]. The largest ethnic group in Indonesia is Javanese that concentrated on the island of Java and have migrated throughout Indonesia and make up about 40% of the total population. The next largest ethnic group are Sundanese, Batak, Maduranese, Betawi, Minangkabau, Bugis. There are also significant populations of ethnic group in islands of Indonesia such as Balinese, Makassar, Flores, etc, and foreign ethnicities such as Chinese in Singkawang and Bangka-Belitung island.

Indonesian language (Bahasa Indonesia) is the official language that used as scientific and legal communication, whereas the ethnic language and dialects are commonly use in informal communication of ethnic groups in Indonesia. Indonesia has more than 700 languages that are spoken by ethnic groups in Indonesia. Some languages can be divided into different dialects in each area. The ethnic language learned in elementary school as local content curriculum.

The ethnic language and dialects also can be seen in the form of online communication or Computer Mediated

Communication beside verbal communication in the real-life situation. The LINE stickers are a form of Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) that open up the possibility of social media to be a tool of communication based on text and image information. Text and image exchange are the way of online communication nowadays. According to Crystal, the internet language is the fourth medium after the writing language, speaking language, and signing language [9]. Text and image exchange in the LINE sticker communication that use human character and its daily expression helps users to communicate to others. According to Chrisanti, 2014, most of LINE apps user choose the LINE apps because the LINE stickers have more fun and interesting expression compared to other apps and it become the attraction factor of the apps [10].

Character visualisation explore features and personality of the LINE sticker and the story behind it. Some visual characters represent specific ethnic identity and its characteristics presented visually in a certain form, facial expression, fashion style, accessories, attributes, and communicate in language that visualised in typographical texts. The fashion style, accessories, and attributes of the LINE sticker that represent ethnic identity does not necessarily showed as character wears traditional clothes of the ethnic identity. The textile products are the reflection of the culture close to society and the colours carries their own value identity [11]. Some of the character wears part of the traditional clothes as a sign of ethnic culture such as headband or sarong. In the LINE sticker it also often simplified as visual elements such as colours or motifs. According to Woolman (2009), the colour is affected by geographic, social and cultural contexts, human psychology, and personal references [12].

Figure 3 and Figure 4 are the example of LINE stickers from Javanese and Sundanese (West Java). Both of stickers stated the ethnic identity in the sticker's name and introduced themselves as representatives of youngsters from Java and Sunda. They also showed batik motifs in the character's attributes. Suzy Jowo wears batik blouse and Deden Si Jajaka Sunda wears batik in the headband as the representation of their ethnic identity.

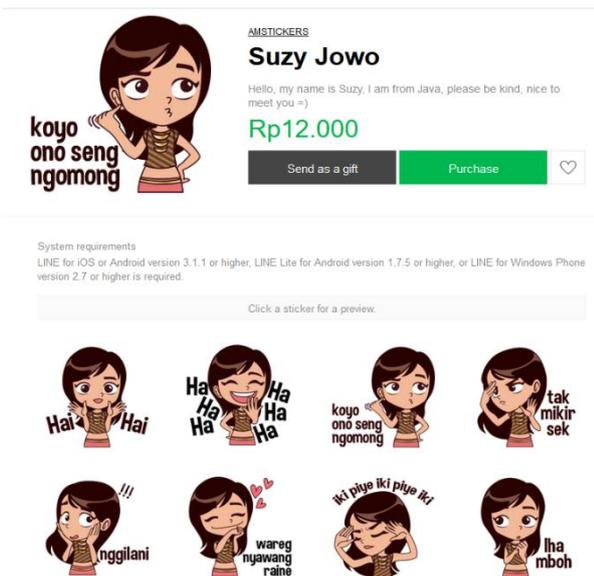


Figure 3 The Suzy Jowo LINE Sticker

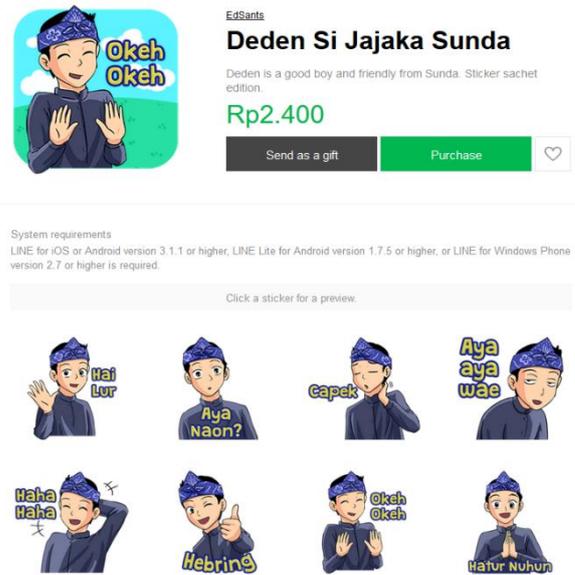


Figure 4 The Deden Si Jajaka Sunda LINE Sticker

Batik is the identity of Indonesia. The art of batik has developing in centuries and represent the cultural legacy of Indonesian people [13]. Batik is the art and culture from Java, but also growing in Sunda and broaden to outer Java. Batik began from traditional classic motifs and technique, but modernity impacts the changing in ornaments, colours, composition, and techniques into the more industrial batik production. By the changing in style and colours, batik become more popular to the youngster. Batik use to wore as *kain* with *kebaya*. But the Figure 3 showed that Suzy Jowo wears batik blouse that has modern and simple cutting that match her style. The attributes related to the fashion style of urban youngsters, that often wear casual and simple fashion style yet not hesitate to wearing batik in their daily life.

The Sundanese culture also values batik as their local wisdom. The West Java batik has the characteristics of aesthetics and identity that has embedded within the originality, values and local content of Sundanese culture [14]. Batik often wear as headband for Sundanese boy or man. The headband known as *Iket Sunda* is related to the life of Sundanese people and their associated culture. Some Sundanese people only wear it as part of complete traditional attire in certain events, but yet its popular among the youngsters to represent the true identity of Sundanese people. *Iket Sunda* formed from a square fabric that has four corners. Each corner has meanings as heart, word, attitude, and body. The fabric the folded into triangle that has three corners. The three corners have meanings as the equality of three values in living in society, which are form by spiritual leader, community leader, and territory leader [15]. When the three values can perform in harmony, the living can also be in harmony.

The way of speaking is also the main element in the LINE sticker's although and often become the reason to apply it in the LINE apps communication. The LINE sticker in Figure 5 showed the "*Aye Betawi Asli*" as the sticker's name. It represents the statement of his identity as Betawi people. Betawi people known for their

characteristics. They are able to speak frankly and freely to express their thought and feelings. They also known for brave characteristic yet humourist people. Different from the stickers in Figure 3 and Figure 4 that showed the character’s fashion style, the sticker in Figure 5 focused on character’s facial expression added with words. The character uses the Betawi language and its dialects. The Betawi language is an indigenous, regional language of Indonesia, spoken by several million people in and around the greater Jakarta area [16]. Betawi language is often used for face-to-face communication within all generations, but in informal situation. The using of Betawi language has the negative connotations for harsh tendency or strong expression. Many youngsters from suburb area such as Tangerang, Depok, Bekasi are using the expression in daily conversation.



System requirements  
LINE for iOS or Android version 3.1.1 or higher, LINE Lite for Android version 1.7.5 or higher, or LINE for Windows Phone version 2.7 or higher is required.

Click a sticker for a preview.



Figure 5 Aye Betawi Asli LINE Sticker

The LINE stickers emphasise on the ethnic character to express the identity represent by it. Figure 6 showed Pia as a girl from Minang who lived in abroad and loved to dance and wore Minang’s traditional costume. Minangkabau is an ethnic group originated from West Sumatra and they are used to travel around the country to seek for a better life [17]. This tradition called *merantau* and living in abroad called living in *perantauan*. One of the popular traditional dances from Minangkabau is *Tari Piring* or the plate dance. *Tari Piring* used and preserved by Minangkabau people in their life so that it becomes culture identity of Minangkabau people. Through the dance, people are able to express attitudes and behaviours as well as the characteristics of Minangkabau people. It serves as a reflection of social and cultural lifestyle of Minangkabau people. Traditionally, *Tari Piring* would be performed at harvest time and would be open to all members of the community but nowadays it performed in wedding ceremony of Minangkabau people who lived in *perantauan* [18]. The traditional costume of Minangkabau is baju kurung with head accessories in red and gold as the traditional colours.

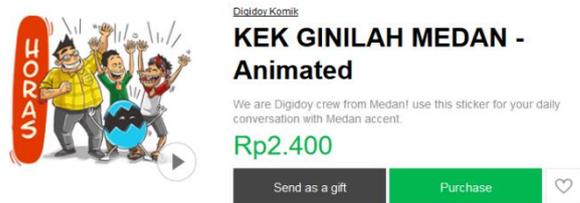


System requirements  
LINE for iOS or Android version 3.1.1 or higher, LINE Lite for Android version 1.7.5 or higher, or LINE for Windows Phone version 2.7 or higher is required.

Click a sticker for a preview.



Figure 6 The Pia Si Gadis Minang LINE Sticker



System requirements  
LINE for iOS or Android version 4.4.0 or higher, LINE for Windows Phone version 3.7 or higher.

Please note:  
Animations for this sticker set can only be played on versions 4.4.0 and higher of LINE for iOS and Android or on versions 3.7 and higher of LINE for Windows Phone.

Click a sticker for a preview.



Figure 7 The Kek Ginilah Medan – Animated LINE Sticker

Figure 7 showed a group of youngsters from Medan who identify themselves as *Digidoy Crew* from Medan. Medan is the capital of North Sumatra province. It is the fourth biggest city by population in Indonesia, behind Jakarta, Surabaya and Bandung. It has been famous that Medan people like to speak loudly. They have the characteristic of powerful and strong person creates loud and strong intonation while speaking. Medan people often use high accent in Medan dialect. Medan is unique because of cultural diversity among people. The language of Medan is actually one of the Malay dialects that has formed and mixed with Batak language.

**Table 1** Ethnic Representation in Sticker

Sticker	Ethnic Representation	Ethnic Character's Name
	Javanese  (Hello, my name is Suzy, I am from Java, please be kind, nice to meet you =)	Part of name mentioned "Jowo" means Javanese. Character communicate in Javanese language "Koyo ono seng ngomong", "nggilani", "iki piye iki piye", etc.
	Sundanese  (Deden is a good boy and friendly from Sunda)	Name "Deden" indicates a male name from Sunda. The sticker's character wears <i>ikat Sunda</i> , a headband in Sundanese ethnic culture. Character communicate in Sundanese language "Aya naon?", "Aya aya wae". "Hatur Nuhun".
	Betawi  (Babe babe encang encing nama aye Daus, anak betawi asli nyang mau numpong beken, nyok donlot stiker aye, biar aye jadi ngetren)	Part of name mentioned "Betawi". Character communicate in Betawi language "Nape?", "Gw tampol Lu", "Nyook", etc.
	Minangkabau  (Bicara bahasa Minang dengan Pia si gadis perantauan!)	Part of name mentioned "Minang". The sticker's character wears Minang traditional costume and dancing the <i>Tari Piring</i> dance. Character communicate in Minang language "Onde Mandé!", "Rancak bana", "Tarimo kasih!", etc.
	Batak  (We are Digidoy crew from Medan! Use this sticker for your daily conversation with Medan accent)	Part of name mentioned "Medan", capital of North Sumatra, the origin of Batak ethnic culture. Character communicate in Batak language "Horas!" and Medan dialects "Sapa ko rupanya?", "Cemana kabar? Apa ceritanya?", "Bongak!", etc.

Table 1 showed the relation between sticker's visual character and the ethnic representation. Each sticker related to an ethnic group. The visual character representing his/her ethnicity by introducing their name or being as part of the ethnic community. They use their language in the introduction to directly communicate to their targeted user, which are people who understand the language or visual sign in the sticker's character.

The process of social learning through LINE sticker's character representation can be acquired by these three aspect:

#### 4.1. The Visual Characters

The LINE sticker's visual character is the representation of a certain ethnic character. The figures, fashion styles, attributes, and colours are visual elements that can be identified as the ethnic identity representation.

#### 4.2. The Communication

The LINE sticker's name is a direct identifier of a certain ethnic group. The visual character also speaking verbally in the ethnic language and dialects through words and sentences that expressed in the stickers. The user uses the LINE stickers in the online communication, by inserting LINE stickers that matched their communication purposes as well as that represented their feeling in the current situation.

#### 4.3. The Character Modelling

The LINE sticker's visual character is in a way become a model of how a certain ethnic character looks like, by identifying meanings in their visual elements and attributes. The way of speaking of the sticker's character through text that embedded also become a model of how their ethnic community communicate to each other. The modelling process can be varied to youngsters who already spoken in their ethnic language and dialects and also to youngsters who want to representing themselves as part of their ethnic groups without using their ethnic language in daily life.

### 5. CONCLUSION

The LINE stickers shown the ethnic identity through visual character based on criteria's which are 1) The name of the LINE sticker's indicates one of ethnic groups in Indonesia, 2) the character's visual image indicates the characteristics of an ethnic group, 3) The text embeded with the character communicates in ethnic language. The LINE stickers emphasise on the ethnic identity character to express the identity represented by it. The character's visual image represents behaviour and way of speech of a certain ethnic group and can be modelled to use in conversation in their ethnic community. The LINE stickers character then became the media representation of the youngsters and their ethnic identity, and mark their social learning process in the digital world.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author acknowledges the financial support provided by the Faculty of Art and Design, Trisakti University, through the research grant. The author also acknowledges the educational support provided by the Visual Communication Design Program, Faculty of Art and Design, Trisakti University.

### REFERENCES

- [1] E. Franzia, "Aspek Keunikan dan Komunikasi Visual pada Stiker LINE (Studi Kasus: Stiker "Cony Special Edition", "Soekirman Si Tukang Parkir", dan "Baba Kiko")," *ANDHARUPA: Jurnal Desain Komunikasi Visual & Multimedia*, vol. 5, no. 01, pp. 48-62, 2019.

- [2] LINE. "LINE Store." <https://store.Line.me/stickershop/showcase/top/en> (accessed 2019).
- [3] N. Mirzoeff, *An introduction to visual culture*. Psychology Press, 1999.
- [4] L. Macfadyen, "VIRTUAL ETHNICITY: The new digitization of place, body, language, and memory," vol. 8, 01/01 2006.
- [5] D. Soobben and V. P. Rawjee, "Ethnic Media and Identity Construction: The Representation of Women in the An Ethnic Newspaper in South Africa," *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, vol. 2, no. 8, p. 697, 2013.
- [6] R. T. Nabavi, "Bandura's social learning theory & social cognitive learning theory," *Theory of Developmental Psychology*, pp. 1-24, 2012.
- [7] G. Rose, "Content analysis: counting what you (think you) see," 2012). *Visual Methodologies: an introduction to reaserching with visual materials Accessed*, vol. 19, no. 16, pp. 81-104, 2012.
- [8] T. Widiyanarti, "Multicultural Community Communication Style in Medan City of North Sumatra," *E&ES*, vol. 175, no. 1, p. 012094, 2018.
- [9] R. Nasrullah, "Media sosial: Perspektif komunikasi, budaya, dan sosioteknologi," *Bandung: Simbiosis Rekatama Media*, vol. 2016, p. 2017, 2015.
- [10] V. Christanti, "Analisis Tanggapan Pengguna terhadap Aplikasi Emoticons Line Berdasarkan Antrophomorphism dan Neoteny di Kota Salatiga," Program Studi Manajemen, UKSW, Salatiga, 2014. [OnLine]. Available: <https://repository.uksw.edu/handle/123456789/5027>
- [11] M. Purbasari and A. Rahardja, "Documenting the richness of Indonesia through the cultural color of Sumatera's traditional textile and culinary product," *Humaniora*, vol. 7, no. 2, pp. 179-188, 2016.
- [12] M. Woolman, *Colour Combinations*. Angela Patchell, 2009.
- [13] Y. Y. Sunarya, "Identity of Indonesia textile craft: Classic to modern batik," *Institut Teknologi Bandung. DOI*, vol. 10, 2016.
- [14] Y. Y. Sunarya and A. Sachari, "THE SUNDANESE AESTHETIC CONCEPT AND IDENTITY IN THE ORNAMENT OF WEST JAVA BATIK," *International Journal of Research In Social Sciences*, vol. 4, no. 5, pp. 71-76, 2014.
- [15] S. Suciati, "Karakteristik Iket Sunda di Bandung dan Sumedang Periode Tahun 1968-2006," *Journal of Visual Art and Design*, vol. 2, no. 3, pp. 237-260, 2008.
- [16] M. R. Lauder and A. F. Lauder, "Language Change and Endangerement in West Java: Recent Dialectology Research," presented at the International Seminar on Sociolinguistics and Dialectology "Changes and Development of Language in Social Life", 2017.
- [17] E. Franzia, "Cultural Wisdom of Minangkabau Ethnic Community for Local-Global Virtual Identity," *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, vol. 8, no. 1, pp. 325-325, 2017.
- [18] I. Indrayuda, "Popularitas Tari Piring sebagai Identitas Budaya Minangkabau," *Panggung*, vol. 23, no. 3, p. 298395.