

Discrimination Narrative and Chinese Indonesians' National Identity: Is There Any Correlation?

Narasi Diskriminasi dan Identitas Kebangsaan Indonesia Tionghoa: Adakah Hubungannya?

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ABSTRACT

Chinese Indonesian have been often treated as an outsider within the Indonesian society. Such a situation had happened for a long time. The discriminative experience of Chinese Indonesian came in the form of racial stereotypes and prejudice. In this study, we analyze the correlation between the discrimination narrative and Chinese Indonesian's national identity. We collected our data through a questionnaire and involved 126 students in Jakarta as our subjects. The questionnaire consists of a national identity variable composed of four dimensions, namely fundamental (6 items, reliability 0.675), instrumental (4 items, reliability 0.520), natural (4 things, reliability 0.798), actualization (4 items, reliability 0.639). Discrimination narrative variables consist of master narrative (10 items, reliability 0.832) and counter-narrative (8 items, reliability 0.781). The selection of those subjects was made using the convenience sampling technique. We employed the correlational method to analyze the data. Our analysis showed that master narrative was not correlated with National Identity with a p-value = 0.179 (> 0.05). Meanwhile, the narrative counter correlates with National Identity with a value of p = 0.008 (<0.05) and a correlation coefficient of 0.234. This means that if someone accepts a counter-narrative statement, it will add value to their National Identity.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Chinese Indonesian is one of Indonesia's minority groups that often received discrimination (Juditha, 2015). According to (Suryadinata, 2014), the discrimination against Chinese Indonesians occurred due to ethnicity. Those discriminative acts relate to personal and social elements as well as citizenship. Chinese Indonesians keep receiving such discrimination from time to time (Melissa, 2017).

During the New Order regime (1966-1998), the Indonesian authority categorized Chinese Indonesian as non-indigenous (*non-pribumi*), not part of the national, ethnic groups. As a result, Chinese Indonesians had a different legal status compared to those ethnics that considered as *pribumi* or indigenous (Burhan & Sani, 2014a).

Other discriminative acts during the New Order period were the ban on the use of Chinese names and the limitation of business activity for Chinese Indonesians (Government Regulation Year 1959 no. 10). Besides that, Chinese Indonesians often faced discrimination when dealing with administrative matters, such as identity cards, birth certificates, and marriage certificates (Korstchak, 2012; in (Burhan & Sani, 2014b). Chinese Indonesians also showed reluctance to enroll in public universities due to the fear of potential discrimination and prejudice against them (Butarbutar, 2012; (Burhan & Sani, 2014b). In addition, Chinese Indonesians became a target of criminal activities (Nasution, 2012; Tan, 2012; (Burhan & Sani, 2014b). The peak of such discrimination was May 1998 riot, as noted by (Juditha, 2015).

The experience of being discriminated against can influence a person's behavior, self-evaluation, and character. This character can be different from individual or group characteristics in which the differentiating character is significant to the individual, known as self-identity (Giddens, 2009). Besides self-identity, there is also ethnic identity, as argued by (Christian, 2017).

According to Ward et al. (2001), Tajfel describes three social identity characteristics: self-concept, in-group feeling, and evaluative and emotional. Tajfel and Turner (2004) noted three phases of social identity formation: social categorization, social comparison, and social identification. Those three phases also happened within Chinese Indonesian. (Dharmowijono, 2021) noted social categorization as a class impression that the definitions have been known, such as Chinese Indonesian' face. Social identification occurred through social categorization and comparison, such as when an individual protected his self-conception by identifying with a group and believing their group is better than others.

The individual usually became a part of various social groups and even attached their identity to that particular social group. Individuals can feel different from others when they join a group and a subject (Schmid & Hewstone, 2011). Every individual who resides within a particular state territory needs a national identity. National identity did not happen automatically, but it requires efforts from each individual to form and strive for it (Latra, 2017). Every nation has its own identity in the form of a distinguished national identity that other countries do not own, as the identity is attached to the owner (Sumaludin, 2018).

This research is proposed based on the discrimination faced by Chinese Indonesian. This paper focuses on answering: is there a relationship between the discrimination narrative and Chinese Indonesian national identity?

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Identity

Identity is differentiating elements from an individual or group character, whereby those differentiating factors are significant for them (Giddens, 2009). Furthermore, (Giddens, 2009) argued self-identity as a process of self-development and personal identity definition when an individual formulating the uniqueness of herself and the relation with the world surrounding the individual.

Besides self-identity, there is also ethnic identity, as noted by (Christian, 2017). Determinants of identity are dialect, domicile, family name, politics, and generation. Ethnic identity is a person's 'emotional significance' to join in a 'sense of belonging' or affiliate with a specific culture (Ting-Toomey, 1999). According to (Giddens, 2009), ethnic identity is understood as values and cultural norms which differentiate group members from other groups.

Tajfel and Turner (2004) describe the phases of social identity formation, namely social categorization, social comparison, and social identification. Social categorization is a person's tendency to interpret himself and others for certain social groups. Social comparison is the process used by a person to determine his position in a particular group. Social identification shows that a person's feelings about who he is and how he relates to others are determined by the individual and the group around him (Tajfel & Turner, 2004).

The individual usually becomes a part of various social groups and even identifies themselves as part of those groups. Individuals differentiated themselves from others when they became part of the group and a subject (Schmid & Hewstone, 2011).

The involvement of an individual in a group or society forms national identity. National identity requires efforts from an individual to develop and strive for it or can be said as identity actualization (Latra, 2017). National identity is an identity that owns by a particular state, and no other states possess it, unique characteristics of a nation. The formation of national identity requires fundamental identity, instrumental identity, and natural identity (Sumaludin, 2018).

Discrimination

Discrimination is related to ethnic identity. Ethnic identity is crucial when a group of people becomes immigrants in a particular country. (Brown & Chu, 2012) argued orientation on ethnic identity reduces discrimination levels. (Berry & Sabatier, 2010) said respondents with ethnic identity and national identity orientation have better 'psychological well-being'; they can adapt better in their school and community.

(Torres & Ong, 2010) said ethnic identity commitment worsens discrimination. However, when ethnic identity is used as a stress buffer, it will affect intensity and recovery from day-to-day discrimination.

(Liebkind et al., 2004) 's study indicated that discrimination could be prevented through a 'supporting system.' Respondents felt armed by prejudice, but support from parents positively impacts their adaptation at school.

Discrimination statements received by someone will affect such individuals, in terms of self-development or joining groups. Thus, a discrimination narrative can influence thinking, feeling, and actions (Hammack & Pilecki, 2012). Narrative originated from the Latin word "narrare," which means saying. Narrative refers to text that contains series of events based on a chronological timeline or group of events. A narrative can be a text in the form of writing. Changes surrounding Chinese Indonesian can be happened both directly and indirectly. Direct experience is usually attached to an individual and can be passed to other individuals at different times. This is the thing that passed from one person to another.

The different arguments on a particular narrative did not only relate to an individual's national identity but

also a different narrative accepted by the individual. Berry dan Hou (2016) argued that an individual who resides in a foreign country could accept or reject the new culture, the latter from a specific culture, including identity.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research employed a quantitative correlational method that focused on the relation between national identity and discrimination narrative. Data was gathered through a questionnaire consisting of three parts: demography data, national identity, and discrimination narrative. The questionnaire consists of a national identity variable composed of four dimensions, namely fundamental (6 items, reliability 0.675), instrumental (4 items, reliability 0.520), natural (4 items, reliability 0.798), actualization (4 items, reliability 0.639). Discrimination narrative variables consist of master narrative (10 items, reliability 0.832), and counter-narrative (8 items, reliability 0.781). The scale in questionnaire uses in Likert scale with choice strongly disagree to agree strongly.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

There were 126 persons as the subjects, consisting of 30 males and 96 females, aged 17-23 years old. The issues are Chinese Indonesian university students at a private university in Jakarta. We utilized a convenience sampling technique to select our subjects.

Table 1. Research Subjects Profile

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Sex		
Male	30	23.8
Female	96	76.2
Age		
≤ 18 years old	47	37.3
19 years old	47	37.3
> 19 years old	32	25.4
Chinese Indonesian Ethnicity		
Father and Mother	99	78.6
Father	15	11.9
Mother	12	9.5
Birthplace		
Jakarta	72	57.1
Bogor, Tangerang and Bekasi (Botabek)	7	5.6
Non-Jabotabek	47	37.3
Stay Duration in Jakarta		
< 1 year	15	11.9
1-10 years	11	8.7
11-20 years	80	63.5
> 20 years	20	15.9

We utilized Google Form questionnaire, which needed 15-20 minutes to fill, as our measuring tool. The questionnaire consisted of several parts. The first part contained an introduction, information on research objectives, and a consent form. The next part consisted of items on national identity variables, and the last part is items on discrimination narrative.

The items used in the questionnaire have gone through validity and reliability tests, which were outed to 30 participants. Initially, we had 23 items on national identity before the validity test. However, the test eliminated five items. As a result, there were only 18 items at the end, as seen in table 2.

Table 2. Validity Value and National Identity Variable Reliability

Dimension	Before Validity Reliability Test		After Validity Reliability Test	
	Total Items	Alpha Cronbach	Total Items	Alpha Cronbach
Fundamental	8	0.558	6	0.675
Instrumental	6	0.343	4	0.520
Natural	5	0.655	4	0.798
Actualization	4	0.639	4	0.639

Meanwhile, the total of initial items on the discrimination narrative was 20 items. The number went down to 18 items following the test (see Table 3). Discrimination narrative is divided into the master narrative and counter-

narrative. The master narrative contained pointer questions on discrimination received by Chinese Indonesians, such as “Chinese Indonesians often became victims during riots.” Counter narrative consisted of items that stated non-discrimination, such as “Chinese Indonesians receive the same treatment as other ethnicities when dealing with administrative matters.”

Table 3. *Validity and Reliability Discrimination Narrative Values*

Dimension	Before Validity Reliability Test		After Validity Reliability Test	
	Total Items	Alpha Cronbach	Total Items	Alpha Cronbach
Master	10	0.832	10	0.832
Counter	10	0.750	8	0.781

Data analysis was done with the Spearman test correlational method. We opted for Spearman correlation due to data distribution abnormality. The test against distribution normality was done through *Kolmogorov-Smirnov* with the result test $p = 0.000$ ($p < 0.05$) for identity national variable, and $p = 0.000$ ($p < 0.05$) that indicated abnormal data distribution.

Relationship Between Variables

Table 4 showed the mean value from each variable. Based on the mean value, there are more than 3 (which is the mean for items scale). Therefore, we can say the value is high. National identity from all subjects displayed a high score (4.3747).

Table 4. *Mean and Deviation Standard Values*

Variable	Mean	Deviation Standard
Master narrative	3.6976	0.71436
Counter narrative	3.4752	0.66069
National identity	4.3747	0.45677

From the master narrative, correlational test on discrimination experience not related with national identity with $p = 0.170$ ($p > 0.05$) value means failed to reject H_0 , no correlation between master narrative with national identity. Meanwhile for counter-narrative has relation with national identity, $p = 0.008$ ($p < 0.05$) value, means reject H_0 , there is a correlation between counter-narrative with national identity with coefficient correlation 0.234 value. As a result, we can conclude that counter-narrative gave a contribution to the formation of national identity.

Table 5. *Correlation Test Result*

Variable	p (sign)	Coef. correlation
Master narrative – National Identity	0.170	0.123
Counter narrative – National Identity	0.008*	0.234

The narrative received by an individual is a master narrative about the uncorrelated experience of national identity discrimination but a counter-narrative about the correlated experience of national identity discrimination. Based on the results of this study, the master narrative or counter-narrative is a discriminatory narrative that is thought to influence a person’s thoughts, feelings, and actions regarding national identity. These results align with Hammack and Pilecki’s (2012) research, who found that a person’s narrative of discrimination affects thoughts, feelings, and actions. Each narration that an individual accepts will form the identity of the individual. The test result showed that the master narrative did not contribute to developing national identity. A different situation occurred in the case of counter-narrative. This condition reflected (Berry & Hou, 2016)’s argument that an individual in a foreign country can accept or reject a new culture, forming a specific cultural pattern that includes identity.

5. CONCLUSION

Counter narrative can strengthen the national identity of Chinese Indonesian. This research has shown that counter-narrative has a positive correlation with national identity. Meanwhile, narrations on discrimination towards Chinese Indonesians seemed no longer relevant. From this research, we can see that the master narrative did not correlate with national identity. Consequently, increasing counter-narratives, such as mass media, social media, education institutions, and advocacy organizations, must be done. Meanwhile, those that are considered master narrative statements must be stopped.

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