

Stereotypical Representations of Chinese Indonesian Ethnic in Short YouTube Videos 10 Ciri Chinese Indonesia, how to be Chinese Indonesian (Edisi Imlek)

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Abstract. The purpose of this study is to examine the representation of stereotypes of Chinese Indonesians in the video, as well as whether they appear in everyday life, using information obtained from interviews with informants from the millennial generation of Chinese Indonesians. A sociological approach, specifically stereotype theories, is used in this study. A stereotypical view of a social group in society includes behavior patterns, physical characteristics, and characteristics. Negative stereotypes are more frequently interpreted as a perspective on differences that leads to the assumption that the group belongs to the "other" category. The appearance of a short YouTube video titled 10 Ciri Chinese Indonesia, How to be Chinese Indonesian (Edisi Imlek), and Tipikal Chinese Indonesian (Edisi Imlek) by Last Day Production (LDP) became an interesting phenomenon because it raised the issue of Indonesian Chinese ethnicity, which was presented humorously by millennial social groups who are of Chinese Indonesian ethnicity. The findings revealed that all respondents had encountered stereotyped views of their ethnicity held by other groups, including negative stereotypes to which they responded lightly and as a joke.

Keywords: Chinese Indonesian Ethnic, Millennials, Representation, Stereotype

1 Introduction

Attitudes based on ethnicity and hereditary values frequently reinforce stereotypical views of the group. Even though the Chinese Indonesian ethnic group has lived in Indonesia for centuries, this happened to them. Stereotypes, as defined Branscombe et al. [1], are beliefs and expectations about the characteristics of a specific social group. Physical appearance, abilities, and behavior are some of the basic components that comprise the stereotype. Furthermore, according to Bodenhausen and Hugenberg [1], stereotypes provide information about the characteristics of specific social groups. When the information is activated, the image remains in one's mind. Stereotypes often result in negative nuanced characteristics of people from various social groups (gender, race, ethnicity). Barker [2], there is a power operation at work in the stereotyping process and its role in carrying out a specific set of social, symbolic, and moral orders. Stereotypes tend to speak about those who are not part of the "normal" order while simultaneously affirming who "we" are and who "they" are. In other words, stereotype reduces, naturalizes, and ensures what is known as the "difference" [2]. In comparison to Barker [2], who stated that stereotyped views have a negative connotation, Branscombe et al. [1] argue that stereotypes can include both positive and negative elements. The characteristics associated with

certain social groups may or may not be accurate, and they may or may not be accepted or rejected by members of their support groups.

Based on this general opinion about stereotypes, the presence of three parody videos by Last Day Production (LDP) on the YouTube platform has become an interesting phenomenon. The three videos are respectively titled *10 Ciri Chinese Indonesia* (2020), *How To Be Chinese Indonesian (Edisi Imlek)* (2016), and *Tipikal Chinese Indonesia (Edisi Imlek)* (2015). These videos are made and played by the young generation of ethnic Indonesian-Chinese, except for *Tipikal Chinese Indonesia (Edisi Imlek)* which features Eka Gustiwana, a young non-Chinese musician. The videos' contents describe characteristics of the Chinese ethnicity that are well-known in Indonesian society, and they have even become stereotypical images of the ethnic group. These stereotypes are not conveyed by those outside the group, which could be interpreted as an affirmation of "otherness." On the contrary, all stereotypical images are presented in a light and entertaining parody format by members of the Chinese Indonesian ethnic group, particularly the millennial generation. The three videos used in this study were viewed by 3-5 million internet users, both subscribers and non-subscribers. This figure indicates that the content of stereotype-related issues has been widely disseminated in cyberspace. As a result, the purpose of this research is to discover how these traditional stereotypes are represented through the eyes of millennial members of the ethnic group, as well as how the facts occur in the social group's real life.

2 Research Method

The research question is how stereotypes of Chinese Indonesian ethnicity are represented in videos and how they align with reality from the perspective of millennials or so called as *generation Y*, whose characteristics are open, supports equal rights (e.g., minorities or gender), is liberal, optimistic, and willing to accept new ideas and ways of life. Stereotypes, according to Lippmann [3], are knowledge structures that serve a mental "picture" of the groups in question, whereas Matcha defines them as exaggerations of reality that are applied to entire groups of people. According to those definitions, stereotypes are general assumptions about certain groups that become identity markers or cultural traits that distinguish them from other groups.

The process of stereotype formation is accompanied by a negative potential, namely overgeneralization, the assumption that all members of a group have the exact same characteristics as the label given, whereas each individual must have a unique personality due to genetic factors that are inherited biologically. According to Nelson [3], stereotypes have three negative characteristics: inaccuracy, negativity, and overgeneralization. The context of inaccuracy leads to the assumption that the group marker applies to all members of the group in question, despite the fact that not all individuals possess the labeled characteristics. Meanwhile, when people recognize characteristics with negative connotations, the context of negativity emerges. Negative labels are more commonly used due to natural human factors that cause people to see differences and believe that their group is superior to others (collective/shared identity). This is consistent with Matcha's belief that "stereotypes are built on a foundation of generalized ignorance and misguided.

The study's subject was chosen to be millennials because the videos were created by millennials, indicating that stereotypes about Chinese Indonesian ethnicity are still prevalent today. Two millennials with Chinese Indonesian ancestry, both around 22 years old, are

interviewed to learn more about the similarities between stereotype representations in videos and reality. Because of the pandemic, the interview was conducted virtually via Zoom meeting. Following that, the findings are analyzed using ethnicity and stereotype theories.

3 Finding and Discussion

These various stereotypes are further classified into three major themes referring to the economic, social, and belief, based on data gathered from videos and interviews.

3.1 Stereotypes of Chinese Indonesians in the Economic Realm

Fulfilling economic needs is centered on stereotypes inherent in Chinese Indonesians, specifically in trade and business. This ethnicity is regarded as having expertise in this field, and it is frequently associated with the occupation of trader or businessman. The stereotype is explicitly depicted in the scenes of a shop owner teaching his employee how to attract customers and two women making money through online sales services. This assumption and video representations are shared by all informants. In fact, their family and nearly all of the group members make a living through trading. Even those who work in the non-trade sector have small businesses selling food, clothing, or daily necessities. It can be said that there is a process of nurturing in the family so that the informants are accustomed to being involved in the scope of trade from an early age.

In one video, the actor explains through the lyrics of a comedic song that even though he studied in college, he still has to trade. Informants confirmed this phenomenon by stating that there were ethnic Chinese Indonesians who were well educated but ended up working in the family-owned shop. Actually, having a hereditary tradition of working in the trade sector does not always have a positive connotation. However, "keeping a shop" or managing a family business appears to diminish the person's status in the eyes of the community, especially if the person has gone to great lengths to pursue higher education. Both informants confirmed that this fact still exists in today's Chinese Indonesian reality.

The facts show that ethnic Chinese Indonesians drive Indonesia's trade-based economy, and that this ethnic group controls large businesses. In terms of history, the trading skills of Chinese Indonesians improved as a result of Dutch colonial policy, which restricted their economic movements [4], they were initially permitted to own land until some of them became wealthy landlords. When the Dutch Agrarian Law began to limit land ownership in 1860, problems began to arise. Chinese citizens' role in agriculture began to dwindle. They were also barred from becoming civil servants. As a result, there were few options for Chinese citizens other than trade and business.

Because they were only permitted to trade, their business expanded in many areas to meet people's daily needs. They honed their business skills and began to master the trade in agricultural and retail products. Their domestic and retail distribution operations were spread across cities and villages on the Indonesian island of Java and other islands. The majority of food and daily necessities retailers operated in shop houses (*rumah toko/ruko*) on major roads, so the presence of Chinese businesses everywhere is ingrained in the minds of Indonesian natives. The post-independence political situation continues to limit their space, making trade or business the only field in which they can freely move. According to 1959 records, Chinese traders contributed 34.7 percent of Indonesia's total national income. When compared to the

average Indonesian, the Chinese are undeniably wealthier, able to obtain a better education, and live in cities. Limitations and skills passed down from generation to generation formed trading skills for nearly all Chinese Indonesians, as well as the ethnic stereotype.

Stereotypes, are general perspectives attached to one specific group in order to distinguish it from others. Stereotypes appear to reflect a group's character or identity, but they contain inaccuracies, negativity, and overgeneralizations. The most prominent example is the trader's occupation, which is associated with this ethnicity. Although the majority of Chinese Indonesians are involved in large or small-scale trade, a small number of others have diverse professions outside of the commercial sector.

3.2 Stereotypes of Chinese Indonesians in the Social Realm

The second theme is the social field, which focuses on the interaction of the Chinese Indonesian group with others. In general, they are thought to have greater numeracy proficiency. This well-intended skill, on the other hand, turns out to have a negative connotation. "Calculating" is frequently misinterpreted as "stingy." This characteristic is represented by a consumer figure who bids on the price of goods and requests a large discount. There is also a scene in which these ethnic Chinese-Indonesians prefer to buy goods at steep discounts, with little regard for quality. There is also a scene in which someone is taking detailed notes on the calculation of facilities (bathroom, sofa, toilet, transportation to the supermarket) that his friend used while staying at his house.

All informants agree that these labels are frequently applied to their group, though some have a negative connotation, such as being stingy. They explain that not all Chinese Indonesians are wealthy in response to this negative stereotype. Saving habits are instilled in the family from a young age. Their family education emphasizes a frugal and self-sufficient lifestyle so that they do not face financial difficulties in the future. There are certain principles that are firmly held regarding the usefulness of the money they have, so that their economic needs are guaranteed to be safe and not to cause trouble for others. The principle of usefulness is also a consideration when giving money to others, in terms of whether the gift will benefit or harm the recipient. One informant even stated that he was never stingy when it came to his friends. Similarly, some of his relatives are quick to give money to others. This type of response is intriguing because informants who belong to ingroup groups do not respond to negative stereotypes with anger, but rather by negotiating with their values, namely giving each other between families. This is consistent with Jetten et al. [3] belief that "symbolic threats should be especially likely to result in increased conformity to the ingroup's norms and values."

The next stereotype in the three videos is that the Chinese are very concerned with their appearance, that they are young, and that the goods they have are always new. Regarding the stereotype of good appearance and youth, informants say that senior citizens are more concerned with physical appearance, such as fashion style, in order to keep up with the trend. It is necessary to take care of one's appearance not only to look good and fashionable, but also to keep one's youthful spirit. However, one informant stated that this ethnic group is under no obligation to always look good. For example, the informant's mother always looks good because it is her personal preference, especially since she works in an office and needs to look good and be fashionable. Maintaining one's appearance becomes a habit. This practice contributes to the stereotype that the Indonesian-Chinese ethnicity has an attractive and youthful appearance, as depicted in the video.

Still within the context of social interaction, some video scenes depict a stereotype known as *kepo*, or extreme curiosity in a negative sense. The term *kepo* is frequently used as an

abbreviation for "knowing every specific object." However, the term *kepo* was widely used by Chinese citizens long before it was widely used and its abbreviation appeared in English. Because the term is derived from the Hokkien language, it is closely related to Chinese ethnicity. According to one source, the term *kepo* refers to the Japanese word *jipo*, which means "chicken grandmother." The phrase means "(people) who like to take care of other people's problems". According to the informants, the nature of curiosity in real life is frequently demonstrated by parents by inquiring about their children's daily activities in great detail. This trait is interpreted positively by them as control over the children and should not be interpreted negatively. It is simply a form of parental care for the family.

The negativity of the occurrence of these stereotypes is the most noticeable aspect of their occurrence. Even when a positive meaning is present, such as in numeracy skills, there are negative nuances that are frequently expressed explicitly by people outside the group. Both informants admitted to being treated differently than non-Chinese citizens at times, or being mocked with words like "stingy" or "Chinese." So far, they've interpreted the expressions as a joke, especially when said by their own friends. This suggests that stereotypes are not a major and demeaning issue for millennials. Stereotypical beliefs have little impact on their social lives and do not distinguish them from others. They even added that the parody of stereotypes displayed by the ethnic group's younger generation is proof that Chinese Indonesians are not easily offended. This could be because they believe that most stereotypes are exaggerated and inaccurate as a result of less harmonious inter-ethnic relations that is in line with Nelson's proposition [3] that stereotypes can arise from, and sustain intergroup hostility. They are sometimes linked to prejudices against race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, nationality, and just about any social category. They can serve to maintain and justify hegemonic and exploitative hierarchies of power and status.

3.3 Stereotypes of Chinese Indonesians Related to Belief

The final theme is about their beliefs. This, like other stereotypes, is humorously portrayed in all videos, such as their belief in *fengshui*, *shio* (Chinese zodiac), and various taboos during *Imlek* (Chinese New Year). The scene is parodied to show how *fengshui* and *shio* become important factors in a love relationship. If the zodiac signs of the lovers do not match, the relationship is considered unsuccessful. One of the videos focuses on the various taboos that must be followed, such as not moving the legs while sitting. Sweeping and washing hair are prohibited during the Chinese New Year celebrations (*Imlek*).

Both informants confirm that their families continue to practice these traditions and beliefs. Informant 1's family celebrates Chinese New Year/*Sincia* with rules that must be followed, such as not washing their hair and having to turn on the house lights all the time. Similarly, Informant 2 stated that his family also believed in zodiac predictions. Nonetheless, these millennials prefer to look on the bright side. For example, a *shio* (Chinese zodiac) forecast is interpreted as a sign to be introspective and cautious.

Aside from the portrayal in the videos, one informant claims that there is a stereotype that Chinese Indonesians must be Christians. This stereotype can be seen as the result of a long history of identity issues experienced by Chinese people as a result of their status as a minority group. As Darwin and Darmawan [5] describes, they continue to face repression, necessitating the use of agency as a means of negotiating their identities. Chang Yau Hoon [5] sees the identity of Chinese people who value "route" over "root" or "being." This allows them to demonstrate their agency in creating a diverse, fluid, and dynamic Chinese identity in Indonesia. Religion,

in this case Christianity or Catholicism, becomes an important agency in this process of identity negotiation.

During the period of harsh repression (1965-1966), there was a significant increase in the number of Chinese who converted from traditional religion to Christianity and Catholicism. Previously, in 1960, some Christians expressed sympathy for Chinese citizens' assimilation policies. More Chinese people are becoming interested in Christianity and enrolling in private Christian or Catholic schools. This phenomenon has indirectly led to the emergence of the stereotype that all members of this ethnic group are Christian, despite the fact that some, such as the informant, practice other religions, such as Islam.

4 Conclusion

According to the above description, the informants almost entirely experience stereotyped views about Chinese Indonesians. However, there are inaccuracies and overgeneralizations, as stated in Nelson's theory. Furthermore, some of the stereotypes contain negative assumptions about the ethnic group, despite the fact that the informants take it as a joke. Last Day Production is very productive when it comes to releasing new videos that are relevant to what is going on in society. Their videos cover a wide range of current issues, such as how they deal with difficult situations during the pandemic, what people think about ethnic differences, and much more. This can serve as an opportunity to conduct research related to the social issues addressed in their videos.

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