

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The fundamental significance in a study is to comprehend the main core of the problem that will be explored. Hence, this first chapter aims to identify the background information in accordance with the research topic, define the research question, goals, significances, and organization of the study.

I.1. Background of the Problem

According to Beebe, Beebe and Redmond (2011, 90-91), ethnicity is shared variety factors, such as language, ancestral heritage, language, by a group of people in common geographic origin. Every people are born with the ethnicity granted from the previous ancestor. They can't choose or change the cultural identity tagged along. Each of ethnicity brings their own uniqueness in forms of traditions, norms, value, and beliefs.

Living in the same land, interaction and communication happened between two diverse ethnicity is inevitable. Interaction between two different cultures refers to the term Intercultural Communication, which by Samovar and Potter (2004, 6) is defined by "circumstance in which people from diverse background interact with one another."

Further, Leksmono (2008) notes that within effective intercultural relationship that shared mutual understanding enables interpersonal relationship stages that bring through the development from individuals to friendship. When

the communication becomes more intense and deeper, romantic relationship and marriage are possible as well.

More than 300 ethnic groups occupy the lands of Indonesia. It can be classified into two large groups: the majority of native Indonesians, and groups of foreign-born immigrants. Native Indonesians consist of various ethnic groups, i.e. Sundanese, Javanese, Betawi, Balinese; they make up about 95% of Indonesian population (Badan Pusat Statistik 2013). The rest of population is dominated by Indians, Arabian, and Chinese Indonesiann.

Chinese Indonesian can be said as one of dominant ethnic exists in diverse cultural group in Indonesia. In census report of Indonesian citizens, there was 1.2 percent of total population of Chinese Indonesian ethnic.

Table 1.1 Statistic of Ethnic Population in Indonesia

Ethnic Groups	Total Population	Percentage	Rank
Javanese	95 217 022	40.22	1
Sundanese	36 701 670	15.5	2
Bantenese	4 657 784	1.97	11
Chinese	2 832 510	1.2	18
Gorontalo	1 251 494	0.53	28
Foreign	162 772	0.07	31

Source: Badan Pusat Statistik 2013

The statistic shows that among other foreign-born immigrants, Chinese Indonesian ethnic group counted as significant group in Indonesia.

Existing among various cultural ethnic in Indonesia, Chinese Indonesian ethnic is considered as notable cultural ethnic that stir up curiosity. The study of

Chinese Indonesian existence in Indonesia has been conducted taking in wide field, either in historical studies, cultural studies, literature studies, social studies of discrimination, and politic involvement.

Undang Undang Dasar Negara Republik Indonesia 1945 verse 26 officialy recognizes the existence and social position of Chinese Indonesian ethnic in Indonesia by its statement,

- (1) *Yang menjadi warga negara ialah orang-orang bangsa Indonesia asli dan orang-orang bangsa lain yang disahkan dengan undang-undang sebagai warga negara.*
- (2) *Penduduk ialah warga negara Indonesia dan orang asing yang bertempat tinggal di Indoensia.*
- (3) *Hal-hal mengenai warga negara dan penduduk diatur dengan undang-undang.*

Further Undang-Undang No. 3 Tahun 1946 deepen the insight of *warga negara* by acknowledge the foreign immigrants including Chinese Indonesian, Dutchman, Arabians, and other nation who profess his or her devotion to Indonesia as his or her homeland.

As before Indonesia stated the insight of *ius sanguinis* which depicts that the citizenship of one depends on blood relationship, one only can be Indonesian citizenship if his or her ancestor is Indonesian descent. However, it changed to be *ius soli* which legalizes anyone born in the terrirtory of a state to nationality or citizenship. By this support of law and enlightenment, it is regulated that Chinese Indonesian despite of the history of their ancestor, is officially and legitimately part of Indonesian citizen own full and definite right and obligation as the other citizenship of Indonesia. It should to be noted as well that Chinese Indonesian people have the same right to be president of Indonesia in future.

Looking up to the history, the arrival of Chinese nation in Indonesia happened through Maritime Southeast Asia in ancient time. Chinese had to wait

for 6 months to go back to their homeland followed the climate to sail. As Chinese prolonged stay in Indonesia, they happened to fall in love with the beauty of the land compared with their barren and straw-colored homeland (Setiono 2003, 13).

Relating with concept of intercultural communication above, the existence of Chinese Indonesian ethnic among any other cultural groups is an interesting substance to be studied. The result of the intercultural interaction shows as Chinese Indonesian ethnic has been received in society. Some important roles are held by Chinese Indonesian ethnic, such as Miss Indonesia 2008 Sandra Angelia, Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy 2011 Mari Eka Pangestu, Vice Governor of Jakarta 2013-2017 Basuki Cahaya Purnama, and many others.

Recalling previous notion of intercultural marriage by Desideria, successful blending between Chinese Indonesian and native Indonesian is also proved by marital bonding. History notes that Prabu Brawijaya V took Chinese princess as wife and had son namely Panembahan Jin Bun (Raden Patah), the founder of Demak kingdom, Sunan Gunung Jati also bonded with Chinese woman, Princess Ong Tien, and from recent century, Soe Hok Djin (the brother of national patriot Soe Hok Gie) chose Minang woman, Leila, as his wife.

Amid Chinese Indonesians and native Indonesians merging, however, still lays a bridge of differences. As noted by Mulyana (2001), the main problem in intercultural communication is the misunderstandings of social perception due to diverse cultural backgrounds influencing perception process and interpretation of meaning.

During Dutch colonialism, Indonesian citizen was categorized into three social groups. First group consists of Dutch, and European held the most prestigious social economy. Second group, Chinese Indonesian, was assigned and granted privileges in distribution and commerce to gain profits profusely from native; consequently, Chinese Indonesian sat on better social economy than the third group, native Indonesians.

The past condition brought two groups created stereotypes based on subjective prejudice. Native assume that Chinese Indonesian are ungenerous, profit oriented, exclusive in mingling with their own ethnic, and have no nationalism (Suryadinata 1999). On the other side, Chinese Indonesian assumes those natives are lazy, in lower social status, and unintelligent (Wibowo 2000). These stereotypes lead to discrimination from one group to another. As result, both groups perceive inequality and infeasible to be united to each other.

History also notes some racial riots occurred between the two groups. One of the most noteworthy incidents was May 1998 Riots. The incident sparked major violence to property and businesses owned by Chinese Indonesian. Over 100 women were sexually assaulted. The past condition left dreadful memories and impressions leading to inharmonious relationship between Chinese Indonesians and native Indonesians as interethnic prejudice (Danandjaya 2013).

In short, even though there was heyday of both group relationships whether in business and economy, religions spread, politics, social and culture, and even some of the bonded in intercultural marriage, history also notes serious polemics (as discrimination riots) which also engraved intense prejudice and

unwillingness between both groups to be united as what Indonesia's ultimate ideology, *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*.

I.2. Identification of the Problem

From the moment of birth, people begin to learn the beliefs, values, and norms of our society. According to Mulyana (2001), culture is communication, and communication is culture. Through communication, culture is shared: parents teach their children how to behave to elder, society consciously or not convey what is good and not. Social groups within a culture distinctively shape members' perspective (Wood 2006, 164).

People learn a culture's perspectives and rules during the process of communicating (Wood 2004, 160). Therefore, within culture, without doubt communication occurs. Culture and communication is two parts that powerfully related and interdependent.

The perspective of one ethnic have to one another is also part of culture in the form of idea ("*gagasan*"). As what culture defined by Mulyana (2001):

Kebudayaan adalah keseluruhan sistem gagasan, tindakan dan hasil karya manusia dalam rangka kehidupan yang dijadikan milik diri manusia dengan (proses) belajar.

Likewise the precedent episodes of interaction between two groups are naturally learned from generation to generation, either through history lessons, parents' story-telling or other media of communication. Individuals learn recognize the social reality from their ancestor; even how the social reality is shaped is partial as noted in Standpoint Theory by West and Turner (2007).

Belonging in one group of ethnic can influence how one sees the other group. Group members share the common identity, the point of view of the world, and dictate how to behave to the other, as well as with the sentimental judgment and stereotype of native Indonesian thought by Chinese Indonesian. Hence, the partial judgment from one ethnic group can be passed over the generation and affected to how individual perceives, gives meaning, and later on, decides to build relationship or not with the other ethnic group.

This includes marriage which the most intimate step of a relationship. In Indonesia, usually parents have a big role in marriage. A child will ask for their permission from their parents about their partner. Even before then, when their children grow to age of maturity, parent convey guidelines how to choose ideal partner, popularly known as *bibit* (the ancestry), *bebet* (the family, society, and livelihood), and *bobot* (the personality, and education). It is attempt for their children to have ideal husband/wife for a happy and eternal marriage.

Prejudice from one ethnic is communicated among cultural groups. It may be an obstacle for the possibility to have interethnic marriage, specifically between Chinese Indonesian to native-Indonesian which has a long throughout history of good and bad.

This prejudice shape negative perception of someone. The importance of perception itself is worth taking note of. Perception offers more than objective output. It ingests an observation and manufactures an altered reality enriched with previous experience (Devito 2012, 36). Perception is base of every action conducted by human. Wrong directed perception can lead to unexpected behavior

and action by someone. To have good outcome of action and respond, one must have right and proper perception.

Shaping perception is also affected by many factors of life. Culture, experience, education, prejudice, and stereotype are aspects that undirectly and indirectly involve in someone's decision of action. That's why it is expected that one can organize and produce descent perception which is the foundation of his or her action. Along with this study, when one has initial wronged perception about one ethnicity, it can be obstacle in further communication. Therefore, as Mulyana (2001, 23) notes perception is the most important pieces in communication, because through perception one produce the meaning of communication message and reproduce the sense of the world.

Based on that concern, it is worth to examine the perception of married Chinese Indonesian woman accepting intercultural relationship, especially interethnic marriage. The consideration, motive, and meaning behind their decision to stave in tradition and taboo are the primary orientation to be explored in this research.

Research object is drawn to Chinese Indonesian women born from pure Chinese Indonesian (*Cina Totok*) marriage as opposed to interethnic marriage (*Cina Peranakan*).¹ Moreover, objects of study had to still live together with parents during before marriage period and talk mother tongue (ethnic language) as demonstration to practice of ethnical life. Detailed information of research object is continued in second chapter, Object of Research.

¹ The insight of *Cina Totok* and *Cina Peranakan* are excerpted form Hariyono (1997, 12) which refers *Cina Totok* to the descent from both father and mother are Chinese Indonesian, and *Cina Peranakan* as descent from one of parents, either father or mother is not Chinese Indonesian.

I.3. Statement of the Problem

Based on the background and identification of problems above, this question is drawn to be the focus of this study, “how is the perception of Chinese Indonesian women towards interethnic marriage?”

I.4. Purpose of the Study

The goal of this study is to explore and examine the perception of Chinese Indonesian woman towards interethnic marriage. The focus is to lay out pieces of a patchwork blanket which is the cultural influence that is learned throughout the object of research’s life through society and family. Each piece of uncovered cloth contributes to understanding of the whole which points to the perception of the object research to willingness accepting interethnic marriage.

I.5. Significance of the Study

The significance of this study will be specified into academic, practical, and social significance.

I.5.1. Academic Significance

The result of this study will deepen pre-existing knowledge on Symbolic Interactionism specifically in meaning shaped within cultural groups.

I.5.2. Practical Significance

This study is expected to contribute reflection of how cultural groups can influence to individual perception. It is hoped that individual can select

and differentiate which one is prejudice, and reality. This mindset is somewhat affect to the possibility of interethnic relationship.

I.5.3. Social Significance

This study will enrich grasp of intercultural relationship in Indonesia, and portray social acceptance of Indonesia's ideology Bhinneka Tunggal Ika. It is expected to encourage society to perceive and accept equality of each ethnicity.

I.6. Organization of the Study

In order to simplify the understanding of the problems discussed in this research as well as present systematic depiction of the framework, the organization of this thesis will proceed as so:

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

The first chapter will focus on the background of the research topic why perception of interethnic marriage is noteworthy to be studied. This chapter also consists the problem identification, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, significance of the study, and organization of the study.

CHAPTER II OBJECT OF RESEARCH

In order to understand and get a bigger picture of the research, it is necessary to have detailed and specific depiction about the research object. Second chapter will consist of a thorough explanation and description of the research objects, interethnic marriage, Chinese Indonesian ethnic and its relationship with

Indonesian indigenous, and specifically women in Chinese Indonesian ethnic which is the core essence of this research.

CHAPTER III LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will focus on correlating theories and concepts concerning this research. Concept and theory will be analyzed to relate with the data analysis. In the end of the chapter, theoretical framework will be organized to keep the research orderly.

CHAPTER IV METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH

This chapter will explain the research paradigm, methodology used throughout the conducting of this study, sources, informant, and plan of data analysis.

CHAPTER V RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The research findings will be analyzed in this particular chapter. The analysis will be conducted based on the research methodologies, theories, and concepts already explained.

CHAPTER VI CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The last chapter will consist of the conclusion to the research conducted and also suggestions related to the conclusion and study that applicable for the further research.