

## TRAJECTORIES OF CHINESE-MUSLIM STUDENTS' CULTURAL IDENTITY AND THEIR CHALLENGES IN UIN MALANG

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### **Abstracts**

*Studying cultural identity among students is considered a pivotal aspect of education. This research explores trajectories of identities among Chinese-Muslim students in Malang. By understanding the identities, individuals can fully understand their positions in the society where they live. It is also expected that citizens and students will develop a more tolerant attitude toward other cultures. In the educational realm, understanding cultural identity is crucial for both teacher and student who interact during the teaching and learning process. In this research, the researcher examines five Chinese-Muslim students' experiences in the process of constructing their cultural identities using a qualitative design. The research results show that Chinese-Muslim students in Malang are of Hui ethnicity. Physically, they have a close similarity with the Han, the Chinese majority ethnic group and identify themselves as pure Chinese rather than acknowledging their Hui background. In the context of Indonesia, they feel like outsiders because of their facial characteristics. Chinese students' learning identity is mostly passive and more individual compared to Indonesian students. Due to its individual-based learning, class discussions and group works pose barriers in education, while self and parental motivations serve as supporting factors.*

*Studi identitas budaya di kalangan mahasiswa dipercaya sebagai aspek krusial dalam pendidikan. Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi trajektori identitas para mahasiswa Muslim-China yang belajar di Malang. Dengan memahami identitas budaya, seseorang mampu memahami posisinya di masyarakat yang ditempati. Masyarakat dan mahasiswa juga diharapkan memiliki tingkat toleransi yang lebih terhadap budaya lain. Di dunia pendidikan, memahami identitas budaya sangat penting bagi mahasiswa maupun dosen yang berinteraksi saat proses belajar-mengajar. Dalam studi ini, peneliti meneliti pengalaman mahasiswa Muslim-China dalam mengkonstruksi identitas budaya mereka menggunakan desain penelitian kualitatif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa mahasiswa Muslim-China di Malang merupakan etnis Hui. Secara fisik, etnis Hui memiliki kemiripan dengan etnis mayoritas China, Han, dan para mahasiswa cenderung mengidentifikasi dirinya sebagai orang China daripada menyebut nama etnisnya. Saat berinteraksi dengan orang Indonesia, mereka cenderung merasa sebagai outsider karena perbedaan fisik/wajah. Identitas pembelajaran mereka cenderung lebih pasif dan individualis jika dibandingkan dengan mahasiswa Indonesia. Karena pembelajaran yang cenderung individualis ini, diskusi dan kerja kelompok menjadi faktor penghambat dalam pembelajaran sedangkan motivasi diri dan keluarga menjadi faktor pendukung.*

**Keywords:** *cultural identity; Chinese-muslims; university students*

*Received: January 27, 2024; Revised: April 22, 2024; Accepted: May 14, 2024*

## **Introduction**

This article is an effort to analyze and discuss the significance of the trajectories of cultural identity among Chinese-Muslim students in Indonesia, especially those studying in UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, East Java. The issue of cultural identity is a fascinating topic studied by social sciences scholars in recent years. Most of these studies conclude that cultural identity always undergoes transformation and is formed by daily activities (Anbreen 2015, 379; Awad 2016, 355; Çerkezi et al. 2013, 154; Hjørne & Säljö 2013, 4; Novakova & Foltinova 2014, 144; Sunarti et al. 2022, 14). It is also shaped by the language used as a basis for interaction (Hani'ah et al. 2019, 846; Lie et al. 2018, 198). Additionally, cultural identity is always connected to other topics, such as

education (Dabamona et al. 2021, 19; Măduța 2014, 2847; Novianto et al. 2023, 11), teaching and learning methods (Altugan 2015, 1159; Çerkezi et al. 2013, 154; Rahmawati et al. 2020, 475; Villodre 2014, 235), and a country's development (Novakova & Foltinova 2014, 144). Măduța (2014, 2850–2851) stated that educational policy is needed to maintain identity of citizens in a country. Therefore, besides understanding cultural identity in daily life, it is also significant to understand the cultural identity in educational life of students (Rosi 2017, 57).

Furthermore, Altugan (2015, 457) and Rahmawati et al. (2020, 475) stated that cultural identity has a substantial effect on determining student's success. Students achieve success in learning if they can identify their identities. It is also important for teachers to understand the diverse cultural identities of students in order to establish appropriate learning methods that anticipate differences and bring about higher motivation and excitement for learning. Different from all studies above, this study tries to explore and continue what some scholars have already done. The research not only explains the trajectories of identity in the educational life of students, but also explores the formation process of students' new identities in a new environment, both inside and outside the classroom. The subject also differs from previous studies, focusing on university-level students, whereas previous ones focused on primary and secondary levels.

Specifically, this study explored the cultural identity of Chinese-Muslim students who lived as a minority. Many scholars concluded that Muslims who lived in non-Muslim majority countries face a lot of challenges. In order to face these challenge, some Muslims developed dual identities to live in harmony within the majority group (Basit 2009, 732; Spiegler et al. 2019, 1924; Zulfikar 2016, 1). Some Muslim minorities also face problems in identifying their identity like Muslim in Thailand who are being confused about defining themselves as Thai, Malay, or Muslim (Rosi 2017, 60; Silapacharanan & Mongkolpradit 2014, 730). The Muslim minority in Uganda, for example, proposed equal opportunities for citizens in accessing education (Schulz 2013, 67). The Muslim minority in India focused on their existence by building *madrasah* as informal educational institution to provide appropriate opportunities for Muslims to receive a better education (Akhtar & Narula 2010, 105). Moreover, Yousif (2008, 134) stated that the Muslim minority in Canada faced the danger of assimilation in a secular country while trying to maintain their Islamic Identity. The existence of this assimilation is also a part of

identifying individual cultural identity (Nur'aini 2021, 1-2). These previous studies highlighted the importance of studying the issue of minorities.

Unlike those previous studies, this study explores the formation process of students' identities and their new identities in a new environment. The subjects of this study are Chinese-Muslims who are ethnically Hui. The Hui is the largest Muslim minority group in China, along with nine other minority ethnic groups (Rosi 2020, 50; Spiessens 2016, 53; T. Wang 2018, 1). Al-Jazeera reported that 1.7% of China's population is Muslim. The largest ethnic group in China is the Han, while the Hui and Uyghur are the largest Muslim ethnic groups, mostly living in Xinjiang, Ningxia, Yunnan, and Henan (Jones-leaning & Pratt 2012, 320; Lee 2015, 2). Interestingly, Wang (2018, 7) stated that even though the Hui are the largest population of Muslims in China, conflicts still occur in their lives as Muslims, including issues with their religious identity. By this statement, exploring Chinese-Muslim identity is crucial in helping them understand their position in society. This study will explore Chinese-Muslim students' original identity, their formation of cultural identity while living and studying in Malang, their trajectories of identity in learning activities, as well as the supporting and barrier factors in their education journey. The findings of this research will help students understand their position inside and outside the classroom. This understanding of their cultural identity will also help them adapt well to their environment. The new environment, with different cultures and habits between China and Indonesia, specifically in Malang, will force the Chinese-Muslims to reconstruct their identity. The finding also will enrich the study of Chinese-Muslims living in Malang.

### **Research Method**

This qualitative research studies the trajectories of cultural identity among Chinese-Muslim students, including the process of constructing their identity in their original country, their new identities in their daily lives in Indonesia, the process of constructing the new identity among Chinese-Muslim students in the classroom, and their perception of supporting and barrier factors in the learning process inside the classroom. These explorations will be gathered through in-depth interviews and observations.

This study explored two male and three female Chinese-Muslim students in Malang. Ma Ling (Aisyah) was the key subject of the research. The researcher asked the subjects about their experiences of being Muslim in China, their experiences with the teaching and learning process in China, and their experiences in Indonesia. Some differences, such as the identity of social lives and learning aspects, may appear because of the different backgrounds of their schools and their regions before coming to Indonesia.

To analyze the results of the in-depth interviews and observations, researcher used the theory of cultural identity presented by Stuart Hall. Hall (1990, 222) argued that identity always correlated to “identity as being” and “identity as becoming”. “Identity as being” can be defined as an identity influenced by the social environment in which an individual first lives. It is regularly associated with ‘who we really are’. Moreover, “identity as becoming” is regularly associated with ‘what we might become’. “Identity as being” is based on history, time, place, or anything happened in the past, while “identity as becoming” is based on anything happens in the present or the future. The interviews and observations results can be identified by this theory. The data were then analyzed using Miles & Huberman’s qualitative data analysis which includes data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verifying (Miles et al. 2014, 31).

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Chinese-Muslim Identity (Being Chinese, Muslim, or Chinese-Muslim)**

Apparently, Chinese-Muslim students identify themselves as pure Chinese rather than by their ethnic identity. They have no confusion in determining the three terms (Chinese, Muslim, and Chinese-Muslim) suggested by the researcher. They acknowledge that their identities encompass all three: Chinese, Muslim, and Chinese-Muslims. In terms of ethnic identity, they are Hui, the largest Muslim population in China quantitatively. China has 56 ethnic groups identified by the government; Han, the majority ethnic group, and 55 other ethnic minority groups (L. Yang et al. 2019, 1). Among these, ten are Muslim ethnic groups (Ho 2010, 65).

“There are 10 Muslim ethnics in China, those are: 回 (Hui), 维吾尔 (Uighur), 东乡 (Dong xiang), 保安 (Baoan), 撒拉 (Sala), 塔吉克 (Tajike), 哈萨克族 (Kazakh), 柯尔克孜族 (Kirghiz), 乌兹别克族 (Uzbek), 塔塔尔族 (Tartar)” (Ling Ma, interview, August 22, 2020).

Each ethnic group has different characteristic, but the Hui have a close relationship with the Han, the Chinese majority ethnic group. In terms of facial characteristics, Hui and Han are nearly identical; they look like typical Chinese citizens. The only thing that differentiates them is religion. Historically, Hui and Han have different roots. The Hui are descended from “*Semu ren*” ancestor who migrated from Arab, Persia, Turkey, Mongolia, and Central Asia to China and lived there for centuries. Slowly, they interacted with Han ancestors living in China. As a result of this interaction, the Hui assimilated with the Han in terms of culture and intermarried. Mixed marriages between Hui and Han are recorded in the Great Ming Law. This law was established in attempt to maintain the existence of the Chinese majority ethnic group (Basuki 2019, 2; Wang et al. 2002, 4).

Before the law on mixed marriages was written, there was a discriminatory law from the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368) up to the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) that prohibited the use of Islamic names. As a result, the Hui metamorphosed their Islamic names into Chinese names through a process called *verbastering*. The name ‘Muhammad’ was changed to ‘Ma’ or ‘Mu’, and the name ‘Nasruddin’ was changed to ‘Na’ or ‘Ding’ (Basuki 2019, 1-2). This aimed to minimize potential conflict between the majority and minority groups in China. It was also an effort to reduce the effects of ethnic identity investigation. From interviews with all informants, they admitted they had no idea about the process of changing Islamic names to Chinese names. They stated that currently, there are no such Islamic names in China. Identification as Chinese is more important to maintain their nationality. This finding contrasts with the Uyghur community, which does not consider themselves Chinese descendants; they identify as Turkic descendants instead.

This is what Stuart Hall referred to as “identity as being”. The Chinese-Muslim identify themselves as being Chinese-Muslim without developing a dual identity like other minorities. While Muslim minorities in several countries develop dual identities to live harmoniously with the majority (Spiegler et al. 2019, 1924; Zulfikar 2016, 6), Chinese-Muslims

in China, especially the Hui, have positively mingled with the Han majority. This is due to the history of the assimilation process between the Hui and the Han. The history and several policies issued by the Chinese government solidified the identity of Chinese-Muslim students (Hall 1990, 222).

### Religious Identity of Chinese-Muslim

The religiosity of Chinese-Muslim is considered secondary. This level is characterized by the religious identity applied in their daily lives. The informants stated that being Muslim in China primarily means believing in “God” and not consuming alcohol or pork. Other Islamic obligatory activities are considered important after attending an Islamic Boarding school.

*“Most of the Hui are Muslim on their ID. Mostly they just pray Jum’at because they are busy working. They also cannot recite the Quran. They are called Muslim because they do not eat pork. That’s it. Before entering boarding school, I did the same”* (Ja Hui Ma, interview, August 19, 2020).

According to this statement, the Hui mostly do not understand Islam comprehensively before enrolling in boarding school. This lack of understanding affects every aspect of their religious identity, including Islamic clothing and rituals. The Hui do not wear Islamic clothing or attend all Islamic rituals before entering boarding school. In this context, family and boarding school become important places for practicing Islam (Mokodenseho & Zamhari 2021, 23). Family, in particular, has become a prominent place for maintaining the Hui and Muslim identity of Chinese-Muslims (Zhao 2023, 13).

Moreover, most of the informants claimed to follow the Hanafi Mazhab. All the informants stated that they are followers of Abu Hanifah in terms of *fiqh*. Even though *Tariqa* also exists, such as *Naqshbandiyah Tariqa*, the informants declared themselves only as Hanafi followers, not *Naqshbandi*. This statement shows that the Hui Muslim groups are categorized as followers of *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama’ah* (Sunni) as also identified by other scholars (Yang & Ding 2017, 469). The religious identity of Chinese-Muslims is influenced by their environment and their experience in expressing Islam in daily life. This identity developed in China matches the concept of “identity as being” stated by Stuart Hall,

which explains that this kind of identity is correlated to history, time, place and environment in which they initially live (Hall 1990, 222).

### **Analysis of Chinese-Muslims' Cultural Identity among UIN Malang Students**

In their daily activities, Chinese-Muslims experience a life that is markedly different from their previous lives. They develop an identity as strangers or outsiders due to their distinct facial features. However, this feeling is not constant in every daily interaction. Sometimes, they feel integrated and accepted as part of Indonesian society, particularly in terms of their religious life. The ease of access to religious facilities significantly influences their identification as part of the Indonesian people. Additionally, the availability of *halal* food or restaurants also contributes to Chinese-Muslims' identification as insiders within the Indonesian milieu.

*"I can say that all Indonesian people are aware that we are strangers. They can see that from our faces which are totally different compared to Indonesians. However, this case is different in terms of religious life. While being Muslim in Indonesia, I feel that most Indonesians consider us as their brothers in Islam"* (Ling Ma, interview, August 22, 2020).

*"In my city, you cannot hear the adzan. Here, we can easily hear the adzan every time. In China, looking for a halal restaurant is laborious; meanwhile here, almost all restaurants provide halal foods. In terms of religious life, I feel like living here is good"* (Yu Jia Jin, interview, August 23, 2020).

The identity they use the most in daily life in Indonesia is as a Muslim. However, they maintain their Chinese identity in contexts such as food, clothing, and customs. The informants mentioned that rice remains their staple food, and they adapted gradually to other aspects of Indonesian culture from the moment they arrived. Additionally, the trait of hospitality has become internalized among Chinese-Muslims. According to them, this is also due to hospitable nature of Indonesians, characterized by behaviors such as greeting others and helping friends in trouble.



*“In China, I have neighbors but I don’t know them. Here, I like the habit of getting to know each other. I know a lot of Indonesian friends, and they help us. It’s nice to be able to help each other. I learn a lot from Indonesians and try to adopt hospitable characteristics. I apply greetings, getting to know each other, and so on”* (Ling Ma, interview, August 22, 2020).

Certain Indonesian characteristics have been internalized by Chinese-Muslim students. The statements above prove that identity is negotiated through social interaction between Chinese-Muslims and Indonesians. While some identity negotiations fail, others succeed, such as the adoption of hospitable characteristic. Positioning oneself is a critical part of this process, as emphasized by Hall (1990, 292), who noted the significance of *positioning* in identity negotiation. The data also support the idea that identity can change over time based on one’s environment or daily activities (Anbreen 2015, 379; Awad 2016, 355; Çerkezi et al. 2013, 154; Hjörne & Säljö 2013, 4; Novakova & Foltinova 2014, 144; Rosi 2017, 60; Sunarti et al. 2022, 14). The daily experiences of Chinese-Muslims living in Indonesia have influenced their reconstruction of identity.

The study also found an aspect of Indonesian cultural identity that Chinese-Muslims have difficulty internalizing: the habit of lateness. All informants stated that they struggled to adapt to this cultural trait, as they were accustomed to arriving late to almost every event. This cultural difference represents a failed negotiation and is a crucial concern for the informants. Interestingly, the informants agreed that adaptation and negotiation of cultural identity are essential for living in a new environment. However, they emphasized that such negotiation should be positive, and negative customs or practices do not need to be adopted. This finding strengthens the theory of Stuart Hall’s “identity of becoming”.

### **Trajectories of Chinese-Muslim Cultural Identity and Their Challenges in Learning Activities at UIN Malang**

After discussing the trajectories of Chinese-Muslim cultural identity in daily activities, this session will further discuss their cultural identity in learning activities. Before exploring the development of cultural identity in Malang, it is important to consider the educational backgrounds of the informants. Generally, all the informants are of Hui ethnicity, though

their educational backgrounds are varied. The informants come from different regions in China.

The first informant is from Henan and graduated from public schools at both the elementary and secondary levels where Chinese was the language of instruction. After graduating from secondary school, this informant enrolled in a boarding school before attending university in Malang in relatively short time. During his time at the boarding school, he preferred learning Arabic that it became his favorite language. Regarding the teaching methods used, this informant experienced mainly lectures.

The second informant is from Shandong province and graduated from public schools at both the elementary and secondary levels in her province. Uniquely, she enrolled in a boarding school outside her province because there were none in Shandong. She enrolled in a boarding school in *Gedang Jiaozuo*, Henan province where it is known for having several such schools. The second informant specified the subjects she learned in boarding school:

*“In boarding school, we learned 语文课 (Chinese language), 阿拉伯语(听, 说, 读, 写) (Arabic Language: listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills), 圣训课 (Hadiths), 古兰经课 (the Quran), and 教法课 (Fiqh)”* (Yu Jia Jin, interview, August 23, 2020).

Regarding the learning methods, she experienced both lecturing and drilling methods. The drilling method was often used to ensure students' comprehensive understanding. She also had several additional activities while learning in the boarding school. She was often asked to teach Arabic at nearby mosque during holiday.

The third informant is from Henan and attended schools in both Henan and Yunnan provinces. She strictly followed Islamic teachings and pursued comprehensive Islamic education at several boarding schools. She traveled a long distance from Henan to Yunnan to learn Islamic science extensively, including Quran memorization. Unfortunately, she also experienced similar teaching methods in Yunnan, primarily lectures.

The fourth and fifth informants are from Qinghai province. Both attended elementary and secondary schools in Qinghai, where they were born, but deepened Islamic teaching in different places. The fourth informant enrolled in boarding schools in Gansu and Yunnan provinces, while the fifth informant studied in Gansu and Yemen. The fifth

informant, a key informant, informed some subjects taught in public school:

*“In public school we learned many subjects including 语文课 (Chinese language), 数学课 (Mathematics), 英语课 (English), 政治课 (Politics), 历史课 (History), 地理课 (Geography), 生物课 (Biology), 物理课 (Physics), 化学课 (Chemistry), 体育课 (Physical/Sport education), 音乐课 (Music), and 手工课 (Art)”* (Ling Ma, interview, August 22, 2020).

She also mentioned that before enrolling in an Islamic boarding school, there was no specific guidance for Islamic teaching implementation. The strict implementation of Islamic teachings began after enrolling in the boarding school, where she learned more about Muslim obligations, rituals, and ethics. In both Gansu and Yunnan, the dominant teaching methods were lecturing and drilling, as reported by other informants.

Based on the above data, it is evident that in learning activities, Chinese-Muslim students also develop a new identity influenced by the Indonesian style of learning. Previously, Chinese-Muslim students experienced teaching methods focused on drilling and lecturing, which nurtured an identity as passive learners, mostly writers and listeners.

*“In China, students like to write and listen. The teacher only implements the lecturing method or sometimes gives us many questions to answer”* (Meng Huan Mei, interview, August 26, 2020)

The data, as agreed upon by all the informants, show that in the classroom, students in China are generally passive, with listening and writing skills. Learning in China emphasizes material mastery without developing critical thinking skills or argumentation. This learning identity requires adaptation when students experience new styles of learning. Typically, the aforementioned learning style is noticeably different from the Indonesian approach, which encourages the development of argumentation and critical thinking. One informant stated:

*“I can’t do a presentation because I have no experience with that skill. In the first semester, I was always afraid to try new thing or make mistakes. If lecturer asked me a question, I always answered that I did not know”* (Ja Hui Ma, interview, August 19, 2020).

*“When I first saw my friend doing presentation, I felt afraid to do the same in the next meeting. But, I had a desire to learn the new skill”* (Yu Jia Jin, interview, August 23, 2020).

The difficulty of adapting to the new environment generally appears in the first year of university. The inability to engage in student-oriented learning is considered natural among the informants due to the differences in learning styles between China and Indonesia. Apart from presentation, expressing opinions was a challenge during the first year of learning in Indonesia. Based on informant's experiences, difficulties with presentations and expressing opinions were common in the first year. However, by the second year, the informants indicated that identity negotiation had been successful. The identity negotiation of Chinese-Muslim students was relatively faster compared to that of Thai-Muslim students who required two years to engage and reconstruct a new learning identity (Rosi 2017, 58).

The negotiations among Chinese-Muslims were carried out in several ways. First, in developing the ability to express opinions, informants actively asked lecturers questions and had private discussions. Second, in developing presentation skills, the informants trained and practiced continuously. Third, being inclusive and having many Indonesian friends was also believed to contribute to the successful reconstruction of a new identity.

These three strategies were considered successful in their identity negotiation. By the second or third year on campus, Chinese-Muslim students had developed a new identity with speaking and expressing opinion skills. However, similar to daily activities, there were cases of failed identity negotiations experienced by Chinese-Muslim students within the classroom. The failed negotiations occurred during group discussions. Working in groups with Indonesians was another difficulty they faced, since they thought working individually more enjoyable. Dealing with different perspectives and opinion within a group was the main factor in their displeasure with group discussions.

Regarding this finding, lecturers need to consider the cultural identity of students to help them engage and achieve their learning success (Altugan 2015, 1159; Rahmawati et al. 2020, 468; Rosi 2017, 60). Specifically, when students show a tendency to maintain their previous identity, as Hall describes with his concept of “Identity as Being”, which

is related to the result of past social construction (Hall & Gay 1996, 165). In such cases, lecturers need to be aware of and consider the previous identity of Chinese-Muslim students. On the contrary, when Chinese-Muslim students successfully adapt and reconstruct their new learning identity, lecturers should support and facilitate this process.

The findings of this session also strengthens previous research, which concluded that identity can transform and change based on Hall's concept of "Identity of Becoming," experienced in the present time (Hall 1990, 222), as Chinese-Muslim students learn in Indonesia. These findings further support that cultural identity undergoes continuous transformation and change over time through negotiation or adaptation (Anbreen 2015, 379; Awad 2016, 355; Çerkezi et al. 2013, 154; Hjärne & Säljö 2013, 4; Novakova & Foltinova 2014, 144; Rosi 2017, 57; Sunarti et al. 2022, 14). The trajectories of cultural identity in the learning activities of Chinese-Muslim students show a journey of identity construction and formation.

### **Supporting and Barrier Factors in Learning Activities**

Regarding the supporting factors in learning activities, there are three categories: motivation, environment, and lecturer. The barrier factors also have three categories: laziness, reluctance to participate in group discussions, and the language of instruction.

The first category in supporting factors is motivation, particularly self-motivation which encourages students to study hard. This motivation often appears from the desire to get a prestigious job in the future, which can only be realized if students graduate from a reputable university. Second, regarding the environment, all informants stated that an environment supporting the trajectories of their cultural identity supports their successful learning in the classroom. Both motivation and environment are pivotal and supporting factors in students' successful learning (Altugan 2015, 1159; Rosi 2017, 60). Specifically, the informants mentioned that the existence of the Chinese Language and Culture Center (CLCC) at the university helped Chinese-Muslim students effectively understand specific subjects by discussing them in Chinese. Moreover, the CLCC consists of members who have an understanding of Chinese culture. The environment created in the CLCC actively contributed to supporting Chinese-Muslim students' success in learning activities. The last factor is the lecturer. Chinese-Muslim students believe

that lecturers who have a comprehensive understanding of their students contribute positively to their success. Most of the lecturers at the university are considered to have a comprehensive understanding of their students.

On the other hand, barrier factors still exist. The first barrier factor is laziness. Laziness can emerge naturally and is sometimes caused by external factors. While laziness come naturally, the informants could not identify specific internal factor related to it. However, external factors such as the presence of a friend in a group discussion who often works at the last minute or near deadlines can contribute to laziness. This habit possessed by the majority of the informants' friends or classmates sometimes causes their laziness. This first factor is related to the second factor, which is reluctance to involve in group discussions or work. Group work or discussion is often seen as an obstacle from the perspective of Chinese-Muslim students. Working individually remains the main choice among them, but when forced to work in group, they tend to be lazy. The last barrier factor is the language of instruction, particularly *Bahasa Indonesia*. The informants have no obstacles with daily *Bahasa Indonesia* because they have learned it in specially designed program for all foreign students called *Bahasa Indonesia bagi Penutur Asing (BIPA)*. This program has already helped the Chinese-Muslim students master daily Indonesian conversation. However, in the context of classroom interaction, most lecturers require students to actively use scientific language. This causes Chinese-Muslim students to experience difficulties in learning activities.

### Conclusion

This research concludes that understanding cultural identity is not merely important for individuals who have that cultural identity, but also for those interacting with people from diverse multicultural backgrounds. Cultural identity constantly undergoes transformation through adaptation and processes such as assimilation or acculturation. In terms of learning activities, understanding cultural identity is important for both teachers and students to get and provide learning success. In the context of Chinese-Muslim students, they identify themselves as Chinese-Muslim without any confusion or developing dual identities like other minorities. Regarding religiosity, the Chinese-Muslim informants of this research are mostly categorized as having a low level of religiosity, similar to most Chinese-Muslims in China. However, there was an informant who strictly

adhered to Islam and was categorized as having an intermediate to high level of religiosity.

Regarding religious life in Indonesia, Chinese-Muslims sometimes feel like outsiders, but, at other times, feel like insiders. Feeling like outsiders is caused by their facial characteristics, while feeling like insiders is mostly due to sharing the same religion as the majority of Indonesians. In learning activities, Chinese-Muslims are mostly experienced a passive style of learning compared to the Indonesian style of learning. Therefore, they develop a new identity in learning activities by trying to adapt to the Indonesian learning style. As an effort to develop a new cultural identity in learning activities, Chinese-Muslims encounters numerous supporting and barrier factors. The supporting factors in learning activities are classified into three categories: motivation, environment, and lecturer. Furthermore, barrier factors are also classified into three categories: laziness, reluctance to involve in group discussions, and the language of instruction. Hopefully, this research contributes to the enrichment of literature on ethnic minorities, cultural identity, and the importance of understanding cultural identity for each individual in the context of learning and outside the classroom. Future researchers are expected to refer to this research as an inspiration to deepen the study on Muslims in China and other relevant matters.

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