

From Margins to Platforms: Overcoming Discrimination Through Social Media in Chinese Indonesian Communities

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Abstract

The rise of social media usage has created new opportunities for individuals and groups to express their cultural identities in digital spaces. This study focuses on the experiences of the Pecinan community in Semarang in expressing their Chinese ethnic identity through social media. While previous research has highlighted the discrimination faced by Chinese Indonesians, their approaches to navigating identity in the digital world remain underexplored. Most prior studies have also overlooked the role of online communities and the impact of social media technologies on identity expression. This research employs a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach, analyzing in-depth interviews with three participants to understand their strategies, motivations, and experiences. The analysis reveals that the increasing willingness to disclose identity on social media is influenced by factors such as community support, technological advancements, and the evolution of social acceptance. The findings demonstrate that identity expression serves not only as a tool to combat discrimination but also as a means to build social connections and enhance self-confidence. This study contributes to understanding how social media facilitates cultural identity negotiation in a multicultural society. The findings offer valuable insights into the dynamics of intercultural relationships and the potential of social media to support identity communication in the digital age.

Keywords: discrimination, Chinese ethnicity, social media

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Introduction

The case of ethnic discrimination against a married couple, Zealous Siput Lokasari and Veronica Lindayati Lokasari are ethnic Chinese individuals living in Yogyakarta, demonstrates that anti-Chinese ethnic discrimination persists. The case began in 2016 when the couple purchased land in Wates, Kulon Progo, Yogyakarta and attempted to transfer land ownership at the Kulon Progo Land Office. However, the transfer process submitted by Veronica Lindayati Lokasari was rejected by the office's service staff on the grounds that the couple were considered “non-indigenous” or non-native Indonesians (Junianto, 2023).

Labeling them as “non-indigenous” discriminated against the couple by implying that they were not truly part of the Indonesian nation. Siput Lokasari stated that both he and his wife are Indonesian citizens (Ma'arif, 2023). They questioned the use of the term “non-indigenous” for Indonesian citizens, which was directed at Veronica Lindayati Lokasari by the Kulon Progo Land Office, considering it a form of discrimination against the Chinese ethnic group.

This case highlights that ethnic or racial discrimination remains a controversial issue for many. Ethnic discrimination is rooted in the belief, held by individuals or groups that others are inferior or unequal due to racial differences (Pinovelius & Lobodally, 2022). Juditha, cited in Kamilia and Putra (2020), also notes that discriminatory treatment often targets minority ethnic groups, particularly the Chinese.

A 2017 survey by the Wahid Foundation revealed that the Chinese ethnic group is among those least liked and perceived as different. This antipathy toward Chinese Indonesians is comparable to the aversion toward non-Muslim groups, communist organizations, LGBT individuals, and even Jewish communities (Aziz, 2018). However, anti-Chinese discrimination extends beyond more dislike, it permeates both conventional and digital domains.

In conventional areas such as structural and administrative sectors, past policies requiring Chinese Indonesians to adopt Indonesian-sounding names continue to influence behavior today, despite the official revocation of such rules. Fear of complications in obtaining ID cards or other documents discourages the use of Chinese names (Iswara, 2023). In politics, discrimination obstructs Chinese Indonesians' participation, with suspicions that they may oppose those in power (Susanto, 2023). In the economic sphere, restrictions on business rights exist (Siregar, 2018), while in education, Chinese students often avoid public schools for fear of discrimination (Hidayat et al., 2023).

In the digital realm, discrimination manifests in negative stigma, stereotypes, and imbalanced representation of Chinese Indonesians in news coverage, leading to public misperception and harm (Harsono & Mazi, 2024). Dhani (2016) cites an example from Tempo magazine, which once published a news story about Bank Central Asia (BCA), founded by Liem Sioe Liong, under the headline “*Bye Bye, Bank Cina Asli Bye?*” in its 25 February – 03 March 2002 edition. This framing was unbalanced, suggesting that BCA existed solely to serve Chinese interests. Such framing harms both the bank and the ethnic Chinese community by reinforcing stereotypes of Chinese Indonesians as financial elites.

Digital content has also become a tool for discrimination, such as in investigative videos and negative discursive platforms used to propagate discriminatory views. One such example is

the investigative content Bondo Wani (MLI), Episode 2, titled “Java vs. Chinese in Surabaya.” The video contains discriminatory narratives, portraying interethnic marriages as taboo and using the term “Cina” which carries negative connotations, suggesting inferiority and a lack of nationalism. Similar forms of discrimination occur on social media, where hate speech, mockery, and derogatory remarks about physical features such as “slanted eyes” a stereotypical Chinese trait are common (Yip, 2022). Even memes such as angpao envelopes containing face masks have emerged on platforms like Instagram (Muhamad, 2024).

Both conventional and digital forms of ethnic discrimination cause significant harm to individuals, communities, and the broader social environment. Sudiana et al. (2020) highlights how attacks on Chinese places of worship are one environmental consequence. For individuals, discrimination can lead to feelings of inferiority, social exclusion, depression, and trauma (Syarifuddin & Zakia, 2022). Hatred from individuals or groups can escalate into verbal and physical violence (Agustina & Osmawati, 2021). Anggraeni (2022) adds that the most common impact is violence amid ongoing conflict and even identity crises.

Given this context, this research is grounded in phenomenology and ethnic identity communication to enrich understanding in the field of ethnic identity studies, particularly in the digital communication era. Aqila et al. (2024) found that in Pematang Siantar, Chinese Indonesians express their ethnic identity through cultural festivals such as Imlek Fair and Cap Go Meh, which serve to promote and preserve Chinese culture, and through social organizations dedicated to cultural preservation. However, Aqila et al.’s (2024) study does not explore the expression of Chinese identity on social media, nor does it apply a phenomenological approach to uncover the meaning and essence of identity expression based on lived experiences.

Therefore, this study aims to provide new insights into the personal experiences of expressing Chinese ethnic identity in the digital age through social media. It focuses on how residents of Semarang’s Chinatown reveal and interpret their ethnic identity via social platforms. This research contributes to the broader field of intercultural communication and Chinese Indonesian ethnic studies by analyzing how individuals experience, understand, and communicate their cultural identity online. While several studies (Atrianingsi, 2024, Murfia, 2023, Pratiwi et al., Safriandi et al., 2022) affirm that identity communication is vital in maintaining ethnic identity and building harmonious interethnic relations in Indonesia, few have focused specifically on the phenomenological experiences of Chinese Indonesians expressing their identity via social media.

Accordingly, this research seeks to fill that gap and contribute to a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of Chinese Indonesians as they represent their ethnic identity through social media. Furthermore, it examines the essence and meaning of such identity expression within Indonesia’s uniquely multicultural context from a phenomenological perspective.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts the Identity Negotiation Theory (INT) by Ting-Toomey (2015) as its main framework to examine how ethnic Chinese individuals disclose their identity on social media. INT views identity as a dynamic and ongoing negotiation between individuals and their social environments, especially complex for cultural minorities who must balance uniqueness and social acceptance. INT highlights the importance of identity communication for self-assertion and social connection in multicultural societies. Globalization, digitalization, and

shifting social conditions such as the post-truth era, social polarization, and declining trust in traditional institutions have intensified the need for individuals to express and defend their identities, particularly in online spaces.

In this context, social media functions as a stage (Goffman, 1956) where users manage impressions and construct identity through visuals, narratives, and interactions (Boyd & Ellison, 2007; Zhao et al., 2008). It allows flexible self-representation and becomes a crucial platform for identity negotiation. While identity communication on social media can foster self-awareness and community-building (Papacharissi, 2010), it may also lead to social anxiety and fragmented identities (Fox & Vendemia, 2016). Thus, INT provides a relevant lens to analyze how ethnic Chinese individuals strategically use social media to challenge stereotypes, negotiate cultural identity, and create meaningful connections within a fragmented society.

Methodology

This study applies a qualitative research method with a phenomenological approach to explore how members of the Chinese Indonesian community in Chinatown, Semarang, disclose and negotiate their ethnic identity through social media platforms. The phenomenological approach is selected because it emphasizes the participants' lived experiences and aims to uncover the underlying meanings and essence of their identity expression in digital spaces (Colaizzi, 1978).

Three informants were involved in this research. They were selected purposively based on specific criteria like being of Chinese Indonesian ethnicity, residing in Chinatown Semarang, actively using social media, and openly expressing elements of their cultural identity online. Data was collected through in-depth interviews conducted in November 2024. The interviews focused on how participants experienced ethnic discrimination, what strategies they employed for self-expression, and how social media influenced their perceptions and sense of identity.

The analysis was conducted using Colaizzi's method, which includes seven steps of data reduction and theme construction. Initially, the researcher read and familiarized herself with the entire dataset to gain a general sense of the participants' narratives. Significant statements were then extracted and grouped according to their thematic similarities. From these groupings, meanings were formulated and clustered into broader themes that reflected the participants' shared experiences. Finally, a comprehensive description of the phenomenon was developed and returned to the participants for validation, thus ensuring the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings. Triangulation was employed by multiple data sources, comparison with existing literature, and peer debriefing. The use of phenomenology in this study enables a deeper understanding of how social media not only functions as a communicative platform but also as a space where ethnic identity can be negotiated, validated, and transformed, particularly for marginalized groups such as the Chinese Indonesian community.

Results and Discussion

This study aims to explore the experience of ethnic Chinese identity disclosure through social media, particularly among the ethnic Chinese community in the Chinatown area of Semarang. The research yielded several findings related to the theme of strategies for

disclosing ethnic Chinese identity on social media by the residents of Chinatown, Semarang. In presenting the research results, the researcher begins by providing brief profiles of each informant, which are presented in Table 1, followed by the main themes that emerged from the data analysis.

Table 1
Informant Profile

Informant	Gender	Age	Background		
			Ethnicity	Occupation	Education Level
AN	Female	24	Chinese	Teacher	Bachelor's Degree
DE	Female	21	Chinese	Students	undergraduate
HW	Male	27	Chinese	Private Sector Worker	Bachelor's Degree

Source. Processed by Researcher (2024)

Themes of Chinese Ethnic Identity Disclosure on Social Media

Data analysis revealed common themes among the three participants regarding their experiences of disclosing Chinese ethnic identity on social media. These include the dynamics of Chinese ethnic discrimination on social media, identity disclosure strategies, support from social media communities, motivations for disclosure and the evolution of social acceptance, and attitudinal transformation in identity disclosure.

The Dynamics of Chinese Ethnic Discrimination on Social Media

The study showed that discrimination against Chinese ethnicity on social media has different characteristics compared to conventional forms of discrimination. DE, a student, expressed serious concerns about such dynamics, pointing out how the viral nature of social media allows discriminatory content to spread rapidly and reach a wider audience in a short amount of time.

This issue becomes even more complex when perpetrators of discrimination exploit anonymity in the digital space, which provides them with a sense of security. The impact of this can be just as severe, if not more so, than conventional discrimination because of its permanent nature. The digital footprint of discrimination can resurface even after deletion. Discrimination on social media is often directed at groups rather than individuals, indicating a pattern of systemic discrimination:

Discrimination on social media is concerning, it goes viral so fast and is difficult to erase, it will resurface again and the discrimination continues. It's a digital footprint and it's hard to punish the perpetrators because most of them use fake accounts. And in the digital world, I see it more often targeting groups rather than individuals. (Interview with informant DE, November 20, 2024)

According to the informant, discrimination against Chinese ethnicity on social media manifests through various digital channels such as comment sections, Direct Messages (DMs), memes, and video content containing negative stereotypes, insults, mockery, sarcastic

remarks, and phrases like “you damn Chinese.” Comments with hateful tones often appear under posts related to Chinese ethnicity. Discrimination also occurs through Instagram DMs targeting individuals with negative stereotypes based on their ethnic identity.

Once I made an Instagram story during COVID, I was just going out to buy food. I was wearing a full mask according to the rules. Someone DM’d me saying, ‘Chinese people shouldn’t go out or they’ll spread the virus.’ I was really hurt, I felt directly discriminated against through a DM. (Interview with informant HW, November 22, 2024)

HW’s statement shows a form of individual-targeted discrimination on social media. Additionally, the circulation of discriminatory memes containing negative stereotypes about physical traits, behavior, or cultural aspects of Chinese people is another form of group-directed discrimination. TikTok videos degrading Chinese individuals have received considerable support through likes and comments, as noted by AN:

There’s a lot of discrimination... on social media apps like TikTok or memes. They get lots of support, likes, reposts, and comments asking the creators to make more similar content. (Interview with informant AN, November 23, 2024)

These contents are widely shared through features such as share, repost, or forward, enabling discriminatory messages to spread quickly and widely.

Strategies of Ethnic Identity Disclosure on Social Media

Strategies for disclosing Chinese ethnic identity on social media were carried out using various platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, Threads, X (formerly Twitter), TikTok, and LinkedIn. Participants employed diverse strategies, which can be categorized into two main types are visual-audiovisual strategies and textual-linguistic strategies.

In the visual-audiovisual context, participants shared photos (visual) and videos (audiovisual) to express their Chinese identity on social media. AN described posting culturally symbolic items such as red lanterns, rice cakes, zongzi, mooncakes, and Chinese calligraphy:

...What I upload on social media includes ornaments that show I’m Chinese, like lanterns, rice cakes, zongzi, mooncakes, and calligraphy. Usually, I post these during Chinese New Year, whether on Instagram, Facebook, or TikTok. (Interview with informant AN, November 23, 2024)

The visual content also includes major celebration moments such as Chinese New Year, family prayers, and events involving Chinese cultural elements. Another informant, HW, noted the use of Instagram filters themed around Chinese New Year:

...On big holidays, Instagram usually has themed frames or filters. Last year I also used a Chinese New Year celebration filter. (Interview with informant HW, November 22, 2024)

In addition to visual content, all participants actively disclosed their identity through audiovisual means by uploading videos related to Chinese culture on TikTok or Instagram Reels, often using Mandarin songs. DE mentioned:

...Sometimes I make aesthetic videos using Mandarin songs to post on Instagram Reels or TikTok. (Interview with informant DE, November 20, 2024)

Textual-linguistic disclosure also played a role. All participants noted using Mandarin in captions on Instagram or other platforms, incorporating Chinese names in usernames, and including Mandarin words or proverbs in their bios.

In my Instagram stories or feed, I often use Mandarin captions without translation since Instagram has a translate feature. My username also includes a Chinese name alongside my Indonesian name, and my bio uses Mandarin phrases or just a title. (Interview with informant DE, November 20, 2024)

On professional platforms like LinkedIn, Mandarin is used to describe skills, aiming not only to express cultural identity but also professionalism. Participants also disclosed identity through X and Threads by tweeting or retweeting Mandarin-language content to build a digital network reinforcing their ethnic identity. AN explained:

On X, I use it to vent, like tweeting in Mandarin and sharing or retweeting others' tweets. Threads are similar, but you can also use voice notes. (Interview with informant AN, November 23, 2024)

These strategies reflect a purposeful use of various social media technologies to disclose identity, especially for minority ethnic groups.

Support from Social Media Communities

Online communities play a significant role in supporting ethnic identity disclosure. These digital societies, especially on Facebook, provide emotional and informational support through likes, shares, and positive comments. Informants expressed feelings, supported and encouraged each other to help each other through these communities:

On Facebook, there are online communities. They support each other with likes and positive comments, sometimes sharing useful links and our posts to raise awareness about Chinese ethnicity. (Interview with informant HW, November 22, 2024)

I joined a Facebook community because not all social media users support us when we show our Chinese identity. In Facebook communities with fellow Chinese, they support each other, so I feel more confident to disclose my identity. (Interview with informant DE, November 20, 2024)

Facebook has the most ethnic-specific communities across Indonesia. They're supportive, if we ask something, they help. If we post an event, they'll help share it. Likes and comments are a form of community support too. (Interview with informant AN, November 23, 2024)

Such support was meaningful for the participants. HW noted it made her feel less alone, DE felt it boosted his confidence, and AN found it helped expand information reach. TikTok's duet and stitch features were also seen as tools to build supportive networks and collective narratives about the Chinese minority experience:

...TikTok has duet and stitch features that connect us with others of the same ethnicity for mutual support, though I rarely use them. (Interview with informant AN, November 23, 2024)

Motivations for Disclosure and Evolution of Social Acceptance

The main motivation for disclosing Chinese identity was the need for recognition and affirmation of social status as an integral part of Indonesia. All participants echoed this motivation:

We're also Indonesians. The Chinese ethnicity today is not the same as before. We've changed, and we want to live peacefully side by side, just want to be seen and accepted as part of Indonesia. (Interview with informant AN, November 23, 2024)

Peaceful and harmonious living—that's the motivation. In society, we want to be seen as Indonesians too, without complications in public services, contributing to Indonesia together. Just live together, right? We all stand on the same Indonesian soil. (Interview with informant DE, November 20, 2024)

Everyone wants to be treated fairly and recognized in the country they live in. We follow the rules, so why be treated differently? I just want to be seen and accepted as part of Indonesia. (Interview with informant HW, November 22, 2024)

According to Ting-Toomey's Identity Negotiation Theory (INT), this process reflects the basic human need for identity security, involvement, predictability in interactions, and connection with others. Participants negotiated their Chinese identity on social media through strategic communication and cultural awareness. The study found that social acceptance has improved. Negative stereotypes have shifted toward support and praise from people of various ethnicities:

Yes, things have changed. Disclosing our identity carries risks, especially considering the sad history of Chinese people in Indonesia. But with social media, our identity is no longer hidden. Now, many people are literate and understand tolerance, so stereotypes are shifting to support and even praise. (Interview with informant HW, November 22, 2024)

This change in acceptance positively impacted participants' well-being, driven by growing tolerance and multicultural literacy in Indonesian society.

Attitudinal Transformation in Identity Disclosure

Participants' attitudes toward disclosing their identity have evolved. The study found a shift from reluctance to courage, and from fear to pride.

Not everything we strive for works out. Honestly, I'm proud now, but I used to feel it was dangerous. I didn't want to post anything related to ethnicity out of fear of problems or rejection. Now I don't feel that way anymore. (Interview with informant HW, November 22, 2024)

I wouldn't even post anything during Chinese New Year before, even though I really wanted to celebrate. I just lacked confidence. But that was in the past. Now I feel it must be done, and I have the right to do it, so I enjoy uploading things like that now. (Interview with informant DE, November 20, 2024)

Personally, I feel more confident now because I know it won't cause problems. What I upload is positive. I also feel safer because today's social media is more advanced, so I'm not afraid to express my Chinese identity anymore. (Interview with informant AN, November 23, 2024)

Social media has become a safer space for expressing cultural identity, closely tied to increasing confidence. This transformation did not happen instantly but gradually, influenced by past trauma and discrimination that had previously led many to hide their ethnic identity in public, including online. The evolution of digital platforms has contributed to making the world more welcoming

Discussion

Social media provides a space for individuals, particularly those of Chinese ethnicity, to participate in constructing and distributing their cultural identity. This participatory activity is referred to as identity negotiation (Ting-Toomey, 2015). According to Ting-Toomey and Dorjee (2019), identity negotiation can serve as an infrastructure that facilitates intercultural understanding and may transform into social acceptance. The researcher agrees that such transformation is possible; however, based on the informants' experiences, this process is neither simple nor easy. As will be elaborated further, successful identity negotiation requires a positive narrative, adaptation to prevailing social norms, strong motivation, and solid support from a virtual community.

Based on data analysis regarding the disclosure of Chinese ethnic identity on social media by residents of Semarang Chinatown, five important themes emerged as part of the identity disclosure process on social media. These themes include (1) the dynamics of Chinese ethnic discrimination on social media, (2) identity disclosure strategies on social media, (3) support from social media communities, (4) the motivation behind disclosure and the evolution of social acceptance, and (5) the transformation of attitudes in identity disclosure.

The dynamics of Chinese ethnic discrimination on social media are increasingly complex. Unlike conventional forms of discrimination, social media discrimination is more concerning due to the speed and broad reach enabled by advanced technology and algorithms. The research findings show that discrimination on social media takes various forms. Informants HW, DE, and AN revealed that discrimination against Chinese ethnicity occurs in the comment sections, direct messages, video content, or visual content that targets individuals or groups with negative stereotypes, slurs, and insults. This is consistent with Pramesty's (2021) study, which found that digital discrimination is often expressed through verbal abuse in textual form.

This study also highlights the difficulty in eliminating discrimination on social media due to the permanence of digital footprints. Additionally, DE noted that perpetrators often disguise their identities, making them less accountable for their discriminatory actions. This finding aligns with research by Algamar (2022) and Manalu (2023), which asserts that digital actions

leave permanent traces, and perpetrators using anonymity are more difficult to track, thereby feeling secure from punishment.

Identity disclosure strategies on social media aim to communicate identity in pursuit of visibility and recognition. This aligns with the goals of Identity Negotiation Theory (INT) proposed by Ting-Toomey (2015). In practice, identity disclosure strategies on social media are presented through visual and audiovisual means, consistent with Goffman's (1956) dramaturgical perspective on self-presentation. Visual and audiovisual elements are integral to social media, complemented by textual and linguistic expressions that enhance content.

The findings show that informants use visual-audiovisual strategies to present their Chinese ethnic identity on social media. AN and HW reported uploading ornaments and photos with Chinese New Year nuances to express their ethnic identity. This aligns with Zhao et al.'s (2008) study, which states that identity communication on social media can be achieved through photos, videos, and interactions such as likes, comments, and engagement within communities. Additionally, informants also employed textual-linguistic strategies in their identity disclosure using Mandarin in captions, usernames, and Instagram bios, as described by DE.

Support from social media communities plays a crucial role in the process of Chinese ethnic identity disclosure. In this context, online communities serve as safe spaces for individuals to express and discuss their cultural identities. These communities also act as sources of affirmation and encouragement, providing support through likes, comments, content sharing, and reinforcement of displayed identity expressions.

The study shows that joining online communities contributes significantly to identity disclosure on social media. HW, AN, and DE mentioned that they each joined online communities, which offered support through interactions via social media features such as likes, comments, and shares on content related to Chinese ethnic identity. This collaborative dynamic helps extend their reach to a broader audience. These findings align with Pramudya et al.'s (2022) research, which indicates that community closeness fosters intimacy and openness among members, enabling mutual support.

The motivation to disclose identity and the evolution of social acceptance underlie the desire to express Chinese ethnic identity on social media. The main motivation identified is the pursuit of recognition and visibility in the digital social environment. All informants stated that their motivation to disclose identity on social media stems from the desire for recognition and acknowledgment. AN, DE, and HW also observed that social acceptance evolved positively, indicated by interactive features such as likes, comments, and shares.

High motivation encourages continued identity disclosure, which contributes to increasing social acceptance. The findings show that motivations to disclose previously stigmatized ethnic identities have shifted, now driven by confidence and growing openness, supported by improved public acknowledgment. This transformation reflects the essence of successful identity negotiation, as proposed in Ting-Toomey's (2015) INT, and aligns with Clarissa and Tamburian (2020) study, which states that motivation fosters openness in expressing self-identity.

The transformation of attitudes in identity disclosure shows significant change, closely related to individuals as actors in the disclosure process of Chinese ethnic identity on social

media. The findings indicate that HW, AN, and DE were initially hesitant and cautious due to concerns over negative responses. However, this changed as they received positive responses, such as affirming comments and praise for expressing their Chinese identity online. This is consistent with Papacharissi's (2010) study, which suggests that identity communication can increase self-awareness, foster community solidarity, and strengthen social capital. These results illustrate that the transformation of attitudes in disclosing Chinese ethnic identity on social media exemplifies the success of identity negotiation, as articulated in Ting-Toomey's (2015) Identity Negotiation Theory.

This study does not fully capture the dynamics of Chinese ethnic identity disclosure through social media across all regions of Indonesia. The limitation lies in the focus on Chinese ethnic communities in Semarang's Chinatown. Nonetheless, the findings offer valuable insights into the personal experiences of Chinese Indonesians negotiating their identity in digital spaces. The richness of data collected through in-depth interviews provides a deeper understanding of how this ethnic minority navigates the tensions between ethnic pride and potential risk in the digital context. These insights can serve as a foundation for future research on similar topics with broader geographical and demographic scopes.

Conclusion

The findings from data analysis and interpretation are summarized in this section to answer the research question regarding how ethnic Chinese identity is disclosed on social media by residents of Chinatown Semarang. The disclosure of ethnic Chinese identity through social media is a form of negotiation in response to the discrimination experienced by the Chinese ethnic group. Various forms of discrimination, whether visual (such as memes), audiovisual content, fake news, hate speech, or negative stereotypes are directed at both individuals and groups.

Social media serves as a medium for asserting the existence and gaining recognition of Chinese ethnicity in society, with several key components being identified: First, the dynamics of discrimination against the Chinese ethnic group on social media reveal a complex pattern that disadvantages ethnic minorities such as the Chinese. However, these experiences also emphasize the importance of identity disclosure on social media to pursue equality and societal recognition. Second, strategies for identity disclosure on social media provide a framework for achieving recognition by utilizing the affordances of digital technology. Third, community support on social media creates a space where individuals feel encouraged and empowered to express their identities. This support fosters a sense of safety and affirmation, enabling individuals to persist in confronting discrimination through collective action. Fourth, motivation for disclosure and the evolution of social acceptance act as emotional drivers that fuel the effort to achieve identity-related goals and bring about societal change in acceptance. Fifth, the transformation of attitudes in identity disclosure is a crucial marker of individual success in expressing identity on social media, reflected in increased self-confidence.

Based on the above findings, the researcher concludes that the experience of identity disclosure by Chinese ethnic residents in Chinatown, Semarang, demonstrates their ability to successfully achieve the goals of identity negotiation and expression in digital spaces. Thus, identity communication of the Chinese ethnic group on social media becomes a strategic effort to confront stereotypes and misrepresentation, while also actively fostering cultural understanding in a multicultural society.

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