

Ethnic and religious identities of Chinese-Kristen/Katolik schoolgirls in a high school setting: An ethnolinguistic case study

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ABSTRACT

The interplay of gender, ethnicity, and religious identifications plays an important role in the daily lives of Indonesians (Bertrand, 2004; Hoon, 2013; Ikasari, 2009; 2020; Suryadinata, *et al.*, 2003). This study looks at Indonesian young girls' ways of being ethnic and religious, in relation to their schooling experiences to determine the manner in which these schoolgirls construct their ethnic and religious identities in the school environment. It is expected to add on to previous and current studies of women/girls in the Indonesian context. Located in a public secondary co-educational school in Yogyakarta, the study involved three schoolgirls from the Chinese ethnicity and Christian religion. Drawing on cultural studies and feminism of identity and difference as the theoretical and methodological framework, the study attempted to explore Indonesian schoolgirls' experiences and constructions of ethnicity and religion. This research is a qualitative descriptive study using case study as its method. The research data were collected from free-format, short autobiography essays written by the participants, individual and group interviews, and observation as well as online communications. Data analyses were initially carried out through data coding as determined by the research questions. The findings show that, first, the three ethnic-religious groups in this study namely the Chinese-Kristiani girls set up binaries of their essentialised understandings of being ethnic and religious members. Second, there are different ways of learning shaped by their ethnicity and religion. These two identities, in turn, shape their learning outcomes within and beyond their schooling site.

Keywords: Ethnicity, identity, religion, schooling

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INTRODUCTION

The youth are an important human resource in Indonesia because they are the future of the Indonesian workforce (Ford & Parker, 2008) and leadership. Indonesian youths represent a high number in the Indonesian population. The population of Indonesian boys and girls from age 10 to 24 is approximately sixty-six million from the total population of two hundred and fifty-five millions (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2013). There is a need to facilitate these youths to reach their fullest potential by understanding how youths construct their identity formations in the schooling environment as language learners within the complexity of the Indonesian society.

This study explores the interplay of ethnicity and religion in the schooling experiences of Indonesian, Chinese-Christian schoolgirls, adding on to the increasing literature on identities, ethnicity, and religion in the Indonesian context. In this case, the statistical number of ethnic and religious groups in Indonesia plays an important role because the status of majority and minority ethnic groups determine access to political, social, and educational institutions within the Indonesian state.

Amongst the more than 300 ethnic groups existing in Indonesia, the Javanese is the majority, constituting the largest percentage (41.71%) of all the groups, followed by the Sundanese (15.41%) and the Indonesian-Malay (3.45%), these being the three largest ethnic groups in Indonesia. The ethnic Chinese population is in the tenth position with 0.86%. Religion-wise, the number of Indonesians who profess Islam is the majority at 88.92% and those who profess Christianity make up 8.92% and are in second place.

Indonesian girls construct and negotiate ethnic-religious identities since young (Beazley, 2003, 2008; Ikasari, 2019; Nilan & Feixa, 2006). They learn ethnic-religious values from the day they were born. In most cases, these girls are born into a family who has certain ethnic-religious background. In the Javanese community for instance, most families have the background of Javanese and Muslim therefore their children are born in Javanese and Muslim up-bringing.

Although there are some girls who enter religious schools before they are admitted to the elementary school, most girls continue to learn about ethnic-religious values when they enter school at the age of approximately seven. Curricular local contents (such as the Javanese language lesson in East and Central Java, the Sundanese lesson in West Java, and the Balinese lesson in Bali) and religious instruction lessons introduce ethnic and religious values to students. These local-content subjects help the students to learn that they are Javanese-Muslim, Javanese-Christian, or Balinese-Hindu women.

Various studies on gender, ethnicity, and religion in the Indonesian context (Blackburn, 2004; Ford & Parker, 2008; Nilan & Feixa, 2006; Nurmila, 2009; Srimulyani, 2012) indicate that ethnicity and religion play important roles in shaping ways of being Indonesian women/girls or females. Srimulyani (2012) in her study on Indonesian women and *pesantren* found that one of the access routes for young girls in education, especially young Muslim girls, is through Islamic traditional schools. Because the majority of the population of Indonesia are Muslims, there are almost equal numbers of young girls who go to public schools and those who go to private Islamic schools.

Nurmila (2009) in her study on Indonesian women's perspectives and experiences of polygamous marriages in Java during the Reformation period found that issues of polygamous marriages in Java are complicated by the hegemonic patriarchal system and the dominance of male over female which operates in both the household and public spaces. Javanese-Muslim women's opinion regarding polygamous marriages depends on how they understand and interpret the Islamic laws contained in the Koran.

To extend this example, there are also studies which examine how young Indonesian Muslims negotiate their Muslim identities in Australian environment (Zulfikar, 2011) and how Chinese-Indonesians in Hong Kong re-immigrate and re-establish their lives (Tan, 2011). The former research examines the experiences of young Indonesian Muslims who migrated to Australia following their parent(s). The family and community are two important sites for religious identity construction of immigrant youth. The latter one reports on the experiences of the Indonesian Chinese who 'returned' to Hong Kong which is perceived as their 'homeland'. Some of the Indonesian Chinese in the study successfully adapt their lives in Hong Kong while others are able to cope with limited wealth.

A range of studies (Blackburn, 2004; Muthali'in, 2001; Smith-Hefner, 2007; Srimulyani, 2012) indicate that schooling is an important social site in which students and young people negotiate ethnicity and religion in constructing their self-identifications. For example, compulsory education is implemented to prepare young people for the work force. Long hours of schooling, approximately 8 hours per day, strongly influence how young Indonesian girls behave. There has also been much research on young Indonesian women in a schooling context that looks at the educational rights of girls (see, for example, Bedi & Garg, 2000; Blackburn 2004; Muthali'in, 2001). In general, schooling in Indonesia is categorized into public and private schools where there is no 'clear-cut' hierarchy between these sectors. Public schools are run by the government whereas private schools are run mostly by religious organizations, such as *pesantren*. Public secondary schools are considered 'better' than private secondary schools. Among private secondary schools, Catholic/Protestant schools are considered by the society the 'best'.

Women, as subjects, construct and negotiate values and beliefs, which come from their experiences of belonging to certain social dimensions, such as ethnicity and religion, prevailing within the culture of a certain context. This theory is useful to explain the experiences of Indonesian schoolgirls in constructing and negotiating their ethnic and religious identities. In this relation, individual and collective experiences play important roles in constructing women's identities. Critical postcolonial feminists (Fuss, 1989; Joseph, 2003; Mirza & Joseph, 2010; Spivak, 1999) state that ways of being women/girls are located within the interplay of subjective and collective experiences. Experience can be affected by subjectivity or individual agency while it maybe also shaped collectively by cultural and societal values and events. This principle fits into the framework of identity and difference in the understandings of identity as multiple and shifting as both structure and agency come into play. It allows for a multifaceted notion of female adolescence identity which is sensitive to similarities and difference

within and between ways of being women/girls in a specific context. In the Indonesian context, the application of the principles above means examining both collective and at the same time multiple and contradictory experiences in the ways of being an Indonesian woman/girl belonging to a certain ethnic-religious group.

The notions of gender, ethnicity and religion are inextricably linked within the discussion of individual and collective experiences in the Indonesian context. This means that these three dimensions of identity impact how Indonesian women think and act in the environment of the society as their individual or collective experiences. Individual and collective experiences in ways of being women as theorised by postcolonial feminists (Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 2005; Brah, 1996, 2002; Mirza & Joseph, 2010, Mohanty, 2007; Narayan & Harding, 2000; Yuval-Davis, 1997) is essential in understanding women/girls' ethnic-religious identities. A woman's identity is determined both by internal understanding created by herself and external elements of this historicised and fluid process whereby her identity is created (Alcoff, 1988; de Lauretis, 1986; Joseph, 2003, 2014; Tsolidis, 1996). Ways of being a woman is affected by internal understanding of how woman make sense of their experiences and by historical and social forces in which these identities are created.

Women are agents of their identity construction as they are individuals who make sense of their surroundings. As an example, an Indonesian woman who is a Chinese-Christian will identify herself as a Chinese-Christian as a result of her individual experiences. These individual experiences can be in the forms of being born and raised in a Chinese-Christian family. Collective experiences of belonging to a particular ethnic community within a nation are just as important as individual experiences. These collective experiences can be in the forms of her interactions with her playmates, school mates, and wider scopes of the community.

To take this further, shared experiences of individuals and collectives are historically and culturally located within a nation (Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 20005; Yuval-Davies, 1997). In this concept, the daily life practices of individuals who belong within a collective (aspects of social dimensions, including gender, ethnicity and religion) in a certain nation are linked to the construction and negotiation of their identities. In relation to gender and identity, the essentialist understanding of ways of being women refers to certain, fixed identity markers 'prescribed' to (all) women. At the same time, a woman's identity is determined also by external elements of this historicised and fluid process whereby her identity is created. This means that 'fixed' gendered markers feature in individual and collective identities within a certain context. This notion needs to be taken into account in understanding ways of being women/girls.

It can be inferred from the concepts of essentialism and difference that the experiences of Indonesian women/girls are sensitive to similarities and differences between and within ethnic and religious categories such as the Javanese, Chinese, Malays and so on as well as the Muslim, Christians, Hindus and others. Despite fixed markers of being ethnic-religious Indonesian exemplified above, the identification of Indonesian youth is a process which is fluid and dynamic. This means that the identity practices of being an ethnic-religious schoolgirl are constantly constructed and negotiated in the daily life experiences, creating new identities.

The percentage of the ethnic Chinese is 0.86% of the whole Indonesian population (Ananta *et al.*, 2008; Suryadinata *et al.*, 2003). According to Ananta *et al.*, (2008), the spread of the ethnic Chinese in Indonesia covers all the 33 provinces with Jakarta as the province with the largest number of Chinese people (486,487). In Java Island, the number of the ethnic Chinese does not contribute significantly to the total population because of the large number of population in Java Island (Ananta *et al.*, 2008). Provinces outside Java which have large numbers of ethnic Chinese are West Kalimantan and North Sumatra. These provinces have similar numbers of the ethnic Chinese residing there (359,202 and 353,525 respectively).

The classification of ethnic Chinese as 'foreign Orientals' by the Dutch during the Indonesian colonial history marks the long trace of how the ethnic Chinese in Indonesia is 'alienated'. Coppel (2004) asserts that 'the ethnic Chinese Indonesians have been classified as people of foreign descents rather than as an 'ethnic group' (p. 17). Coppel indicates that with the Dutch categorization influences, the ethnic Chinese in Indonesia are not seen as one of the ethnic groups, but as a 'foreign' group.

As an example, Ang (1999) recalls that when she was a child she was told by other children, usually Javanese, to go back to her own country, China (p. 550). Ang was confused with this disturbing utterance thinking that Indonesia was her country. In a study in Sukabumi, the younger generation of

the ethnic Chinese see themselves as different from the ethnic Indonesian (Tan, 1991, p. 124). Coppel (2004; p. 20) strongly argues that centuries of settlement in the archipelago is not enough to allow the ethnic Chinese to call Indonesia 'home'. He further states that the Indonesian term for 'ethnic group' is often denied to the ethnic Chinese group. The common justification for this exclusion is that the ethnic Chinese have no homeland within the Indonesian nation.

The discussion on the ethnic Chinese Indonesians who have also been classified into *totok* and *peranakan* is debateable. The original usage of this classification is of a racial one, where *totok* refers to the pure Chinese while *peranakan* is of a mixed ancestry (Dawis, 2009; p. 76). However, Susanto (2008; p. 14) argues that this classification is not formed on the basis of race or religion, but rather as a result of the development of interrelated political, economic, historical, educational, and psychological factors (Susanto, 2008; p. 14). In addition, Hoon (2008, p. 5) states that the *peranakan* refers not only to the Chinese with mixed ancestries but also to those pure-blood local-born Chinese who cannot speak Chinese at all. The *totok* are those who are born in China whereas the *peranakan* are those who are born locally in Indonesia. The *totok* are less-assimilated into Indonesian cultures and maintain their Chinese cultures and language whereas the *peranakan* are more assimilated into the Indonesian cultures (Suryadinata, 2001, p. 503). The distinction between *totok* and *peranakan* prevails only amongst the older generation whereas in the younger generation, this distinction is rarely used and is of less importance (Susanto, 2008; p. 53).

Basically, the way of life of the *peranakan* Chinese and that of the majority of *pribumi* Indonesian are not different (Susanto, 2008; p. 14). The Yogyakarta *peranakan* Chinese have changed to the point that they are 'no longer Chinese' by indicators such as the Chinese language that they use, the appreciation of films and songs, and Chinese traditions and cultures such as visiting a family (Hariyono, 1980 in Susanto, 2008, p. 15), this study shows that the Chinese people are no more 'traditional' because they do not appreciate much of Chinese films, songs, and cultural traditions.

Chinese Indonesians have been stereotypically portrayed in Indonesia's public sphere as wealthy business people (Hoon, 2008, p. 4). This stereotyping, however, does not apply to all Chinese Indonesians. First, there are many poor Chinese in Tangerang and Singkawang (Hoon, 2008, p.4). Most of the Chinese Indonesians living in Singkawang work as rickshaw pullers, coolies, garbage collectors, road sweepers, and so on (Dawis, 2009; p. 89). Bertrand (2004; p. 48) also noted that the Chinese who live in Kalimantan are as poor as the Dayaks. Furthermore, the *Amoi* (*Gadis Cina/Chinese Girl*) in Singkawang are sold to rich Taiwan men to obtain money.

Religion wise, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism are regarded as close to the Chinese cultures because of their similarities such as the use of incense in the Chinese, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism rituals. Nevertheless, the Christian-Chinese are not allowed to use incense at all (Dawis, 2009).

The percentage of the Christians in the Indonesia is 8.92% of the whole population. Christianity, consisting of two major streams: Protestantism and Catholicism, arrive and spread in Indonesia during the colonial period. It was introduced by the Dutch and Portuguese. The majority of Minahasan in Sulawesi Island and the Bataknese in Sumatra Island practice Protestantism while Catholicism spreads in East Flores and its offshore (Schroter, 2010) with their Christianity teachings. Christianity becomes a majority religion practiced in the Minahasa and Batak areas and some other parts of ethnic groups in Indonesia.

An example of the spread of Christianity teachings or traditions is the implementation of some teachings in the holy Bible in the everyday lives of the people. Praying to Jesus and the naming of newborn babies with Christian names (Aragon, 2000) such as Antonius, Maria-Theresa, and Fransiscus-Xaverius are two practices of the spread of Christian traditions within the local families. These traditions are also practiced publicly within the society in churches and formal institutions such as schools and universities privately funded by Christian organizations and foundations.

Various practices of Christian traditions continue to shape the lives of people embracing this religion. Some of the followers who deeply believe the piousness of God (Jesus), heaven for good behaviors and hell for bad behaviors, follow the religion strictly. Aragon (2000) termed these people as 'fanatic Christians'. Other followers combine Christianity with the local cultures such as the example in section 2.3 where churches in Java Island spread the Christianity teachings to the Javanese by performing the teachings in a puppet-shadow traditional Javanese theatre. As Ricklefs (2008) states this is what it means by 'Javanizing Christianity'. Therefore, some Javanese practice Christianity although

Christians are minorities in Java Island compared to those majority Christians in Sumatera, Sulawesi, and the eastern islands of Maluku and Irian.

METHOD

This study uses the qualitative case study with the perspective ethno-linguistic feminism of identity and difference. This is used as a framework in framing the methodology of this study. This theory is concerned with understanding the notion of diversity among and within women's experiences. The use of lived experiences as a source of knowledge implies that this study is a qualitative, descriptive research which explores reality within the experiences of subjects which is socially constructed within a certain context where that reality exists (Hesse-Biber, 2012; Johnson & Christensen, 2004). The subjects in this research are three Chinese-Christian girls and the reason in choosing all girls- subjects is because in the Indonesian girls, especially in Chinese-Christian patriarchal families, women are considered as the 'second sex'.

The setting of this research is SMA 3 Yogyakarta My reason of recruiting senior high school girls for this study is because these girls are more aware of their ethnic-religious identities, thus they will be elaborate enough to voice their ideas. I am aiming at my former senior high school as the setting of the research as I predict that I will get an easier access to the school as I am more familiar with the school and I am one of the alumni. Besides that, this public high school is chosen by the three Chinese-Christian girls because of its reputation of being a favourite school in the region. Usually, Chinese-Christian people go to private schools where they are comfortable studying in and so by choosing a public school it means that the public school is trusted to be a qualified school by these three Chinese-Christian girls,

I recruit the three Chinese-Christian girls from a senior high school in Indonesia as the participants of my study. All of them are year-10 schoolgirls. I choose year-10 girls to be my participants because they are not yet loaded with many assignments like their classmates in the higher grades. Since there are no data statistic concerning students' ethnicity in the high school, I had to count manually and there are approximately around sixteen Chinese girls in year-10 and only three who volunteered for this study. This is due to the fact that students in this school are very busy with academic works, extracurriculars, events and courses taken outside school. The recruitment is voluntary based and three Chinese-Christian girls volunteered to participate in this study. The sampling for this study is also purposive sampling whereby the subjects are selected on purpose because they have characteristics needed in the sample. The names used in the finding section are pseudonym of the participants so that their real names are hidden.

I use five methods of data collection techniques and analysis in this ethno-linguistic feminism of identity and difference study; namely the free format autobiography essays, interviews, group discussions, online interviews, and observations. I am employing two main data collection techniques, namely interviews and group discussions; and three additional techniques of free-format essays, electronic interviewing, and observation. I will conduct the interview as the first phase of data collection. Before the interview, I will let the participants write on a piece of paper concerning their brief personal backgrounds such as their names and ages, families, and hobbies. I will use the information from the free-format essays as a guide for conducting the interviews. The interviews may take about one week to complete. I will follow it up with the group discussions, using information from the interviews as input. Observation will be done throughout my stay in the school whenever I have a good chance to look at the girls' interaction outside of the classroom. I will also conduct the electronic interviewing whenever I need to add the data with more information.

I report on the data collected through the interviews and group discussions as the main data. I will use quotations from what the girls say in the interviews and group discussions to confirm to the analytical themes. The free format essays, electronic interviewing and observation are used as support data if I find unclear statements from the girls in their interview and group discussion transcripts. With this ethno-linguistic approach, data regarding ethnic and religious identities of Chinese-Christian schoolgirls can be analysed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The findings show that, first, the three ethnic-religious groups in this study namely the Chinese-Kristiani girls set up binaries of their essentialised understandings of being ethnic and religious

members. Second, there are different ways of learning shaped by their ethnicity and religion. These two identities, in turn, shape their learning outcomes within and beyond their schooling site.

In relation to gender and identity, the essentialist understanding of ways of being women refers to certain, fixed identity markers 'prescribed' to (all) women. For example, Brody & Hall (2008)'s study are 'prescribed' as sensitive in expressing happiness, sadness, and anger among other feelings. These issues are described as follows,

There are three Chinese-Kristen/Katolik who participate in this study. These girls explain that what they see as characterizing traditional *religius* Chinese-Kristen/Katolik girls is exposed in their behaviors which are negotiated in different ways. First, they told me that being traditional and *religius* is linked to being a Chinese-Kristen/Katolik girl. The messages these girls identified from this group include those linking Chinese-Kristen/Katolik femaleness with practices of both Chinese traditions and Christianity such addressing and using Mandarin in certain occasion, preserving Chinese cultures and praying regularly. Betsy and Lily state,

My little brother likes to watch *tiktok*, he likes playing games, then do the dance and asks our mom and me 'come on Ci, let's dance'... so it's like addressing (Lily, 16)

Chinese names was usually reserved for the family members... my grandma usually call us with our Chinese name (Lily, 16)

...my church is Chinese, Christian, Indonesia, so like we have three different three Sunday services, the first and the second one the song, the worship usually have Chinese letters and during '*pengakuan iman Rasuli*' we also said it in Chinese (Betsy, 16)

From the interview quote above, Betsy use Mandarin when she prays in church meanwhile Lily addresses members of the family, such as siblings, using Mandarin. Lily's grandmother also uses Mandarin to address the grandchildren. It is the elderly who usually preserve the 'local' language.

Another marker of being traditional is preserving Chinese tradition. According to Carla and Lily:

For Chinese New Year, we still eat together and the cuisine usually consist of a duck, an egg, a noodle, and a few garnishes here and there... (Carla, 16)

...so between January and February there is *Imlek*, well we gather together for *arisan* from *Imlek* to give *angpao*, like that (Lily, 16)

I want to experience studying aboard and living in other country but I'm afraid of not being able to adapt, cause it's really liberal there and I'm afraid of bad cultures affecting me, like their liberal thoughts like LGBT, there are some church that are not the same as my church, and sometimes it can be like bad, it's not... (Betsy, 16)

First of all you need to like have a faith in Him, trust that Jesus is your savior, second of all, you need to read the Bible and do what God says to do. The Bible says a lot of things... (Betsy, 16)

Both Carla and Lily celebrate *Imlek* or Chinese New Year with their family. Moreover, Betsy states that being traditional is not 'liberal' such as having thoughts of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender, for example. She thinks that this 'culture' is a bad culture.

Some of these markers such as preserving Chinese traditions of speaking Mandarin and practising Christianity are associated with an essentialised understanding of traditional Chinese ethnic and religious cultures. These understandings are mainly prescribed from family members, society, and religious classes. Most of the Chinese-Kristen/Katolik girls talk about these behaviors in the individual interviews such as the above excerpt. These are understandings which emphasize preserving traditions and devotion.

Second, in the one-to-one interviews, the three Chinese-Kristen/Katolik girls described their concepts of the modern and not pious girls as those who socialize. They also spoke of rarely adhering

to *Kristen/Katolik* teachings such as rarely going to church and not reading the Bible as markers of being not pious. The following comments in the individual interviews express some of these points,

It's like *Kristen KTP*, something like that, if they are bad (Christians), because it is only for identity, they don't really do the teachings (Lily, 16)

Like coming to this school, they're like more Javanese and I'm just like minority here... I was scared of not being able to interact with people (Betsy, 16)

We are social humans, we cannot (live) alone, we need communication (Lily 16)

I think Padmanaba students are more like, not smart, smart like genius smart, but like smart, hardworking, socializing kids (Betsy, 16)

In the one-to-one interviews above, Lily used the term as the Javanese-*Muslimah* girls for the marker of not pious, which is *Kristen KTP*. Lily and Betsy described their concepts of the modern and not pious girls as those who socialize or interact with people. Lily spoke of not adhering to *Kristen/Katolik* teachings as *NAPAS Kristen/Katolik*. *NAPAS* here means praying only when Christmas (*Natal*) or Easter (*Paskah*). In sum, the essentialized understanding which has been described above can be shown in the table below:

Tabel 1. Ethnic identity construction of Chinese-*Kristen/Katolik* schoolgirls in a High School

No	Pseudonym	Language use	The shaping of Chinese- <i>Kristen/Katolik</i> Schoolgirls
1	Lily	Chinese names or addressing such as 'Ci'.	The habit of using Chinese names and addressing shapes they ways in which they are Chinese- <i>Kristen/Katolik</i> .
2	Carla	Chinese celebration such as Imlek	Celebrating Chinese traditions such as Imlek leads to the preservation of the tradition.
3	Betsy	Chinese letters	Learning using Chinese letters in writing also leads to the preservation of the tradition.

Table 2. Religious identity construction of Chinese-*Kristen/Katolik* schoolgirls in a High School

No	Pseudonym	Language use	The shaping of Chinese- <i>Kristen/Katolik</i> Schoolgirls
1	Lily	<i>Kristen KTP/NAPAS</i>	This term describes Christians who are not pious in religion. <i>KTP</i> is the identification card of Indonesians and <i>NAPAS</i> means <i>Natal</i> and <i>Paskah</i> only.
2	Carla	Doesnot mention any keywords on religion	The shaping of religious identity is not shown by Carla.
3	Betsy	- Have faith in Jesus - <i>Pengakuan iman rosuli</i>	The shaping of being a Christian should be marked by believing in Jesus and conducting prayers such as <i>pengakuan iman rosuli</i> .

Discussion

*Ethnic identities of Chinese-*Kristen/Katolik* schoolgirls in a High School Setting: An Ethnolinguistic Feminist*

Betsy and Lily are Chinese-*Kristen/Katolik*. They take on some ethnic and religious markers associated with being traditional and *religious* Chinese-*Kristen/Katolik* in interacting using Chinese, such as addressing relatives and praying in church, for example. Betsy and Lily say,

so, my church is Chinese, Christian, Indonesian based, I don't know, so like we have three different Sunday services, but the first and the second one the song, the worship usually have Chinese letter, and then during *Pengakuan Iman Rasuli* we also say it in Chinese (Betsy, 16)

so, like addressing I'm confused, I', supposed to say 'pek' or 'ku' or what? I don't really know, when I was in elementary school I learned (Mandarin) until the second grade, I forgot because in Junior High School, I don't learn Mandarin anymore (Lily, 16)

In Lily's case, she learned Mandarin when she was in Elementary School but not in Junior and Senior High School. Therefore, her ability fades as she gets confused of which addressing she should use.

An interesting phenomenon about these two girls is that they take on markers of modern Chinese yet they also take on markers of *religijs Kristen/Katolik* as they report that Chinese tradition is not in accordance with Christianity, which is the religion they embrace. According to Betsy,

Oh because most of Chinese people believe in 'Dewa', I guess, but like in Christian we believe in Jesus Christ so like it's completely different from that (Betsy, 16)

like they follow their own traditions, so, coincidentally my family there are *Kristen* and Buddhist, so when there is an event like burning money or something, we are asked to come but we rarely come because it is not in accordance with *Kristen* teachings and there are *Kristen* teachings which are not in accordance with Buddhist (Lily, 16).

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Religion is also an important aspect for Betsy and Lily's lives as schoolgirls. Both girls are Christian Protestant, whereby Lily uses the term 'Kristen' to refer to Christianity. Betsy as a modern and *religijs* Chinese *Kristen/Katolik*, for example reveals that there are differences between Chinese culture and *Kristen* and she chooses to take *Kristen* teaching and leave Chinese culture which differs from her religious teaching. She further explains,

... like as a Christian it doesn't make sense, so yeah, but like um God is first thing in life, I guess (Betsy, 16)

Betsy's choice above is like Lily who rarely come to family gathering when it was not in accordance with *Kristen* teaching. These two girls show similar behavior of being modern and *religijs* Chinese-Kristen/Katolik girls.

Regarding extracurricular, similar to their Javanese-Muslimah high achieving classmates, these two girls take on school extracurricular activities as a marker for high achievement. According to Betsy and Lily,

like if you talk about the grade obviously extracurricular but like if I, if the grade doesn't matter I think events much important because I can learn more like survivor skills or like daily stuff that I need it in the future (Betsy, 16)

the girl scout here is exciting, yesterday there are camping too, it's the second camping, and it's exciting because it's rather long, basically I like to take a walk... (Lily, 16)

The excerpts above show the reasons why the high-achieving Chinese-Kristen/Katolik girls regard extracurricular as important. While there is much schoolwork to do, they also enjoy extracurricular offered by the school.

Betsy and Lily epitomize the highly successful Chinese-Kristen/Katolik schoolgirls. The girls' new identity as high achievers are shaped by their ethnicity, religion, and schooling background. Interestingly similar to the Javanese-Muslimah girls, these girls take on some markers of modern and *religijs* Chinese-Kristen/Katolik in their experiences as schoolgirls. In doing so, they point out that leaving Chinese culture which is not in accordance to the *Kristen* teaching and joining extracurricular activities are markers of their new identity: high achieving, modern and *religijs* Chinese-Kristen/Katolik schoolgirls.

Carla is ranked 12 out of 36 students and she is ranked 70 within the total 251 year-10 students in SMA Negeri 3 Yogyakarta. Carla is one of the three Chinese-Kristen/Katolik girls in this study who is a low achiever. She takes on some ethnic and religious markers associated with being traditional and *religius* Chinese-Kristen/Katolik as well as being modern and NAPAS Chinese-Kristen/Katolik. According to Carla,

Yes, the Chinese name was usually reserved for the family members ... my grandma usually call us with our Chinese name (Carla, 16)

My father's side family was still a pretty strong Catholic, well, my grandma, my mother side of family they held on Buddhism and Kong Hu Chu so yeah I went to a chapel once, but yeah because of my father family they were more integrated to the Javanese society, I mean my father was a orang Yogyakarta since birth so he was more exposed to Javanese society as a whole but my mother she came from Medan and Medan was ya Medan's Chinese still very strong so they still hold on Kong Hu Chu, Buddhism (Carla, 16)

Carla reveals about the 'strong' Chinese by comparing Yogyakarta Chinese to Medanese Chinese. Her father, which is a Yogyakarta person embraces Catholic which is considered 'not strong' Chinese. Those who still hold on to Buddhism or Kong Hu Chu are 'strong' Chinese. With regards to religious practices, Chinese who embrace Buddhism and Kong Hu Chu are regarded as traditional whereas those who embrace Catholic is regarded as modern.

Carla also states that there are some markers of culture which characterize being a Chinese. She said,

Chinese are diligent, yes that was the culture, like the culture of the Chinese people you have to do your best, like push as hard as you can, don't give up, do your best, reach the highest point, that was a cultural thing I think maybe it's originally from the parents' concern, survive as minority (Carla, 16)

Carla emphasizes that diligence is needed in order to survive as minority. Parental influence is shown whereby they are 'concern' about their children success in life so they have to do their best.

Religion is also an important identity for Carla. By being a Catholic, Carla hopes to be a *religius* one by stating,

There is this one passage in the Bible like it's okay to not attend the mass if you are helping others so yeah they are not like very strict with their like oh you have to go to church, if you are not going to church you are a sinner (Carla, 16)

Being *religius* does not mean that they always go to Church. A more important deed is helping each other as an act of love. Carla also added that a sinner is a person who does not obey the religious instructions.

Joining extracurricular activities also shape Carla in being a low achiever. According to her,

I don't really think, they're I don't feel like they're teaching me anything because yeah maybe the extracurricular was made for the students who have already join a research team before in middle school but yeah I haven't because when I was in middle school it was in the middle of pandemic (Carla, 16)

Carla looks forward to learning or gaining knowledge through the extracurricular activities but in reality, it turns out that she has not received what she has expected. She explains that the extracurricular, in this case the research team extracurricular, is a continuation from those of Junior High School ones and she felt excluded because she has not joined one at Middle School. It was during the pandemic and students has to go online for schooling.

Regarding time management in juggling her schoolwork and extracurricular, Carla remarks,

I don't know, like I'm not really good at managing my time, like, I'm not really good at managing my time, I can't, like few things, I'm not really good because, in someday I could just like speed run through all of my studies and then the next day I work till like 3 am to finish a multimedia task, at one point I slept like at 4 because the *panitia* just ask me to finish something in the middle of the night (Carla, 16).

Carla works hard both on her schoolwork as well as the extracurricular activities at school. She is willing to stay late, even until very early in the morning to accomplish all tasks given. Her diligence and persistence in getting the task done shows that she is a hardworking student. Although in this study she is categorized into low achieving schoolgirl, it does not mean that she cannot have hardworking, diligence and persistent characters.

Carla epitomizes the low-achieving Chinese-*Kristen/Katolik* schoolgirl. She takes on modern and *religius* Chinese-*Kristen/Katolik* markers such as being diligent and being a good *Katolik* in her experiences as a schoolgirl. This marker is a combination from the two essentialized understandings of being a traditional and *religius* Chinese-*Kristen/Katolik* and a modern and *NAPAS* Chinese-*Kristen/Katolik* explained in Chapter 4.

The explanation above shows that Clara's new identity of being modern and *religius* Chinese-*Kristen/Katolik* is formed because she does not embrace traditional Chinese religion such as Buddhism and Kong Hu Chu which she coined as 'strong Chinese' religions or in other words, traditional Chinese. She prefers to embrace Catholicism as her religion which is a modern religion. So although she still have markers of traditional and *religius* Chinese-*Kristen/Katolik* such as being diligent, the religion shift shows her transition from a traditional girl to a modern one. Carla shows that her new identity of being diligent, being a good *Katolik* and joining extracurricular activities are markers of a low achieving Chinese-*Kristen/Katolik* schoolgirl. Again, ethnicity, religion, and schooling are dimensions of identities that intertwine among each other by which Carla sees herself, and others see her as a low-achieving schoolgirl.

CONCLUSION

My study looks into how Chinese-*Kristen/Katolik* schoolgirls construct and negotiate their ethnicity and religion within a schooling context and how these shape their educational outcomes. Located in an Indonesian context where ethnic-religious collective is important in constructing identities of being schoolgirls, the study further looks into ways of being females which are located within the interplay of subjective and collective experiences. With the above contexts in mind, it is important to find out how ethnicity and religion shape Indonesian schoolgirls' identities and how this in turn shapes their educational outcomes.

The intertwining relationship of gender, ethnicity and religion is important in researching Indonesian young girls. Essentialised understandings of being ethnic-religious collectives are discussed. The participants in this study belong to the Javanese-*Kristen/Katolik* group. This collective has its own 'neat' binary of the essentialised understandings of being ethnic-religious girls in Indonesia. It is the traditional and *religius* Chinese-*Kristen/Katolik* as opposed to the modern and *NAPAS* Chinese-*Kristen/Katolik*.

Nevertheless, the identity practices of the participants in this study are more complicated compared to the essentialised understandings of being ethnic-religious schoolgirls. This Chinese-*Kristen/Katolik* ethnic-religious schoolgirls are categorised into high achieving and low achieving students in order to find out how they negotiate their identity practices in their schooling experiences. These schooling experiences in turns are important to look into their educational outcomes which resulted in the following practices: 1) A new identity of the top achieving, modern and *religius* Chinese-*Kristen-Katolik* which is a mix between the two essentialised understandings of being Chinese-*Kristen/Katolik*; 2) A new identity of low achieving, modern and *religius* Chinese-*Kristen/Katolik* which is a mix between the two essentialized understandings of being Chinese-*Kristen/Katolik*.

These identity backgrounds of the three schoolgirls in a high school in Yogyakarta is then used to scrutinize the learning outcomes at school. As stated above, the research participants and I, as the researcher, come from three different ethnic and religious collectives.

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