

Experiences and Learning in Intrapersonal Communication: A Case Study on Chinese Ethnic Families in Medan

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Abstract

Introduction: This study looks at how Chinese families in Medan communicate with each other and how this affects their culture and behavior. We use interviews and observations to understand this better. We found that language, migration, fitting into a new culture, teaching family values, and culture are important in how these families communicate and see themselves as individuals. This helps us understand the Chinese community in Medan better.

Materials & Methods: We used interviews and observations to collect information for this study. We talked to people in Chinese families in Medan and watched how they communicate. This information helped us analyze our findings.

Results: Our study showed that language, migration, fitting into a new culture, family values, and culture are very important in how Chinese families in Medan communicate and see themselves.

Conclusions: In summary, our research helps us understand how Chinese families in Medan communicate and how it affects their identity. Learning about these factors helps us appreciate the culture and identity of the Chinese community in Medan better.

Keywords: Experiences in Learning, Intrapersonal Communication, Communication Psychology, Chinese Ethnic, Medan.

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The examination of communication psychology and intrapersonal communication within the Chinese ethnic community in Medan can provide a deeper understanding of how values and norms within family and community environments influence the process of informal education, which forms the foundation for shaping behaviors and culture in Chinese individuals. Communication psychology studies how individuals communicate, interact, and exchange information with others. In the context of informal education, the family, as the primary social unit, plays a crucial role in conveying values, traditions, and culture from previous generations to the younger generation. Communication within the family can serve as a means to convey traditional Chinese teachings, such as respect for parents, family, and neighbors.

Intrapersonal communication, which occurs within an individual, also influences the formation of identity and behavior. In this context, Chinese individuals in Medan can internalize their cultural values through self-reflection and evaluation of teachings received from their families and surroundings. This can create self-awareness of their ethnic identity and strengthen their connection to Chinese culture.

It is important to recognize that the values and norms taught through formal and informal education can impact how Chinese individuals interact with the surrounding society, including aspects like clothing and social etiquette. Research in the field of communication psychology and intrapersonal communication among

the Chinese community in Medan can provide insights into how these factors influence communication patterns, self-identity, and social interactions.

Furthermore, this study can also examine the role of formal educational institutions in influencing how Chinese individuals understand and practice their cultural values. Formal educational institutions can be a place where Chinese cultural teachings are systematically and organizedly conveyed, shaping attitudes, skills, and values within individuals in a more formal manner.

These activities are manifested through the *Analisa* newspaper, managed by the Chinese community. Condolence advertisements in the *Analisa* newspaper serve as a marker of the Chinese ethnic identity in Medan, differentiating it from other ethnic groups in the city. The presence of condolence advertisements signifies honoring the contributions of individuals, maintaining strong family ties, promoting social unity, preserving cultural heritage, and showing respect for ancestors (Suharyanto & Hidayat, 2018).

Research by Suharyanto & Matondang (2018) on the Cheng Beng ceremony highlights its purpose of honoring ancestors and recognizing their significance in the living world. The ceremony also provides an opportunity for close family members, relatives, and children to gather, strengthen family bonds, and enhance communication among family members. The Cheng Beng ceremony carries deep social and spiritual values for the Chinese community, involving the reverence of ancestors, strengthening family bonds, and fostering close communication among family members (Suharyanto & Matondang, 2018). The political involvement of the Chinese community is also studied by Suharyanto (2014) in his examination of their participation in the 2010 Binjai City Regional Election (Suharyanto, 2014).

Burhan and Sani (2013) discovered that intergroup threat perception (symbolic and realistic threats) mediates the relationship between national identity and prejudice. This finding demonstrates how the national identity held by native individuals is not actually related to prejudice against the Chinese ethnicity. National identity seems connected to prejudice due to its association with threat perception ancaman (Burhan & Sani, 2013). Elvinawanty et al. (2020) found that Chinese individuals also exhibit traits such as attention, trustworthiness, hard work, frugality, family solidarity, education, and ethical values in entrepreneurship, emotional stability, meticulousness, courage, and honesty (Elvinawanty et al., 2020). Hadiluwih (2004), in his study, aimed to explain the problems faced by the Chinese community in Medan using a quantitative approach. An interesting aspect of this research is the assessment of how Chinese people perceive themselves and how others from different ethnic groups evaluate Chinese individuals by choosing negative and positive characteristics for each respondent (Hadiluwih, 1994).

Given this background, the purpose of this article is to examine the psychology of communication and intrapersonal communication within the Chinese community in Medan, exploring how they shape behavior and culture. By understanding the processes of formal and informal education, as well as the role of communication psychology and intrapersonal communication in forming the identity and behavior of Chinese individuals in Medan, we can appreciate and respect the diversity of cultures within our society. This study can also provide insights to enhance cross-cultural understanding and strengthen inter-ethnic harmony in Medan and Indonesia as a whole.

Literature Study

Communication Psychology and Intrapersonal Communication Intrapersonal communication and communication psychology are two interrelated topics in the fields of communication and psychology. Communication psychology considers how past experiences, learning, and socialization affect the development of an individual's intrapersonal communication (Nurdin, 2020). Traumatic experiences or the imparting of specific values can shape how an individual communicates with themselves and their self-perception. It's important to note that intrapersonal communication and communication psychology mutually influence and shape each other. Exploring this relationship helps us understand the complexity of human communication with themselves and its impact on psychological well-being and interactions with others (Maulana & Gumelar, 2013a).

Intrapersonal Communication Process: This type of communication is closely related to an individual's perceptions, beliefs, emotions, and personal experiences, which influence how they communicate with themselves. Intrapersonal communication can take various forms, such as self-talk, inner dialogues, and mental imagery, where different voices can represent not only the self but also close persons, imagined

friends, lost relatives and spouses, teachers and mentors, media stars, and voices of culture. Intrapersonal communication is essential for developing a sense of self as a communicator, which involves balancing constructive feedback from others and constructive self-affirmation. It is also interconnected with interpersonal communication, which occurs between two or more people.

Role of Self in Communication: Communication psychology also examines how self-concept and identity influence how individuals communicate with themselves. Positive or negative self-perceptions can affect how someone assigns meaning to life experiences and how they view themselves through the process of intrapersonal communication (Rahmi, 2021).

In conclusion, self-concept and identity significantly influence how individuals communicate with themselves through intrapersonal communication. Positive or negative self-perceptions can impact how individuals assign meaning to life experiences and view themselves, ultimately affecting their overall well-being and interpersonal communication skills.

Internal Communication and Decision-Making: Communication psychology also studies how individuals communicate with themselves when making decisions. The internal decision-making process often involves critical thinking, risk evaluation, value consideration, and choices influenced by intrapersonal factors (Harapan et al., 2022).

Intrapersonal factors, such as self-concept, perceptions, beliefs, and emotions, can influence an individual's decision-making process. For example, a person with a positive self-concept may have greater confidence in their decision-making abilities, while a person with a negative self-concept may experience self-doubt and struggle to make decisions. In summary, communication psychology explores how intrapersonal communication and factors such as self-concept, perceptions, beliefs, and emotions influence an individual's decision-making process. This internal decision-making process often involves critical thinking, risk evaluation, value consideration, and choices influenced by intrapersonal factors.

Impact of Intrapersonal Communication on Psychological Well-being: Psychological communication research can identify how the quality of intrapersonal communication relates to an individual's psychological well-being. The ability to speak to oneself positively and establish a healthy emotional connection with oneself can impact emotional and psychological balance (Setiadi, 2016).

In summary, the quality of intrapersonal communication plays a crucial role in an individual's psychological well-being. Developing the ability to communicate positively with oneself and fostering a healthy emotional connection can lead to improved emotional and psychological balance, ultimately contributing to overall well-being and interpersonal communication skills.

Role of Experience and Learning in Intrapersonal Communication: Communication psychology considers how past experiences, learning, and socialization affect the development of an individual's intrapersonal communication. Traumatic experiences or the imparting of specific values can shape how an individual communicates with themselves and their self-perception (Riyanto, 2014).

Communication psychology considers how past experiences, learning, and socialization affect the development of an individual's intrapersonal communication. Intrapersonal communication refers to the communication that occurs within an individual's self or mind, involving processes such as thinking, reflecting, and self-talk. Traumatic experiences or the imparting of specific values can shape how an individual communicates with themselves and their self-perception.

In summary, past experiences, learning, and socialization play a significant role in shaping an individual's intrapersonal communication. Traumatic experiences and inherited values can influence a person's self-perception, self-awareness, and self-management skills, ultimately affecting how they communicate with themselves and others.

Intrapersonal Communication and Behavior: Communication psychology also explores the connection between intrapersonal communication and individual behavior. How individuals plan actions, set goals, and self-monitor in achieving those goals through intrapersonal communication (Hadi et al., 2016).

Communication psychology explores the connection between intrapersonal communication and individual behavior, particularly in the context of planning actions, setting goals, and self-monitoring to achieve those

goals. Intrapersonal communication, which refers to the communication that occurs within an individual's self or mind, plays a crucial role in shaping an individual's decision-making process and actions.

In conclusion, communication psychology highlights the importance of intrapersonal communication in planning actions, setting goals, and self-monitoring to achieve those goals. Developing strong intrapersonal communication skills can help individuals understand their own thoughts and feelings, make informed decisions, and communicate more effectively with others.

Materials & Methods

We used interviews and observations to collect information for this study. We talked to people in Chinese families in Medan and watched how they communicate. This information helped us analyze our findings.

Discussion

Historical Experience and Trauma: Family or ethnic group history can influence how individuals communicate with themselves. Traumatic experiences in family or ethnic history can have lasting impacts on self-understanding and how individuals reflect on themselves and face emotional challenges. An individual's past experiences can lay the foundation for how they communicate with themselves. Positive or negative experiences in life, including memories, achievements, or failures, can shape an individual's beliefs, attitudes, and self-understanding. For instance, past traumatic experiences can influence how someone views themselves and handles emotional challenges in intrapersonal communication. Traumatic experiences like loss, violence, or safety-threatening events can have long-term impacts on an individual's intrapersonal communication.

Chinese Heritage in Medan is filled with diverse events and experiences. The early migration of the Chinese to Medan occurred during the Dutch colonial era, with many arriving to work on tobacco, rubber, and palm oil plantations. Additionally, events like the Cultural Revolution in China in 1965 affected the Chinese community in Medan, resulting in pressure and persecution that led to insecurity within the community (Sinaga & Simangunsong, 2020; A. Suharyanto, 2010). However, the Chinese ethnic group continues to contribute to Medan's development and progress through economic roles and social activities. The Chinese cultural identity also persists and evolves in Medan, evident in language, cuisine, festivals, arts, culture, and religious practices. Despite facing challenges such as discrimination and ethnic conflicts, the Chinese community continues to adapt and build harmonious relationships with the wider Medan society (Nasution & Syahputra, 2022; Revida, 2006; Rudiansyah & Sijabat, 2022; A. Suharyanto, 2010).

They tend to form groups and secure themselves in houses that are interconnected within a complex similar to a beehive, with iron bars on every door and window. It's as if they feel unsafe and tend to be suspicious of other ethnicities. They rarely communicate openly with other ethnic groups unless they are close acquaintances or friends with their family.

Cultural Socialization in the Chinese Ethnicity of Medan: Cultural socialization plays a key role in shaping an individual's intrapersonal communication. Norms, values, and social rules taught by the cultural society influence an individual's self-communication and self-perception. This socialization process also impacts an individual's view of their role in society and how they convey their feelings and thoughts to themselves. Socialization is the process through which individuals learn to interact within their social environment (Gea, 2011; Syarif, 2012). This can occur through family, peers, school, media, and the surrounding environment that imparts norms and values in that environment. Ethnic, cultural, or religious socialization can be crucial factors in shaping how individuals communicate with themselves. Social groups also provide role models and specific behavioral standards that influence how individuals talk to themselves and perceive themselves. The Chinese culture in Medan, rich with values, norms, and unique traditions, shapes how individuals communicate with themselves and others. Values such as respect for parents and ancestors, family harmony, and obedience to recognized authorities can reflect in self-talk and individual self-understanding (Muda & Suharyanto, 2020; A. Suharyanto, n.d., 2013; Susilawati et al., 2023).

Language and Identity: Language is a crucial part of individual and group identity. How individuals use language and specific expressions in their language can affect intrapersonal communication. Language also influences how individuals reflect on themselves and understand themselves within cultural and group identities. Language is a vital component of intrapersonal communication and the ethnic Chinese identity.

Chinese individuals growing up with the language and culture may develop different intrapersonal communication perceptions than those growing up in different cultures.

Language is a primary means of connecting with a specific ethnic group. Chinese individuals in Medan who speak the Chinese language might feel more connected to their ethnic community, influencing their self-perception and connection with their ethnic group in intrapersonal communication. It's important to note that while language is a major aspect shaping the identity of Chinese individuals in Medan, it's not the sole factor. Identity and intrapersonal communication result from complex interactions between language, culture, personal experiences, and other factors. Studying the role of language in shaping intrapersonal communication and the ethnic identity of Chinese individuals in Medan helps us understand the complexity and richness of cultural and individual identity within this city.

Migration and Acculturation Experience: For individuals experiencing migration or acculturation to a different culture, this experience can shape how they communicate with themselves. Changes in social environment, culture, and language can influence self-perception, identity, and how individuals adapt to new situations. Migration and acculturation experiences have significant impacts on the intrapersonal communication of Chinese individuals in Medan. The process of adjusting to a new culture creates challenges in intrapersonal communication. Individuals might reflect on how to integrate aspects of their original culture with the new culture and how this affects their identity.

The migration and acculturation process involve social integration into a new society. The challenge of building strong social relationships and finding one's place in the new society can influence the intrapersonal communication of Chinese individuals in Medan. They might reflect on how to interact with others, their role in the new society, and how this affects self-understanding.

It's important to remember that each individual has a unique migration and acculturation experience, and its impact can vary. This process brings significant change to how individuals communicate with themselves and perceive themselves. Understanding these migration and acculturation experiences helps us comprehend the complexity of identity and self-perception for Chinese individuals in Medan, recognizing their resilience in facing cultural and social changes.

Identity and Cultural Connection: Values and culture taught within Chinese families shape individual identity and connections to their ethnic group. Individuals reflect on how their family culture shapes their identity and how this identity is reflected in intrapersonal communication.

Teaching values and family culture are integral to the socialization process and the formation of individual Chinese identity in Medan. This influence shapes how individuals communicate with themselves, how they understand their roles and responsibilities within family and culture, and how they see themselves as part of the broader Chinese ethnic community. Understanding the role of family and the teaching of cultural values helps us appreciate the complexity and depth of individual identity and recognizes how culture and family values shape how individuals speak to themselves and perceive the world.

Ethnic Chinese Identity in Medan: The Chinese ethnic group in Medan is heterogeneous and cannot be categorized solely based on occupation or specific sub-ethnic groups. However, their distinction from other Chinese ethnic groups lies in the everyday use of the Hokkien language among them. Despite originating from different sub-ethnicities, they still use Hokkien. As the Chinese ethnic group is among the diverse ethnicities in Medan, they use Hokkien to differentiate themselves as a single ethnic group, since other ethnic groups also use their own languages to communicate within their communities (Usman, 2013).

In terms of language, the ethnic Chinese community in Medan has specific terms for those who cannot speak Hokkien, referred to as "Kieo Seng." They also have specific terms for fellow ethnic members and other ethnicities. They call themselves "tenngang" and refer to other ethnic groups as "hoana." The importance of the Hokkien language for Chinese families in Medan can be seen in the tradition of planting sugar cane in front of their homes five days after the Lunar New Year celebration. This tradition stems from ancestral stories of fleeing and hiding in sugar cane plantations to avoid conflict with other ethnic groups in the Chinese country. Since then, sugar cane has been planted as a tribute to the plant that helped them, and this tradition continues to this day.

Conclusions

The conclusion drawn from this topic is that language, migration, acculturation, family value teaching, and culture are crucial factors that shape the intrapersonal communication and individual identity of the Chinese ethnic group in Medan. Language plays a central role in forming cultural identity and self-perception. Migration and acculturation experiences can create complexity in how individuals communicate and perceive themselves, depending on the adjustment process and the formation of dual identities. Teaching family values and culture also play a vital role in shaping intrapersonal communication and individual identity, with values such as the importance of education, family loyalty, and ancestral obligations influencing self-perception and connections with the ethnic group. Understanding the intricate interplay between language, culture, migration, acculturation, and family value teaching helps us appreciate the cultural richness and individual identity of the Chinese ethnic group in Medan.

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