



## Cultural Diversity and Harmony of Tionghoa Good Character: Towards Unity with Incremental Change of Citizenship

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### ABSTRACT

Indonesia, as a country with rich cultural diversity, shows a strong commitment to developing social dynamics to care for and maintain this diversity. This research explores the role of ethnic Tionghoa in their contribution to national diversity and unity. Through qualitative methods with an ethnographic approach and literature study, with a total of 30 ethnic Tionghoa informants, this research found that the values of tolerance, respect for differences and mutual cooperation implemented by the Tionghoa community play an important role in maintaining social harmony in Indonesia. Research results have shown that Indonesian people, including ethnic Tionghoa, view cultural diversity as a wealth that enriches national identity and strengthens national unity. Ethnic Tionghoa actively participate in preserving and advancing their cultural traditions, as well as demonstrating the values of tolerance, respect for differences and mutual cooperation in everyday life. These values have proven effective in maintaining social harmony and overcoming potential inter-ethnic conflicts. In addition, the policy of incremental change in citizenship has helped integrate various ethnic groups, including ethnic Tionghoa, within an inclusive national framework, thereby strengthening national unity gradually and sustainably.

### ABSTRAK

### Kata-kata kunci:

Keragaman Budaya;

Karakter Baik;

Incremental Change

Kewarganegaraan.

**Keberagaman Budaya dan Harmoni Good Character Etnis Tionghoa: Menuju Persatuan dengan Incremental Change Kewarganegaraan.** Indonesia, sebagai negara dengan keragaman budaya yang kaya, menunjukkan komitmen kuat dalam mengembangkan dinamika sosial guna merawat dan memelihara keragaman tersebut. Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi peran etnis Tionghoa dalam kontribusi mereka terhadap keberagaman dan persatuan nasional. Melalui metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan etnografi dan studi pustaka, dengan jumlah informan sebanyak 30 orang Etnis Tionghoa penelitian ini menemukan bahwa nilai-nilai toleransi, menghargai perbedaan, dan gotong royong yang diterapkan oleh masyarakat Tionghoa berperan penting dalam menjaga harmoni sosial di Indonesia. Hasil penelitian telah menunjukkan bahwa masyarakat Indonesia, termasuk etnis Tionghoa, memandang keragaman budaya sebagai kekayaan yang memperkaya identitas bangsa dan memperkuat persatuan nasional. Etnis Tionghoa secara aktif berpartisipasi dalam melestarikan dan memajukan tradisi budaya mereka, serta menunjukkan nilai-nilai toleransi, menghargai perbedaan, dan gotong royong dalam kehidupan sehari-hari. Nilai-nilai ini terbukti efektif dalam menjaga harmoni sosial dan mengatasi potensi konflik antar-etnis. Selain itu, kebijakan incremental change dalam kewarganegaraan telah membantu mengintegrasikan berbagai kelompok etnis, termasuk etnis Tionghoa, dalam kerangka nasional yang inklusif, sehingga memperkuat persatuan nasional secara bertahap dan berkelanjutan.

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## Introduction

Indonesia, as a country that is proud of its cultural diversity, shows a strong commitment to developing its social dynamics in order to care for and maintain multi-aspect diversity. This diversity permeates aspects of everyday life, including language, religion, customs and ethnicity, creating an impressive cultural mosaic. In the view of sociologists and cultural anthropologists, Indonesia is considered a laboratory of diversity, a place where cultural plurality is managed in harmony and maintained (Wulandari, 2020).

Tionghoa ethnicity, as a community that is an integral part of Indonesia's diversity, plays a very important role in forming a culture that combines various cultural elements. Social anthropologist have emphasized that the contribution of the Tionghoa ethnicity is not only limited to preserving and developing its own cultural riches, but also lies in its ability to interact and coexist with various other cultural elements in Indonesia (Chua, 2004; Hoon, 2006).

Based on a historical perspective, ethnic Tionghoa have become active actors in the dynamics of Indonesian culture, bringing with them traditions and values that enrich the cultural treasures of their homeland so that Indonesian culture becomes increasingly diverse (Chin, 2021; Kristiono, 2018). Cultural diversity resulting from inter-ethnic interactions, including ethnic Tionghoa, not only produces a strong national identity but also creates a foundation for sustainable social development.

In order to manage existing cultural diversity, cultural anthropologists highlight the importance of tolerance and inter-ethnic dialogue. Ethnic Tionghoa have played an important role in shaping Indonesian culture, they are considered agents who can pave the way for achieving harmony and unity amidst complex diversity (Walujono, 2014).

Previous research on ethnic Chinese was basically also carried out by other researchers such as Sofinadya & Warsono, (2023) with the title "praktik toleransi kehidupan beragama pada masyarakat etnis Tionghoa di kota Surabaya" which discussed tolerance of religious life of ethnic Chinese. The results of his research found that the practice of ethnic Chinese tolerance is manifested in family and community life through various actions such as inviting extended families and neighbors from various religions to gather for religious activities, providing religious freedom to family members, and not engaging in discrimination. or judge other religions, and cooperate in social activities. The similarity between the research results of Sofinadya & Warsono and this research article lies in the practice of tolerance of the ethnic Chinese community of Surabaya. The difference is that the research conducted by Sofinadya & Warsono focused on the practice of religious life while this article does not focus on that practice alone

Then research conducted by Pitoyo & Triwahyudi, (2017) with the title "dinamika perkembangan etnis di Indonesia dalam konteks persatuan negara" found that to achieve unity in a heterogeneous society, one way is to encourage society to become multicultural. This means mutual respect for cultural differences to create common views, souls and goals in society. Research conducted by Agus Joko Pitoyo and Hari Triwahyudi (2017), has similarities and differences with this article, the similarity lies in the research focus on Chinese ethnic unity, while the difference lies in the development process, research by Agus Joko Pitoyo and Hari Triwahyudi (2017) discusses the dynamics of Chinese ethnic development, while this article focuses on how good character can create unity.

Another research is research conducted by Chen, (2022) entitled "Representing Chinese Indonesians: Indigenous Discourse and Regional Elections in Post Reform Indonesia". This

research discusses the political representation of ethnic Chinese, civil liberties and political freedom, as well as the citizenship status of ethnic Chinese based on a historical perspective in Indonesia. The results of Chen's research show how discriminatory attitudes are received by ethnic Chinese and how political freedom actually increases ethnic Chinese participation so that many Chinese Indonesians are elected to occupy government positions (Chen, 2022, pp. 60-83). The similarity between Jonathan Chen's research in 2022 and this article lies in the study of citizenship status, but the difference lies in the study of citizenship rights and how the citizenship rights obtained by ethnic Chinese can change the character of ethnic Chinese so that they can blend in with other communities. Although there is similar research on Chinese ethnicity, there has been no specific research that examines how cultural diversity, good character, and gradual changes in citizenship can form unity. In fact, in the main study of these two topics, many basic foundations for the formation of unity were found.

By integrating cultural elements from various communities, Indonesia not only builds a strong foundation for national unity but also creates an environment that allows society to grow and develop holistically (Bukhori, 2019). These overall dynamics reflect a model that can be followed by other countries facing the challenge of managing cultural diversity for the sake of a just, inclusive and harmonious society.

A deep understanding of society's views on cultural diversity, including the diversity of the Tionghoa ethnic community, is the main key to understanding social dynamics and efforts to maintain harmony amidst this diversity. Through interviews and research observations with various respondents, it appears that the majority of people consider cultural diversity in Indonesia to be a wealth. This positive outlook provides a strong foundation for this research, which is directed at understanding how ethnic Tionghoa not only experience this cultural richness but also how they contribute to national unity.

Although some respondents stated that cultural diversity in Indonesia is considered positive, this research article will explore the views of the general public and ethnic Tionghoa communities regarding cultural diversity, as well as the extent to which values such as tolerance, mutual respect and the spirit of mutual cooperation are reflected in real actions.

This article will also explore the extent to which good character, such as tolerance, mutual respect and the spirit of mutual cooperation, is reflected in the views of the ethnic Tionghoa community. How these values are translated into real actions and contributions to the social development of the wider community needs to be revealed so that it can provide a comprehensive picture of the role of ethnic Tionghoa in the context of national unity, especially from the perspective of incremental change.

By exploring society's understanding of cultural diversity, this article hopes to contribute to deeper thinking about how cultural diversity, especially involving ethnic Tionghoa communities, can enrich collective prosperity and encourage the process of incremental change in citizenship towards a more solid unity. In this overall context, the title "Cultural Diversity and Harmony of Tionghoa Good Character: Towards Unity with Incremental Change of Citizenship" reflects the shared spirit of efforts towards harmonious unity, involving all levels of society, including ethnic Tionghoa.

Based on the material from the research results and analysis presented, the following are the novelties of this research or new differences from existing research, especially regarding tolerance: First, views of Chinese Ethnicity as an Integral Part of Indonesia's Cultural Diversity: Positive views and inclusive attitudes of ethnic communities Chinese to cultural diversity in

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Indonesia is an important contribution that has not been widely discussed in previous research. Most previous research tends to focus on the conflict and discrimination experienced by ethnic Chinese, while this research highlights how ethnic Chinese see cultural diversity as an asset and wealth that enriches Indonesia's national identity.

Second, the Role of Basic Ethnic Chinese Values in Promoting Social Harmony: This research emphasized the three main values (tolerance, respect for differences, and mutual cooperation) implemented by the ethnic Chinese community in maintaining social harmony. This adds new insight into how certain cultural values of ethnic Chinese can contribute positively to national unity and harmonious social life. Third, incremental Change Approach in Citizenship and Unity: This research introduced the concept of incremental change in the context of citizenship and unity in Indonesia. This approach shows how gradual changes in citizenship policies and cultural acceptance can support social integration and harmony in multiethnic societies. This is a new perspective that provides an alternative to more static views of citizenship policy.

The fourth, contribution of Ethnic Chinese in Preserving Culture and Traditions: This research highlighted the active role of ethnic Chinese communities in preserving and advancing their cultural traditions, which is often overlooked in discussions about cultural diversity in Indonesia. This shows that ethnic Chinese are not only recipients of diversity, but also active contributors in enriching the national cultural heritage. The fifth, Good Character of the Chinese Ethnic Community as a Model for Managing Cultural Diversity: This research highlighted the positive characters of the ethnic Chinese community, such as humility, patience, and a good social spirit, which can be a model for other communities in managing cultural diversity. It provides a new view of how personal ethics and values can contribute to a more inclusive and harmonious social life.

The sixth, Acceptance and Appreciation of Cultural Diversity as the Foundation of Unity: This research showed that awareness and appreciation of cultural diversity by society, including ethnic Chinese, is an important foundation for creating national unity. This shifts the focus from diversity as a potential for conflict to diversity as a source of national strength and wealth. Thus, the novelty of this research lies in the positive and constructive emphasis on the role of ethnic Chinese in maintaining and promoting cultural diversity, as well as the incremental change approach in managing citizenship and national unity. This research offers a more optimistic and inclusive perspective in understanding social dynamics in Indonesia.

## Method

This research uses a qualitative approach with ethnographic study methods and literature study. This approach and method was chosen because it was considered the most appropriate and effective for exploring the character, relationships and culture of the Tionghoa ethnic community. The research was carried out on 30 ethnic Tionghoa people spread across the city of Surabaya with different statuses and backgrounds. The data collection techniques used in this research are in-depth interviews, observation and literature study methods. Meanwhile, the selection of informants was chosen using purposive sampling. All of the domiciles of the informants are residents of Surabaya, East Java, this was chosen because Surabaya is a big city with many residents of Tionghoa ethnicity and the researcher's domicile is in Sidoarjo, East Java, close to the city of Surabaya. Meanwhile, the data analysis technique applied in this research is the *verstehen* technique (Miller & Brewer). This technique seeks to

understand the meaning of the research subject's concepts and actions from the subject's own perspective, with the aim of gaining an understanding of the underlying value system.

## Result and Discussion

Respondents' positive views on cultural diversity in Indonesia are reflected in their awareness of the positive values resulting from this diversity. First, many say that cultural diversity is considered a wealth for Indonesia. They see this diversity as a positive asset that enriches national identity and creates its own uniqueness. Similar answers were obtained from research sources, one of whom was Mrs. Esther Carolina Sanusi, who conveyed;

"There is a lot of cultural diversity in Indonesia and in my opinion, all of them are very unique with their own cultures, so in this case I am amazed that Indonesia is different but still united. My view of Chinese diversity is that Chinese people are great because most successful people come from clever Chinese people. So I am motivated to be successful people, but not only successful but also to be able to serve others well".

In their minds, this diversity is one of the characteristics of Indonesia that should be proud of. As Hildred Geertz, (1963) has emphasized in her book "Indonesian Cultures and Communities" that cultural diversity in Indonesia reflects social richness and a strong collective identity. According to him, this diversity is an important asset in national development and unifying the nation.

Second, several respondents linked diversity to increasing the country's uniqueness and beauty. They see that every diverse cultural element, such as language, religion, customs and ethnicity, adds color to the lives of Indonesian people. In this perspective, diversity is not only considered as diversity, but also as a source of cultural richness that beautifies Indonesia's face in the eyes of the world. Fransiskus Xaverius Dani, as one of the informants who works as a businessman, said;

"In my opinion, this diversity is very good because it means that our country is very rich in culture. This wealth must be maintained so that we can remain and always be a country known for being rich in culture. Society must also be educated to respect this diversity. A society that is less educated can create divisions, so tolerance education is very necessary from an early age".

Supporting the respondent's answer, Koentjaraningrat also emphasized that Indonesia's cultural diversity, including language, customs and ethnicity, enriches people's lives and adds to the beauty of Indonesia's social culture. He has assessed that this diversity is a source of strength that beautifies and strengthens national identity (Koentjaraningrat, 1994).

Third, several respondents highlighted that Indonesia, as an archipelagic country with a long history of migration, naturally has a diverse mix of cultures and ethnicities. By embracing this view, the general public recognizes that cultural diversity is not an achievement or innovation created by humans, but rather a natural reality that is deeply rooted in Indonesian history. This helps form a perspective that diversity is not something that can be avoided or limited, but rather a phenomenon that is inherent in the essence and sustainability of Indonesia as a nation. Ayu Saraswati, (2013) in "Seeing Beauty, Sensing Race in Transnational Indonesia" has discussed how a long history of migration and cultural interaction has shaped Indonesia's diverse society. He concluded that this cultural diversity is a natural phenomenon that has existed for a long time and cannot be separated from the sustainability of the Indonesian nation.

The answers from the ethnic Tionghoa community illustrate that they consider them to be an integral part of Indonesia's very important cultural diversity. This can be explained by several factors reflected in their responses. In their view, 1) diversity is not an obstacle or potential conflict, but rather an opportunity to learn from each other and enrich life experiences together. Respect for cultural differences is considered a strong foundation for building harmony and unity amidst diversity. 2) Diversity is not a problem for them. This view reflects a

positive and open attitude towards cultural diversity, where they see it as something natural and acceptable. In this context, the ethnic Tionghoa community not only accepts cultural diversity, but also considers it as an aspect that enriches the social life of society as a whole.

In conclusion, the answers from the ethnic Tionghoa community reflect an inclusive and positive attitude towards Indonesia's cultural diversity. They recognize the values of mutual respect, appreciation and acceptance of differences as the basis for maintaining social harmony. From the Tionghoa ethnic perspective, diversity is not just an accepted condition, but a gift that enriches and strengthens the meaning of life together in Indonesia.

Regarding the role of good character in maintaining unity, a number of respondents, including from the general public and ethnic Tionghoa, highlighted positive values which are considered a key factor in maintaining social harmony. These values include tolerance, respect for differences, and a spirit of mutual cooperation. The research results found about 3 (three) main values that are widely applied by Tionghoa society;

Table 1: Basic Values of the Tionghoa Ethnic Community in Indonesia

Values	Form of Attitude/Action	Function	Impact
Tolerance	Open and appreciative of aspects of life	Creating an inclusive social environment	Respect for Individuals
Appreciate Differences	Understanding cultural diversity	Enriching shared prosperity and creating a framework that supports peaceful coexistence between ethnicities and community groups	Positive response to differences
Mutual cooperation	Collaboration and mutual assistance between Ethnicities	A foundation that unites society in facing challenges and promoting social justice.	Formation of the Union

Positive values such as tolerance, respect for differences, and a spirit of mutual cooperation are a strong basis for maintaining unity (Huda et al., 2020; Widyatiningtyas et al., 2023) and the contribution of the Tionghoa community in maintaining Indonesia's cultural diversity is an important aspect of positive social dynamics. The basic opinion above was felt so strongly when researchers found similar answers, such as Karlina Putri Hariyanto, as one of the research informants, said that;

"In my opinion, integration or unity of the ethnic Chinese community in building social harmony in Indonesia is very important. Because, in my opinion, ethnic Chinese play a big role in building harmony. Because, there are still many people who view ethnic Chinese as if they only want to gather or socialize with other ethnic groups. In fact, behind that, we can find ethnic Chinese still socializing with other ethnicities. The next reason is because the Chinese ethnic group is famous for its cohesiveness. Therefore, the unity of the ethnic Chinese community is very important in building social harmony in Indonesia. In fact, it is not only ethnic Chinese, but all ethnicities in Indonesia. Because all ethnicities play an important role in harmonious social diversity in Indonesia".

The Tionghoa community, in particular, also highlighted their contribution in maintaining Indonesia's cultural diversity. In this recognition, they show that as part of Indonesian society, they actively participate in preserving and advancing various cultural traditions owned by the Tionghoa ethnic group. Hao & Hao, (2020) have said that the contribution or participation of ethnic Tionghoa in preserving and advancing various cultural traditions is an integral part of efforts to maintain and enrich national cultural diversity.

The basic values and cultural diversity they bring not only enrich Indonesian society as a whole, but also help in creating a harmonious, inclusive environment, and present the good character that exists among the ethnic Tionghoa community in Indonesia. The Tionghoa ethnicity, with its basic values and cultural diversity, has encouraged a strong commitment to caring for and maintaining multi-faceted social dynamics. This diversity includes language, religion, customs and ethnicity, and creates an impressive cultural mosaic. Taufik, (2012) in his research has seen the Tionghoa ethnicity in Indonesia as a laboratory of diversity where cultural plurality is managed in harmony. One of the research informants, Christin Elisabeth Haulussy, as a Surabaya Chinese figure, in her interview also assessed that diversity is part of creating a unique and interesting mosaic;

"For us, cultural diversity in Indonesia, including the diversity of the ethnic Chinese community, is a very valuable asset. Indonesia is a country rich in diverse ethnicities, languages, religions and cultural traditions. This diversity can create a unique and interesting cultural mosaic."

In this context, ethnic Tionghoa play an important role in forming a culture that combines various cultural elements. They not only preserve and develop their own cultural riches but also interact and coexist with various other cultural elements in Indonesia. Through these contributions, ethnic Tionghoa helped create a strong national identity and a foundation for sustainable social and economic development.

The Tionghoa ethnicity is considered an important agent in paving the way towards harmony and unity amidst complex diversity. By integrating cultural elements from various communities, Indonesia is building a strong foundation for national unity and creating an environment that allows society to grow and develop holistically. This is in accordance with the aim of managing cultural diversity stated by Hao & Hao, (2016; Manalu & Lase, (2024) namely to achieve a just, inclusive and harmonious society so that it reflects a model that can be followed by other countries.

A deep understanding of society's views on cultural diversity, including the diversity of the Tionghoa ethnic community, is the key to understanding social dynamics and maintaining harmony. Based on interviews with respondents, society's view of the good character that ethnic Tionghoa can carry out to maintain unity reflects important values such as tolerance, mutual respect and mutual cooperation. Some of the respondents' answers about this good character include. (1) Accept Differences: It is important for ethnic Tionghoa communities to practice tolerance towards the culture, traditions and beliefs of Indonesian society. Respecting differences is key in building harmonious relationships. (2) Avoid Negative Emotions: Not being provoked by emotions despite unpleasant treatment shows maturity and the ability to maintain calm amidst differences. (3) Interaction and Tolerance: Continuing to interact with various ethnic groups and showing religious tolerance is an important step in maintaining good relations. (4) Respect and Appreciate: Respect the culture, language, religion and beliefs that are different from other groups in society, and do not look down on other ethnicities. (5) Participation in Traditions: Engage in cultural and traditional celebrations, such as celebrating Tionghoa New Year, without discriminating against other cultures. (6) Get along with all ethnicities: Do not choose in socializing and allow children to make friends and build relationships with any ethnic group without restrictions. (7) Don't look down on other ethnicities: Do not consider ethnic Tionghoa to be better than others and repay kindness with kindness, not with hatred. (8) Develop Solidarity: Maintaining the sense of solidarity and tolerance that has existed with other ethnicities. (9) Avoid Conflict: Avoids arguing with other ethnicities and prefers to give in whenever possible. (10) Be humble and patient: Have a humble, patient attitude and a good social spirit and are open to diversity in Indonesia. (11) Strong Family Culture: Close family relationships and a strong family culture are also characteristics of Tionghoa society. These values not only help in maintaining family well-being but also strengthen the overall social structure. (12) Commitment to Education: Tionghoa society places

great importance on education and strives to provide the best for the next generation. This can be seen from their efforts to develop skills and knowledge that are useful for their lives and the wider community.

By combining these characteristics, ethnic Tionghoa have shown how they can contribute significantly to social development while maintaining their cultural identity. In a broader context, Anurogo & Napitupulu, (2023) have stated that values such as hard work, discipline and tolerance can be a model for other communities in managing cultural diversity in order to achieve a just, inclusive and harmonious society.

Incremental change in citizenship refers to the process of gradual and ongoing change in a country's citizenship policies or practices. In Indonesia, this process can take place through several mechanisms, such as amendments to the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, changes to laws, administrative policies, or interpretations by authorized institutions. According to Christian Joppke in his book "Citizenship and Immigration", has stated that these changes are evolutionary and occur over a long period of time, allowing countries to gradually overcome social and political problems related to citizenship (Joppke, 2010).

In the Indonesian context, incremental change in citizenship has been formed through the historical process of decolonization and the emergence of a multi-ethnic state after colonial nation-building. Important examples of this change are the Citizenship Law which was first created in 1946 and Law Number 62 of 1958 which then introduced the *jus sanguinis* principle of citizenship. These changes reflect the need to regulate the citizenship status of various ethnicities, including Tionghoa, and respond to evolving socio-political dynamics.

Incremental change in citizenship can also be seen through gradual policies that introduce changes to the definition of citizenship, relaxation of citizenship requirements, or expansion of citizenship rights (Bauböck, 2006; Hunt, 2007; Romans & Ulasiuk, 2019). For example, the adoption of the new Citizenship Law no. 12 which repealed the 1958 Law and introduced a limited dual citizenship policy to provide greater protection, especially for children whose parents are of different nationalities.

This incremental change supports the process of harmonization and integration in multiethnic Indonesian society. By adopting gradual changes in citizenship policy, Indonesia was able to respond to the changing needs and challenges faced by various ethnic groups, including ethnic Tionghoa. For example, policies that allow limited dual citizenship provide space for communities to feel more inclusive and integrated in the national context. Citizenship is a matter of sovereignty and each country, through its legislative body, can decide on the legal requirements it deems necessary for state membership (Van Oers, 2013). Based on the research results, researchers found that Incremental Change presents policies that are able to accommodate the expansion of ethnic Tionghoa citizenship rights, through this expansion there are also various activities that change the character values of society, including; (1) Tolerance, such as tolerance and Inter-Ethnic Dialogue: Incremental change allows for policy adjustments that support inter-ethnic tolerance and dialogue. As Solska, (2013) has stated that by introducing more inclusive policies, such as relaxing citizenship requirements, the government can facilitate inter-ethnic integration and harmonization. (2) Society Care, such as Respect for Cultural Diversity: Gradual policies that respect cultural diversity strengthen national unity. Mustajab, (2015) in his research journal has explained that official recognition of various cultural celebrations, such as Tionghoa New Year, and not discriminating against other cultures helps build mutual respect and harmony. (3) Nationalism, such as participation in National Traditions: Ethnic Tionghoa who actively participate in national traditions demonstrate a commitment to unity. As stated by Checkoway, (2012) in his book, policies that support participation in traditions reflect changes that strengthen a sense of togetherness and national identity. (4) Peace Loving, such as avoiding Conflict and Discrimination: Purdey, (2006) in his book has said that by avoiding conflict and discrimination through gradual policies, such as a ban on ethnic discrimination and easing citizenship requirements, Indonesia can create a more inclusive and harmonious environment. (5) Enthusiasm and Friendship, such as humility and



social solidarity: Policies that encourage humility and social solidarity, such as social assistance and mutual cooperation, strengthen social cohesion. Spade, (2020) has said that incremental change that supports these values helps build stronger and more united communities.

The results obtained themselves illustrate the suitability of the existence of a character configuration (construction) which combines various processes and are interconnected until they lead to character formation as previously conveyed by Budiman (in Hulawa, 2018)) regarding the simulation of the implementation of educational development coupled with reference to the formulation put forward by Kemendiknas, (2010), as seen in the image below:

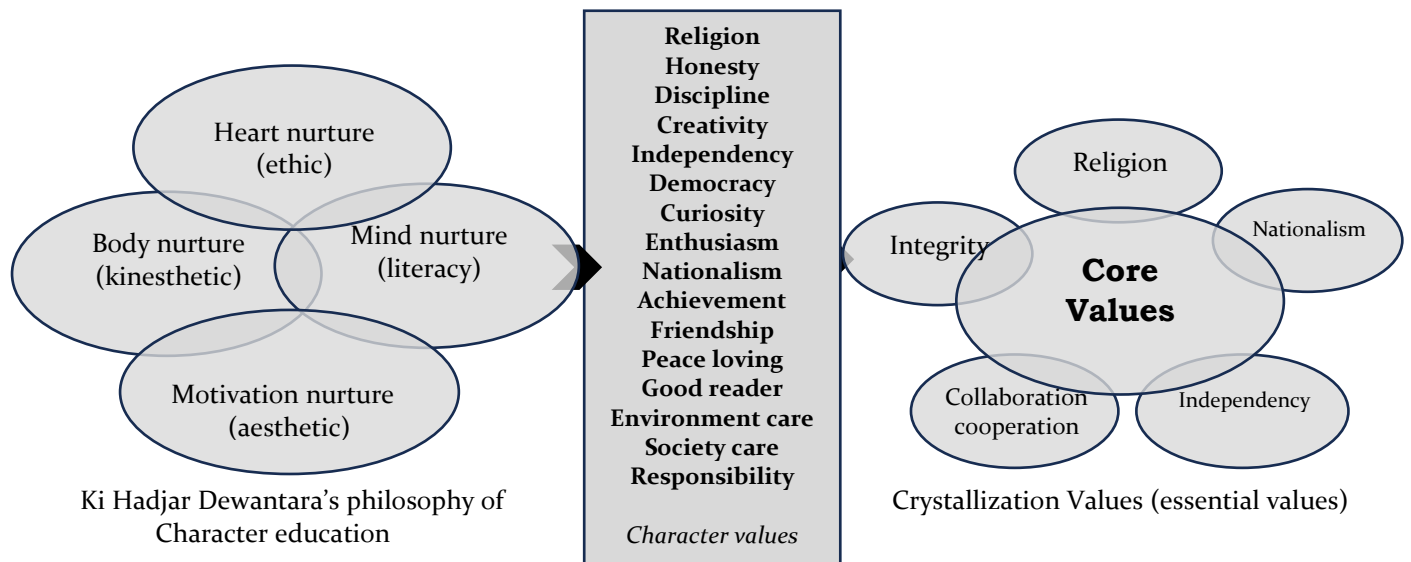


Fig. 1 Development of Character Values in 2013

Research also shows how a positive view of cultural diversity in Indonesia, including from the ethnic Tionghoa community, can encourage national unity through an incremental change approach. The following are several main points that explain how the results of this research can bring unity based on the explanation of incremental change: (1) Awareness and appreciation of cultural diversity: Respondents from various backgrounds stated that cultural diversity is considered an asset that enriches national identity. This reflects awareness and appreciation of the positive values of diversity, which is the first step in incremental change. Indrawati & Sari, (2024) in their research emphasized that through recognition of cultural richness, society can build a strong foundation for appreciating and maintaining diversity as part of national identity. (2) Positive Outlook and Acceptance: Respondents, including ethnic Tionghoa, emphasized the importance of mutual respect and appreciation in diverse cultural contexts. As stated by Lista et al., (2023), a positive view and acceptance of diversity shows an open attitude that supports change towards a more inclusive and harmonious society. This reflects incremental change through increased understanding and respect between groups. (3) Tolerance and Mutual Respect: Values such as tolerance, respect for differences, and the spirit of mutual cooperation were recognized by respondents as important elements in maintaining unity.

Hendar & Tanjung, (2024) have also explained the same thing in their research that tolerance describes an open attitude and respect for differences, which is the basis for creating an inclusive social environment. It shows how small changes in people's attitudes and behavior can have a big impact in the long term, leading to stronger unity. (4) Recognition of Tionghoa Ethnic Contributions: Ethnic Tionghoa identify themselves as an integral part of Indonesia's cultural diversity. This recognition shows an inclusive and participatory attitude in Indonesian cultural life. By recognizing their important role in enriching national cultural heritage, ethnic Tionghoa communities contribute to the formation of a strong national identity (Hutapea &

Dewi, 2020). his is another example of incremental change, where the active participation of various ethnic groups helps strengthen national unity. (5) Good Character Maintains Unity: Research highlights various good characteristics of the ethnic Tionghoa community, such as being diligent, conscientious, entrepreneurial spirit, discipline, cooperation and tolerance. Villacís et al., (2021) through the results of his research, he also agreed that values such as being diligent, conscientious, entrepreneurial spirit, discipline, cooperation and tolerance not only enrich the nation's culture but also help create a harmonious environment of unity. Through the implementation of these positive values in everyday life, Incremental Change towards a more cohesive and harmonious society can be achieved. (6) Role in Caring for Diversity: Ethnic Tionghoa emphasize the importance of caring for Indonesia's cultural diversity, showing their commitment to be positively involved in the process of forming a national cultural identity. Aqila et al., (2024) also have the same opinion that ethnic Tionghoa not only accept diversity but also actively contribute to preserving and advancing cultural traditions. This reflects incremental change through small but significant actions that enrich and strengthen the meaning of life together in Indonesia.

## Conclusion

This research has shown that good characters such as tolerance, mutual respect and the spirit of mutual cooperation are highly reflected in the views of the ethnic Chinese community in Indonesia. Respondents from the Chinese community showed awareness of the positive values of cultural diversity, seeing it as a wealth that enriches national identity and creates uniqueness for Indonesia. They view diversity as an asset that must be cared for and as an opportunity to learn from each other and enrich their shared life experiences. The process of gradual change in citizenship policy, such as the relaxation of citizenship requirements and the recognition of limited dual citizenship, helped create a sense of inclusion and integration, allowing ethnic Chinese communities to become more involved in Indonesian social and political life, and strengthening a sense of togetherness and national identity. Overall, the real values and actions of the ethnic Chinese community in caring for cultural diversity, actively participating in social life, and adopting positive values on a daily basis contribute significantly to social development and national unity in Indonesia. The incremental change approach in citizenship policy strengthens this integration process, showing how the contribution of ethnic Chinese can help create a just, inclusive and harmonious society within the framework of unity.

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