



The Importance of Shop Signboards in the Chinatown Area of Suryakencana Street, Bogor

Soegih Poerawidjaya¹, Tri Wahyu Retno Ningsih², Ayesa³
soegihpoeraw@gmail.com,

¹Sastra Tiongkok, Universitas Gunadarma, Depok, Jawa Barat

²Sastra Tiongkok, Universitas Gunadarma, Depok, Jawa Barat

³Sastra Tiongkok, Universitas Gunadarma, Depok, Jawa Barat

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Abstract

Chinatown is a term for a district in a city inhabited by Chinese ethnic. Most Chinese ethnicities that live in Chinatown on Suryakencana Street, Bogor City, have a livelihood as merchants and store owners. Store name board is one of the important elements of stores then be regulated by the government and inflicts the reduced value of Chinatown. This research aims to know the important values of store name boards as the identity of Chinese ethnic on Suryakencana Street, Bogor City. This research uses qualitative descriptive methods such as interviews and literature reviews. This research result shows that the laws in effect from 1966 to 2000 discriminated against Chinese ethnicities and their identities in Indonesia. That is reflected in store name boards with elements of Chinese culture such as Chinese characters (Hanzi) forced to be changed to Latin script with store's name should have "Indonesian" characters. After analyzing, store board names have deep means and values as the material culture of Chinese ethnic that represent important values about identity, history, and culture of Chinese which can be an added value from Chinatown on Jalan Suryakencana, Bogor City.

Keywords: *Chinatown, store name board, important value, identity*

Introduction

Chinatown, also known as "Pecinan" or "Kampung Cina" in Indonesian (and 唐人街 Táng rén jiē in Mandarin), is an area predominantly inhabited by people of

Chinese descent. This region or district refers to a part of the city where its population, social structure, housing, and surroundings exhibit distinct Chinese characteristics due to historical growth from the Chinese cultural community (Lilananda, 1998). According to Koentjaraningrat (1999), a Chinatown is a collection of shop houses facing each other, with a main road running through the center of the city. Another characteristic of Chinatowns is the presence of shophouses, which serve as both retail spaces and residences (Kohl, 1978: 268-289; Kurniawan, 2010).

One of the Chinese settlements in the inland city of Java is the Chinatown in Bogor City. This Chinatown in the city formerly known as Buitenzorg has existed since the 1700s, marked by the presence of several temples and Chinese ethnic settlements. To facilitate the oversight of each ethnic group, during the Dutch East Indies administration, the "Wijkenstelsel" (1845) and "Passenstelsel" (1863) regulations were introduced, requiring the Chinese ethnic population to reside along the Groote Post Weg road in the south of the Lands Plantentuin (now Kebun Raya Bogor) (P3KP, 2013: 89-104; Kurnadi, 2009: 29). The road was later renamed "Handelstraat" in 1905 (P3KP, 2013: 89). In 1915, both regulations were revoked by the Dutch East Indies government, allowing the people of Buitenzorg to choose their place of residence freely. However, the Chinese community did not move much due to factors such as comfort and Feng Shui considerations (Kurnadi, 2009). After Indonesia gained independence, the street was renamed "Jalan Perniagaan," which translates to "Business Street."

As for the current state of the Chinatown area, Ariyani Putri (2016) mentions that the buildings in Suryakencana Street's Chinatown have various functions, including trade, services, residences, as well as educational and religious facilities. This Chinatown area grew in a linear fashion with rows of shophouses along the main street and small lanes surrounding it. The buildings in this Chinatown area hold historical value. Among the various types of buildings, the shophouses dominate the Suryakencana Bogor area, and along Jalan Suryakencana, various shops display a variety of shop signboards, creating a dense commercial atmosphere.

In 1966, during President Soeharto's administration, several regulations were imposed to suppress Chinese culture throughout Indonesia, including Bogor City. These regulations were aimed at "nationalizing" the Chinese ethnic community living in Indonesia. One such regulation enacted at the time was MPRS Decree No.

32 of 1966, which prohibited the use of Chinese script and language in mass media and the names of shops or companies. In the 1970s, the name "Jalan Perniagaan," which still had Dutch elements, was changed to "Jalan Suryakencana." These regulations were later lifted during the presidency of Abdurrachman Wahid in 2000.

Based on this background, Suryakencana Street has long been known as a residence for the Chinese ethnic community since the Dutch East Indies era. The theories of Koentjaraningrat (1999) and Kohl (1978) regarding the characteristics of Chinatowns align with the criteria possessed by Suryakencana Street in Bogor City.

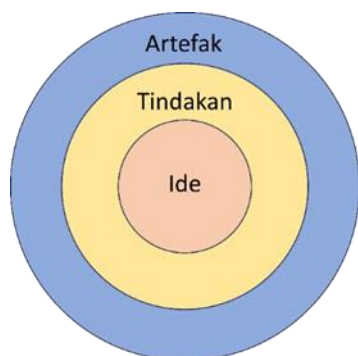
However, at present, Suryakencana Street in Bogor City does not fully represent the Chinese ethnic area in terms of material heritage. Many shops have been renovated into contemporary buildings that no longer reflect a Chinese settlement. To maintain the identity of Chinatown, since 2018, the Bogor City government has been revitalizing this area to make it more characteristic of Chinatown. This includes infrastructure improvements such as pedestrian walkways and the addition of streetlights and lantern ornaments at the end of Suryakencana Street. Based on the initial exploration, only three elements currently represent Chinatown: temples, some shophouses, and the Chinese ethnic community. No reinforcing cultural objects have been identified yet. Therefore, further research is needed to understand the reinforcing value of Suryakencana Street's identity as a Chinatown in Bogor City.

Similar research on shop signboards and their importance has been conducted previously. Sahmiran Harahap (2008) conducted a study titled "Evaluation of Language Use on Shop Signs and Advertisements in Medan City." There is also Candrawinata (2014) with the research title "Language Use on Shop Signboards in Malioboro." Additionally, Lestari and Hudaidah (2023) conducted research that assessed the importance of Makam Ki Marogan and turned it into a potential tourist attraction.

Although this research shares similarities with previous studies, it introduces a novel aspect by assigning importance to shop signboards from a material perspective. Thus, it is hoped that this research will not only contribute to the field but can also be implemented in various aspects, including tourism and local

regulations in Bogor City.

Method



In this research, Koentjaraningrat's theory of three cultural manifestations is utilized. According to Koentjaraningrat (2015: 150-153), there are three types of cultural manifestations, namely: 1) Ideology; 2) Actions; and 3) Artifacts. Among these three aspects, cultural manifestation in the form of artifacts is the most straightforward to observe because it is physical and represents the ideas and actions of cultural practitioners.

With reference to Koentjaraningrat's theory, the use of shop signboards can be classified as artifacts. After recognizing this, an exploration is conducted to uncover the ideas that underlie the creation of these signboards, encompassing aspects such as identity, culture, and the regulations in force at that time.

To address the research questions, a systematic research method is required to ensure the academic accountability of this study. At the very least, three fundamental research steps are necessary: data collection, analysis, and conclusions.

The definition of data collection method, according to Burhan Bungin (2003:42), is how and in what manner the required data can be obtained so that the final research outcomes can provide reliable and valid information.

In this study, a qualitative method or approach is employed to obtain reliable and valid information. The qualitative approach aims to comprehensively understand the phenomena experienced by research subjects. Furthermore, the specific approach used in this research is the descriptive approach. Descriptive research aims to elucidate problem-solving. The data obtained is presented in easily understandable words and language (Moleong, 2007:6).

The qualitative descriptive approach is commonly used in research to obtain in-depth and comprehensive data. Some previous studies that utilized this approach include Thaharah and Batubara (2023) and Sanjaya et al. (2022). From these two examples, it is evident that data collected through this approach is in-depth and comprehensive. By utilizing this method, this research hopes to gather

detailed information from business owners or significant figures on Suryakencana Street in Bogor.

Data or research objects can be considered as the social research situations in which they occur. Within the research objects, activities, actors, and specific places can be observed in depth (Sugiyono, 2007:215). The primary data in this research consists of shop signboards on Suryakencana Street in Bogor. Secondary data, on the other hand, includes literature, regulations, and interviews with local residents. The next step is data analysis. Both primary and secondary data are analyzed by comparing the two types of data to identify correlations between them.

The analyzed data is then interpreted and subsequently summarized in the hope of addressing the research question of this study, which is to assign significance to Suryakencana Street as a Chinatown area in Bogor City.

Result

Shop Signboards on Suryakencana Street Shop

Signboards are a means to facilitate business activities. According to Barata (1988:210), a signboard is an activity aimed at providing information or an idea, product, or service to attract people's attention to the idea, product, or service being offered.

Signboards are divided into two types: government and non-government signboards. This division is based on the function of the signboard itself. Government signboards only provide information, while non-government signboards have motives to capture the attention of the public, enticing them to purchase the products/services being offered.

As the supervisor and executor of the Indonesian language development and enhancement program, the Language Development and Enhancement Agency has produced a guideline book on language usage in signboards. The "Pengindonesiaan Kata dan Ungkapan Asing" (2007) guideline book contains instructions on the proper use of the Indonesian language in public places, including banners, signboards, and advertisements. One of the regulations discussed is the use of the Indonesian language on signboards. If businesses, areas, or buildings use both Indonesian and foreign names, the Indonesian-language name should be placed above the foreign-language name and accompanied by an Indonesian translation.

Based on the field research conducted along Suryakencana Street, a total of 183 shops have signboards as identifiers and location indicators. These shop signboards contain elements such as the shop's name, products, information, and more.

From the data collected, to identify the presence of Chinese culture in the signboards, a data curation process is carried out for signboards that meet one or both of the following criteria:

a) Use of the abbreviation "d/h" or "d.h" on the shop signboard; and b) Use of Hanzi characters.

These criteria are established based on field data indicating the presence of Chinese culture on Suryakencana Street. The use of the abbreviation "d/h" or "d.h" on shop signboards means "formerly." This abbreviation was commonly used by Indonesian society in the past and is only collective knowledge, as the use of "d/h" or "d.h" was never incorporated into the Enhanced Spelling Rules (EYD). The use of Hanzi characters is included in the criteria because these characters have been present since the arrival of the Chinese community in Buitenzorg (Bogor) since the 1700s and continue to be used by the Chinese community in Bogor to this day (Ayung, 2022).

The use of Chinese words using Latin characters (such as "Tjong," "Yusin") is not considered as a criterion because these names have a more recent origin, and anyone can create such names nowadays.

From the curated data meeting one or both criteria, five shop signboards are identified. The five shop signboards are as follows:

Table 1. Main Data Description of Shop Signboards on Suryakencana Street, Bogor.

No	Name Store	Detail	Figure
1.	Djati Murni d/h Hang	Djati Murni Furniture Company is a store that sells teak wood furniture. Located at 141 Suryakencana Street. Two indications of old writing are apparent. First, from the use of the abbreviation "d/h" with the original name Hang, and second, the use of old spelling such as 'dj' referring to the word 'djalan', and 'c' spelling still using 'tj'. This old spelling was only eliminated after the introduction of the Enhanced Spelling Rules in 1972.	 <p>Figure 1. Djati Murni Signboard</p> <p>Source: Personal Documentation</p>
2.	Mulia d/ Sam Ho	Mulia Store is a jewelry store located at 54 Suryakencana Street. Based on its signboard, this jewelry store used to be named Sam Ho.	 <p>Figure 2. Mulia Signboard</p> <p>Source: Personal Documentation</p>
3.	Jatiluhur d/h Sin Hoo	Jatiluhur is a sewing equipment store. Information on the store's signboard indicates that the former (d/h) name of Jatiluhur Store was Sin Hoo.	 <p>Figure 3. Jatiluhur Signboard</p> <p>Source: Personal Documentation</p>

The five pieces of data above represent stores known to maintain their old names or use Hanzi characters on their signboards. This data is considered insufficient, given that the total number of stores on Suryakencana Street reaches 183.

These findings lead to new questions about why only a few stores retain Chinese elements on their signboards. To address these questions and the research problem, it is necessary to revisit the regulations regarding the use of store signboards and conduct interviews with the community.

It is known that since 1966, several regulations were introduced to "nationalize" the Chinese ethnic community in Indonesia. Some of these regulations included: Decree of MPRS No. 32 of 1966 prohibiting the use of Chinese characters and language for store or company names.

Presidential Cabinet Decision 127/U/Kep/12/1966 regarding the change of individual or family names of Chinese descent to Indonesian names.

Presidential Instruction No. 14 of 1967 on the restriction of worship procedures for the Chinese ethnic community.

Ministry of Home Affairs Instruction No. X01 of 1977 regarding the issuance of special marks on Identity Cards (KTP) for the Chinese ethnic community in Indonesia. To secure their residences, the Chinese ethnic community in Indonesia, especially in Bogor, complied with these regulations. These regulations, in turn, contributed to the discrimination against the Chinese community, particularly in terms of material possessions such as store signboards. This is evident from the numerous store signboards that use Latin characters and Indonesian words, such as "Toko Mujur Jaya," "Bintang," and others.

Another consequence of these regulations is the change in the nature of the Chinese ethnic community, which tends to become more closed-off. Some studies have shown that the regulations in place created stereotypes that the Chinese community became exclusive and closed off to the native population (Nurcahyo, 2016; Musa et al., 2022).

Similar issues have also occurred in Bogor City. This research faced difficulties in interviewing the Chinese ethnic community on Suryakencana Street, especially the store owners. Further research is needed to explore the impact of discriminatory regulations against the Chinese ethnic community in Bogor.

From the interviews with the store owners mentioned above, there was no clear

information obtained regarding the use of the abbreviation "d/h" or the reasons for choosing Chinese names. Some store owners claimed to be third-generation store owners and were unaware of what happened to their stores before 1966 or were unwilling to provide information about their stores.

This led the research to conduct interviews with the Chinese ethnic community who are open, play a significant role in the Chinese community on Suryakencana Street, and/or have stores and come from the second generation or have managed stores before the 1966 regulations were enforced. Three potential interviewees meeting one or more of these criteria were identified. These three individuals are Koh Ayung, the guardian of Dhanagun Vihara (Hok Tek Bio), Koh Wijaya, the third-generation owner of a traditional medicine store named Mustajab, and Koh Acun, the second-generation owner of Naga Mas, a store selling religious items.

Based on the interviews with these three interviewees, several pieces of information were obtained directly from cultural practitioners or based on their collective memories.

Regarding the naming of stores, many store signboards that existed before the 1966 regulations used Hanzi characters or their pronunciation written in Latin characters. The naming of a store during that time could be traced back to two factors: 1) the family name or owner's name and 2) hopes, prayers, or statements.

"It's usually like this, I have a child, let's call him A. Then, the store prospers. Because (the child) is seen as a blessing, that's when they name the store using the child's name. For example, like Yung Hin." (Ayung, 2023)



"...like, for example, Ngesti. Ngesti was taken from the name of the store owner, Ci Ngesti. But before that, it was named Yung Hin. Besides that, there's also Puncak Store, which was previously, if I'm not mistaken, named Shān (山), which means 'Mountain.' Well, they took the 'puncak' (peak) from it, to signify something high (in terms of name or blessings)." (Acun, 2023)

This is reinforced by the statement of Koh Wijaya, the owner of a traditional medicine store named Mustajab. According to his explanation, he used to have

Figure 6. Old Store Sign of Mustajab with the Writing Yù Ān Táng Source: Personal Documentation

an old store name, Yù Ān Táng (育安堂药). Then, in 1966, the store name was changed to Mustajab with a prayer or statement that the medicine he sold was truly 'mustajab' (effective).

Due to the Decree of the Provisional People's Consultative Assembly (MPRS) No. 32 of 1966, many stores decided to change their names and store signs to more 'national' names. According to Koh Wijaya, his old sign with Hanzi characters was preserved and used as a partition wall.

The exact number of stores that changed their names cannot be determined, but from field research, currently, only five store signs still display elements of Chinese culture on Jalan Suryakencana. After the regulation was repealed in 2000, store owners seemed unwilling to change their store names back to the old ones. Koh Wijaya and Koh Acun mentioned that 32 years of using the new name and the familiarity of their customers with that name were reasons why they didn't want to change it."Nowadays, people know it as Toko Mustajab. Only a few know its old name." (Wijaya, 2023) "Yeah, if my parents built the Naga Mas store in the 1970s with this name, so it doesn't affect me. But if other stores change their names back to the old ones, it might not do well. Because people have known this name (the new one) since the beginning." (Acun, 2023)

From the data in the form of store signs, the regulations that suppressed Chinese culture on Jalan Suryakencana in Bogor actually led to two attitudes: adaptation and resilience. For example, Toko Mustajab adapted to the existing regulations by changing its old store name. Meanwhile, the attitude of resilience is demonstrated by the five stores that still maintain their old names or use Hanzi characters in their store signs. Both of these attitudes represent actions taken by the Chinese ethnic community to secure comfort and economic opportunities.

Identifying the Importance of Store Signs

Evaluating the significance of an object can be a challenging task. Assessing an item's importance is subjective and may favor certain parties. To establish credibility in assigning value to an object, it requires a thorough examination from various aspects. To facilitate this assessment, the identification of the importance of store signs in Chinatown, Suryakencana Street, Bogor, will be based on three aspects: identity, history, and culture.

a. Identity

When discussing ethnicity or cultural objects, the term "identity" is often mentioned. According to Collier (cited in Iskandar, 2004: 120-123), cultural identity is the distinctive character of a communication system within a group that emerges under specific circumstances. Sjamsuddin (2017) also identifies ethnic identity as the commonality among communities with customs, traditions, experiences, history, and other factors. The theory presented by Rubenstein (Ikrama, 2017: 51-53) further strengthens the notion that the use of store signs represents the commercial identity of an area and is one of the four essential elements for an area and city.

If these three perspectives are applied to the case of store signs in Chinatown, Suryakencana Street, Bogor, the store signs must contain elements of Chinese culture. In this context, cultural identity in store signs is reflected in the use of Hanzi characters, their pronunciation in Latin script, or ornaments present on the store signs.

b. History

Regarding history, as previously explained, the Chinatown area on Suryakencana Street has existed since the 1700s, with its planning later undertaken by the Dutch East Indies government. Its location on Grote Post Weg (Great Mail Road) led the Chinese community in the vicinity to establish shop houses.

Due to the area's fame for having numerous stores, the Dutch East Indies government in Buitenzorg (the former name of Bogor) named the street "Handelstraat," which translates to "Trade Street" in English. After Indonesia's independence in 1945, the street's name was changed to "Jalan Perniagaan," maintaining the area's identity as a business district while translating the Dutch name into Indonesian. In 1970, after the regulation prohibiting the use of Chinese elements in store signs was implemented, the street's name was changed to "Jalan Suryakencana" for nationalist reasons. This street name has been in use ever since. Beyond buildings, cultural artifacts like store signs also have historical value. Their continuous presence since the stores opened makes them historical artifacts with the potential to enhance the significance of the area.

c. Culture

There are two ways to describe the cultural value of store signs: aesthetics and public value. Aesthetic value is derived from the beauty of an object, encompassing its form, craftsmanship, and more. Public value, on the other hand, pertains to the utility of an object for the broader community.

Taking the example of the old store sign of Mustajab (Yù Ān Táng (育安堂药)), the store sign has aesthetic value due to its use of Chinese calligraphy. The writing appears authentic and closely tied to the ethnic Chinese identity.

In terms of public cultural value, store signs can serve as educational tools and tourist attractions. The use of Hanzi characters on store signs can emphasize that the area is a longstanding Chinatown. The frequent use of cultural and historical areas is for nostalgia and collective memory. According to Holbrook and Schindler (1991), nostalgia can be defined as a preference for common objects when a person was younger than those of today. In other words, utilizing authentic and culturally rich store signs can invite the general public to reminisce or engage younger generations in experiencing collective memories of the past conditions of Chinatown on Suryakencana Street.

Conclusion

From the above research, it can be concluded that the store signs on Suryakencana Street in Bogor City are physical evidence driven by the culture, ideas, and actions of the Chinese ethnic community, which can represent their identity. However, due to the regulations that were once in effect in Indonesia from 1966 to 2000, the Chinese ethnic community on Suryakencana Street had to relinquish their identity for the sake of security and economics. Ironically, the store signs that previously had the potential to enhance significance and the presence of Chinatown remain underutilized today.

The final results of this research can also provide recommendations to two parties. First, to the Chinese ethnic community who own shops along Suryakencana Street in Bogor City, to start reemphasizing their identity as Chinese ethnic through their store signs. Second, to the Bogor City government, which can consider prioritizing and reinstating the identity of the Chinese ethnic community on Suryakencana Street in terms of the use of store signs.

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