Navigating Dual Identities: Language, Media, and Social Networks in Korean-Chinese Youth Cultural Formation

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Abstract: This study explores the construction of cultural identity by 176 Korean-Chinese (Chaoxianzu) adolescents aged 13-18 in modern China, by adapting Berry's acculturation paradigm with the complementary explanation of cultural capital by Bourdieu. By performing an advanced survey analysis that explores language proficiency, media usage, culture, and social media interconnection, we expose a complex structure of identity negotiation, whereby 81.8 percent of the participants use a bilateral strategy of Chinese-Korean identification. The study proves substantial regional differences exist between Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture and other places, and the youth there retain more heritage language and cultural practices (78.5 percent and 85.7 percent versus 61.2 percent and 70.1 percent). According to the multiple regression analysis, language proficiency is the strongest influence on ethnic identity strength (p-.001), with independently significant impacts on identity outcomes wielded by media consumption patterns and peer networks. The results are at odds with linear assimilation theories as they characterize more complex tactics in cultural navigation, taking the forms of selective cultural participation in youth as they build on emerging hybrids. These findings hold significant policy implications about education and cultural preservation policies when dealing with multiethnic societies.

1. Introduction

The Korean-Chinese population (also known as Chaoxianzu) is the thirteenth largest ethnic minority in China, with a population of about 1.83 million, predominantly inhabiting northeastern provinces. This group is experiencing a cultural identity dilemma now more than ever, with fourth-generation youth balancing their heritage and seeking acceptance into mainstream society in modernizing China [1]. Their complexity in the identity formation process provides vital information on how the ethnic minority youth in a multiethnic nation-state with a high rate of social transformation build their cultural identities.

Modern Korean-Chinese adolescents possess a cultural environment that is very different from that of their forefathers. The old rural settlements that maintained the Korean language and tradition due to geographic isolation have mostly been replaced by city scattering and being included in the mainstream Chinese society [2]. Policy actions that focus more on Chinese-medium education in terms of economic mobility have marginalized the Korean ethnic group, including the faith, where Korean elementary schools in Yanbian dropped in number between 1996 and 2000, decreasing to 183 in 2000 [3]. Such structural changes bring forth the underlying questions of how young people proactively create their specific culture in context and the boundary of lessening institutional assistance and augmenting assimilation.

The theoretical importance of studying Korean-Chinese youth goes beyond this particular group to general questions on how globalized and multicultural societies tend to breed issues in identity formations. As Berry [4] argues, acculturation processes in the modern context require highly complex negotiations that cannot be reduced to a binary decision between a heritage culture and a mainstream culture. Korean-Chinese youth are the best example of such complexities as they consume a variety of cultural streams regarding their local Korean-Chinese culture, mainstream

Chinese culture, and transnational Korean popular culture via digital media. The implications of how they negotiate these numerous cultural appeals can be applied to other diaspora youth populations in other parts of the world.

Such a study can fill deep gaps in current literature by investigating the interaction of the different types of cultural capital, especially linguistic competence, media consumption, and social networks, on the development of identity outcomes by Korean-Chinese youth. Although earlier research has reported trends in language shifts and changes in cultural practices [5], little research has helped to study how actively young cultural resources are used in various social settings to build workable histories of cultural records. This study combines psychological and sociological approaches to cultural capital [6] to explain which resources one needs to navigate the identity effectively and which structural factors govern which identities can be followed.

2. Literature review and theoretical framework

The conceptualization of the ethnic minority youth identity formation has substantially changed since the initial linear models of assimilation to the more intricate, multidirectional models of cultural adjustment and identity formation. Berry's [7] influential acculturation model transformed and advanced the direction of the field of acculturation because it hypothesized that two independent dimensions of cultural adaptations entail the maintenance of heritage culture and involvement in the larger society. Four acculturation strategies, namely: integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization, produced by this bidimensional model, have demonstrated an outstanding resilience in the diverse cultural contexts and populations [8].

Integration, which is the maintenance of heritage culture and adoption of the mainstream culture, is always the most adaptive strategy regarding psychological well-being and sociocultural competence. The overall study of the acculturation presented by Sam and Berry [9] shows that it is integrated people who report self-esteem, less depression, improved academic performance, and more successful social relationships than people who use alternative strategies. Nonetheless, to attain integration, it is necessary to have extensive resources, such as bilingual skills, bicultural expertise, and a support system that approves dual cultural participation [10].

Theories have shown that acculturation is domain-specific and fluid by focusing on the recent development of the theoretical aspects of the field. According to Schwartz et al. [11], people can use various tactics in various spheres of life, and they combine in social situations and divide in their families. This domain-specificity is especially apt when applied to the Korean-Chinese youth who must handle different family, education, and peer demands. Dynamic dimensions of acculturation also destabilize fixed indices, where the longitudinal studies show individuals swapping between strategies in response to developmental requirements and the fluctuating social conditions [12].

The cultural capital theory advanced by Bourdieu (1986) offers essential instruments of cultural resources needed to accomplish successful navigation in a culture that the individual models of psychological acculturation cannot represent. There are three forms of cultural capital: embodied (dispositions, skills, and knowledge), objectified (cultural goods), and institutionalized (credentials and qualifications). In the case of ethnic minority young people, linguistic capital is significant, embodied cultural capital, since language skills open or close doorways to such possibilities as participation in cultural life and building identities [13]. The family forms of specific cultural capital do not have the same value in all the social fields, and this particular aspect introduces complications into the calculations of the youths who have to make decisions concerning the cultural competencies they have to build and implement.

The combination of acculturation and framework of cultural capital produces significant theoretical synergies. The two approaches identify personal agency as part of the structural limitation, respect the contextuality of the cultural processes, and signal the importance of language as the basis of cultural participation. Nevertheless, whereas the model developed by Berry emphasizes the psychological orientation and outcomes, the extensiveness of the framework devised by Bourdieu sheds light on the material and social prerequisites of successfully implementing specific orientations. With the help of this integration, one will be able to analyze not only what strategies of acculturation

are preferred by the youth, but which cultural capital they require to successfully implement those strategies [14].

The experiences of the youth of Korea and their mix with the Chinese are valuable in the context of the empirical studies of the population of the Korean diaspora. Research on Korean Americans demonstrates that the competency in the heritage language has strong connections to ethnic identity strength, during which the ethnic identity is maintained through both instrumental and symbolic uses of language [15]. Nevertheless, the Korean-Chinese experience is unique in that they are challenged by political sensitivity in issues of ethnic identity in China and the lack of accessibility to modern South Korean culture as presented in the case of the Korean diaspora in Western societies [16].

The impact of digital media on the development of contemporary identities brings about further dimensions that are not given due attention in the classical acculturation theories. With the help of streaming services and social media, the representatives of Korean-Chinese communities receive exposure to Korean pop culture, which is drastically distinct from the traditional culture that their grandparents were able to save until our time. This generates the so-called mediated biculturalism in which young people build hybridization by learning and experiencing both the current and traditional forms of cultures in digital and real societies [17]. To grasp these digital identity practices, we will need theoretical frameworks to support the transnational and fluidity of the current amalgamation of cultural practices.

3. Methodology

This study adopts a multidimensional mixed-methods study that combines quantitative survey and qualitative analytical methods to replicate the multiple dimensions of the making of Korean-Chinese youth identity. The study design shows a proper attention to both the theoretical necessities of studying complex phenomena of identity development and the restrictions of researching ethnic minority adolescent groups in China. The mixed methodology marries structured questionnaires to measure important variables with open-ended responses that permit individual voice, to balance the breadth and the depth of coverage and understanding.

The study employed purposive sampling to select the research participants via pre-existing connections with schools and community organizations in different regions. The target population was Korean Chinese teenagers between the ages of 13 and 18, a period in which key identity formation is experienced in early stages of adolescent experimentation and late stages through adolescent solidification. The regional stratification, on the one hand, guaranteed the voicing of the Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture, where a large proportion of the Korean-Chinese enjoy institutional enshrinement of culture preservation, and other regions where the Korean-Chinese survive as small groups amid Han domination.

The resulting sample of 176 was above the power analysis threshold to detect medium effect sizes in a reasonably planned analysis. The participants were varied in their ages between 13 and 18 years (M=15.4, SD=1.8) and had a relatively comparable gender proportion (52.3% female, 47.7% male). There was 90.3 percent regional representation, 68.4 percent of which is Yanbian Prefecture and 9.7 percent is Heilongjiang Province. Such distribution represents real Korean-Chinese population densities on the one hand and, at the same time, offers enough variation to support meaningful regional comparisons. Generational status revealed 73.9 percent third generation and 26.1 percent fourth generation Korean-Chinese, indicating a crucial stage of transition in the acculturation pattern of the communities.

Community consultation and pilot testing extensively developed the survey tool to guarantee cultural validity and conceptual suitability. It is more of a collaboration effort by the research team and native Korean-Chinese teachers, parents, and youths to develop culture-specific items that reflect significant differences within the community setting rather than a direct translation of existing items. The last tool was a combination of several validated scales transferred to the Korean-Chinese rubric and newly-created measures that concerned community-related experiences.

The measurement of identity orientation included the ranking mode in which respondents ranked four identity descriptors using their ranking order according to how well those labels describe them:

Chinese, Chinese-Korean, Korean ethnicity, and overseas Korean. This strategy captured identity priorities against the political sensitivities existing on ethnic identification in China. The language proficiency was measured as the self-perceived Korean and Chinese skills in speaking, listening, reading, and writing realms with the help of five-point scales, acknowledging the dimensional aspects of the bilingual competence.

The engagement with cultural practices was estimated using the behavioral-specific questions about participating in customs, holidays, food culture, and religious activities. There was an evaluation of media consumption habits in a cross-media and cross-genre study that examined the preferences of drama, music, and social media according to the language spoken. Social network composition has been analyzed in terms of friendship group composition and language usage patterns in various peer groups. Such steps were comprehensive enough to cover some of the major domains discovered in the literature as crucial to identity formation.

The data collection was done through online survey administration, whereby the level of reach is effective in geographically distinct populations. Also, it ensures that the participants remain anonymous. The virtual platform allowed for a smooth bilingual presentation and instant technical assistance, which led to high completion rates and few data gaps. Quality control measures included attention checks and completion time monitoring to ensure data integrity.

Several complementary methods of statistical analyses were used to derive as much information about the rich dataset as possible. Sample description and reports of identity orientation, language use, and cultural engagement patterns were also descriptive. Significance Between categorical variables associated with other factors, such as identity orientation and regional background, was tested using the chi-square. Correlation tests into relationships between continuous variables, such as the supposedness of language proficiency, media use, and identity strength measures. The multiple regressions selected distinct predictors of the identity outcomes even after introducing demographic variables. All the analyses used SPSS 28.0 and other expert analyses with R 4.3.0.

4. Results and analysis

The pattern of identity orientation observed among the young Korean-Chinese people sheds light on their emphatic choice to resort to dual identification strategies, which break the premises of ethnic or national identities as forced choice. Specifically, out of 176 who took part in the survey, 81.8 percent have chosen to describe themselves as Chinese-Korean as the first point of self-identification, which once again proves an outright support of hyphenated identity that manifests itself as a form of national belonging with the visible ethnic signifier (Table 1). Such results confirm the integration strategy of Berry as the leading acculturation strategy, yet disclose the significant details of the way integration is implemented in the Chinese setting, where the representatives of ethnic minorities should very delicately strike a balance between preservation of their culture and the display of allegiance to the nation.

Table 1 Distribution of Primary Identity Orientation (N=176).

Identity Category	n	Percentage	95% CI
Chinese-Korean	144	81.8%	[75.9, 87.7]
Korean ethnicity	25	14.2%	[9.1, 19.3]
Chinese	7	4.0%	[1.1, 6.9]
Overseas Korean	0	0.0%	-

The minority of participants selecting singular identities showed interesting asymmetry, with 14.2% prioritizing Korean ethnicity compared to only 4.0% choosing exclusively Chinese identity (Figure 1). This tendency indicates that, as Korean-Chinese youth more frequently undergo singular identifications, they are more likely to highlight ethnic, rather than national, identity, probably about the salience of ethnic minority status in their everyday lives and the necessity to retain cultural uniqueness in the Han-dominated China. Interestingly, none of them identified themselves primarily as overseas Koreans, and they actively denounced transnational framings that would have alluded to

divided loyalties and a doubtful level of devotion to Chinese citizenship.

This pie chart displays the distribution of primary identity orientations, highlighting the dominance of the hyphenated Chinese-Korean identity.

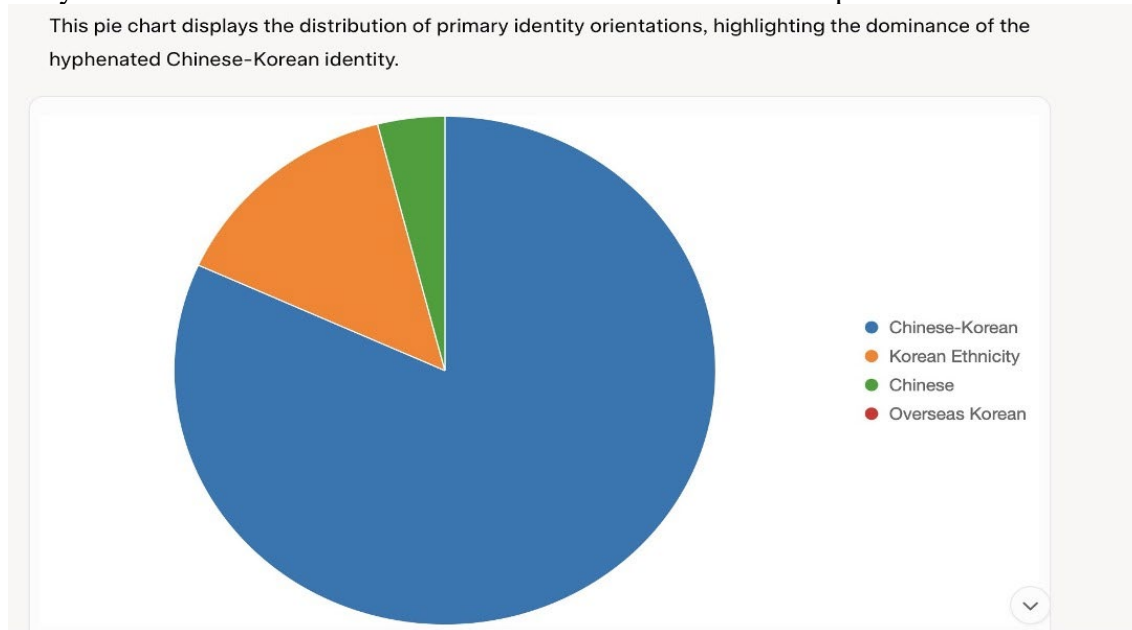- Chinese-Korean
- Korean Ethnicity
- Chinese
- Overseas Korean

Figure 1 Primary Identity Orientation Among Korean-Chinese Youth.

Language proficiency data shows strong asymmetric bilingualism favoring Chinese in all the skill domains, indicating a larger incentive structure within society and educational policy. In oral skills, 93.2 percent of participants reported their Chinese speaking as good or excellent, as against 50.0 percent Korean (Figure 2). In contrast, listening comprehension has a similar trend, with 89.8 percent being skillful in Chinese and 57.9 percent in Korean. A further widening of these gaps is witnessed with an excellently high literacy skill performance of 87.5 in Chinese reading abilities as opposed to the poor 35.3 in Korean and the lowest hitting 83.0 in Chinese writing skills versus the pitiful 27.3 in Korean (Figure 2). Such a disparity in literacy indicates the relatively little formal Korean language training that an average participant can have, demonstrating the institutions' strong influence on the language development track.

This bar chart compares proficiency levels in Chinese and Korean across speaking, listening, reading, and writing domains.

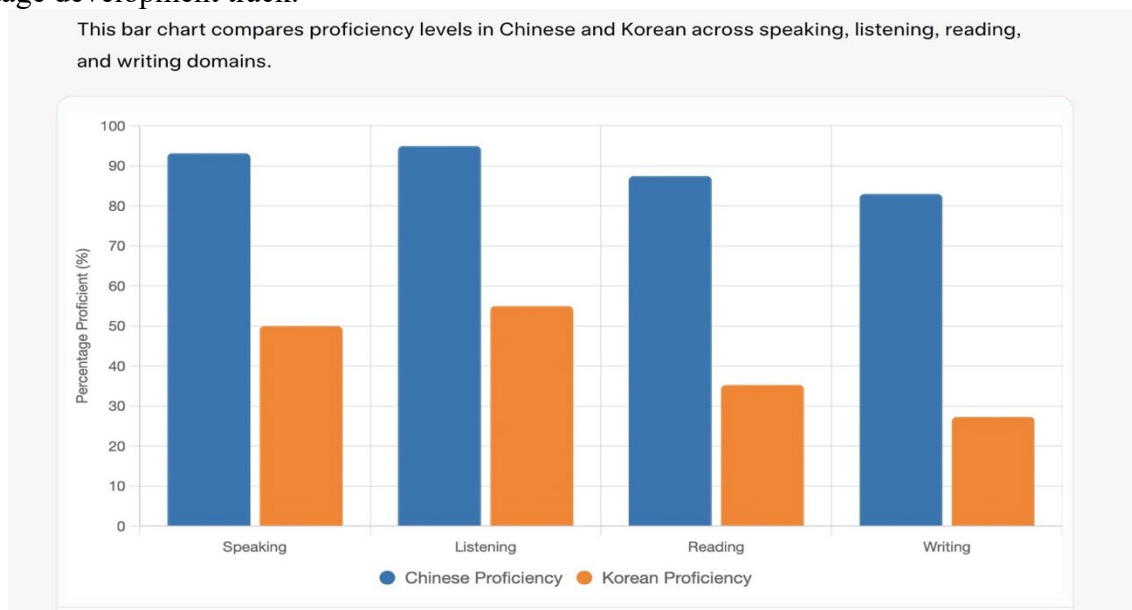- Chinese Proficiency
- Korean Proficiency

Figure 2 Language Proficiency by Domain and Language.

Treatment of language use as domain-specific shows an ever-growing tendency for Korean to be used in intimate situations and universally used by Chinese in all other spheres. At the family level, the proportion of youth using Korean frequently (72.7%) does not correspond with the qualitative reports, where speaking Korean among the youth is often restricted to comprehension of the Korean

language spoken by the grandparents, and replied in Chinese, thus producing lopsided bilingual dialogue, which could potentially exacerbate inter-generational language change. In peer interactions, both demographic realities of predominantly Han peer social sets and social pressures on positioning Koreans as backward or limiting are indicated by the dramatic Chinese superiority of 10.8 percent when using Korean frequently with friends (Table 2). Even nominally bilingual schools are virtually monolingual Chinese in educational settings, and this significantly adds to the coherent immersive setting characterized by information and language dominance of the mainstream.

Table 2 Language Use Frequency by Domain.

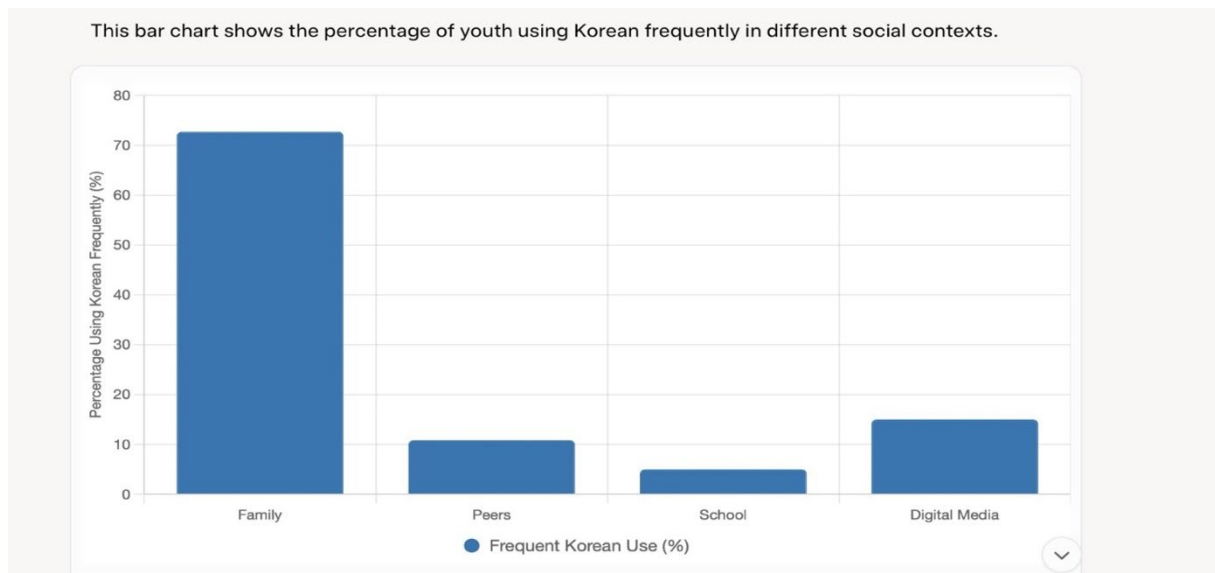| Domain	High Korean Use	Mixed Use	High Chinese Use
Family	72.7%	21.6%	5.7%
Peers	10.8%	15.3%	73.9%
School	6.8%	11.4%	81.8%
Digital Media	23.9%	44.3%	31.8%

Figure 3 Korean Language Use Across Social Domains.

The involvement in cultural practices shows the selective practices of maintenance in which the young people maintain culturally perceived meaningful and compatible practices, to abandon those perceived as irrelevant or superfluous. Food culture also comes to the fore as the area of least change, as 81.3 percent of families preserved the kimchi-making and cooking Korean food traditions (Figure 3). The foregoing continuation could probably be matched to various issues, such as the acquisition of taste preference ceasing in childhood, the ability of collective food preparation to bring people together socially, and the convenience of the food culture to contemporary lifestyles. As Figure 4 shows, more fluid trends are seen in traditional holiday celebrations bound by more flexible behavioral patterns, where the Lunar New Year perfectly mixes Korean and Chinese traditions. In contrast, Korean holidays such as Chuseok encounter bigger problems due to the absence of an official stance and operating programming issues.

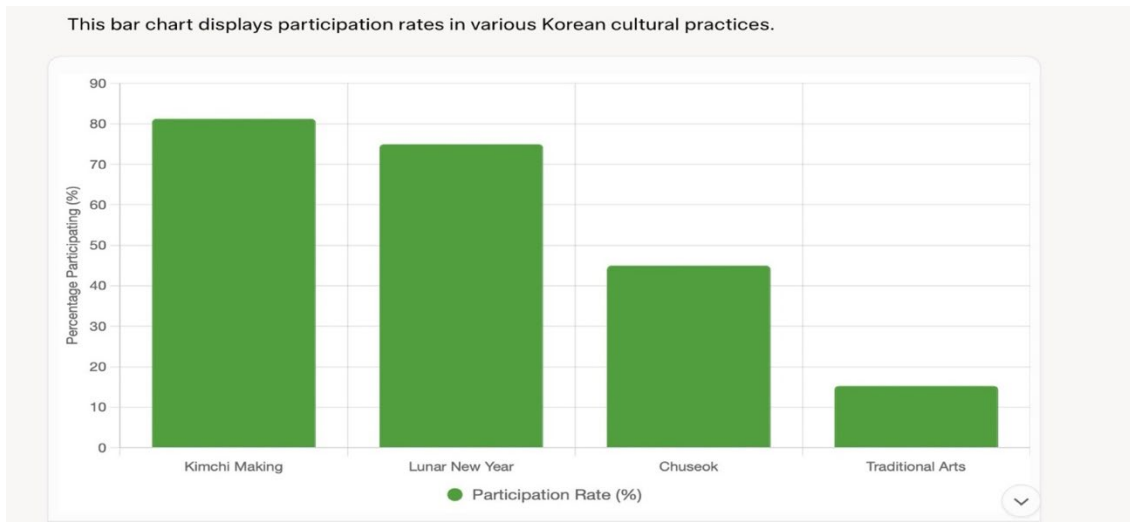This bar chart displays participation rates in various Korean cultural practices.

Figure 4 Cultural Practice Engagement.

The media consumption patterns indicate the presence of advanced approaches to cultural navigation that do not allow describing relative heritage and mainstream culture in terms of the dichotomy. The fact that 43.2% of respondents watch mostly Korean dramas, whereas 35.2% consume equal amounts of Korean and Chinese programming, shows varied processes of identity work through media (Table 3).

Table 3 Media Consumption Preferences by Type.

Media Type	Consumption Pattern	Consumption Frequency
Drama/TV Shows	Korean only	43.2%
	Both equally	35.2%
	Chinese only	21.6%
Music	K-pop preference	38.6%
	Both equally	34.1%
	Chinese preference	27.3%
Books/Literature	Chinese books	68.2%
	Both equally	21.0%
	Korean books	10.8%

Notably, consumption of Korean drama has more functions than mere cultural preservation, which also features language acquisition, involvement in a transnational popular Asian pop culture, and acculturation to current cultural knowledge rather than the traditional culture of the grandparents. The preferences in music are also quite complicated, with 38.6 percent choosing K-pop, 34.1 percent listening to both Korean and Chinese music, and 27.3 percent choosing Chinese music patterns, which overlap with trends of the youth culture all over the world, and are not ethnic identification-related.

The social network structure differed immensely, region to region, core defining the development opportunity and limitation of identity development. The proportion of Korean-Chinese who feel that half or more of their close friends have the ethnicity is 68.4% among the youth. This setup in Yanbian, where the Korean-Chinese are substantial in numbers, has been conducive in normalizing and legitimizing their identity as a people. These ethnically homogeneous friendships offer invaluable arenas for using heritage language, sharing cultural practices, and discussing collective identity.

Conversely, Korean-Chinese young people in the regions dominated by Han people tend to be single ethnic minorities, and only 23.5 percent of them have notable co-ethnic friends (Figure 5). This sociological fact imposes various adaptation strategies because the isolated youth has to construct their ethnic identity and defend it actively without the possibility of peer acknowledgment and support.

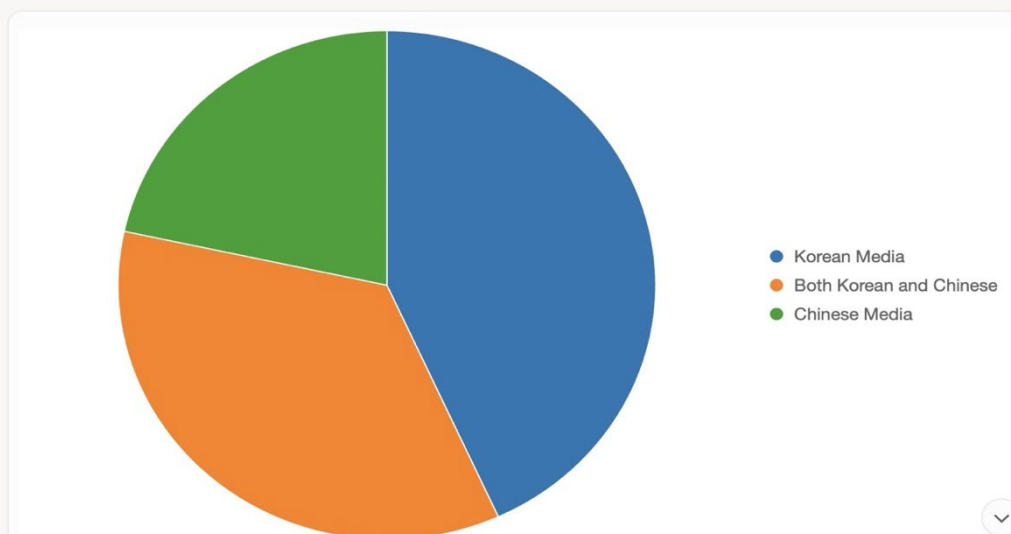This pie chart illustrates the distribution of media consumption preferences among Korean-Chinese youth.

- Korean Media
- Both Korean and Chinese
- Chinese Media

Figure 5 Media Consumption Preference.

This bar chart compares the percentage of co-ethnic friends between Yanbian and non-Yanbian youth.
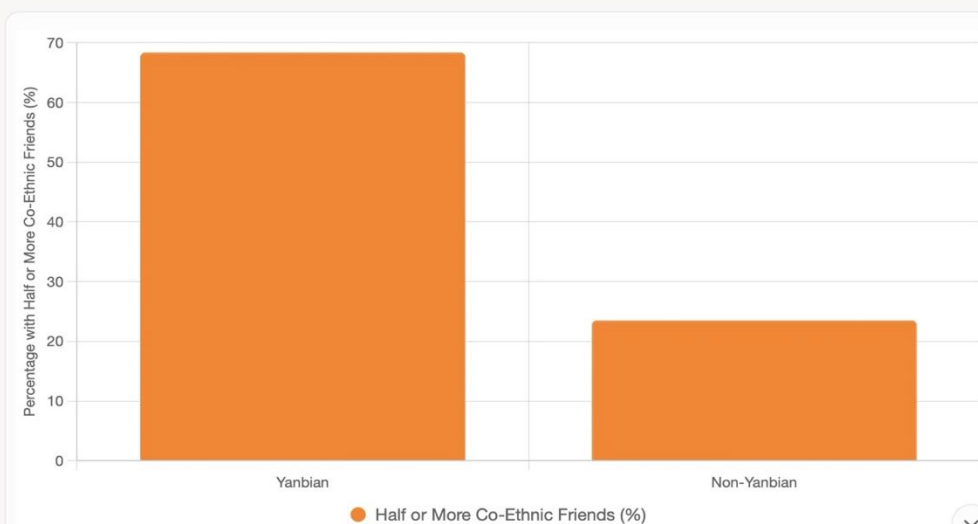
- Half or More Co-Ethnic Friends (%)

Figure 6 Ethnic Composition of Friendship Networks by Region.

The regional comparisons show the extent to which the community context manifests itself whenever determining the results of individual identity. In various indicators, such as the use of the Korean language in the family (78.5 percent compared to 61.2 percent), maintenance of cultural practices (85.7 percent compared to 70.1 percent), and ethnical peers (68.4 percent compared to 23.5 percent), Yanbian youth are much more oriented to the heritage culture (Figure 6).

These variations indicate the difference in demographic composition and institutional frameworks that enhance the Korean culture through the media, educational institutions, and community groups. Nevertheless, the cultural resource advantages do not always transfer into identity performances of Yanbian youth, who also cite such peculiar obstacles as conservative community expectations and identity rigidity as opposed to those in cities, who have to maneuver in relaxed, multiple cultural contexts.

A connection between identity orientation and cultural engagement demonstrates peculiar patterns that question the assumptions of unidirectional causation. Chi-square tests report considerable links between primary identity select and various social aspects of culture, featuring language benefit (χ^2=48.7, p<.001), media tastes (χ^2=36.2, p<.001), and peer-group setting (χ^2=42.5, p<.001). However,

these relations are found to be reciprocal and reciprocating instead of being predictive. As the Korean language becomes stronger, young people tend to keep their ethnic identity, yet ethnic identity frequently is a stimulus to retain language learning and acting, which sets up a recursive spiral of cultural interaction and identity upholding.

The prediction of ethnic identity strength by cultural capital variables using multiple regression analysis indicates that language proficiency is a powerful unique predictor (β=.34, p<.001), arguing theoretical claims of language being one of the crucial types of cultural capital. But the relationship is partially statistically mediated with the topic of cultural practice involvement (indirect effect=.12,p<.01), indicating that language helps cultural participation, which helps to build identity rather than identity being directly related to language. Media consumption patterns contribute independently to identity outcomes (β=.18, p<.01) even controlling for language and cultural practices, indicating that digital cultural engagement provides unique identity resources beyond traditional cultural transmission mechanisms.

The interaction effects indicate the variability of the way cultural capital functions across contexts and subgroups. The region moderates the association between family cultural resources and identity outcomes, with a stronger connection in the Han-dominated areas, where families are the primary, or only, source of cultural support. There is a moderating role of gender on peer network effects, and the same-ethnicity friendship factor was more strongly associated with identity when the female subjects were more uncomfortable in identity-based conversations in their relationships. Such interaction patterns indicate that the same cultural resources yield varying identity consequences according to the wider contextual circumstances and personal differences.

5. Discussion and implications

The predominance of dual Chinese-Korean identification among participants challenges both popular and academic assumptions about inevitable assimilation or forced choice between competing identities. The 81.8 percent taking up the hyphenated identity is indicative of the fact that there is a strong resistance among the Korean-Chinese youth against being pressured to conform to either the line of ethnic and national belonging at the expense of the other one by adopting inclusive identities that lay claim to belonging to the two groupings. This response to cultural integration is in line with the international research. It represents important particularities of the integration functioning in China with its political needs and demands of the ethnic minority groups that have to feel themselves carefully in the process of national loyalty performance on one hand and preserve their cultural uniqueness on the other hand.

The high level of cultural navigation practices, both in the practice of selective cultural maintenance of culture and pattern of the strategic media consumption practices, is reflective of youth as an agent of performance of functional hybrid identity rather than the receivers of imposed cultural transmission or the likes of cultural pressure assimilation. Children retain elements that are useful and significant to their culture, and cultures are things like food culture and culture that focuses on families, and leave or modify those things that do not fit into the modern way of living. This selective strategy gave birth to the transformed Korean-Chinese culture, with its qualities in opposition to the traditions of the ancestors or the modern South Korean culture as an active cultural production instead of its maintenance or extinction.

As a key part of our analysis, language appears as a primary cultural capital that controls other modes of participation in culture and is indicative of identity outcomes to a significant extent. Nonetheless, the association between language and identity is not only difficult but also a two-way process involving language or culture as a door opener of existing cultural engagement and, henceforth, accentuates identity as well as identity commitment as a drive to keep attaining and utilizing language. Official education as an instrument of institutional support makes a decisive impact on the language development path in the dramatic literacy differences between Koreans and Chinese. Unless the acquisition of Korean literacy is approached systematically, young people can continue to have oral communication skills to be able to interact with the family in the language, but they will not have the skills needed to engage more deeply with the culture in writing, in the media,

or through thematic production (e.g., theatre, film, literature).

The adaptation of Korean to become a half communicative code, which can be called "heritage heart language," is a result of a creative response to the structural limitations and not of language loss. The younger generation retains enough Korean to be able to express their feelings and be close to their families; they grow up using Chinese as their first means of instrumental thinking and socialization. Such functional specialization enables contemporary ethnic group maintenance via language, despite the decline in communicative competence, although it results in doubts regarding the long-term preservation of the language, since even the minimal oralizational forms of knowledge can disappear unless one is provided with the opportunity to practice them.

The differences in cultural resources and outcomes of identities also reveal the profound implications of structural forces in shaping the possibilities of individuals. The institutional framework in Yanbian aiding Korean culture, in the form of schooling, media, government services, and economic niche, involves an environment wherein preservation of the heritage culture is less of an individual endeavour and gains more social endorsement. Nonetheless, it is possible that the same environmental support needed to maintain culture can also restrict the flexibility of identity because the high community standards of cultural authenticity inhibit individual experimentation. Korean-Chinese in the urban context have to negotiate more about the deprivation of cultural resources, and more conscious ethnic identification may also be developed with a level of hard work and persistence in trying to retain cultural identification.

Such a high profile of digital media in modern identity development opens up new horizons of cultural interaction and shifts its conventional geographic and social context. They get their modern identity through Korean dramas, K-pop, and social media, which offer modern means of available culture in Korea, which supplements or even substitutes the older culture. This cross-cultural mediation enables one to become a global K-pop fan and, in the process, ensures that ethnicity is validated in cosmopolitan rather than conventional terms. Nonetheless, when digital consumption is not coupled to the embodied practice or the involvement in a community, it can also generate impoverished cultural participation that is unable to facilitate long-term maintenance of identity.

The theoretical implications of these results push both the Berry and Bourdieu frameworks in valuable directions. Domain-specificity in identity expression regards the expectations of convergent acculturation strategies and indicates the importance of having more sophisticated models that take into consideration that identity deployment occurs situationally. The key importance of different forms of cultural capital enabling successful integration strategies is that they make a psychological and sociological approach to identity orientations complementary to each other because they prove that identity orientations cannot be successfully enacted without material and social resources. Acculturation under the conditions of youth agency in the traditional culture is a dynamic way of producing culture instead of conveying the culture or the loss of the culture.

The analysis gives rise to clear practical implications for the policy and practice. Policies in education need to be in tandem with the rhetoric of inclusion of languages or multicultural respect with their practices, especially in language teaching and evaluation. The existing systems that support nominally bilingual education and perform all high-stakes testing in Chinese are contradictory and destroy any expressed interests. Heritage language learning needs more than a few Korean lessons, and it must have a coherent teaching of literacy, modern curriculum material that is attractive to young people, and the development of social reinforcements towards using the language outside the family domain.

Youth should not be left as mere recipients of the traditional culture, but they should be regarded as role players as part of the community programs to bring change in the culture. The experiences of other successful programs prove the youth's interest in heritage culture in forms that are relevant to contemporary realities and immediately associated with lived experiences. Popular culture and digital tools can be used as a means of opening up cultural interaction and not as enemies of the original culture. Nevertheless, immaterial interaction cannot substitute tangible performance and personal involvement in societies, which is necessary to conduct a profound transmission of that culture.

Service providers have a lot to do concerning the implications of managing life between two or

more worlds of contrasts in mental health. In our figure, we find an issue of high levels of stress in the manipulation of various cultural expectations, i.e., code switching between contexts, and also dealing with challenges connected with identity that receive little support. The culturally competent counseling services should realize the understanding of bicultural identity development as healthy and normal instead of problematic, and offer means of overcoming cultural conflicts as well as exploring identities.

6. Conclusion

This holistic study of Korean-Chinese youth cultural identity construction demonstrates complicated dynamics of active identity creation amidst structural restraint that defines access to cultural resources and identity repertoire. The strong preference to be both Chinese and Korean shows the unwillingness of the young generation to accept the polarity of ethnic and national affiliation, insisting on integrative identities that grant complete membership to both groups at the expense of developing new hybrid forms resistant to either one of the established cultures. These results reject the linear approach to assimilation, as well as the highly categorical approaches to the identification of acculturation strategies that instead show the dynamic, domain-specific negotiations of identity as young people allocated their varied cultural resources in selective ways in a variety of social situations.

The combination of the Berry acculturation framework and the theory of cultural capital developed by Bourdieu turns out to be especially fruitful in explaining the psychological orientations that are formed by the youth, as well as the material means needed in the game of identity navigation. Language can be found as a form of cultural capital that opens doors to wider cultural engagement, but the connection between the level of language skills and the level of identity is not unidirectional and causative, but through complex, recursive loops. This change of Korean as a full communicative code to an affective heritage language represents creative adaptation as ethnic identification is retained despite the decline in functional competence; however, it would be considered that the sustainability of such in the long term will depend on support by institutions in the preservation of the language.

Local differences between Yanbian and other regions demonstrate the extent to which the forms of community context define the possible individual identity through different access to cultural resources, peer groups, and institutional sponsorship. Though Korean cultural infrastructure in Yanbian helps to preserve the heritage at a reduced level of individual input, it also creates restrictions in the form of high standards on authenticity. In some cases, urban Korean-Chinese youth have more complex access to cultural resources, and the concept of conscious ethnic identity can become particularly strong as a result of the necessity to fight the attempt to be assimilated into the structure. These trends demonstrate the necessity to study resources and constraints when defining the outcomes of identity.

The high degree of involvement of digital media in the construction of identity today transgresses the boundaries of cultural activities that were typified in the past, so that young people in its wake are also able to gain access to modern Korean popular culture, which offers them contemporary sources of identity resources counterbalancing or even substituting the old forms. Access to transnational cultural groups mediated by this cultural practice means the ability to validate ethnic identity through a cosmopolitan set of frameworks that appeal to the youth. Nevertheless, it is uncertain whether non-embodied practice and digital consumption are sufficient to perpetuate an identity over a long period and allow the transmission of culture through generations.

Policy and practice implications indicate the necessity of educational strategies that match multicultural rhetoric to current practices, such as heritage language education and assessment systems. Community programs need to understand that young people are active agents of cultural change and not just recipients of firm tradition, and they have to come up with modern ways of relating heritage culture to life activities. Cultural competence training is needed in mental health services in order to help people develop a healthy bicultural identity, in addition to preparing ways of addressing cultural conflicts that are bound to occur in multicultural situations.

Future research ought to utilize longitudinal designs in following identity trajectories through

developmental stages, as well as under altered circumstances in life. A comparison between the various ethnic minority groups might find typical processes of developing an identity and differences in more group-specific processes in identity building. Research on what interventions have been used to aid good identity development would offer evidence for an appropriate program. Analysis of the transformation of identity patterns that are formed during adolescence throughout emerging adulthood and indefinitely would shed light on the long-term consequences of various identity strategies.

The Korean-Chinese youth, which is the subject of this study, are a vivid example of the complicated identity work to which ethnic minority adolescents in modern multicultural societies are exposed. Their elaborate methods of preserving cultural ties even as they fully engage the mainstream society express the human creativity in the formation of meaningful identities within the frameworks of limits. Comprehending and maintaining these identity formation procedures is important to the social development of inclusive communities that embrace cultural diversity in a real way and thereby facilitate the achievement of social cohesion. Since China and the rest of the world are facing growing cultural diversity, the case of Korean-Chinese families and their young people serves as an experience in terms of working out policies and practices that would allow positive identity development among all youth who find themselves in intermediate cultural worlds.

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