

## **Cultural Roots in a Globalized Grove: Dissecting National Psyche and Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions in Chinese and Philippine Higher Education**

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### Abstract

This study explores how cultural dimensions shape higher education systems in China and the Philippines through the lens of Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions framework and national psyche analysis. Using literature review methodology, the research examines educational policies, research papers, and published reports to address the research question: How do cultural dimensions of national psyche, as analyzed through Hofstede's framework, shape, and juxtapose higher education practices between China and the Philippines? The analysis reveals distinct cultural patterns across six dimensions. China demonstrates high power distance with hierarchical authority structures, while the Philippines exhibits moderate power distance with approachable academic relationships. Both countries show collectivistic orientations with subtle individualistic tendencies, though China emphasizes state-driven unity while the Philippines focuses on community-centered collaboration. China displays long-term orientation through strategic initiatives like Education Modernization 2035, whereas the Philippines exhibits short-term orientation responding to immediate market demands. China tends toward restraint with standardized approaches, while the Philippines leans toward indulgence with flexible, adaptive practices. The study identifies ten cultural tenets for each system: Chinese values include *Rén* (benevolence), *Lǐ* (proper conduct), and *Tiānxià* (collective responsibility), while Philippine values encompass *Bayanihan* (collective orientation), *Galang* (deference to authority), and *Tatag* (resilience). Despite shared foundational values of respect, community orientation, and achievement motivation, China employs structured, state-driven frameworks while the Philippines emphasizes relational, localized approaches. These findings underscore the importance of understanding cultural roots when developing culturally sensitive educational policies in the context of globalized higher education.

**Keywords:** Hofstede, Cultural Dimensions, National Psyche, Cross-cultural Analysis, Chinese Education, Philippine Education, Higher Education Systems, Cultural Values in Education, Educational Globalization.

### Introduction

To branch and reach towards the idea of progress and development, there has been a strong inclination of higher education institutions towards globalization strategies,

particularly through internationalization approaches. Altbach and Knight (2007) emphasized the implications and advantages of these strategies on integrating research, strengthening English as the lingua franca, contributing to the borderless labor market for academics and scientists, and fortifying the progress of IT, to name a few. Jiang (2008) further describes the influence of globalization and internationalization in Higher Education (HE) as ‘reciprocal exchanges of national cultures’, regardless of the differences of cultural influences between the ‘producers’ and ‘consumers’ of internationalization methods.

However, it is imperative to also acknowledge that such adverse effects and ramifications are evident with such approaches; that the context of higher education branching towards progress and development may also challenge its stability. Commercialization challenges the accessibility of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), rampant diploma and accreditation mills emphasize the strong preference of meritocracy over competitive skills and competencies, global rankings contribute to homogenization and institutional isomorphism, and cross-national labor market agreements often lead to brain drain consequences (Knight, 2018).

Moreover, Carayannis and Campbell (2021) emphasize that sustainable innovation systems require democratic foundations that respect cultural diversity, arguing that “without a democracy or knowledge democracy, the further advancement of knowledge and innovation are seriously constrained,” which supports a need for culturally sensitive approaches to higher education internationalization.

On a more political angle, the aspect of globalization and internationalization has also been criticized for being more favorable to the global north, overlooking the narratives of “marginal and diaspora peoples” especially from the developing countries (Montgomery, 2017). Several studies argued that the internationalized HE scheme is more Eurocentric and Anglocentric (Edwards et al., 2023), and that the countries in the ‘peripheries’ are presented with complications when adapting to practices not tailored for their local needs. This was observed in the issue of African countries during the 1980s when global entities recommended countries like Uganda, Nigeria, and other Sub-Saharan countries to prioritize national funding of basic education over higher education systems, resulting in

a weaker structure of the human capital and labor power (Mwesigwa, 2015; Mchombo, 2017). Several studies resonate with the Anglocentric ideologies of globalized higher education strategies and their consequences for countries in Asia (Phan, 2016; Ruiz and Junio-Sabio, 2012; Diano et al., 2023). This critique extends to global university ranking systems, which often employ indicators and methodologies developed in Western contexts, failing to account for the socio-economic realities and unique educational missions of institutions in developing regions (Heredia, 2023).

Thus, this paper argues that although systems need to branch and reach the objectives of globalized alignment, particularly in the field of higher education, it is also imperative for systems to be able to deepen the roots—to tailor-fit initiatives, policies, and projects to the unique and intricate characteristics of where the systems are rooted. Through analyzing the national psyche of the HES in China and the Philippines with Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions (Hofstede, 2011), the research aims to create a discourse that while globalization has indeed transformed higher education in China and the Philippines, the local cultural dimensions, as illustrated by Hofstede's framework, play a crucial role in shaping the HE practices and stakeholder experiences in both the countries.

Through dissecting the respective policies, studies, and related research papers, alongside initiatives related to Higher Education in the two countries, the research paper aimed to answer the following research question: "How do cultural dimensions of national psyche, as analyzed through Hofstede's framework, shape and juxtapose higher education practices between China and the Philippines?" In doing so, three subquestions were further aimed: (1) How does the framework resonate with the selected literature on Chinese and Philippine HE?; (2) Which tenets of Chinese and Philippine Psyche are manifested from the framework?; (3) How are these tenets of National Psyche juxtaposed between Chinese and Philippine HE?

The succeeding parts of this paper are hence outlined considering the research question and subquestions. First, it establishes the theoretical foundation using Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions along with the concept of national psyche, HE governance, and innovation to analyze how cultural values shape educational policy and practice in both countries. Second, through a comprehensive literature review and detailed comparative analysis, the

study systematically explores each cultural dimension, namely the power distance, individualism vs. collectivism, motivation towards achievement and success, uncertainty avoidance, long-term and short-term orientation, and indulgence vs. restraint. The study illustrates how these constructs manifest in higher education systems, policies, and stakeholder experiences. Afterwards, the study identifies the deeply embedded cultural tenets within Chinese and Philippine HE systems according to the respective dimensions. The discussion culminates in the juxtaposition of the two HE systems to highlight the enduring influence of national culture on academic governance and practice.

### **Theoretical Background**

Understanding the cultural underpinnings in HE practices is essential for developing effective strategies in pedagogy, curriculum development, and policy framework that accommodate the diverse student populations and their backgrounds (Jimenez-Crespo, 2020). With this, the study uses the concept of ‘National Psyche’ in describing the cultural and ideological roots of HE practices. Ratner (2006) defined the concept as the collective consciousness, beliefs, emotions, and psychological characteristics that define a specific nation or cultural group. Hofstede’s (2011) Cultural Dimensions are used as a framework to understand this analysis between the two national systems (China and the Philippines). The framework consists of the following dimensions:

- Power Distance: Acceptance of power distribution in educational authority structures.
- Individualism vs. Collectivism: Focus on personal achievement versus group collaboration in HE environments.
- Motivation towards Achievement and Success: Assesses societal motivation toward achievement, success, and performance standards.
- Uncertainty Avoidance: Preference for structured environments over ambiguity in educational policies and practices.
- Long Term vs Short Term Orientation: Emphasis on future planning versus immediate results in educational goals.
- Indulgence vs. Restraint: Balance between personal gratification and social norms in academic contexts.

Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions has been applied to several studies on higher education governance. One notable study discusses how Malaysian Universities show that the national culture of staff directly influences succession planning and governance in public higher education, with the authors recommending that the institutions tailor governance and management practices to align with specific cultural attributes (such as power distance or collectivism) to ensure effectiveness and sustainability of institutional function (Ahmad et al., 2020). Another study by Stefanowicz-Kocoł (2024) also conducted a re-examination of the cultural dimensions of five countries, namely Poland, Hungary, Malta, Portugal, and Israel, through a conducting a survey on university students. The findings in the study indicated that some of the dimensions remain consistent with Hofstede's descriptions, while there was also a noted significant shift that referred to a more globalized generation of university students; nevertheless, the study highlighted recommendations on the adjustment of classroom procedures, management tactics, and communication to adapt to the continuously changing cultures in HEIs.

The use of Cultural Dimensions as a framework in this analysis is further supported by Carayannis and Campbell (2021) in discussing the Quadruple and Quintuple Helix Innovation Systems. Focusing on the aspect of HE innovation, they argue that sustainable innovation in higher education requires democratic governance structures that are sensitive to both cultural contexts and environmental challenges, suggesting that cultural dimensions interact with institutional governance models in shaping innovation outcomes.

In terms of institutional governance, a study by Atanaw et al. (2025) highlights how leadership and cultural fit are instrumental for successful governance reforms. Price (2024) supports this claim in discussing another study that examines how governance cultures can be reshaped to better foster inclusion, social justice, and equity, especially as universities internationalize and host more diverse populations. This awareness of cultural aspects in higher education governance provides further alignment to support the utilization of cultural dimensions in analyzing the systems in China and the Philippines.

In the application of this model, the study identifies and juxtaposes the cultural roots of Chinese and Philippine higher education systems, particularly in national and institutional policies, teaching methods, student experiences, and HE initiatives.

### **Analysis**

As the study uses literature review as its means to dissect the context of national psyche in the two systems, an in-depth analysis was conducted with educational policies, research papers, and published HE reports. The following discussion follows the resonated characterizations of Hofstede's (2011) Cultural Dimensions in Chinese and Philippine higher education.

### ***Cultural Dimensions and Chinese and Philippine HES***

#### ***Power Distance***

Power Distance, as defined by Hofstede (2011), refers to the degree to which less powerful members of society accept and expect power inequality within a hierarchical structure.

The concept of Power Distance is pronounced in Chinese HES, as the culture projects a deeply rooted hierarchical system. A significant role is played by the state in shaping the academic landscape, fundamentally highlighting the strength of "top-down" policy diffusion (Jian & Mols, 2019). Xiahong (2019) noted the strong influence of symbolic capital in the variance between positions within higher education institutions in the country, establishing a "steep structure" among the organizational ranks and responsibilities in the academe. This hierarchical characterization is further reinforced by limited academic freedom and university autonomy (Ruth & Xiao, 2019; Zha, 2012), which holds the decision-making process of curriculum development and initiatives within and outside of the classroom setting. The cultural dimension also manifests in the preference of students for teacher-centered learning environments, where teachers are viewed as authorities whose knowledge and status are rarely challenged (Stork & Hartley, 2011). In terms of internationalization, this top-down approach is further evidenced in China's centralized management of international education, where the Ministry of Education maintains strict control over institutional qualifications for hosting

international students and scholarship distribution (Ngetich & Bulolo, 2024). This deference to authority resonates a cultural respect for hierarchy and expertise, consistent with high Power Distance Values.

On the other hand, the Philippines exhibits a moderate Power Distance in its HE system. Although organizational structures and hierarchy do exist, they are tempered by a strong tradition of academic freedom as influenced by the country's democratic values and educational culture adapted from the American system (Pernia & Radiamoda, 2023). Respect for authority is balanced with a similar meritocratic approach in the academe, much as that in China, where the expertise and reputation of the academics influence the acceptance of knowledge, with power having distinct boundaries (Tabajen et al., 2023; Aruta et al., 2019). The dynamic reflects a less rigid hierarchy compared to Chinese HES, as seen in the academic practice of showing regard towards authority figures with respect but also engaged with a manner characterized by "approachability" and even "friendliness" (Nuñez & Gula, 2023), especially in the dynamics between student and teacher.

Such distinctions on the high Power Distance in Chinese HES and moderate Power Distance in Philippine HES illustrate how higher education practices have their nuanced characterizations. The hierarchical characterization in Chinese HES aligns with observations by Carayannis and Campbell (2021) regarding how governance structures in innovation systems reflect underlying cultural values, where high power distance societies may prioritize centralized decision-making in knowledge production, while moderate power distance systems allow for more participatory governance models that enhance innovation through democratic engagement. These intricate contexts between the systems will further be discussed in the succeeding sections to highlight specific tenets of the national psyche.

### *Collectivism vs. Individualism*

The cultural dimension of Collectivism versus Individualism provides the extent of prioritization of cultural groups on communal cohesion over individual achievement (Hofstede, 2011). Both the countries of China and the Philippines are generally known as collectivistic societies. However, their higher education systems exhibit subtle and



occasional individualistic tendencies.

The national ethos and higher education practices in China project a collectivistic orientation. The educational system emphasizes “patriotism, collectivism, and socialism,” noted in the core values of the Ministry of Education, which shows a sense of collective responsibility among stakeholders of the system (MOE, 2009b). As Chinese universities are strategically aligned with the goals of the national and local policies, the institutions reflect a strong societal expectation to contribute to social integration and national progress (Zha, 2012; Zhu et al., 2024). This strong integration of similar goals among different bodies, particularly government ministries and commissions, is seen through unified curricular planning processes and societal improvement as essential goals of research production. (Zhu et al., 2024). Furthermore, the collectivistic alignment extends to China’s international education strategy, which explicitly aims to “produce graduates who both understand China and contribute to connecting China to the rest of the world,” reflecting the integration of individual achievement with collective national objectives (Ngetich & Bulolo, 2024). These valuations of the alignment among state, local objectives, along with globalized aims resonate with the collectivist approaches of Chinese HES.

It is also important, however, to note that certain aspects of the system reveal subtle individualistic traits. One example of this is the intense competition for access to prestigious universities through the rigorous GaoKao national exams, which underscores a focus on individual achievement and competition among students as they vie for limited spots at elite institutions (Liu & Helwig, 2022).

The same collectivistic nature of higher education is also evident in the Philippines through its policies and practices that prioritize social development and community engagement. For one, the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act (RA 10931) justifies a commitment to equity and inclusivity as it ensures broader access to education as a means for honing collective progress through the provision of governmental assistance (GOVPH, 2017). The legislation also includes the removal of tuition fees at state-governed universities and colleges. Similarly, the integration of civic engagement into the HE curriculum highlights the importance of community-oriented values in

shaping students' roles as socially responsible citizens (Merza et al., 2022). Since the system also does not have a standardized national examination for university admissions, it arguably emphasizes the relatively low level of competition for accessibility (Lomer & Lim, 2022).

Nevertheless, much like the Chinese system, individualistic traits are not absent from the Philippine HE landscape. "Clan" mentalities within academic knowledge-sharing dynamics are evident in the country's academic culture. This suggests both collectivist loyalty to immediate social groups and individualistic exclusivity in knowledge dissemination (Tabajen et al., 2023). Moreover, the diversified approaches to curriculum planning, which include individualized learning and student-centered pedagogies, introduce elements of personalization and self-directed strategies on instruction (Trinidad, 2020).

Despite the presence of individualistic traits in both countries' systems, the encompassing cultural orientation of both China and the Philippines indicates a strong pattern towards collectivism. The collectivistic orientation in both systems resonates with Carayannis and Campbell's (2021) Quadruple and Quintuple Helix innovation model, which emphasizes how cultural dimensions influence the integration of universities, industry, government, and civil society in knowledge production processes, particularly in how collectivistic societies tend to align higher education goals with broader social and national development objectives. This is manifested through their common emphasis on community engagement, alignment with societal development goals, and policies that foster inclusivity and group cohesion. These traits would be further exemplified in the latter discussions that reveal the cultural roots of the said systems.

### *Motivation towards Achievement and Success*

The cultural dimension of Motivation towards Achievement and Success reflects the extent to which individuals and societies emphasize achievement, excellence, and the pursuit of goals (Hofstede, 2011). Although different manifestations of this drive are exhibited by China and the Philippines, both countries demonstrate strong motivations for success within their HES, as seen through their distinct cultural, structural, and policy contexts.

Both cultural values and systemic practices are evident in the system in China. A strong filial emphasis on academic achievement reflects deeply rooted societal expectations, where students' educational accomplishments are seen as a means to fulfill family and societal obligations (Zhu & Chang, 2019). Governmental incentives further reinforce this motivation through the provision of support towards academic excellence and improving the quality of research in universities as part of a national strategy to boost global competitiveness (Yang, 2023). STEM education is prioritized in this area, as its expansion in the higher education of China is a part of the country's commitment to achieving long-term development goals, as seen in China's Modernization 2035 (MOE, 2019; Xiao et al., 2024). These competitiveness-driven initiatives are also reflected in China's ambitious goal of reaching 500,000 international students by 2020 and its significant increase in scholarship funding, demonstrating systematic pursuit of educational excellence as a national achievement strategy (Ngetich & Bulolo, 2024). Furthermore, motivation towards success is embedded in the culture to advocate for holistic education, which encourages the discourse on a comprehensive approach to success that goes beyond academic metrics, especially in the inclusion of moral and character development in curriculum designs (Marginson, 2016).

A similar characterization is portrayed in the Philippine HES, where success motivation is expressed through a more relational and community-oriented lens. In the filial scale, there is a predominant practice of parents to invest in the educational achievement of their children, along with communal perspectives of how the immediate environment of the student celebrates the latter's academic success (Alampay & Garcia, 2019; Villarino, 2020; Magulod, 2019). Higher education institutions in the country— on a more federal scope— employ strategies to enrich and sustain a research culture to strengthen efforts of elevating academic standards and best practices (Quitoras & Abuso, 2021), regardless of the issues of challenges of funding and limited opportunities for academic publications (Wa-Mbaleka, 2015).

Both countries exhibit high levels of success motivation despite a slight variation in approaches to the dimension's characterization. China's focus on national competitiveness, STEM education prioritization, and government-driven initiatives reflects a structured and goal-oriented pursuit of success. Meanwhile, the Philippines'

focus on success values, academic recognition, and emerging research culture shows a relational and inclusive interpretation of achievement, which may be arguably more abstract than systematic.

### *Uncertainty Avoidance*

Uncertainty Avoidance refers to the degree to which members of a culture feel uncomfortable with uncertainty and ambiguity, and the extent to which they attempt to minimize these through structured systems, rules, and planning (Hofstede, 2011). The higher the uncertainty avoidance, the higher the preference of a group towards a structured, organized, and rigid system. The lower the level of uncertainty avoidance, the more propensity towards flexibility, resilience, and adaptability to the environment is exhibited within a system. In the case of Chinese and Philippine HES, distinct approaches to managing uncertainty are observed through their cultural and institutional priorities.

Moderate uncertainty avoidance is characterized in Chinese HES, as illustrated in the balancing of the structured systems with an openness to innovation. Particularly in a large and diverse system, the standardization of curricula and assessments reflects an effort to ensure consistency in educational practice and experience (Stork & Hartley, 2011). Regardless of this strong organization of educational structure, there is also a strong governmental support for international collaborations and exchange programs, which demonstrates the system's willingness to embrace global opportunities that introduce new perspectives and practices (Yang, 2023). Moreover, as a countermeasure against COVID-19, the development of online education platforms that were and are continuously being developed and administered even after the pandemic highlights China's adaptive capacity to address uncertainties in educational delivery (Zhou et al., 2020). The Ministry of Education's "Double First Class" initiative is also a portrayal of the country's aim to foster innovation and critical thinking, especially through developing novel teaching methods (MOE, 2022). These examples illustrate a system that values structured frameworks but is also capable of evolving to meet emerging challenges.

In contrast, the Philippines demonstrates low Uncertainty Avoidance. This is characterized by the higher education system's cultural emphasis on flexibility, adaptability, and resilience. One evidence of such characterization is the country's

proactive approach to Disaster Risk Reduction Strategies for higher education institutions, which prioritize preparedness and adaptability to natural disasters and emergencies (Paño et al., 2015). Other national initiatives like the Virtual and Blended Learning programs introduced under RA 11469 were developed as a response to the challenges posed during the pandemic but now are utilized to provide flexible learning environments that adapt to the needs of students with diverse backgrounds— especially tertiary students who are studying part-time (Tuga et al., 2022). As there are shifting demands that the educational practices need to be catered by educational practices, there have been several innovative educational models, including individualized (autodidactic approaches) and student-centered approaches (Alda et al., 2020). Academic freedom and an emphasis on research and inquiry also contribute to a culture that values exploration and adaptability over rigid conformity (Grimm & Saliba, 2017).

It is evident that China and the Philippines exhibit similar initiatives towards uncertainty avoidance, with China displaying moderate levels, while the Philippines shows a low level of the cultural dimension. China’s moderate level of characterization is seen through its balanced preference for structured systems such as standardized curricula with initiatives aimed at fostering innovation and embracing global opportunities. The Philippines’ low levels of characterization are a projection of prioritizing flexibility, resilience, and adaptability in its higher education system as reflected in proactive disaster strategies, emphasis on blended learning, and openness to innovative practices.

### *Long Term vs. Short Term Orientation*

The cultural dimension of Long-Term versus Short-Term Orientation discusses the extent to which societies prioritize future-oriented planning and persistence over short-term, immediate outcomes (Hofstede, 2011). The higher education systems of China and the Philippines reflect contrasting orientations, shaped by their respective cultural, economic, and political landscapes.

China demonstrates a strong Long-Term Orientation in its higher education policies and practices. Governmental initiatives, such as the “Double First Class” program, aim to cultivate top-tier institutions and foster long-term advancements in science and technology (MOE, 2022). This initiative is part of a broader strategic vision encapsulated

in China's Education Modernization 2035, which outlines long-term goals for the development of a globally competitive education system (MOE, 2019). Additionally, China places a significant emphasis on vocational education, designed to create stable and sustainable employment opportunities across diverse sectors, ensuring a steady supply of skilled professionals to meet future demands (MOE, 2019). These initiatives indicate a forward-looking approach that prioritizes sustainable growth, innovation, and national competitiveness over immediate returns.

In stark contrast, the Philippines' higher education system aligns more closely with a Short-Term Orientation, as reflected in its focus on immediate employability and adaptability to current market demands. For example, the JobStart Philippines program (RA 10869) prioritizes equipping students with skills for quick integration into the labor market, reflecting a responsiveness to short-term industry needs (Digest PH, 2016). Similarly, the rapid adjustments in nursing program offerings, which were restricted during periods of oversupply and reinstated during increased demand during the pandemic, underscore the system's focus on addressing immediate economic conditions. This reactive approach, while pragmatic, highlights a short-term planning horizon aimed at addressing current challenges rather than building long-term systemic resilience.

Political dynamics also play a role in shaping the short-term orientation of the Philippine higher education system. Policy frameworks, such as the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2017-2022 (GOVPH, n.d.), are often aligned with the electoral terms of political parties, limiting the continuity and longevity of strategic educational goals. This contrasts with China's centralized governance model, which enables the formulation and execution of long-term, cohesive policies across decades.

### *Indulgence vs. Restraint*

The cultural dimension of Indulgence versus Restraint examines the extent to which societies prioritize gratification of desires and emotions versus adherence to strict norms and regulations. In the context of higher education, the systems in China and the Philippines reflect differing inclinations, with China leaning toward restraint and the Philippines demonstrating tendencies toward indulgence. Nonetheless, there are nuanced elements within each system that reveal characteristics of the opposite orientation.

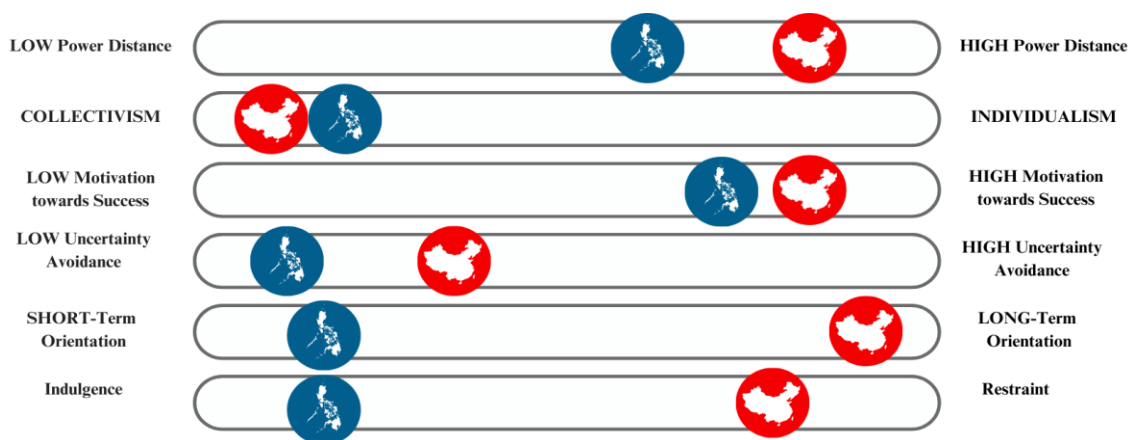
China's higher education system exemplifies a predominantly restrained approach, emphasizing standardization, practicality, and conformity. Performance metrics, standardized programs, and uniform curricula underscore a structured and uniform approach to education, where consistency is prioritized over flexibility (Zhu et al., 2024). Research in Chinese universities tends to focus on result-oriented themes with practical applications, aligning with national development goals and avoiding unconventional or exploratory topics that may diverge from state priorities (Zhu et al., 2024). This focus reflects a cultural emphasis on discipline, control, and alignment with societal expectations. Furthermore, there is a restrained attitude toward academic ideas or discussions that deviate from state-approved narratives, reinforcing the system's adherence to established norms (Ruth & Xiao, 2019; Zha, 2012). However, recent movements for balance within the system, such as initiatives to integrate innovative and creative approaches, signal emerging elements of indulgence (Kipnis, 2019).

In contrast, the Philippines' higher education system leans more toward indulgence, characterized by flexibility, inclusivity, and responsiveness to student and societal needs. Academic programs in the Philippines are notably adaptable, with universities introducing flexible learning innovations that cater to diverse student preferences and well-being, particularly evident in conditions of disruption through the "Bayanihan to Heal as One Act" or the RA 11469 (Daway-Ducanes, 2022; LAWPHIL, 2020). This responsiveness reflects a willingness to prioritize the desires and needs of students, a hallmark of indulgence. Additionally, Philippine universities encourage diverse research pursuits, including topics in social issues, cultural studies, and the arts, which provide a broader and less restricted scope compared to the more standardized focus in China (Quitoras & Abuso, 2021). The prioritization of social experiences and relationships within the academic journey further highlights the indulgent orientation, as students integrate personal gratification and community engagement into their educational experiences (Bernardo, 2018).

Despite these prevailing tendencies, there are subtle indications of the opposite orientations in both systems. In China, the emerging emphasis on balance and innovation reflects a growing acknowledgment of the value of flexibility and creativity, elements

often associated with indulgence (Kipnis, 2019). Similarly, in the Philippines, the necessity to address pressing labor market demands and align curricula with industry requirements can sometimes introduce elements of restraint, as universities respond to practical and immediate economic pressures.

Figure 1: Conceptualized equalizer illustrating the dynamics of Chinese and Philippine HES according to Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions (2011); Source: Author's own conceptualization



In summarizing Figure 1 above, there are diverse characterizations between the higher education systems in both the Philippines and China. The analysis highlights similarities that both countries relatively value collectivism and perceived high motivation towards success, while also indicating contrasting characterizations in terms of short-term and long-term orientation, and prioritizing value over restraint.

### ***Manifested Tenets of National Psyche***

After the indicated cultural dimensions of the Chinese and Philippine Higher Education systems, this specific section provides a categorization of the conditions in both countries in order to synthesize an encompassing understanding of their respective national psyches.

### ***Chinese Higher Education System***

The tenets of the Chinese national psyche are deeply embedded within its cultural fabric and manifest prominently through its higher education system. These principles, rooted



in Confucian traditions and collective cultural values, influence the structure, practices, and policies of China's higher education institutions. Table 1 below shows an exploration of these tenets, aligned with the previously discussed cultural dimensions and specific initiatives.

Table 1: Manifested tenets of the Chinese National Psyche from the Analysis of HE Cultural Dimensions; Source: Author's own conceptualization

<b>Tenets of the Chinese National Psyche</b>	<b>Cultural Dimensions</b>
仁 (Rén) - Benevolence/Humanity	Power Distance
礼 (Lǐ) - Proper Conduct or Ritual	Power Distance
天下 (Tiānxià) - All Under Heaven/Right to Rule	Collectivism, Uncertainty Avoidance, Restraint
恕 (Shù) - Reciprocity/Consideration of Others	Collectivism, Success Motivation
关系 (Guanxi) - Network of Social Relations	Collectivism
孝 (Xiào) - Filial Piety	Success Motivation
勤奋 (Qínfèn) - Diligence/Hard Work	Success Motivation, Long Term Orientation
适应性 (Shì Yìng Xìng) - Adaptability	Uncertainty Avoidance, Restraint
自我约束 (Zìwǒ Yuēshù) - Self-Restraint	Long Term Orientation, Restraint
中庸 (Zhōngyōng) - The Doctrine of the Mean	Uncertainty Avoidance, Restraint

The Chinese national psyche, deeply rooted in Confucian traditions, manifests prominently in its higher education system through a blend of collective values and structured practices. The tenet of *Rén* (benevolence/humanity) emphasizes harmonious relationships and mutual respect, reflected in hierarchical respect and standardized curricula designed to ensure equitable opportunities. Similarly, *Lǐ* (proper conduct) reinforces the importance of discipline and order, evident in uniform academic practices that foster cohesion and adherence to cultural norms.

*Tiānxià* (all under heaven) underlines collective responsibility and unity under central governance, shaping China's unified policy-making and its alignment with long-term national development goals, as seen in initiatives like Education Modernization 2035. Complementing this, *Shù* (reciprocity) promotes empathy and mutual benefit, fostering international collaborations and vocational programs that balance societal and individual needs. The relational value of *Guanxi* (network of social relations) further highlights the role of mentorship and cooperation in fostering academic and societal integration.

The cultural emphasis on familial and societal obligations is evident in *Xiào* (filial piety), which drives academic achievement as a means of fulfilling family and societal expectations. This aligns with *Qínfèn* (diligence), which underscores perseverance and is reflected in the "Double First Class" program aimed at positioning Chinese universities for sustained global success. Meanwhile, *Shì Yìng Xìng* (adaptability) highlights China's capacity to innovate and navigate uncertainty, exemplified by the rapid development of online education platforms during the pandemic.

Values like *Zìwǒ Yūēshù* (self-restraint) and *Zhōngyōng* (the doctrine of the mean) emphasize balance and moderation. These principles guide a restrained yet innovative approach to research and teaching, ensuring alignment with broader societal goals while fostering adaptability and resilience. Collectively, these tenets provide a cohesive framework that aligns cultural values with the ambitions of China's higher education system.

***Philippine Higher Education System***

The Philippine national psyche, shaped by its unique cultural and historical context, is also reflected in its higher education system, as indicated in the discussion of the cultural dimensions. The interplay of deeply rooted values and cultural dimensions such as collectivism, power distance, and a short-term orientation manifests in the priorities and practices of Philippine higher education institutions. Below (Table 2), the key tenets of the Philippine national psyche are explored, aligned with the cultural dimensions and specific educational initiatives.

Table 2: Manifested tenets of the Philippine National Psyche from the Analysis of HE Cultural Dimensions; Source: Author's own conceptualization

<b>Tenets of the Philippine National Psyche</b>		<b>Cultural Dimensions</b>
“Galang”: Deference to Authority		Power Distance
“Kamalayan”: Awareness of Consciousness		Power Distance, Uncertainty Avoidance, Indulgence
“Hiya”: Sensitivity to the ‘Other’		Power Distance, Collectivism, Success Motivation
“Kapisanan”: Clan or Faction Mentality		Collectivism, Short-Term Orientation
“Bayanihan”: Collective Orientation		Collectivism, Uncertainty Avoidance, Indulgence
“Dangal”: Dignity or Honor		Success Motivation
“Utang na Loob”: Debt of Gratitude		Success Motivation
“Tatag”: Resilience and Flexibility		Uncertainty Avoidance, Short-Term Orientation, Indulgence
“Panandalian”: Transient, Short-Lived		Short-Term Orientation

“Pagkahayahay”: Carefree and Laidback Indulgence  
Attitude

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The Philippine national psyche, deeply rooted in cultural values and interpersonal relationships, shapes its higher education system through an emphasis on respect, community, adaptability, and well-being. Galang (deference to authority) highlights the balance between hierarchical respect and relational warmth, fostering student engagement through approachable educators. Kamalayan (awareness of consciousness) reflects a commitment to addressing societal and individual needs, as seen in flexible and adaptive educational practices like virtual learning and disaster preparedness strategies.

Hiya (sensitivity to the ‘other’) promotes social harmony and motivates students to excel academically to meet familial and societal expectations, reinforcing the collectivist orientation of Philippine higher education. Similarly, Kapisanan (clan or faction mentality) underscores the importance of social affiliations, driving loyalty and collaboration but occasionally fostering exclusivity in knowledge-sharing practices. The spirit of Bayanihan (collective orientation) is evident in inclusive education policies like the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act, emphasizing shared responsibility and community support.

Values like Dangal (dignity or honor) and Utang na Loob (debt of gratitude) further highlight the relational and achievement-driven motivations in Philippine higher education. While Dangal drives the pursuit of academic distinction as a reflection of personal and familial honor, Utang na Loob instills a sense of gratitude that motivates students to succeed as a way of reciprocating familial sacrifices. Tatag (resilience and flexibility) and Panandalian (transient, short-lived) emphasize adaptability and a focus on immediate needs, showcasing the system’s capacity to respond to challenges such as shifting labor market demands. Finally, Pagkahayahay (carefree and laidback attitude) promotes a holistic approach to education, balancing academic achievement with personal well-being and satisfaction. Together, these tenets illustrate a uniquely relational and adaptive educational ethos in the Philippines.

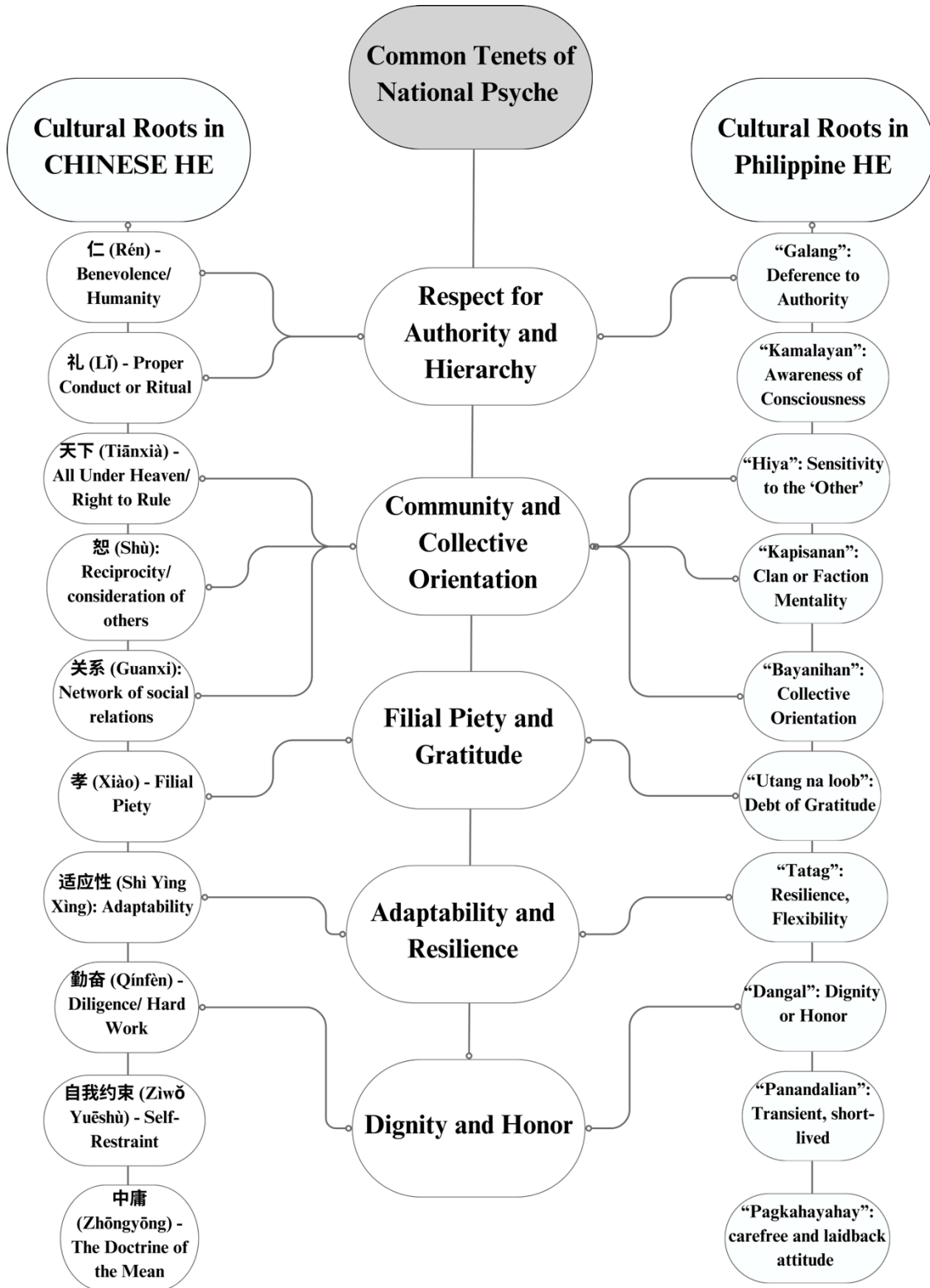
**Discussion: Juxtaposing Tenets of National Psyche**

The tenets of the national psyche in China and the Philippines share foundational values rooted in respect for authority and hierarchy, community and collective orientation, filial piety and gratitude, adaptability and resilience, and dignity and honor, yet they are manifested in distinct ways within each country's higher education system. Figure 2 illustrates that these similarities and nuances reveal the depth of cultural influence on academic structures and priorities.

Respect for authority and hierarchy is a tenet central to both national psyches, though expressed differently. In China, this is exemplified through *Lǐ* (proper conduct) and *Rén* (benevolence), which foster a formal and structured relationship between students and educators. Authority figures, such as professors, are viewed as custodians of knowledge and wisdom, creating a system where deference is institutionalized through standardized curricula and teacher-centered learning environments. In the Philippines, this respect for authority is encapsulated in *Galang*, which also emphasizes relational warmth. While Filipino students acknowledge educators' authority, they expect approachability and personal traits such as friendliness and humor, reflecting a moderate power distance compared to China's more rigid hierarchies.

Community and collective orientation also feature prominently in both psyches, albeit with different focal points. China's *Tiānxià* (all under heaven) and *Guanxi* (network of social relations) drive a collectivism deeply tied to national unity and development. This manifests in a unified, top-down approach to educational policies and initiatives that align higher education with societal and governmental goals. Conversely, in the Philippines, *Bayanihan* (collective orientation) and *Kapisanan* (clan mentality) reflect a more localized collectivism. Filipino higher education emphasizes inclusivity and community engagement through programs like the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act, while sometimes exhibiting exclusivity within smaller social groups, such as academic "clans." These differences highlight how collectivism in China is often state-driven, while in the Philippines, it is more community-focused and relational (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Conceptualized diagram of the juxtaposed tenets of Chinese and Philippine National Psyche; Source: Author’s own conceptualization



Filial piety and gratitude are shared values that strongly influence success motivation in both countries. In China, Xiào (filial piety) frames academic achievement as fulfilling familial and societal obligations. Students' success is viewed as a contribution to both family honor and national progress, aligning with the long-term goals of state-driven educational initiatives. Similarly, the Filipino concept of Utang na Loob (debt of gratitude) drives academic effort as a means of repaying familial and social support. However, while China integrates Xiào into broader national objectives, Utang na Loob in the Philippines remains more personal, which emphasizes direct reciprocity within family and community relationships.

Adaptability and resilience are also vital to both national psyches, shaping their responses to challenges in higher education. In China, Shi Ying Xing (adaptability) is reflected in systematic innovations like online education platforms and long-term policies such as the Education Modernization 2035 plan. These efforts demonstrate a structured approach to navigating uncertainty while focusing on sustainable progress. In the Philippines, Tatag (resilience and flexibility) defines the nation's ability to adapt swiftly to immediate demands. For instance, the rapid adjustment of nursing program offerings during changing labor market conditions exemplifies a pragmatic, short-term approach to challenges, contrasting with China's future-oriented resilience.

Finally, the values of dignity and honor motivate academic excellence in both nations. China's Qínfèn (diligence and hard work) underpins a rigorous commitment to educational excellence, as seen in the "Double First Class" initiative aimed at fostering global competitiveness. Meanwhile, the Filipino value of Dangkal (dignity or honor) encourages students to achieve academic success to maintain personal and familial pride. While both tenets promote striving for excellence, China's focus is more aligned with national and institutional objectives, whereas the Philippines' emphasis is rooted in individual and family achievements.

The analysis of Chinese and Philippine cultural dimensions within higher education reveals broader implications for understanding how national psyche shapes educational innovation systems globally. These findings align with Carayannis and Campbell's (2021) conceptualization of Quadruple and Quintuple Helix innovation systems, which

emphasize the crucial role of democracy, civil society, and environmental considerations in knowledge production and application. The contrast between China's structured, state-driven approach and the Philippines' relational, community-focused methodology demonstrates how different cultural foundations can lead to distinct pathways for educational development within the broader context of globalized higher education. This suggests that successful internationalization strategies must acknowledge and accommodate these deep-seated cultural differences rather than imposing uniform, one-size-fits-all approaches.

The persistence of culturally-rooted practices within both educational systems, despite significant globalization pressures, underscores the importance of what can be termed "cultural resilience" in higher education. While both China and the Philippines have embraced international standards and practices, their core cultural tenets continue to shape how these global influences are interpreted, adapted, and implemented. This phenomenon challenges the homogenization thesis often associated with educational globalization, suggesting instead that local cultural dimensions serve as filters that transform global practices into culturally-congruent local innovations. The findings indicate that rather than replacing traditional values, globalization has created hybrid educational models that blend international best practices with indigenous cultural strengths.

## **Conclusion**

This study aimed to answer the overarching research question: "How do cultural dimensions of national psyche, as analyzed through Hofstede's framework, shape and juxtapose higher education practices between China and the Philippines?" To address this inquiry comprehensively, the research examined three specific sub-questions: (1) How does the framework resonate with the selected literature on Chinese and Philippine HE?; (2) Which tenets of Chinese and Philippine Psyche are manifested from the framework?; (3) How are these tenets of National Psyche juxtaposed between Chinese and Philippine HE? Through systematic analysis of educational policies, institutional practices, and cultural manifestations, this investigation has revealed the profound ways in which national psyche is intertwined with higher education systems. The findings demonstrate that while globalization has created apparent similarities in educational structures and



goals, the underlying cultural dimensions continue to shape how these systems operate, adapt, and evolve in distinctly different ways.

In exploring the interplay of Hofstede's cultural dimensions with the national psyches of China and the Philippines as reflected in their higher education systems, the findings show that for the subquestion 1: the framework resonated with the literature through highlighting shared values such as collectivism, respect for authority, and success motivation, while also revealing nuanced differences in their expression. For subquestion 2: ten (10) key tenets in Chinese HE and ten (10) key tenets in the Philippine HE demonstrate how deeply rooted cultural values shape policies, governance, and student-teacher dynamics in both countries. For subquestion 3: the juxtaposition of these tenets revealed that while both countries share similar characterizations of the national psyche including respect for authority and hierarchy, community and collective orientation, filial piety and gratitude, adaptability and resilience, and dignity and honor— China leans toward structured, state-driven frameworks, whereas the Philippines emphasizes relational, localized, and adaptive approaches to education.

Therefore, to answer the overall research question in alignment with the aforementioned findings, this analysis demonstrates that cultural dimensions of national psyche, serve as foundational determinants that shape higher education practices in profoundly different ways between China and the Philippines. Despite sharing similar collectivistic values and respect for authority, these cultural dimensions manifest through distinct pathways: China's higher education system reflects a structured, state-driven approach characterized by long-term strategic planning and systematic implementation, while the Philippines exhibits a relational, community-focused approach marked by adaptive flexibility and localized responsiveness. This juxtaposition reveals that national psyche operates as a cultural lens through which global educational trends are filtered, interpreted, and transformed into locally meaningful practices, ultimately creating divergent yet equally valid models of educational development that challenge the assumption of educational homogenization in an increasingly globalized world.

The study's findings are limited by its reliance on secondary data and theoretical analysis, as interviews and firsthand empirical evidence were excluded due to time constraints.

Future research could incorporate primary data collection through interviews, surveys, or focus groups to validate and expand upon the tenets and their practical manifestations. Additionally, comparative studies involving other Southeast Asian countries or other related contexts could provide a broader regional perspective and deeper insights into the interrelation of culture and education.

In closing, the metaphor of cultural roots encapsulates the essence of this study. Just as a tree must deepen its roots to branch toward the skies, the higher education systems of China and the Philippines are deeply anchored in their cultural foundations while reaching out to the globalized academic landscape. Understanding these roots not only enriches the appreciation of the shared and unique aspects of different HE systems but also offers valuable insights for fostering equity, inclusivity, and cultural sensitivity in global education.

#### **Author's Note on the Use of AI Tools**

This research study utilized OpenAI's ChatGPT 4.0 as an assistive tool for generating ideas, organizing content, and drafting sections of the manuscript. The AI's contributions were carefully reviewed, edited, and supplemented by the author to ensure accuracy, coherence, and alignment with the study's objectives. The author maintains full responsibility for the intellectual content, analysis, and conclusions presented in this study.

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