

PHILIPPINE CULTURE-PERSONALITY RESEARCH: A REVIEW

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The culture and personality field, referred to by John Honigmann (1967) as "another approach to cultural understanding . . . concentrates on the actors who keep a way of life going . . . studies culture as it is embodied in its carriers' personalities."

In the words of Robert A. Levine (1974) the province of culture and personality research "may be defined as the interrelation between the life cycle, psychological functioning and malfunctioning, and social and cultural institutions."

Concerned with the importance of the culture and personality field, Bert Kaplan (1961) states that it "is no less important for an understanding of personality functioning. The question that is most generally posed by psychologists and psychiatrists concern the nature of the influence of the social environment in which the person develops, and its effect on the course of his development. . . . Work in the field of communication has been especially concerned with what actually goes on when one person influences another. One might ask as well, what happens when a person is influenced by a culture pattern."

The basic issues of culture and personality have long been given attention, and workers in the field have concerned themselves with discussions on the interrelation between culture, personality, and society. Such discussions have stimulated research in psychology, social sciences, and education.

In the Philippines, we find a fast-accumulating literature of culture and personality research. Local scholars, however, have expressed dissatisfaction with how the central methodological problems have been neglected.

This paper, therefore, will try to summarize the trends and development most evident in Philippine culture-personality research, and then, using the analytical evaluations of some major culture and personality studies done by our social scientists, the paper will also try to indicate that, in paying more attention to method and by reconsidering conceptual orientations, a greater accuracy and validity in culture and personality research may be achieved.

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An Overview of Philippine Culture-Personality Research

In the preparation of a bibliography of the literature in this field covering the period from 1890-1966 (Lagmay, Tan 1971), a review of over three quarters of a century of Philippine culture and personality research, Allen Tan and the present writer were guided by the definition of culture-personality research of Francis L.K. Hsu: (1961).

1. A work of culture-and-personality is one by an anthropologist who has a good knowledge of psychological concepts or by the member of another discipline who has a good knowledge of anthropological concepts.

2. Any work that deals with the individual as the locus of culture.

3. Any work that gives serious recognition to culture as an independent or a dependent variable associated with personality.

4. Any work by an anthropologist which uses psychological concepts or techniques or by a scholar in psychological discipline which provides directly pertinent data in forms which are usable by anthropologists.

5. The field of culture-and-personality is equivalent to the cross-cultural study of personality and sociocultural systems and includes such problems as: (a) the relation of social structure and values to modal patterns of child rearing; (b) the relation of modal patterns of child rearing to modal personality structure as expressed in behavior; (c) the relation of modal personality structure to the role system and projective aspects of culture; and (d) the relation of all of the foregoing variables to deviant behavior patterns which vary from group to group . . .

6. The conception of personality-culture as emerged from interaction is fruitful. To this it should be added that students of culture-and-personality are concerned with behavior always with reference to its antecedents and cannot be satisfied simply to describe its characteristics.

It appears that before World War II, there were no significant studies from the direction of psychology or sociology, and that Philippine anthropology then produced only ethnographies of pagan groups. Aware of the dearth of culture and personality research done on our ethnic groups, our attention has been focused on significant studies on major lowland linguistic groups.

Existing materials are seen to be grouped into three major areas of research: socialization, values, and other socio-cultural

research. It is interesting to note, however, that not many significant contributions have been done in the area of culture change.

Child Rearing Studies

The main topics in culture and personality would normally encompass the socialization process within any particular group of people. Child rearing practices, therefore, take a good deal of space, for it is assumed that one of the main components in the formation of the basic personality structure of the individual within society is learning and patterning of behavior during the early years of childhood. Through a study of the socialization process, one is able not only to get at the structure of education and the mechanisms by which socialization is achieved, but it also enables one to get at the value system as well. Investigations of the socialization process tend to focus on the years of infancy, early childhood, the character of early emotional relationship, later childhood, and the adolescents' position in the wider kin group. The studies that were initiated to explore how groups have incorporated distinctive personality characteristics have, therefore, inquired into socialization, focusing on the individual's transformation from infancy to adulthood.

A close look at the Lagmay and Tan bibliography shows several entries on child rearing studies that have been done on individual subcultures. These studies are limited—rather sporadic, and this in the sense that we speak of a dearth of materials in the area. The writer is not aware of a systematic coverage of the various regions. We therefore look forward to a large project where gaps in knowledge about socialization in the various areas may be tackled.

From the various socialization studies we have, it is observed that these are of three categories: field studies, sample surveys and essays referring to child rearing.

1. Field studies include those of Domingo (1961) Nena Eslao-Benton (1962), Ethel Nurge (1965), Nydegger & Nydegger (1963) and Lagmay (1974).

Domingo in 1958 studies the child rearing practices in Barrio Cruz-na-Ligas, investigating nine behavioral systems; succorance, self-reliance, nurturance, obedience, responsibility training, achievement orientation, aggression, dominance, and sociability. She spoke of child rearing as only one of the many factors affect-

ing the Filipino child's personality. The present writer's restudy of Cruz-na-Ligas, also investigating these nine behavioral systems focused on changes in these systems after a span of more than a decade.

Ethel Nurge conducted research in a Visayan village, first in Southern Negros Occidental preliminary to an extensive study in Leyte. She reports of a gradual process of transition, the Filipino child learning thru examples and growing up in a leisurely fashion.

A rich ethnography is provided by the Nydeggers in their child rearing study in Tarong, an Ilocos barrio. This is a field study on child rearing where ecological determinants of child rearing are explored.

The study of Nena Eslao-Benton on the child rearing practices of the Samals of Manubul, Siasi, Sulu is both a field study and a sample survey. The conclusions indicated some correlations with those found in Leyte and Tarong.

F. Landa Jocano has contributed many studies that contain descriptions of the life cycle, doing work in Tagalog areas as well as the Visayan Islands. His many contributions are of interest not only to anthropologists but also to those in the field of education and culture change.

2. Survey researches include those of George Guthrie (1966), Lourdes Quisumbing (1964), Virginia Malay (1961), Jovita de Guzman, and Rodolfo Varias (1965).

Guthrie, focusing on national differences in child rearing attitudes, mentioned characteristics of the Filipino family, and came out with conclusions on achievement and authoritarianism which were at variance with the findings of other workers. In a later study of child rearing and personality development, he gave a description of Filipino parents' behavior and expectations toward their children, making comparisons with data from American culture.

Virginia Malay, investigating middle class income groups, concentrated on aspects of adolescent behavior. She focused attention on influences other than child rearing practices, such as school peer groups.

Lourdes Quisumbing, in her study of child rearing practices in Cebu, had for sample middle class families of Cebu City. She covered aspects of feeding, weaning, toilet training, concluding that customs of Cebu are reflective of the Filipino life in general with "overprotectiveness and close cooperation, cohesiveness, and hospitality" as important characteristics.

Other studies such as those of de Guzman and Varias were mostly descriptive in nature, with no correlations made of sociological and psychological variables as other studies have done.

3. Essays referring to child rearing include those of Himes (1964), Oracion (1965), Santiago (1953), and Stoodley (1955).

Himes, in his study of rituals performed on the Bontoc child described how good behavior is learned from adult caretakers. Oracion, on the other hand, dealt with Magahat practices, also describing weaning and child rearing practices. Some other essays include that of Santiago on "Welfare Functions of the Filipino Family" and Stoodley on "Sociological Theory in the Philippine Setting." Here, both emphasized the authority in the Filipino family, describing the family as one that attracts loyalty and self-sacrifice. Both essays are characterized as intuitive and hypothetical in nature.

In a more recently published bibliography prepared by Virgilio Enriquez (1975) of the UP Dept. of Psychology, "Sikolohiyang Pilipino: Batayan sa Kasaysayan Perspektibo, Mga Konsepto at Bibliographiya," entries include various papers done on child rearing amongst Filipinos that are worth noting for their contributions to knowledge of child training practices in the Philippines.

At this point, we wish to mention two major American studies that have influenced our Philippine child rearing researches:

1. The influence of Whiting (1966) has been widespread, especially in most of the field studies that have been earlier cited. The general concept was that ecology, economics, social and political organization are parameters for the behavior of the agents of child rearing, and that child behavior is an index of adult personality.

2. The Sears, Maccoby and Levin (1957) study, which emphasized that child rearing introduces some effect at some stages in the child's growth, focused on the interactions between parents and their children, and on parents' training behavior. They were interested in investigating the mechanisms by which material behavior was translated into the child's personality. This influence is felt especially in the child rearing study of Guthrie.

The Value Studies

Culture and personality may be arbitrarily set off from other courses: it deals primarily with those ideas, feelings, and behaviors

that form the basis of interaction between the individual and his society (Hsu 1961). Those cognitions and motives that are shared by the members of the group are basically part of its content, for example, the values and aspirations of a people such as one finds in current studies on the Filipino personality: Bulatao (1964); Guthrie (1961); Sechrest (1963); to name only a few. Scholars such as Lynch (1964), Bulatao (1964), and Hollnsteiner (1964) have emphasized such Philippine values as *hiya*, *utang-na-loob*, *pakiki-sama*, etc.

The culture and personality field is also concerned with the description of the most frequent or dominant characteristics in the group, sometimes known as national character or modal personality. Under this category, we have a number of world-view studies which cannot be classified precisely for lack of a definite culture and personality dimension. World-view and value orientation studies worth mentioning are the study of Pal (1956) on a Philippine barrio, the study of Fox (1956) on social class, and the social class study of Lynch (1959) in a Bikol town.

Other Socio-cultural Studies

The deviant personality is also considered in the field of culture and personality just as much as the modal. Personalities showing psychopathological characteristics actually throw considerable light on the modal personality. Recently, a good deal of material seems to have been accumulating, showing that psychotic patterns of behavior and thought are determined to a large extent by culture. The processes that operate with respect to the modal personality share a good deal with those that give rise to deviant members of the group. Varias (1959), Sechrest (1963), and Lapuz (1976), to name a few, have made contributions in this area.

The culture and personality field deals with the use of methods that are distinctly psychological. The favorite techniques are the administration and interpretation of projective tests such as the TAT, doll play, drawing test, etc., all of which give materials which are analyzed through specialized techniques requiring the conceptual apparatus of psychology.

Various cultures may give culture-bound responses to the Murray TAT. The Lagmay PTAT (1965) and PCAT (1975) have contributed to offset this handicap. To our knowledge, nothing much of significance using these instruments have been done in the Philippines save for a few studies that have administered the

test (Ventura, Ilan 1971) (Lagmay 1975) to further study its possibilities. With the development of the Philippine projective tests, it is hoped that more studies will be conducted using these instruments in relation to ethnographic information.

Some Critical Evaluations of Philippine Culture-Personality Research

This section examines briefly what has been done by way of analytical evaluation of Philippine culture-personality research. Noticeably so, there is a dearth of these critical appraisals, though some recent attempts have been made by scholars from the University of the Philippines (Lawless 1969, Jocano 1966, Enriquez, 1977).

Lawless, reviewing 128 titles of Philippine culture and personality research through 1967, does not limit his criticism to socialization studies, but includes analytical evaluations to what he calls value-norm research as well. Lawless makes an appraisal of research methods and theoretical frameworks and speaks of our value-norm researches as "methodologically unsophisticated," the approach being "largely impressionistic and selective." He strongly suggests a re-evaluation of conceptual orientation and careful handling of method. Furthermore, he stresses the need to know the cultural component before the psychological factors are investigated. He emphasizes the importance of field studies which allow for a better view of the socio-cultural milieu.

The question regarding the use of foreign tools is not only raised for socialization studies but for the studies on values and on normative behavior as well.

Visibly disturbed by the Ateneo approach to the study of values, Lawless (1969) wrote:

Hiya, pakikisama and utang na loob are vernacular terms tied to specific actions and situations and are perceived thus by the actors. The Ateneo approach uses these same terms but perceives them at a different level—as all-pervading, organizing values and trait complexes. This difference in perception of terms can only lead to a confusion of folk levels and analytic levels of understanding.

Jocano's critical appraisal of value studies echoes Lawless' disillusionment. The Institute of Philippine Culture (IPC) research on values, as Jocano (1966) puts it "had led many, especially foreign observers and some scholars, to accept it as the guideline for understanding Filipino ways of thinking and behaving, and as the measure of what one can socially expect from a Filipino."

On the whole, issues that have been raised include: 1) simplistic explanations, 2) problem of cross-cultural validation, and 3) problem of language. Jocano suggests not to consider tightly relationship between norms and actions, and that "any mode of action must not be conceptualized in terms of exclusiveness and directness of relationship."

Enriquez' 1977 paper refers to the mis-education and the colonization of the Filipino mind. He stresses how the handling of Filipino concepts in psychology in the context of Western analysis which relies on the English language and English categories of analysis, has led to a distortion of Philippine social reality. He points to social scientists who are aware of the "inappropriateness" and "inapplicability" of Western models in the Third World setting. Most of these Western tradition trained social scientists either turn to "local adaptations," "modification of Western models," or, "see nothing at issue at all because they are convinced that any departure from the Western approach is blasphemy before the altar of science."

Citing the *bulong* of the early Filipinos, the psychotherapy of the *babaylans*, the beliefs and practices of the natives, up to the present issues of modernization, Enriquez claims that Philippine and Filipino psychology is very much alive. Identified as bases for an indigenous national psychology are: 1) Early or traditional psychology; 2) Man and *diwa* (consciousness and meaning, or the local conception and definition of the *psyche*, as a focus of psychological interest); 3) Psychology of *pagbabagong-isip* (reawakening as an attitude and as a stage in the development of national consciousness); 4) Psychology of behavior and human abilities (Western psychology has much to contribute on this), 5) Social issues and problems; and 6) Native languages, culture and orientation.

Enriquez' description of Philippine culture and personality research orientation has a ring somewhat of Lawless' call for a new perspective and direction. Enriquez, however, is concerned with looking "at 'indigenization' as a total, privileged, and inalienable process." His major argument on indigenous psychology focuses on "the fact that the native culture has time-tested ways of mental and behavioral assessment which need not be 'indigenized' for they are already indigenous to the culture."

While Enriquez recognizes that "the data base of Western psychology is now much broader," he stresses however "that a broader data base is far from adequate in assuring a universal

psychology unless alternative perspectives from non-Western psychologies are put to use." Furthermore, his paper alludes to the point that "it still makes a great deal of sense for scientific and not maudlin reasons to use the local languages and cultures as sources for theory, method and praxis."

In pursuit of the above inquiry towards an indigenous point of view in Philippine psychology, Judy C. Sevilla in a recent paper on indigenous (Philippine) research methods takes a close look at Western assumptions and methodologies and critically reviews approximately 37 researches done within the framework of Enriquez' thesis on indigenization. She examines methods such as *pagmamasid*, *pakikiramdam*, *pagtatanong-tanong*, *pagsubok*, *padalaw-dalaw*, *pakikialam*, *pakikilahok*, *pakikisangkot*, etc. that are employed in these studies and hints at the many dimensions of these intensive field methods together with some of the requirements in the practice of this art. I consider this evaluative review to be a very perceptive and penetrating inquiry into Philippine social-psychological research that promises to give us a new set of data from which to construct culture and personality concepts appropriate to the Filipino.

Summary and Conclusions

Some amount of dissatisfaction has been expressed in regard to Philippine culture and personality research. This is found not only in Lawless' "An Evaluation of Philippine Culture-Personality Research," but also in a more recent paper by Enriquez "Filipino Psychology in the Third World." One or two others have written critical appraisals, and the lack of such evaluations is indeed noticeable.

On the whole, what has been expressed in all the appraisals is a disillusionment over the neglect of the central methodological problem. What is argued for may be summed up in the following:

1. a reconsideration of measurements of psychological dimensions which have been taken out of their socio-cultural context;
2. a more careful regard for sampling procedures;
3. attention on the use of imprecise foreign instruments;
4. the importance of using local language and culture as sources for theory and method.

While the need for refining methods is an issue, we feel that it is just one aspect of a still larger issue, and that is towards the development of a new approach to the study of our people.

Roughly, the following recommendations have been offered every now and then:

1. There is no substitute for a good collection of data in the field from which basic indigenous concepts may be derived. This will require a methodology which minimizes the operations of frameworks not appropriate to the culture.

2. Learn whatever one wishes from Western concepts. This will call for an examination of Western social science in order to find out what can be used or restated in some other way. For example, basic concepts which are biological or even ecological may be useful, but those that are not basic, such as achievement motivation, which are highly derivative Western concepts, may be appropriately questioned.

3. Use of the native language is seen as a major concern and may be regarded as a strategic move towards the re-education of scholars on the problem of validation of Western concepts within our culture.

Finally, I think that because the study of Philippine culture and personality is of special importance to us in that its findings strike deeply into how we think of ourselves as a people, this one area of work that needs a very careful reassessment of how we arrive at knowledge in this field. The epistemology of Philippine culture and personality studies is undergoing a major recasting which I think will affect the very foundations of much of what we have been made to believe about the Filipino.

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