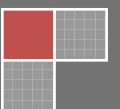


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The Social and Psychological Approach of the Collectivist Culture

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I. INTRODUCTION

Society itself creates the individual's identity through family and personal values, social customs and lifestyle, and work ethics. Our environment influences people to react to a certain stimuli and respond in accordance to personal inquiry of social norms. Our "human attitudes, beliefs, and actions" are based in our society where the "citizens shared and accepted" and lived with these norms up to the present time. These standards are defined as culture. Culture offers benefit to an individual in terms of the advancement of self-value to the whole community. Sometimes, culture dominates people toward themselves, and society that will turn out that man will be twisted in searching and looking for their true identity.

According to the book Individualism And Collectivism by Harry C. Triandis, the author talks about a particular group within a society that promotes interdependence, which these people in this society value harmony in a group. In addition, Triandis states the idea of Jean-Jacques Rousseau about interdependent group as follows:

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who in his 'Social Contract' argued that the individual is free only by submitting to the general's will. The general will was conceived as the common core of opinion that remains after private wills cancel each other out and that can be ascertained by majority voting. The general will is always right and tends to the public advantage... (Triandis, 19)

As a pattern of social behavior under this group, the value of close relationships to the individual promotes unity and equality. Although, the objective is the advancement of the group, deprivation of freedom and personal choice are always a common issue most especially in Asian countries.

Asian countries like the Philippines, China, Vietnam, Thailand, and Japan are good examples of being defined as the collectivist culture. Mohan J Dutta-Bergman and William D. Wells are the authors of the article “The Values and Lifestyles of Idiocentrics and Allocentrics in an Individualist Culture: A Descriptive Approach,” who define collectivist culture as: “...the close linkage among individuals who see themselves as parts of one or more collectives and are primarily motivated by the norms and duties of those collectives, emphasizing connectedness with other members of the collectives..” (232) Today, the stress of the environment becomes more malignant as we try to ignore some aspect of reality in our culture that can hinder us toward our goals in knowing who are we, who are they, and what is our environment. The construction of social behavior lies on what culture from which we emerge and that defines us of who we are. Being a part of the collectivist culture, it is an advantage to get to know better your own culture in terms of: family values, personal values, social customs and lifestyle, and work value or ethics. As we will study these subjects, this will give us not only knowledge, but it will provide a big relief of eliminating any kind of stress or confusion that might happen in the future. First, let us examine first the family values of the collectivist culture.

A. FAMILY VALUES

Freedom, loyalty, commitment, honor, and respect are some of the basic principles that Asian families value the most. It has been accepted in the society that the goal of the group should come first before anything else. Furthermore, the family, most especially on the part of the parents or someone they can trust inside the group, expects too much autonomy over their children to do most of the tasks. Although, every member is expected to contribute for the sake of the whole family and society, the level of freedom,

loyalty, commitment, honor and respect might vary in each individual. For instance, superiority and dominance of the elder member of the group might change the view of what is right and wrong and what each person must abide. In spite of these basic principles that bind Asian families in making their linkage stronger and tighter, these could also make things complicated in terms of the level of freedom, loyalty and commitment of each member of the family.

According to the book Culture and Customs Of The Philippines by Paul Rodel, he mentions that: “the Filipino Family plays a more central role in the lives of its members, and in the nation’s greater social political life, than do families in many other cultures.” (Rodel, 120) The traditional Filipino family includes not only the husband, wife, and children, but most likely the parents of either the husband or the wife or some relatives. A basic family consists only of the husband, wife, and children. The theory is that everybody is expected to contribute and live within the principles, which most likely is the father or the mother is in control of everything. On the parent’s side, they are expected to:

Ensure the child’s success in life. In rural farm families, children continue to be valued as future helpers in the family’s daily economic life... while urban poor areas, it is expected that children will supplement the family’s meager income by doing odd jobs. In any case, all families, rich or poor, welcome children with the expectation that they will provide for their parents in old age. (131)

Well basically, an ideal family is supposed to be one where the father is the “bread winner” of the family, and the mother is the guidance of the house, making sure that she is doing her job in guiding her children towards success in their lives. “Since the father is provider and distant authority figure who gains respect for his ability to operate in the wider world beyond the family circle, much of his potential authority is delegated to his

wife.” (132) For example, some Filipino husband love spending their free time with their *barkadas* (group of male friends), instead of spending their time with their family. Filipino men always think that they have wives to accomplish their tasks or duties as long as they can provide the family’s basic needs. The members of the family cannot complain, especially in the case of the children. If they will attempt to do so, it is a sign of disrespect towards their parents. On the side of the wife, “mothers not only give birth but they also nurture, feed, teach, encourage, punish, and above all, expand any amount of completely unconditional love”(131), for this reason, the child is obliged to give complete loyalty towards his or her parents no matter what the circumstances. If they fail to abide by this norm, the child will have a sense of regret for the rest of their life, because the Filipino society conditions the child to pay their parents with individual sacrifices (even though, most Filipino people are not aware this cultural phenomenon).

Besides these feelings of guilt and regret for the rest of their lives, children might comply because of their fear of physical punishment. Physical punishment in my country, the Philippines, is allowed as long as it pertains in disciplining the child. Words are not enough to correct, or to guide the children, but physical punishment will occur if severe disrespect or loss of honor of the entire family is present. Not complying with the parents’ desires and wishes might result with this kind of punishment. Questioning one’s parents is also a sign of disrespect. The only option that is available to the child is to follow what the parents want. Some parents are more reasonable, and they will at least explain the reason why they want you to follow them, but, still in the end, are expecting the child to obey what they wish- no matter what.

In the case of the extended family: “the Filipino family lacks in terms of the strength of the Chinese patrilineal style of kinship descent, it makes up for withThe broad Filipino network of actual relatives.” (Rodel, 121) Some Filipino people are still practicing this kind of family tradition, for example, when they build their houses; the house is constructed close to their relatives or parents. Others they will buy a whole compound and build their own houses, but these compounds are areas strictly only for well to do families (Rodel, 121). This kind of family tradition might give a negative impact, not only in the Philippines’ scenario, but also on the economic status. Majority of the population are poor, so, most commonly, ends up happening in the extended family is that one “bread-winner” will be responsible for caring and feeding for the entire family. For short, the entire extended family will become dependent upon one other. For example, the ratio and proportion is one to ten. This means that out of ten members of the family, there is one bread winner to provide for the basic needs. Sometimes, this case may be worse than my approximate ratio, most especially, in areas where there is a limited resource such as lack of urban areas. In the case of the rural areas, resources are not limited, so some Filipinos have the idea that living in cities would give one more opportunities to survive. Living in urban areas have more limited resources than in rural areas where you can do lot of things, like farming. A different example of the idea of the ratio of one to ten is that young adults engage early in marriage without finishing their education. A good parent will support his or her child no matter what. So, for the mean time, they will depend on their parent’s income, which will add to the economic burden to the whole family. Some teens learn from their mistakes, but some do not. It is worse in the case of the adult, if he or she will make himself or herself not to hold responsible for

their own lives. In this case, if the family is under an economic crisis, this will reflect on the whole life of the family and will be considered to be a big failure.

Besides the Philippines, other Asian countries, such as China, share some of the similarities in terms of level of loyalty and commitment towards one another. The fact that these two countries belong to one continent, Asia, the Philippines history states that Chinese people came first before the invasion of the Spaniards, as they are considered as one of the earliest colonizers of the former country. This influenced how the Filipino family behaves in a certain manner as the Chinese people do, in terms of loyalty, honor and respect towards their family. According to Alan Lai, EdD, and writer of the article “Eye on Religion: Cultural and Caring for Chinese Patients,” Lai states that:

Chinese people strive to activate human potentials through a lifelong journey of self-cultivation: to succeed in life, one needs to pay attention to what lies within. At the same time, to sacrifice oneself for both one’s family and society is deeply valued. A mature citizen in the Confusion sense is defined by the kinship networks that support filial, piety, hierarchy relationship system, loyalty and caring. (Lai)

The sense of loyalty inside the family comes first as the same in the case of the Filipino values. Just like the former country above, Chinese people must preserve and value their loyalty and respect towards their family, and “failure to do so will result in shame and low self-esteem.” (Lai) This statement is also supported by Jaya Sastry and Catherine E. Ross, the authors of the article “Asian Ethnicity and the Sense of Personal Control” explain that most Asian people are encouraged to subordinate their personal demands to

that of the family's needs - which is their priority (103). For example, in terms of marriage, traditional Chinese people are most likely to have an arranged marriage. In the case of my mother, she experienced this kind of scenario in her life, where less autonomy or freedom to choose whom one wishes to marry. My mother's late father, who is my late grandfather, is a native Chinese man who came from Amoy China. Asians may "perceived less freedom, less autonomy to further their own goals, and less ability to determine outcomes in their own lives." (Sastry and Ross, 103) Sacrificing one's own happiness is a great honor, as long as the whole family is happy, because you fulfilled what they desired and fulfilled your responsibility, a responsibility to comply and not to question.

Being responsible is being a good person and citizen to your country. Chinese people are stricter in terms of handling responsibility. According to the book Survey of World Cultures China by Chang-Tu Hu, he explains that: "the family rather than the state provided the individual with economic and social security and education." (Hu, 158) Hu uses the example that being the head of the family, most likely, you will be held responsible for everything, not only for providing the family's needs but as well as being held in the case of one of the members of the family commits a crime as it shows through the following lines:

If a person committed an offense against society or against the state, the head of his family might be held to account for the crime. Any or several members of a family might be punished for a crime if the guilty individual could not be apprehended. The individual was held accountable to his family; the family was responsible for its individual members. In this sense the family was the minimal unit of social identity. (Hu, 158)

Again, this idea falls into being loyal and committed to your own family. This is not only a matter of being responsible towards another, but the question that underlies it all is that this is fair treatment of each individual. Sacrificing oneself is, again, a great honor, particularly in these areas where they valued honor, respect, loyalty and commitment to the group and not to oneself that determine the happiness of the family. Secondly, let us try to see also the personal values of the collectivist culture.

B. PERSONAL VALUES

Personal values relate to the individual's mirror image. Asian values are preserved mainly based on harmony, family closeness, respect towards other people, and less autonomy. The values of these collectivist people not only describe or define who they are, but also measure the level of satisfaction and happiness in their life. Sometimes, our values predict our future on whether how successful or unsuccessful we will be in the future. Asians are more aware of whether other people are happy or are not, rather than looking toward their own happiness or self-satisfaction. Understanding oneself is not easy, yet, knowing better your own culture, one can help oneself to analyze, accept, and see the real meaning of life.

According to Masaki Yuki, author of the article "Intergroup Comparison versus Intragroup relationships: A Cross-Cultural Examination of Social Identity Theory in North American and East Asian Culture Contexts," states that: "... East Asian collectivism is based largely on the promotion of cooperative behaviors and maintenance of relational harmony 'within' in-groups. As a result, in East Asians' cognitive representations of self, the self is personally connected with other members of the in-group." (Yuki, 168) For example, if I want to buy a particular dress, I will first ask the

opinion of other people before buying a dress. Not only about buying a dress, but also asking what style or even what color they want you to buy and not the style or color that you want to buy and wear. In connection, the Filipino culture according to Paul Rodel, is best described in this scenario. He says that, “Even during dating, when an adolescent boy consults with his barkada (group of friends) mates about which girl he should court, and the boy seeks the approval of his selection, he is continuing the group-centered for his actions.” (Rodel, 198) Failure to do so will result to what Filipinos called *makasarili* or self-centered. If this will happen, the group will reject you and you will be on your own, which, most of us do not like to be in isolation. Whereas, if you will dance with the flow of the group, you will make them happy, you will be fine too. Is this always the case? What if there is something you want to do, but the group or your family does not approve of it? This notion demonstrates how much freedom the Collectivists people have in order to always be in the group and not being the victim of rejection.

In connection, freedom has a relation concerning our personal control. The more we can internalize things, the more we can achieve peace and harmony in ourselves and in our family. Sometimes, our freedom chooses things that we want but turn out to be very limited. Even the options that are available to one are also traps due to many factors which often lead to confusion and eventually conflict with every individual. A simple example of this is when one chooses a career. Some parents, in my opinion, wish to control what college and what course their children should choose in life. An obedient child will follow what the parents’ desire and demand. The same idea, such as in choosing one’s own style and color of dress, parents or the group may not agree with your taste, which would result with you not making them happy. Again, being a good

child, one must make certain that one will make one's parent happy by satisfying and following their advice. This idea of personal control is supported by Jaya Sastry and Catherine E. Ross, authors of the article, "Asian Ethnicity and the Sense of Personal Control." Sastry and Ross say that: "...allocentrics focus on relationships and on making others happy. This often leads to a feeling of purposelessness and of being out of control. The sense of not being in control, it may be argued, also reflects a lower level of self efficacy and self-esteem." (Sastry and Ross, 233)

Although the level of personal control is not a lot under Asian countries, self-esteem under the Collectivist culture is also interpreted as low, which undergoes different factors like the influence of the group or the family. This statement explains by Harry C. Triandis, the author of Individualism and Collectivism. Furthermore, Triandis explains that the group has a big impact on the decision of each individual, whether they are a success or failure, as it shows in the following statements:

Radford et al. (1993) reported that Japanese subjects have a lower decisional self-esteem, that is, feel less confident when making decisions...The Japanese reported complacency (I put little effort into making decisions), avoidance (I avoid making decisions), and hypervigilance (I panic if I have to make decisions quickly)...The Japanese also reported more stress when they had to make a decision without consultation (Triandis, 71).

Alan Lai supports this idea when he says: "If the inner private self is rejected, Chinese people say the person has lost face." But "face" in the Chinese context is not merely something external; it is deeply internal. Preserving face or dignity in the public eye is more important in the collectivist culture. Consultation with the group is much preferred than going to your personal instinct and decision. As a result, this will turn out that you are committed to the norms of the society or the in-group, and this will convert your responsibility to abide to the principles of your environment.

Another factor that can affect individual's self-perception is about health related issues. Sastry and Ross indicate that: "Triandis (1995) pointed out that social support plays an important role in good health... people with greater levels of social bonds have more of a sense of the meaning in life and are more likely to take good care of themselves (Triandis, 1995, p.137)." (Sastry and Ross, 233) In addition to the observation of the two authors, Asian people are more aware about the nutritional value that they can get in the foods that they will eat. In fact, even when I was in the Philippines, most Filipinos will buy their foods in the super-market; they will always read the informational labels of the food products. In fact, I always read the labels at the back of the food packaging, and I also convert the amount of calories from the fat of the food that I want to buy. Sastry and Ross conducted a study about health consciousness of Asian, and they found out that:

...allocentrics demonstrated a higher propensity to avoid foods that are high in cholesterol...have high salt content...have additives in them...or have a high amount of fat. Instead, they were concerned about getting enough calcium in their food...and with the amount of sugar they ate... and made a special effort to get enough fiber in their diet... (Sastry and Roos, 233).

This explains why Asians most likely prefer to prepare their meals inside their house rather than buying their meals from outside. Foods from outside are more exposed to high amounts of sodium, cholesterol, or even sugar that leads to many types of disease such as hypertension, which leads to heart attack and diabetes (which is one of the number one causes of death in America). Being a health conscious person is very important goal in achieving a happy life in the Asian cultures.

In relation to health consciousness of the collectivist group, financial satisfaction and financial optimism can also affect the person's view about life and happiness. Sastry

and Ross show that based on their study, Allocentrics have a lower financial satisfaction because saving for future was a luxury that he or she could not afford in the current situation (Sastry and Ross, 233). In my personal observation, Asians are more aware of their expenses, thus influencing their spending habits of their money for self satisfaction. For instance, the day after Thanks Giving Day in this country, American consumers are crazy in line in different department stores to buy lots of stuff. People wake up early and rush to fall in line. Although some Asians are already influenced with the kind of lifestyle here, outside the country, people will interpret this as crazy and impractical. In comparison the way collectivists shop, they bargain for the cheapest price. For example, in *Baclaran*, the place in the Philippines where you can buy cheap products, Filipinos still bargain over the price of an item even it is already cheap. In comparison, if you go to a department store, one will encounter that all of the prices are fixed and final. For them, after you shop and you still have some money that is left in your pocket, it is a sign of good fortune, for you know to look out for tomorrow.

The basis of positive financial control within the Allocentrics is the level of cognitions and motivations within the group. Harry Triandis claims that under the cognition level: "Collectivist think often about the needs of their in-group," where as the motivational level is: "...reflects receptivity and adjustments to the needs of others." (Triandis, 72) For example, I might be motivated to buy expensive things like jewelry when I am inside the department store. On the hand, I will also consider that if I will buy this jewelry; I will not have money to set aside for my mother's gift; I will then make her very unhappy. Or even more so, I am not supposed to buy a gift for my mother. Sometimes, parents want to know how much money you're spending and saving for

yourself and for the whole family. The idea behind this notion is that your money is their money. If this is the case, you always need to tell them because this is considered as a part of your responsibility to always seek their opinion. This might be sounds strange to other cultures but under this type of culture this is the right thing to do. Is this always the case? How about if you are successful, but the group fails to do their duty and they are failing? Does it mean that your success is meaningless? The notion under this culture is to preserve security among the members and not for individuals alone. Now that we figured out the family and personal values of the collectivist culture, third, let us study also about the environment and their lifestyle.

C. SOCIAL CUSTOMS AND LIFESTYLE

Communication is one method in which to get involved with other people and in the society. This is most especially in dealing with people and their lifestyle. Sometimes this can be literal or implied. It can be simple or complex that will end into either of these two products: a success or a failure. Whatever the result, this will give any affect to any relationship to other people and could also possibly give an impact to those people who are very interdependent. By means of communication, social lifestyle and customs of the collectivist culture has a great impact on how they interact with each other, which will play the role of who we really are.

According to Harry Triandis, the author of Culture and Social Behavior, “Communication can be frustrating when one person expects the other to use an abstractive style but the other uses an associative style.” (Triandis, 195) For example, Paul Rodel wrote the book Culture and Customs in the Philippines, states that the word

'yes' sometimes does not always mean "yes" in agreeing with something or someone. This scenario applies in the culture of the Filipino. He further explains that this word "'yes' is not a clear concept in the Philippines, and guidebooks warn, will say 'yes' when they are not sure and even when they actually mean 'no'." (Rodel, 195) For other cultures, this only an implication of not being true to oneself, but you cannot argue about this for the reason that this is how they were brought up. For Filipinos, by saying 'yes' to other persons, this will preserve harmony. Being hospitable to others, most especially to your guest, is one of the most precious behaviors of a Filipino and, neither to dismay, nor to hurt the feelings of other person.

Besides the example that has been used in the former paragraph, in the case of saying "no" to the other person instead of saying 'no', Filipinos will simply show some uneasiness that the other person can read in-between the lines the actual intended meaning. Furthermore, sensitivity to oneself must be observed to protect individual's self-esteem. Sometimes, being sensitive is a good thing, if it is accompanied with criticism. For example, "Raising of one's voice, staring, or standing with ones arms akimbo can be seen aggressive and, therefore, unwelcome." (Rodel, 199) These illustrations are not acceptable and, therefore, the person itself must be sensitive enough to read what the other person is telling, especially when there is a criticism between these individuals. The purpose of this attitude is to improve one another.

In addition of being hospitable and being sensitive, Filipino people like to socialize with a lot of other people, but sometimes they use socialization as their personal past time called 'tsismis.' (Rodel, 198) This word 'tsismis' means talking about someone's life, which most of the time results in the destruction of other people's image to the public.

Gossiping can cause trouble and revenge to the other person. Sometimes this feeling of anger, by either the victim of gossip or the person who causes the gossip, may be described as “associative thinking.” According to Triandis, Culture and Social Behavior, “In certain culture people believe they can kill an enemy by taking a needle and piercing a doll that represents him or her. The similarity between the doll and the person represented is seen as resulting in the desired death.” (Triandis, 196) This will only happen if there is a severe conflict between the groups or the individuals.

As times passes by, Triandis also added that “as people becoming more educated, they shift from associative to abstractive thinking.” (Triandis, 196) My observations in the provinces in my country, the Philippines, Filipinos find enjoyment from gossiping about other people’s lives. The fact is that the Filipino society contributes to this kind of behavior and practices such as the unemployment level in the Philippines allows people in the society the time to get involved in other’s lives. In comparison to areas like cities, where there is a lot of work, the personal habits will change as your society changes. Like here in this country, America, the cycle of life here is so fast so that you cannot even notice the hours that pass. Perhaps, in Asian countries, life is a little bit slower, which shows that a collectivist culture sometimes denies change. However, at present, these collectivist countries are accepting changes. They do not believe nor act without seeing the actual result first, before they will accept that a particular notion is valid. As a result, Asians think now from being abstract to being “concrete and contrast.” (Triandis, 196)

Paralinguistic communication is also important in learning about a person and the society in which you’re living. For Triandis, Culture and Social Behavior, he said that:

In associative communications people also depend very much on paralinguistic cues, such as looking someone in the eye, touching or not touching, keeping a certain distance from the other person, standing in a certain way (face to face, or at angle-and how large is the angle), using a particular level of voice, using perfume or other olfactory cues, keeping the body tense or relaxed, and so on (Triandis, 198).

For example, communication without words in Japan is normal, especially in many restaurants. These restaurants use plastic replicas of their offerings, which includes the price. These replicas or duplicates are made so well so that the people who want to buy the food or menu just look closely to the duplicates and just point out their order, especially if you are a beginner to eating Japanese food. (Triandis, 197) In addition, in a relationship, if one partner is upset or mad to his or her partner, one of them may not say anything, no matter how mad or upset the other partner may be. He or she will remain silent, until one of them notices that his or her partner is not feeling fine. There is a denial between these two partners for the purpose of protecting the relationship and not to cause the relationship from going farther apart. For example, the man says, "Is there something wrong, my Honey?" And the woman says, "Nothing is wrong...I am fine," even though that is not the truth, and she is actually upset yet prefers not to say anything, in order to avoid further conflict. Again, collectivist people would rather show their true feelings by gesture, eye contact, or any body movement that creates communication to every individual, in order to preserve the relationship of the group itself. And it is better for them to suffer, in the sense of denying their true feelings of actually being hurt, because loyalty, sincerity and faithfulness comes first, before thinking about one's self.

In the case of financial matters, how do Allocentrics satisfy themselves and spend their money? For Allocentrics, they are more concerned for tomorrow's living than the

present. In that sense, they always try their best to save money, every time they spend it. In the article “The Values and Lifestyle of Idiocentrics in an Individualist Culture: A Descriptive Approach,” Triandis further explains that “collectivist is more likely to be ethnocentric. Therefore, the ethnocentric Allocentrics is expected to demonstrate a greater degree of fear of the ‘unknown other’... (Triandis, 235) Collectivists have more fun, if they will just spend their time with their love ones or family, rather than travelling. Traveling costs a lot of money, which this culture is trying to avoid - unnecessary expenses. He also added that other culture is stronger to take risk like in gambling than the collectivist ones. (Triandis, 235)

In terms of being patient in order to finish something, Allocentrics are graded higher than the individualist. (Triandis, 236) Triandis uses the data of what are the types of people who usually use the public library and finish reading. The Collectivist is less interested in utilizing modern technologies and more interested in basic and manual labor and methods. For example, in preparing the food itself, collectivist prepares more food inside the house, than buying outside the house. Again besides the idea of spending too much money, they are more aware about the quality of food that they eat, because they believe that “what you eat is what you are” - being health conscious. Triandis says too that “in-group oriented activities that reinforce the group identity of an individual were focused on by Allocentrics.” (Triandis, 236) For example, because Filipinos are known as hospitable people, they will serve different types of delicious food if they have a feast or a special guest that will visit them inside their house. They always love to welcome people and be their guest in their “home sweet home.” Sometimes, this will end in some exaggeration, because, if the host is not ready to welcome guests, the host might borrow

money just to use in welcoming their guest and to preserve their name in order to avoid shame in the society.

All these beliefs, traditions and different ways of communication affect how and why people behave in a certain way that other people cannot understand. A strong sense of commitment to ones group contributed also to these factors of why some people, like collectivist people, want to hide their true feelings in interacting with other persons, and why do they prioritize first the whole group or other people instead of themselves. Sometimes these things are hard to understand, and we always give question, but the only thing that we can do is to try to understand and accept these things that this is the society from which we came. As we just study about how do they evolve and involve within their society, fourth, let us try to study the work value of this group.

D. WORK VALUE

Work ethics varies differently from every individual, group, and society. Work can be less or more, that is, work depends on the society where you are living. Some people are more independent individuals working on a project, but some are more comfortable by working in a group. In a collectivist culture, the relationship toward others comes first before any rewards that they can get from the job. How about in terms of family obligation, which comes first? As discussed from earlier paragraphs, the group values harmony peace and unity.

For collectivists, in comparison to other cultures, they are less of a workaholic and more dependent upon their co-workers than individualists. Triandis conducted a study and its shows that “Allocentrics ...had a lot of spare time (Allocentrics= 2.90; Idiocentrics= 2.75; $t= 2.72$, p value is less than .001).” (Triandis, 235) This statement

does not mean that collectivist people are not working hard in their job. They are working hard, too, like other people who belong to different cultures. However, what this statement means is that they are more aggressive to make the work done sooner. Perhaps, I can use my country as an example to this situation. In my country, people are not paid by the hour. They are paid by the salary, not unless they are working at some job that pays “under the table.” Some companies are also adopting now the style of paying their employees by the hour, but only a few of them. Over Time is not common in our country. When it is time to go home, they will save the rest of the work for the following day and that is why a lot of unfinished work is very common in my country. If you have to file some papers, you have to wait for months upon months before the work is finished. Probably, in my humble observation about this notion, is that people are getting excited to go home, because they want to devote the rest of their time to their families and not only to their professional work.

On the case of dependency to each other, they feel more confident to get the work done and present to the board of committees if they can work in a group together. Besides that they value friendship as Triandis emphasize in his journal, “The Values and Lifestyle and Allocentrics in an Individualist Culture: A Descriptive Approach,” Allocentrics also believe and value the opinion of other people. They believe the idea that “two heads are better than one.” The thoughts and suggestions from others are very important for them to succeed. It is not about only the ideas that they can borrow or learn from their peers, but, as well as, they can get self confidence from outside. If for instance, I am working for a project, but then I need some feedback from my co-workers on what do they think of my project? If I will not consider their opinion, it is not only an

insult in their part, but it is a matter of losing great ideas from them. To gain confidence does not mean that you will accept the opinion from another person. It is matter of learning from other people, whether it is for the good or for failure. (Triandis, 235)

In connection to learning from your peers at work, Triandis states that “corporations in collectivist countries generally train their employees much more than do corporations in individualistic countries.” (Triandis, 147) Triandis said that corporation trains the employees to be more loyal, so that they will not leave the company. By keeping employees, companies can save more on their financial and time rather than having employees who are flexible and leaving the company if the employee can get a better deal from a competitor. (Triandis, 147) Some corporations will give good benefits and vacations to their good employees. Sometimes, they can get too many vacations, especially, in my country, that the work that is supposed to be done is always postponed for the following business day or month.

While some people are working so hard in their own country, overseas-contract labor is also in demand in some countries, like the Philippines, just to give their families a brighter future. According to Rodel, *Culture and Customs of the Philippines*, it is sad to say that:

...the weakness of the Philippine economy that cannot offer its citizens the prospect of a decent career and livelihood, the number of Filipinos who have migrated overseas on temporary short-term work contracts has mushroomed during the 1980's and 1990's (Triandis, 208).

In 1998, Rodel also reported that “there were 755,684 Filipino overseas workers found in more than 100 countries, with most still working in the Middle East...” (Triandis, 208), and this is only an implication that the economy of the Philippines is getting worse. The

very sad thing in this part is that even college graduates are forced to sign contracts from foreign countries just to have something to start with in their life. Some overseas contract workers are successful about the career that they chose, but some are not. Sometimes, this kind of job will cost their lives and dignity, as some reports that Filipinas working from the foreign countries, such as in the Middle East, are victims of abuse. Even now, Filipinos are aware of these different kinds of abuse, but, still, they are craving to come here and work. Why do they do this? The love for the family is one of the reasons why they will take the risk and even sacrifice their own lives just for the sake of the future of the whole family.

Being dependent and less of a workaholic are some of the results of the influence of the society that evolves in the case of the collectivist people. Asking the opinion from other persons is valued in this type of society. It is not a sign of not possessing the knowledge pertaining to the job that you're working or, simply, laziness, but it is a sign of being aware of the opinion from other people on what, how, and why do they feel that there is a need of improvement. Being dependent also from another person creates close relationships. Meanwhile, family has also a great influence and why some, or probably most, Collectivist groups are less of a workaholic than others. Allocentrics are trying to balance the responsibility in their job and also in their family. They like that even the busiest days in their work, they want to have some time to be with their families. Sacrificing one's life or happiness is the best thing you can give to your family and that is why Asians are considered patient, loyal, loving, and caring in terms of their work and families. Now, that we finished looking at the different aspects of their life like family,

personal, social and work value, let see how these values affect each individual through the analysis of either the positive or negative feedback.

II. ANALYSIS

A. POSITIVE FEEDBACK

It has been discussed in the previous topics that one of the values that collectivist people promote is the preserving of the close linkage of each member of the group. For such an individual to carry that value, this must start from his or her parents. Home is the first school of the children and the parent is the first teacher of the children. The measurement of closeness in a relationship depends on how the parents show their love and care of their children. On the child rearing, Triandis, Individualism and Collectivism, says that parents, "...control their children by providing high rates of interaction, guidance, and consultation." (Triandis, 63) For example, in choosing a career, parents must always intervene on what career choice their children should take. If child X wants to be a teacher for instance, but the parents of this child want him or her to choose law as his or her career, then the child's options to choose what career path he or she will get becomes limited. It might end up that he or she will get the second option, which is, his or her parent's choice. Some reasons why this will happen is that sometimes, it is in the family that all or most of the members are lawyers. So, the parents would like to preserve that line of being a lawyer in their history. By doing this, not only the close relationship to every member of the family will be preserved or valued, but also the passing of knowledge inside the family will be cherished.

Besides from passing the knowledge inside the family, respect and loyalty are also maintained within the group. If the parents teach well their children, at the time they

will need some companionship, their children will automatically repay their parents without being asked. They will have the initiative to do such things, like taking care of their parents when they get older. It is not only a matter of obligation, but it is a matter of loving and caring somebody who sacrificed themselves in order to nourish and nurture the children. This concept of being responsible is highly valued in this culture. Sometimes, they would rather not get married, if they cannot take care of their parents. If this happens, they are bound to their parents' lives without any regret. Loyalty and respect inside the family comes first before anything else.

In terms of the financial matters, the Collectivist, as it has been mentioned in the earlier topics, their concern is more focused on tomorrow than today. This means that they always think for the future, like saving money for tomorrow's expenses. This idea of conservation begins in the close linkage between the members of the group. Their thoughts of the present are not as important as their thoughts of tomorrow, because they believe that "it is not always a feast." This notion and ideal of the tomorrow, the Collectivist parents try to pass this belief on to their children. For instance, a child wants to buy a new toy, but the parents, most especially the mother, will always say "no," because the child still has an old toy. This situation reminds me when I was a child. I and my mother went to church one day and outside the church, there are some men who are selling different kinds of toys. One of the toys that they were selling was different sizes and colors of balloons. I asked my mother to buy me one of the big red balloons, but my mother refused, because I still had a balloon from a previous day, it was just a smaller size. Now that I am older and my understanding about this situation has changed, I can see that it was not a sign of selfishness or frugality by my parents, but rather they wanted

to control their children from spending on unnecessary things. By practical situations, a child can learn and understand more clearly why sometimes collectivist parents are very strict and tight in controlling their children.

In connection to financial matters, the balance between spending time at work and inside the family is also one of the positive feedbacks of this culture. It has been viewed in the previous topics that Allocentrics scored lower than Idiocentrics (Triandis, 235). Their individual success and achievement is not their priority. The idea of having a balance is important in having a happy life. Work alone cannot give them their happiness. For instance, Christmas time in my country is celebrated. This means that this season is a national holiday and most of the companies, especially in the government sector, are on vacation. Perhaps if we will take a look in a different perspective of other cultures, people from other countries and cultures celebrate Christmas, it is not in the same manner or fashion of the Asian countries – how Christmas is observed or how the vacation is taken. This special season is one of the important days where families gathered together not only to celebrate Christmas, but it is a time of sharing and renewing the relationship towards other members of the family. By means of sharing and renewing the relationship inside the group, this will strengthen them to have a better and closer relationship. As we always say, “it is good to have a day off.”

Not only about balancing between your time at work and time for your family but also maintaining a good relationship towards your co-workers is also important in this culture. Having a good relationship with the other employees, not only promotes a faster and more reliable result of the project on which you are working, but also promotes unity and harmony. As people say, “it is fun to work with people who have a sense of humor.”

Imagine that you are working with people who are less fun with their co-workers or even people who totally do not have a sense of humor, how would you feel? How do your feelings of insecurity and madness towards others affect the result of your project? And do you want to work in an environment that almost every day you are attacked or being irritated by your partner on the project which you are working? How terrible to work in that kind of environment, especially if most of your co-workers are selfish and inconsiderate, right? Not only will your work suffer in this terrible situation, but, most of all, it is you who will suffer the consequences. Stress is one of the causes of some serious illnesses of people. Too much tension will lead to either trouble inside your work or gaining serious illness, like a heart attack or hypertension. If you are always uncomfortable seeing your co-worker due to not being treated well, then that is a bad sign of not having a good relationship towards other. This does not mean that having a good relationship is easy to earn, which it is not. Having a balanced relationship is achieved by having good communication with your peers.

If living in a sound environment can promote a good relationship in society, eating the right food will make the country healthier and wealthier as well. Having healthy people is a good sign of a progressive country. Although this is not always the case, collectivist people are known for being health conscious. Their sensitivity about the food outside, like fast-food, makes them strive for a healthy life. It is not only a matter of saving money, but also a matter of being concerned about the food you are taking-in. As it has been discussed in the previous sections of my paper, “what you eat is what you are.” People in the collectivist culture not only promote a close linkage between the members of the group, but they promote love and care by eating healthy food.

Through the means of preserving unity, close linkage, love, and care, the balance within the society is maintained. Every element is important that needs to preserve and nourish by the members of the group. Without the other, the other elements will fail as a result of not succeeding in life. A strong emphasis of these values must be carried by each individual and passed through generation by generation. The inheritance of knowledge from our parents is one of the most valuable things that a collectivist person like me can inherit. Now, let us try to see also other impact that these different values might bring into the individual's life and into the whole society, which is the negative feedback.

B. NEGATIVE FEEDBACK

If there are some positive outcomes of these different values of the collectivist culture, there are always some disadvantages. The sense of personal control versus the control from the group is one of the factors that might contribute to this negative feedback from this culture. According to Triandis, "Asian Ethnicity and the Sense of Personal Control," "some people feel that they have completely free choice and control over their lives, and other people feel that what they do has not real effect on what happens to them." (Triandis, 106) Everything that is in excess is dangerous. Therefore, too much control in the life of an individual also promotes destruction to their lives.

Love and care are one of the foundations of having a stronger family unit. Sometimes, we cross the line which will result to some negative effects on the life of an individual. For instance, parents are very strict to their children that even from the simple to the most complex of making a decision for themselves, parents are always there not only to guide their children, but over all to guide them in life. A basic example of this

situation is that choosing the right career for their child. As I used in my previous topics of the positive feedback about this kind of behavior, if he or she wants to be a teacher but the parents wish him or her to be a lawyer, most likely some misunderstanding between the child and the parents will exist. Some children are obedient to follow what their parents want them to choose as a career. In the case of these obedient children, there are two results that will happen in following their parent's wish either a successful or a failure. The definition of being a success in this situation is not only getting and finishing the career of his or her parent's choice but also at the end learning to like the career that these children decide to follow. There are some people too that even after they achieve their parent's choice of career, they are still not happy. They are just doing this for the sake of being an obedient child towards their parents, which will result to the opposite definition of being successful, which is a failure.

In relation to the topic of being the parents are very strict in controlling their children's lives; the feeling of being pressured inside the family is one of the effects of the idea of being very respectful and loyal to your family. Inside the collectivist culture, loyalty and respect are observed within the members of this society. The Allocentrics children are loyal and respectful towards their parents, because of the child rearing. Parents show love and affection towards their kids when they are little. So the parents get older, the children will repay their kindness by caring for their parents. Even though it is not directly implied to their children, they learn that it is natural, like when you are giving bread to the other person; you are not expecting anything in return. Most Allocentrics are unaware of this situation, but we are unconsciously motivated by our parents to repay their kindness. As a result, the conservative person feels that he or she is obliged to

follow what the group or the family wishes. To cover the true feelings of being pressured, some conservative persons use the reason that this is a part of our responsibility. It's just the way our society motivates us to the way we are now.

Being pressured means having less freedom inside the group. When a person has less freedom in his or her life, it might also result in either becoming a rebellious person or always the victim of slavery. Slavery in this situation does not mean being a helper of someone who is more superior to the person itself. For example, in the case of the extended family, the provider most of the time, he or she will always be the provider of the family. Whereas, the Receiver is always be the Receiver, due to the Provider will let the Receiver make him or her serve as the provider of all their needs. The dependability will always present itself in most of the situations of the extended family. The learning process is very slow, because they always have the idea in their mind that the Provider will always shoulder the responsibility of the entire family. This kind of situation will add to the problem of the present society, which is in an economic crisis. Making the other members of the family or even the group in a society will eventually paralyze the entire system of economic growth. Being responsible inside the family is good but does not mean that a person from a collective society is also responsible for the other person's life.

The responsibility which most Allocentrics always carry will also lead to great stress and anxiety. Most Asians have the feeling of guilt and eventually self-blaming. If they cannot fulfill their responsibility for their role as a part of a family or a member in a society, most of the time they blame themselves. As a result they feel sad, which results to depression that depends on the degree of their responsibility. Like the example of the previous paragraph about the Provider and the Receiver. If the Provider fails to fulfill one

of his or her responsibilities, he or she will feel guilty and blame his or herself why he or she did not meet the expectations of the group or family. The idea of “it is my fault” is false guilt and self blame, because we do not realize that there are some things that we are not able to control, as we cannot control people’s lives or people’s fates.

On the other hand, the idea of socialization is also good, but sometimes we just need to be more careful in what kind of group of people we are dealing with. The close linkage sometimes will end up into disaster. Like for example, crab mentality in the Philippines’s culture is very common especially when one of the members of the group is improving. Some negative traits of the members of the group in my country is that they will help first their members to succeed, but when that member is promoted into a higher position, one of them will also try to see some way in which to destroy and pull down his or her partner. Jealousy and selfishness are also present in this kind of society, although it is not openly admitted and most likely being ignored by the society. This negative behavior will also add to the burden of the whole society, because on the final run, no one will go to the top or to lead them into a better future.

If there be positive effects of being a collectivist person, there are some negative effects too as human are made to be not perfect. Therefore, if there is goodness in the heart of a person, there is some darkness too. The feeling of guilt of not fulfilling your responsibility towards your family or to your group will cause trouble such as stress, anxiety, and depression, which is not helpful when attempting to succeed in life. The idea of balance between one self and to the society is a good start to have a better understanding and experience on what we have to do in times of tight situations. Values

and traditions inside and outside of our family is highly valued and preserved, but the most significant among these values is your value as a person to drive your own destiny.

III. CONCLUSION

As we have learned in the previous topics that we have discussed, human beings evolve in a different society, which creates man's personal identity. For millions of years, society creates an image of man that reflects who we were and who we are today by involving ourselves in a group which starts inside our home, our family. Our family is the basic unit of our society and this is the first place where we learned our own personal values and where we were nurtured through different customs and lifestyles, including our work values. The establishments of the different values inside and outside our family promote different values, which introduce different groups of people. Collectivism is one of the groups of people where they value harmony, unity, and equality.

Asian countries are belonging to the collectivist culture. As we already discussed in the previous subjects, people from these society value loyalty, commitment, honor and respect. We also figured out that individual's freedom is not the priority of these groups. Instead, the loyalty and commitment towards the family is on the top of the list of the collectivist people. The parents teach and encourage their children to respect and commit to the family in an implied manner. Most of the people in the society do not pay attention to this matter. As one of the collectivist persons, we feel that it is a part of our obligation as to why we have to obey (always) our parents. Even though these are our values that create us, who we are now, our family teaches us to behave this way, as the society contributes in promoting these values.

In relation to the idea of promoting loyalty towards our family and the essence of obligation to do our duty as an obedient child, the feeling of guilty and self-blame come when we do not fulfill our obligation inside and outside the group. Like in the case of the extended family that I used as an example of my previous topics, the provider will blame his or herself if he or she does not meet the needs of the receiver. The issue of dependency versus independency contributes to the economic burden inside of the family where is one person is trying to meet the basic need of the entire family. This issue reflects also in our environment, which creates the idea of an unproductive society.

Besides the obligation and the feeling of guilt towards ourselves when we cannot meet the expectations of our family, our parents play an important role in making personal decision. Freedom versus personal control creates confusion to an individual to choose what he or she wants to do in his or her life. The example of choosing the “right” career in the earlier topics brings the idea of who really decides in our part as a person? Our parent involves themselves in the decision making. The obedient children will follow what the parents want him or her to get. The reason why the child will follow the parent’s wish is that the family and even the society create an image of an obedient child to always obey the parent’s will. This is one of the causes of stress and anxiety which will lead to depression.

If a child is limited in terms of their personal control in making their decision on their own, the collectivist culture promotes also close linkage not only inside the family but also in the society. Having a good communication is one way to have close relationship to other people. Sometimes, different places give different meanings to the different languages that we are using. Like the example that we used in the previous sections of

this paper, some place like the Philippines, the word “yes” has different meanings which is the opposite of the implied. Maintaining good relationship, like not being so obvious about showing the true feelings to the other person, is one way of preserving shame of the whole family or a group. Filipino people are known as being hospitable people and use this method in order not hurt the feelings of other persons. Once again, happiness of Allocentrics people depends on the happiness of the group and not the individual. As time evolves, more professionals came to the idea from being abstract into a being of clarity.

As time is improving as well as the way how people communicate, financial matters are also one of the concerns of the Allocentrics. Saving for tomorrow is more important than spending at present, especially if it is unnecessary. As Triandis, the author of Individualism and Collectivism, reports that Allocentrics spend more time in their family rather than going traveling to other countries and doing insignificant expenses, like gambling. (Triandis, 235) In addition, collectivist people are also health conscious which give them the opportunity to prepare their own food instead of going outside. Besides, being more concerned on eliminating unimportant leisure, collectivist is also less of a workaholic. They have the balance of maintaining their time with their family and their work. Their concern is not individual’s achievement and competition; instead they can work better in a group rather than working on their own.

Overall, in every value that this group of people from collectivist society promotes, there is always a positive and negative feedback. One of the positive feedbacks is loyalty and commitment towards the member of the family or the entire society. This value promotes love and care, especially if the children most take care of their parents when

they get older. In return, this might also give a negative feedback on the part of the children for they will sacrifice entirely themselves, especially in the case of deciding on what kind of path you would like to take. Usually, if there is no balance between self obligation and family obligation, great pressure will exist and eventually, this might lead to the individual's destruction. Like in science, if there is no homeostasis inside our body we cannot survive. If we cannot survive, therefore we cannot exist in this world. For as long as we live, there is our family, our society, in creating our real reflection of yesterday, today, and tomorrow.