

# **Influences of the "Culture Industry" on the Tri-Focal Functions of Higher Education Institutions and Their Implications for Quality Education**

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## ***Abstract***

*Education is a fundamental right of every individual. Everyone is entitled to this right, and no one should be deprived, regardless of status, gender, color, sexuality, religion, and culture. Education is a doorway to enhance skills and talents and enables individuals to explore multiple opportunities for continuous self-development. Schools, colleges, and universities should not only have the duty to provide quality education to people but also have the highest calling to provide and maintain safe spaces where students share equal access to education. However, this paper argues that educational institutions, specifically in higher education, tend to neglect the duties and responsibilities they hold within society. Due to the demand for internationalization and by seeking to upscale itself in the international landscape, Indigenous people remain an easy target to experience disparity when it comes to equal access and quality education. Using critical theory as a framework and methodology will expose how education, with its trifocal functions (instructions, extension, research), becomes an avenue to perpetuate discrimination in various forms and at different levels among the Indigenous community. This study will examine the educational systems of higher education institutions to determine whether they promote culturally sensitive education that benefits Indigenous people. The researcher will use Theodore Adorno's 'culture industry' concept to identify the 'instrumentalities' already existing in higher education. Adorno's concept of the culture industry will help the researchers expose the materialistic and capitalistic tendencies of higher education institutions (HEIs) that subordinate and exploit education's fundamental value by fostering an individualistic or corporate-oriented pursuit of a market economy in education.*

**Keywords:** Indigenous access, Culture industry, Commodification, Marketization, Higher education.

25



## **Introduction**

According to Jacob et al. (2015), the terms Indigenous, indigeneity, and Indigenous community are considered central to most policy debates, with direct implications on social justice issues, human rights, and education in general. The term refers to "a native" of a certain place, as one is Indigenous to his/her own native place/land (Alterado, 2021). As such, Indigenous people are vulnerable to discrimination, poverty, and sociocultural marginalization, which affect their experiences in education, often with the sole intention of preserving their identity, language, and culture. Similarly, the term itself has been inundated with various definitions, with the most common interpretations associated with being 'Native,' 'Aboriginal,' or 'Local' (Jacob et al., 2015). According to some writers, there is no concrete or exact definition for identifying Indigenous people because nothing can truly capture the diversity found in each Indigenous people's culture, languages, identities, histories, and other circumstances.

As of 2023, the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples (IDWIP) estimates that there are 476 million Indigenous peoples living in 90 nations. They have their own knowledge systems, values, institutions, behaviors, and economies. Indigenous peoples have established their own cultural traditions and ways of passing knowledge to future generations (Aseron et al., 2013). The Philippines has a population of almost 110 million inhabitants, with 75% belonging to various ethnic groups and the other 25% belonging to Indigenous tribes. More than 110 ethnic tribes and cultural communities face extinction in the country (Abejuela, 2007). The country's tribal people are becoming poorer and more disenfranchised as the devastation of their traditional cultures and lands continues. Consequently, the Indigenous people experience economic and cultural disempowerment.

The Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (IPRA) provides a legislative foundation for promoting and recognizing Indigenous rights and establishing Indigenous schools. Despite the recent legislation, there are very few Indigenous schools created in the country, and government support remains minimal. Abejuela (2007) noted that in addition to these difficulties, the growth of formal education and religious denominations in human relations has led to Indigenous cultures and practices being neglected or worse, discouraged. From this point on, education becomes a barrier that stigmatizes Indigenous identity. Indigenous students begin to lose public interest and are subjected to various forms of prejudice both within and outside of school. Indigenous children battle for equality and respect against discriminatory and racist attitudes. To defend Indigenous peoples' rights to quality education, the United Nations' State of the World's Indigenous Peoples (published in 2009) proposed a remedy. To construct and govern their own education processes, Indigenous people should be able to teach in their own language or in a way relevant to their cultural teaching and



learning methods. A similar situation occurred in the Philippines when the Department of Education implemented guidelines (released in 2016) on allocating and utilizing Indigenous people's education (Department of Education, 2016).

As a disclaimer, this paper does not intend to overgeneralize Higher education institutions or universities as evil entities, rather this paper explores the propensities of universities to implement unethical practices through the trifocal functions (Research, Extension, and Instruction) becoming avenues that perpetuates discrimination and alienation of the indigenous peoples. With that said, the objective of this paper is to explore the importance of recognizing the role of Indigenous education in the realm of higher education, delving into the issues of marketization and commodification as a result of emerging industries. In addition, this paper talks about the propensity of Higher Education Institutions to cross over ethical boundaries in pursuit of (Indigenous) knowledge, contributing to the impact of the culture industry within higher education, wherein higher education institution are shifting their attention to marketability rather than the needs of students, which is detrimental to the overall characteristics of what education is. After all, education should promote diversity of thought (Apolo et al., 2025), making the aspirations and dreams of people a reality rather than creating "products" that offer more monetary value for the corporate world, ultimately decolonizing the Westernization of education as a whole. To quote Walter Mignolo, "Decoloniality promotes pluriversality as a universal option—which means that what 'should be' universal is in fact pluriversal, and not a single totality" (Mignolo, 2018). There is no room for colonial mentality within the academic sector; it should be inclusive and free for all people, regardless of culture, religion, color, gender, sexuality, etc.

## **Methodology**

To question the systemic influences that perpetuate the cycle of discrimination against Indigenous peoples from education, the study utilized critical theory as its methodology. Referencing Theodor Adorno's theory of the culture industry, this paper describes universities as both products and tools of modern capitalism, in which institutional demands, in the form of the trifocal obligation through research, extension, and instruction, tend to coincide with economic utility over humanistic purposes. This paper exposes and critiques the commodification and marketization of higher education institutions (HEIs), where they contribute to the marginalization of Indigenous communities within the academic sphere.

Moreover, qualitative research design is used to examine the policies, journal articles, related literature, and legislative mandates, delving purely into textual analysis to sustain the philosophical nature of the paper. Documents such as DepEd orders pertaining to Indigenous Peoples Education, educational policies, and national and international publications serve as



the groundwork to produce a profound critique on the implication of higher education in the lived experiences of Indigenous peoples in the Philippines. That is, these texts critically examine the patterns, language, and social archetypes that sustain exclusionary practices against Indigenous communities, rendering them unable to participate fully in education.

## **Results and Discussion**

### *The Indigenous People and Education*

Despite the government and educational organizations' efforts to increase Indigenous involvement in the public domain, Indigenous people still face discrimination today, with schools being a primary venue for such experiences. Indigenous people are treated differently and made to adapt to school or university mandate protocols, causing incompatibility with their practices and traditions. Buying uniforms and shoes, for example, is out of reach for many Indigenous communities. It shows the mainstream educational system's failure to address the Indigenous community context by labeling Indigenous people as slow learners due to their difficulty adapting to the common standard, especially in oral communication. Indigenous peoples and other marginalized groups face many challenges to education and suffer behind in educational success.

In the absence of adjustments in the educational system, which includes developing curricula that are inattentive or insensitive to Indigenous ways and traditions, there will be an educational gap, limiting access to education for the privileged. Because of their isolation, Indigenous peoples have been seen as inadequate to contribute to modern society, and the introduction of information and communication technology courses in colleges and universities has responded to the current influx of demands (Department of Education, 2016). In some cases, Indigenous culture is discussed in the classroom. The emphasis will be on the artifacts and activities like songs, costumes, etc., rather than the tribe as a whole. Similarly, some Indigenous individuals who have attended mainstream schools have become pompous, closed-minded, or estranged from their communities. As a result of the youth's disregard for their traditions, the meaning of cultural rituals is perverted, causing alienation.

### *Indigenous Education in the Philippines*

Indigenous people face several changes concerning the pedagogies in education. Biana et al. (2021) reported that teachers lack the linguistic proficiency necessary to contribute profoundly to IP students' educational needs. Venegas et al. (2025) also found that taking tests that use English as the instruction medium nearly guarantees IP students to fail. In addition, the inability to fully participate and share their lived experiences due to the linguistic gap compromises the IP students' education (Venegas et al., 2025). According to Eduardo and



Gabriel (2021, p. 2), "The concern of IP education is both global and international in scope. IPs are mostly deprived of access to quality education." Moreover, in a world where IPs are deprived of educational motivation, they will inevitably be deprived of the social privileges that come with education, resulting in a lack of genuine engagement with society.

However, there are efforts in trying to cater to the needs of the Indigenous Peoples, especially in the Philippines, which must be duly recognized in this paper. DepEd has implemented DO 42, encouraging the mainstreaming of the educational system towards the educational needs of IPs and Cultural Communities (Department of Education, 2004). According to the DepEd order, curricula, teachers, and school calendars will be able to adhere to the needs of IP students. In particular, the curriculum is mandated to find a balance in achieving learning competencies to master the significance of Indigenous peoples and various cultural communities. Second, this mandate explores the possibility of non-degree holders in education handling matters concerning culture, tradition, and practices, which non-Indigenous teachers may teach ineffectively.

Moreover, the DO 101, s. 2010, in response to the "Education for All" campaign, the Department of Education provided core areas related to IP and the learning competencies necessary to meet the learning needs of IP communities. Found within the order, topics regarding family life, health, civil consciousness, income, and the environment of IP communities are introduced in order to acknowledge their concerns further while also providing an avenue for other pupils to learn about the multifaceted life of Indigenous peoples (Department of Education, 2010). Indeed, proper foundations must be established to define the areas relevant to Indigenous-appropriate education clearly.

Indigenous Peoples continue to struggle today as a result of a lack of access to education, which may further hinder their ability to participate in the affairs of contemporary life. From limitations in services to failing to provide proper culturally appropriate education are two of the many factors that continue to thwart opportunities for education for Indigenous people. Under DepEd Order 62 2, 2011, they recognized the need to adopt a system that appropriately responds to the diverse context while exercising respect to cultural identities to prevent undermining IPs' cultural heritage (Department of Education, 2011). By creating a system that caters to the needs of the IP, they are encouraged to engage in meaningful participation, empowering them to exercise their rights and duties, which further the goal of removing barriers that impede the participation of IP in society.

Furthermore, the adoption of the Indigenous Peoples Education Curriculum Framework, or IPED, is a monumental addition for Indigenous Peoples' participation in education. It focuses on the idea that the curriculum must relate itself to a particular setting, situation, or area of application relevant to learners, which, in this case, Indigenous students,



or what they call "Contextualization" (Department of Education, 2015). There are degrees to which contextualization is distinguishable. These are: (1) Localization, which refers to the idea of relating the curriculum to local information relevant to the learner, and (2) Indigenization, which refers to enhancing the curriculum, resources, and pedagogy in order to relate it to the socio-cultural context of the learner's community. Implementing the IPED Framework creates an avenue for active participation of the Indigenous Peoples. Directly involving the IP learners in the process of education cultivates a sense of ownership and belongingness, which ensures that the overarching goal of the IPED ultimately resonates with their cultural heritage and tradition. With that said, designing a culturally relevant curriculum that reflects the values, stories, and lived experiences of Indigenous life creates a more meaningful educational experience for the IP students.

According to Gonzales (1989), Indigenous students may find school alienating due to a lack of relatable content present within their institution, in connection with the Western effects on higher education. This lack of concern for the diversity of thought present within society may be detrimental to the overall developmental goals of education. Cases and Quiambao (2023) noted that schools are already having a hard time finding Indigenous enrollees, and Indigenous peoples are also finding it difficult to enroll in schools because of the many challenges they face, such as poverty, discrimination, and parental influence. Therefore, it is imperative to encourage the Indigenous communities to find the drive that shapes their motivation, which may awaken their academic aspirations (Casas & Quiambao, 2023). By creating an inclusive environment and support systems custom to the unique cultural backgrounds of Indigenous people, educational institutions can bridge the gap between Indigenous identity and education. In short, a system that values diversity ensures empowerment.

#### *Commodification of Indigenous Knowledge*

It is no secret that knowledge, in general, is being commodified. According to Minbaeva and Minbayev; Cornelio (2024;2023), prominent universities worldwide are pressured to publish academic research. In particular, higher education institutions are increasingly becoming hubs for commodifying knowledge through research papers. Universities, particularly in neoliberal economies, prioritize profit, efficiency, and competition (Strhan, 2010). The point is, it becomes increasingly more enticing for universities to profit by way of commodifying Indigenous knowledge in research. By definition, commodification refers to transforming an entity into something that can be exchanged for (market) value (Pankova & Khaldeeva, 2017). All forms of knowledge have no escape from this process of commodification. Smith and Smith (2018) argue that the education sector has started commodifying Indigenous knowledge, taking a keen interest in Indigenous communities and

30

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ISSN 2799-0435



what they have to offer. In hindsight, this process is ideal for the preservation of Indigenous knowledge. However, colonization has still taken a new form (Smith & Smith, 2018). In short, the Indigenous communities can be seen as mere means to the higher education institution's ends — a modern form of colonization.

According to Guena and Nesta (2008), Universities that patent research are rising, which could potentially limit access to academic journals due to the existence of a paywall. Nevertheless, the key issue here is that because universities are treating academic journals of Indigenous knowledge as products, Indigenous knowledge becomes a mining site for profit. On the other hand, others argue that the commodification of Indigenous knowledge in research may also serve to be beneficial, especially for developing countries where state-funded universities may use this commodity as third-stream income (Botshelo, 2008). With that said, most universities that adhere to neoliberal principles cloak their interest in the pursuit of internationalization. Indeed, when capitalistic tendencies are prioritized, people's needs are overlooked.

#### *Marketization of Education as "Culture Industry"*

According to Oplatka (2010), globalization or the rising worldwide interconnectedness of economies is firmly related to liberal capitalism as the dominating economic world. Globalization has many elements, and the higher education industry is now a well-established worldwide phenomenon. Globalization in higher education is followed by marketization, as universities are driven to compete for research funds and generate marketable "products." It emphasizes the importance of external interactions, quality assurance, worldwide and national competitions, and marketing-led management (Oplatka, 2010). Higher education has become an 'instrument' for economic gain, rather than a place for human development. To serve the larger system of capitalist interests, higher education tends to support the 'culture industry' system, which constantly provides standardized systems and manipulative methods.

According to Natale and Doran (2011), Higher Education Institutions operate similarly as "brands" to create a more competitive status due to the gradual permeation of business practices and principles, marketing education as "products" rather than a public good. Accordingly, these institutions focus their attention on advertising degrees that are catered towards specific job requirements, relying on employment opportunities and the idea that students should be lifelong consumerists in their chosen field instead of pursuing degrees that cultivate their abstract and critical thinking (Natale & Doran, 2011), which could potentially hinder transformation on a more profound and personal level. In short, profits are squeezed from students while universities are run by bureaucrats whose sole purpose is to increase capital, resulting in lower academic standards (Tan, 1998). Moreover, when collegiate-level



institutions become "the same," they become inflexible to all aspects of life (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1944). In other words, higher education institutions have the potential to annihilate degrees that they deem impractical. By saturating field with degrees of the same, it undermines the plurality of education as a whole, instead only focusing on "industry-grade" fields, monopolizing education.

Theodor Adorno posed a compelling challenge by questioning whether society and organizations truly understand education. He even challenged whether the current education status or discourse could enhance an individual's feeling of responsibility and autonomy without neglecting education's essential significance. Adorno criticizes and inspires everyone's thinking to examine and address several educational clichés. Education should not be seen as a means to an end, such as becoming a 'useful' citizen or 'good market subject'. In this view, education is only valuable for external goals like job-seeking. Thus, education becomes a commodity that can be used for hyper-specific reasons. According to Dadico (2017), rather than educating the person, the education system began to offer a "half-education" that engenders false consciousness, acting as an agent and product of pseudo-culture or 'culture industry'.

According to Adorno (1944, as cited in Hansen, 1992), the culture business is a highly effective ideological process. It is a subset of late capitalism's interlocking monopolies that profits on what was once considered culture. The culture business, with its distinctive characteristics, originated in a heterogeneous manner. They create the regressive illusion of a common discourse, which is viewed as a reversal of enlightenment into myth and the resurfacing of the archaic in modern forms of domination; the dissociation of image and sign, as well as the concomitant instrumentalization of language and reification of aesthetic expression; the double nature of mimesis; and the false identity of individual and social totality under monopoly capitalism, advanced by cultural economy fetishism and repetition (Hansen, 1992). The mass mind is drawn to certain things and distracted by others, and the cultural industry operates in accordance with this. In a consumerist society, happiness is sought through material possessions. There is always at least one more thing professing to provide consumer satisfaction, and because this is a psychological preoccupation, the chain of alienation and imitation continues to grow, further subduing the consumer to the compulsive consumption system (Said Ahmed, 2008). The culture sector is perpetually defrauding its consumers of what is perpetually promised. Similarly, it does not sublimate; rather, it suppresses. Continually displaying the object of desire piques the sublimated anticipation of pleasure. The more firmly entrenched the culture industry is, the more it can do anything it wants with consumer needs - generating, regulating, and disciplining them – without constraints on cultural growth. The cultural industry brushes aside criticisms of both itself and the reality it neutrally replicates (Hansen, 2012).



The decline of experience in education contributes to the corrosion of education and the spread of the detached spirit when the subject is provided with standardized plans to engage in the education process. Cultural components have already replaced the subject/autonomy of individuals and strengthened their own reification, producing a false consciousness (Dadico, 2017). The market ideology of education assumes that marketization would improve teaching quality, encourage change, and promote research efficiency in higher education. Higher education institutions are pressured to accept changes and innovations backed by key institutional stakeholders like the government, industry, and financial institutions. A good institution's structures and programs are congruent with the thoroughly institutionalized, rule-like understanding about organizing to attain a specific end (Oplatka, 2010).

In connection to capitalism, as it pertains to the organization of education and culture as a tightly knit concept to produce a standard product, the commodification of education raises potential ethical concerns on an international level. With only a handful of degrees becoming relevant or, more appropriately, enforced by a standard system, people are forced to enroll and pay for more or less 4 years' worth of certification that does not align with their personhood. In other words, commodification of education may result in social inequality and, perhaps, a lack of genuine connection with one's career (Easy Sociology, 2024). With increasing job competition and employers becoming more demanding regarding specific job requirements, degrees could become a waste of money. Furthermore, when education becomes a product that can be bought, sold, and even traded, it erodes the public nature of education. In fact, state-funded universities are racing to become industry-leading schools in the ASEAN region. That is, their philosophies and strategic goals are business-centred instead of student-centred. Hence, universities enjoy the idea of students becoming revenue streams due to the standards they impose on the system.

Moreover, Andone (2021) points out that as a worldwide process, globalization influences drastic changes in a country's education, economic, and political structures, accelerating global communication while creating a new world order with the market economy and democratic leadership in mind. Therefore, rethinking how local societies perceived international dimensions requires reevaluating the current learning processes needed to cultivate competencies (Andone, 2021). In other words, because globalization accelerates communication across borders, it has also affected the educational system, acting as a catalyst that shapes the world (Andone, 2021). However, how can it shape the world when it pays to participate in a cyclical system created by advertising privileges? Hence, those Higher Education institutions that can pay the fees for advertising such a branding are part of "the system" (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1944).



The internationalization efforts by universities, driven by competition and principally anchored on globalization, must be balanced with sustainable development. Otherwise, this phenomenon can disrupt the development of education, leading to tangible and intangible consequences for students and institutions alike. Hence, policymakers should regulate the proliferation of business-centric learning institutions, rooted in globalization efforts.

Education is a great business model. It guarantees profit, provided there is enough initial capital to sustain it for several years. In the US alone, the Education franchise has an annual revenue of 40 billion USD with an expected 5% growth per year in the next 5 years (Stefanović & Stanković, 2017). In short, if an individual or entrepreneur can invest in franchising a school, it is likely to profit. In such cases, the school is more likely to invest in marketing the school to appeal to more enrollees than in improving its facilities and system. Adorno and Horkheimer (1944) argued that there are certain rhythms to content-making that recycled across various media forms. To fool the consumer into "freshness", other variables are only interchanged, and as long as this content is still "catchy" and easy to understand, the production structure remains untouched. This is true to higher education as well, wherein contents are recycled to seemingly convince consumers of knowledge that what they are learning is new or fresh, similar to, in Adorno and Horkheimer's words, "ready-made cliches." The scheme of education becomes cyclical, creating plainness in content. Higher Education institutions should be different from high schools. It should be freer, expressive, and unpredictable. However, the culture industry encourages its shift from these once diverse characteristics, and subordinates it to a system Adorno and Horkheimer call a "formula" (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1944). From an art that once flowed freely, it becomes a factory to cater to the industry standard that a capitalistic society desires to create.

#### *Discriminatory Propensity of the Trifocal Obligation of Education*

According to Quitoras and Abuso (2021), Higher education institutions offer avenues for students and employees to showcase their craft through a trifocal obligation in research, extension projects, and instruction. This trifocal function is a benchmark to determine the competency level of universities and professionals under the facade of "self-promotion". For the community, especially Indigenous communities, extension projects create a public sphere to foster genuine discourse and reflection (Minetto et al., 2016; Silva et al., 2017, as cited in Santana et al., 2021). Employees, specifically the university faculty implementing this trifocal function, where they are expected to produce knowledge and lead community projects to benefit the institution involved and society at large (Quitoras & Abuso, 2021). However, despite Higher education institutions' seemingly good-willed aim to raise their reputation through this trifocal system, this paper argues that it can reinforce discrimination against Indigenous communities.



### *Research*

According to Tuhiwai Smith (1999), the research practices of many academic institutions are often extractive, where researchers seldom connect and build genuine collaboration with indigenous groups, often treating them as subjects rather than co-creators of knowledge. This practice can be seen as a colonial gaze, which breeds stereotypes and systemic exclusion (MacDonald, 2012). The pursuit of globalized recognition turns research into unrealized discrimination, which can lead to further communal and cultural damage. For many tenured researchers in the West, indigenous knowledge is dismissed as unsystematic, thus inconsequential for the 21st century (Battiste, 2005). While there are many efforts to amend this notion, it is becoming increasingly difficult because of the pride and background trend regarding the ultimacy of the research practices.

Moreover, when conducting genetic research among Indigenous people, lack of ethical consideration and guidelines have contributed to social harms, such as "violation of violation of individual rights, stigmatization, and distrust of genome researches by IPS," and, potentially, long-term ramifications (Tallbear, 2007; Sterling, 2011; Channells and Steenkamp, 2018, as cited in Rodriguez et al., 2022). When HEIs or universities fail to comply with the ethical considerations necessary to conduct studies in collaboration with Indigenous People, it raises concerns regarding the credibility of the research while also underscoring the exploitative nature of studies that have not undergone rigorous ethical approval. Hence, it is imperative that before HEIs implement collaborative research with Indigenous People, they must comply with policies and ensure respectful practices, leading to the non-existence of the commodification of Indigenous knowledge.

According to Love and Hall (2020), performance-based research funding systems in countries like New Zealand, Australia, and Nordic nations aim to boost indigenous academic representation. However, these systems are generally exploitative, marginalizing indigenous knowledge and researchers, further reinforcing Western epistemological dominance. Therefore, it is important to establish inclusive reforms to protect the integrity of indigenous knowledge while being free from colonial hegemony.

### *Instruction*

Instructional curricula evidently sideline indigenous knowledge, systems, and language for a more Western-centric framework, leading to marginalization (Battiste, 2005). When dominant cultural narratives are favored compared to local knowledge, they neglect and can outright erase the existence of the diverse traditions and practices of indigenous peoples (Dacudao, 2021). As a result, Indigenous learners experience alienation, where their history and language are misrepresented (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and



Cultural Organization, 2010). Thus, it is imperative to promote indigenous culture within the curricula to prevent the total extinction of indigenous knowledge, potentially reintroducing some of the neglected cultural traditions to society.

In the Philippines, mandates such as the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (IPRA) and Department of Education Order No. 62, s. 2011, remains inconsistent and underfunded (Department of Education, 2011), and with the Department of Budget and Management only allocating 57.6 million pesos for IPED Assistance as of 2024 (Department of Budget and Management, 2024), this creates a cycle of band-aid solutions to the cause of Indigenous peoples' education. Without the appropriate funds and pedagogies to help Indigenous communities learn and become beacons to society, many will continue to become helpless against the demands of the capitalistic nature of globalization and modernity.

Furthermore, the persistent conflict between the validity of knowledge claims, especially when Western views are involved, has created a challenge for education to conform to Western thought. Ultimately, however, this conformity has misrepresented Indigenous knowledge and imagery within the education system (Zigzag Weekly, 2020). Moreover, to think that the authors of these textbooks are oftentimes tenured professionals from Higher Education institutions raises concern over the credibility of these authors. In order to facilitate the appropriateness of the cultural representation within modules and textbooks, the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples should take the lead in reviewing and correcting the cultural misinterpretations (Philippines Daily Inquirer, 2020).

#### *Extension Projects*

The extension projects of HEIs are good programs that aim to provide welfare and development for diverse communities. However, it also requires heavy commitment. As a result, when they overdo it, it can become more about spoonfeeding than actually fostering independence for these communities. In their study titled "*Impact assessment on the tourism community extension project to the beneficiary of SHL restoration village*," Borbon and Ylagan (2021) underscore the importance of establishing independence for the beneficiaries by "letting them do the work after teaching them" so as not to create spoon feeding. Alvarez and Novenario (2019) describe that universities often fail to consider the context of diverse cultural communities, where, while they aim for the betterment of the communities, they implement a one-size-fits-all approach that ultimately leads to irrelevant or harmful interventions. Extension projects closely related to the modernization of agricultural practices or livelihood training impose alien technologies or a capitalistic mindset on communities whose relationship with land is spiritual and communal (Deloria, 2006), potentially disrupting the communal balance within these indigenous communities while devaluing indigenous existence. Without the attitude of cultural sensitivity present within the consideration of these



extension projects, they become tools for colonization (Lynch & Makarious, 2003). That is, partnerships become pseudo and self-serving under the facade of partnership. The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) has handed out awards to institutions for fostering Indigenous community-based projects, which is commendable and appropriate for the amount of impact a university has had on the IPs they have helped. However, this raises concerns over the pursuit of reward and recognition, wherein universities are incentivized to only create extension projects in collaboration with Indigenous Peoples because of the prestige CHED offers in return.

Research, Extensions, and Instruction often lead to unrealized colonization, becoming a quiet instrument of structural discrimination. Rather than becoming a mechanism for good, they often damage the very communities they endeavor to talk about and engage with. True empowerment and justice can take form in building genuine connections with the indigenous community, while also considering the lines the university should prevent crossing. Addressing issues present within indigenous communities is never easy; hence, there is a need to create a safe way to support these communities where their voices are heard and genuinely acknowledged by higher educational institutions. Until there is reform in this trifocal obligation, education will remain a highly breeding site for oppression and discrimination against indigenous communities.

#### *The Role of Philosophy in Higher Education Institutions*

Rizvi and Lingard (2010) emphasized that a new perspective on human capital may prepare students for the workforce, where schools are expected to build or prioritize knowledge, skills, and dispositions. This situation highlights the need to enter and compete in the further education and labor markets. For example, rules expressing privilege groups' points of view and experiences may look neutral and universal (Young, 2000), especially within cultural imperialism. Students are expected to behave, value, and aim like the mainstream, which promotes assimilationist projections (Rudolph, 2011). For those students or individuals who already identify with the ways of living and opt to stay in their comfort zone by following the mainstream education process, such situations would be beneficial solely for those students or individuals. As a result of this exclusion, Indigenous people are perceived as failing and will be far behind in basic skills such as literacy, numeracy, and information technology.

According to Ramon Reyes (2014, pp. 4-5) of Ateneo De Manila University in his article, "a life lived purely on the level of material and pragmatic satisfaction was not much of an existence for the ancient Greeks, the human person with his or her mind was seen to be able to go beyond the level of mere, apparent reality and raise himself or herself to that level where s/he could contemplate about the constitutive structures and ultimate ground of all



reality, thus, unifying." Thus, philosophy will be of great assistance in higher education as a point of connection between disciplinary boundaries, steering the institution in a direction that offers the possibility of meaningful growth for both students and culture as a whole. However, it must also be representative (both in theory and in practice) of the diverse practices and beliefs that underpin higher education institutions (Stoller & Kramer, 2018). Philosophy will also play a role in assisting Indigenous communities in transforming their 'difference' into characteristics that are recognizable to the system built primarily for use in higher education institutions.

This approach highlights the necessity for public discourses and policies that challenge mainstream views using critical theories to create a language of rigor, not conformity. For Adorno, the only education worth having fosters critical thought—a school that fosters critical-reflective thinking (Cho, 2009). In order to de-familiarize the current behaviors or categories found in the dominant ideologies, philosophy will need to clarify, intervene, and create opportunities for producing new viewpoints. Philosophy and critical theory or analysis exist solely to illuminate and challenge particular truths, offering up new pathways for working with issues of fairness, race, and difference in education. The new methodological labor of philosophy in education is orienting action toward more meaningful and productive purposes (Stoller & Kramer, 2018).

## Conclusion

While there may be efforts to create opportunities for Indigenous people to participate in education, it may not be enough. Because of the rapid cultural exchange, which can potentially homogenize everything, it becomes increasingly difficult, if not outright impossible, for Indigenous people to cope with the power of a globalizing world. With that said, there is much to be done in the education sector. For one, universities should redefine their priorities, moving from a neoliberal system to one that values cultural inclusivity and pedagogy. At the end of the day, the point is to expose one of the underlying problems facing Indigenous communities, which is the decline or the deterioration of many cultural communities across the globe.

The many efforts to resist the impact of the culture industry on education open many avenues for more people to engage and participate in a good cause. This participation creates more opportunities to reverse the damage the culture industry has done to education. Since education has become, more or less, merely a means to produce modern slave laborers for the ever-evolving corporate-driven system, society must dilute the capitalist mentality into mere nothingness through mass enlightenment via communicative discourse. In other words,



through policy changes, alternative funding models, and shifting back to its humanistic roots, higher education institutions can become a transformative ethos for all people, regardless of background.

### ***Recommendations***

Government departments should do more to regulate and foresee policy changes and goals for higher education institutions, regardless of whether they are in the private or public sectors. Universities must adhere to tenets of transparency in order to inform potential students about what they are in for. While there might not be a need for legislative changes, the HEIs that prioritize profit-oriented maneuvers must be accountable for the deterioration of careers that are dissolved due to blatant disregard. In particular, Indigenous peoples are more inclined to take humanities and arts because of their motivations to preserve and learn more about their culture, which must be supported and marketed. Hence, it is necessary to provide effective, sufficient, and inclusive policies to protect Indigenous Peoples' Rights, especially in the education sector.

So, what values should universities and other higher education institutions strive to uphold and demonstrate in the future? Furthermore, what kind of instructional action is necessary in response to such values? To what extent can developments in higher education institutions be attributed to globalization and the marketization of knowledge? Is it possible for a higher education institution to be truly sensitive to the needs of both international and local students, including those from underrepresented groups?

As a result, philosophy will be given top priority in developing an educational pathway suited for philosophical work in higher education while also being sensitive to the institution's discursive, organizational, economic, epistemic, and political cultures. This job entails examining university procedures' material conditions, policies, and economics to make recommendations. Consequently, this endeavor is regarded as a philosophical inquiry of the concept of education, to push higher education institutions in new directions (Bengtsen, n.d.).

The goal of higher education institutions is to emancipate their students. Higher education should possess and transmit higher-order critical thinking, which helps students to view perspectives on a larger scale and apply the same in other settings for the objective of achieving greater degrees of comprehension. To recapitulate Immanuel Kant's argument, it follows that education should not be regarded as an experimental or simply scientific activity



with the sole goal of performing and finding procedures and practices that are tied to certain pragmatic ends. As a result, education is a relational activity; that is, education should be directly related to personality, beyond the reach of any imaginable procedures and methodologies. Education is a relational activity in nature.

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