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Transcending East and West: Toward a New Paradigm of Integrating Chinese Collectivism and Western Individualism

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Abstract:

This study explores the mutual permeation and fusion of Eastern and Western cultural values in the contemporary era of globalization, focusing on the interplay between Chinese collectivism and Western individualism. This study delves into the core characteristics and principles of collectivism in China and individualism in the West. Furthermore, this study compares the differences in cognitive patterns and thinking styles between Eastern and Western cultures and analyzes the impact of these differences on cross-cultural communication and cultural integration. Additionally, this paper discusses the significance of the fusion of Eastern and Western cultures in international relations, cultural innovation, and societal progress. Finally, we emphasize how the fusion of Chinese and Western cultures has practical implications for fields such as education, management, economic development, and international relations, ultimately advocating for an increasingly open, diverse, and innovative environment.

Keywords: *Cultural Integration, Collectivism, Individualism, Cognitive Patterns, Cross-Cultural Communication, Cultural Innovation, Values Integration*

1. Background of the Study:

In the wake of contemporary globalization, the exchange and interaction between civilizations around the world have become increasingly frequent, leading to the mutual permeation and amalgamation of Eastern and Western cultural values at various levels. This cultural integration manifests in a formal union and substantially constitutes an innovative social practice model. Specifically, the principle of collectivism in Chinese culture and the value of individualism in Western culture are mutually borrowing, blending, and innovating in many respects, steering societal evolution towards greater inclusivity and harmony.

The collectivist nature of Chinese culture fundamentally emphasizes prioritizing collective interests, advocating for individuals to seek their position and value realization within the group. It is deeply rooted in China's long-standing social traditions and philosophical thoughts and represents a

profound social-ethical concept. This concept displays new vitality, especially in the rapid economic development and social transformation. For instance, in China's education sector, the value orientation of collectivism has promoted comprehensive development among students, emphasizing teamwork and social responsibility.

Conversely, Western individualism emphasizes the autonomy, independence, and importance of individual rights. This value orientation is central to Western culture and catalyzes societal diversity and innovation. In areas such as politics, economics, and culture, the principles of individualism have fostered the establishment of democratic systems and the development of market economies.

However, under the backdrop of globalization, Eastern and Western cultures are not isolated from each other but engage in extensive and profound exchanges and integration at both ideological and practical levels. This integration is characterized by mutual recognition and respect for each other's cultural values and mutual borrowing and innovation based on this understanding. For example, in China, with the continuous deepening and improvement of the market economy system, individualistic values are gradually introduced and combined with collectivist values, forming a new social value orientation. This orientation emphasizes collective interests and gives sufficient space and respect for individual development, positively influencing individual innovative capabilities and entrepreneurial spirit.

The practice of this new Sino-Western paradigm offers the possibility of a more inclusive and progressive new social model. It represents not just a cultural convergence but also a creative transformation and synthesis of traditional and modern values in the context of economic globalization and cultural diversity. In this model, through a profound understanding and innovative practice of traditional Chinese culture and modern Western culture, it is possible to maintain social stability and harmony while ensuring the maximization of individual development and freedom, thereby promoting the construction of a harmonious, orderly, and vibrant society.

2. Significance of the Study:

The study of the integration and synthesis of Eastern and Western cultures and the interaction between collectivism and individualism in the context of globalization holds profound academic and practical value. Firstly, these studies can promote cultural understanding and respect. Culture is one of the core elements of human society, and significant differences and similarities exist between Eastern and Western cultures. By thoroughly studying the core principles and characteristics of collectivism and individualism, we can more comprehensively understand the different cultures' ways of thinking, behavioral patterns, and value concepts, which is vital in reducing cultural misunderstandings and biases and promoting cross-cultural understanding and respect. Cultural conflicts and misunderstandings often lead to tension and instability in the international community.

Therefore, through in-depth research, this study provides a theoretical basis for building more harmonious international relations.

Secondly, studying the integration of Eastern and Western cultures and the interaction between collectivism and individualism also provides theoretical support for improving international relations. In today's globalized context, the international community faces various challenges and opportunities from different cultural backgrounds. Understanding the differences and commonalities between Eastern and Western cultures and the role of collectivism and individualism in international affairs helps politicians, diplomats, and international organizations better understand and respond to challenges brought by cultural differences, which contributes to building more harmonious, stable, and beneficial international relations, thereby promoting global cooperation and peaceful development.

Furthermore, studying the integration of Eastern and Western cultures and the interaction between collectivism and individualism also aids in promoting cultural integration and innovation. Cultural exchange and integration are fundamental driving forces behind the development of civilization, and the interaction between Eastern and Western cultures provides rich material for this. This study examines the process and integration methods between collectivism and individualism, hoping to stimulate new ways of thinking and social practice models and provide valuable insights for cultural integration and innovation. In the age of globalization, cultural integration and innovation are essential for societal progress and development.

Moreover, studying the impact of collectivism and individualism also offers guidance in education and management. Understanding how these cultural values influence individual behavior and organizational management helps educators and leaders optimize teaching methods and leadership strategies. Understanding the impact of different cultural values on students' learning and development can help educators design more effective educational curricula and teaching methods. Understanding how cultural differences affect employee behavior and team cooperation can help leaders better manage multicultural teams and organizations.

Lastly, studying the integration of Eastern and Western cultures and the formation of new cultural values helps promote social development towards a more comprehensive and harmonious direction. This integration can balance social stability and individual development, promoting a harmonious, orderly, and vibrant society. In this new cultural value system, the interests of the collective and the freedom, autonomy, and dignity of individuals complement each other, helping to meet various social needs and pursuits, and providing strong support for social progress and harmonious development. This comprehensive cultural value system can offer beneficial references and guidance for social planning and policy-making, promoting sustainable social development. In summary, studying the integration of Eastern and Western cultures and the interaction between

collectivism and individualism is significant for promoting cross-cultural exchange, international relations, cultural innovation, and social progress, offering the possibility of a more inclusive and progressive new social model.

3. Research Objectives and Questions:

To deeply understand the integration and synthesis of Eastern and Western cultures and the interaction between collectivism and individualism in the age of globalization, the primary objective of this study is to explore the impact of these cultural phenomena on society, economy, and international relations. Specifically, our research objectives are as follows:

Firstly, this study delves into integrating and synthesizing Eastern and Western cultures. In today's wave of globalization, cultural exchange has become increasingly frequent, and the mutual penetration and fusion of Eastern and Western civilizations have become an undeniable phenomenon. Our research will explore the development of this trend and how this cultural integration affects social and economic development in various fields.

Secondly, this study deeply analyzes the core characteristics and principles of collectivism and individualism in Chinese and Western traditional cultures. Collectivism and individualism, as two extremes of cultural values, profoundly impact social ethics and value concepts. By understanding their essence, we can better comprehend why Eastern and Western societies show significant differences in certain aspects and how these differences shape their respective cultures.

Thirdly, this study explores the manifestation of Eastern and Western cultural differences in cognitive patterns and ways of thinking and their impact on cross-cultural communication and cultural integration. The different cognitive approaches of Eastern and Western cultures may lead to misunderstandings and challenges but also provide opportunities for innovation and mutual learning. We will study how these differences affect people's interactions and understanding in the context of globalization.

Lastly, this study explores the importance of Eastern and Western cultural exchange and interaction for international relations, cultural innovation, and social progress. In the era of globalization, the international community faces various challenges and opportunities from different cultural backgrounds. Understanding how the exchange of Eastern and Western cultures shapes international relations and how they promote cultural innovation and social progress will help better address these challenges and opportunities.

To achieve the above research purposes, we will delve into the following key questions:

Firstly, how has the integration and synthesis of Eastern and Western cultures rapidly developed in the wave of globalization? How does this development affect social and economic development? We will study the evolution of this trend and its impact on social structures and economic models.

Secondly, what are the core characteristics and principles of collectivism and individualism in Chinese and Western traditional cultures? How do these cultural value concepts influence social ethics and value concepts? This study will deeply explore the essence of these cultural value concepts to understand their evolution and impact on the two cultures.

Lastly, how can traditional collectivism be integrated with Western individualism to promote society towards a more comprehensive and harmonious direction and positively impact fields such as education and management? This study explores the possibilities and practical paths of this integration to explore how to establish a more inclusive and innovative cultural value system in the age of globalization.

Through in-depth research on these questions, this study aims to better understand the integration and synthesis of Eastern and Western cultures, as well as the interaction between collectivism and individualism in the context of globalization, providing theoretical and practical support for promoting cross-cultural exchange, international relations, cultural innovation, and social progress. These questions will reveal the complexity of cultural exchange and how to address better the challenges and opportunities brought by globalization.

3.1 The Core Characteristics and Principles of Chinese Collectivism:

Chinese collectivism has a long-standing tradition, deeply rooted in the profound and extensive social-ethical system of the Confucian culture. With its rich historical accumulation and philosophical ideas, Confucian culture provides solid theoretical support for the collectivist value orientation of the Chinese nation. As Xiao Li (2011) states, the core values of collectivism in Chinese culture emphasize social harmony and the priority of collective interests. Its manifestations are diverse, such as emphasizing harmony in social norms of behavior and placing collective honor and interests above personal gains. This deeply ingrained value not only provides an internal moral engine for the stability and development of Chinese society but also maintains its vitality in the process of modernization.

In contemporary China, this traditional value orientation has not faded with the changing times but has been continuously strengthened through various means. Guang-ping (2022) mentions in his research that through moral education and social practice, collectivist values have been significantly reinforced among contemporary Chinese college students. This group exhibits higher professional ethics and civic responsibility, and their pursuit of scientific spirit and socialist values is particularly prominent, which indicates that collectivism is not only inherited at the value level but also widely applied and promoted in practice.

In corporate management and organizational behavior, collectivist values also demonstrate their powerful influence. Min-hu (2006) points out that collectivism promotes stable development and team cohesion in enterprises through emphasizing family concepts and personal dedication.

Under the guidance of socialist thought, this collective-centered value system effectively balances individual and collective interests. As Hong (2006) discusses, this balance benefits both individuals and collectives, contributing to constructing a socialist spiritual civilization.

The value concept of collectivism is also reflected in its unique reward distribution mechanism. Leung's (1984) research reveals that traditional Chinese collectivism emphasizes the values of fairness and equality. This distribution mechanism not only reflects deep cultural values but also has a positive impact on actual socio-economic activities.

The practice of new collectivism in rural areas, as Pan (2017) analyzed, is a modern extension of the traditional collectivist spirit. This new collectivism not only inherits the spirit of unity and cooperation in traditional Chinese culture but also adapts to the requirements of the socialist system, providing new ideas and practices for building a harmonious rural society. Fu-yuan (2008) further points out that under the backdrop of a public ownership economy and distribution system, new collectivism promotes collective welfare and common interests of peasant laborers, reflecting the principles of fairness and justice in socialism.

3.2 The Core Characteristics and Principles of Western Individualism:

With its profound influence and widespread dissemination, Western individualism has become a significant hallmark of modern Western civilization. The fundamental belief of this cultural concept lies in emphasizing the individual's independence, autonomy, and dignity. As Hong Liang (2007) notes, these elements together constitute the framework of the core values of individualism. This respect and elevation of individual value, while unique at the cultural level, also holds a significant position in the development process of Western political philosophy. Liberalism, as an essential school of Western political philosophy, bases its fundamental viewpoint on considering individual freedom as the cornerstone of social order. As Sánchez-Flores (2010) elucidated, liberalism posits that in a society with fair rules, pursuing personal interests is reasonable and necessary. This viewpoint has effectively driven the widespread adoption and protection of individual rights and freedoms in Western societies.

However, despite the positive role of individualism in the development process of Western societies, it has also led to a series of social issues. The overemphasis on individualism can lead to loosening social relations and alienation among individuals. As Honneth (2004) suggests, the focus on individualism may lead to social alienation, not only in interpersonal relationships but also in the lack of identification with common goals and social values.

The United States, as a representative nation of individualistic values, reflects the dual nature of individualism in its culture. As Xiao Hong (2010) described, individualism is a significant driving force behind America's prosperity and strength and fuels technological progress and economic development by encouraging individual capabilities and the spirit of innovation. At the same time,

individualism can also be a potential factor in exacerbating social divisions, potentially leading people to focus more on personal interests at the expense of the common good, resulting in various social issues such as widening income disparities and weakened social integration.

In the development process of globalization, individualism and collectivism, as the two major cultural concepts of the East and West, show a trend of fusion and transformation through their interaction and exchange. In its interaction with collectivist culture, the philosophy of individualism may be re-evaluated and interpreted, leading to a more comprehensive and inclusive new cultural model on a global scale. Similarly, Western societies, while confronting the challenges posed by individualism, are actively exploring how to maintain individual freedom and dignity while strengthening social cohesion and a sense of collective responsibility. This dynamic development and transformation of culture have significant theoretical and practical implications for understanding contemporary societal changes and building more harmonious international relations.

3.3 Comparing Cultural Differences between East and West:

In the context of global multiculturalism, the academic community views the differences in cognitive patterns and ways of thinking between Eastern and Western cultures as a highly insightful topic in cultural studies. Chinese culture, in terms of cognitive patterns, emphasizes overall harmony and intuitive perception. This holistic way of thinking is deeply rooted in the soil of traditional culture. In contrast, Western culture places greater emphasis on logical reasoning and analytical methods. This analytical way of thinking also has a long history, rooted in Western philosophical tradition. As Ya-wen (2005) states, these differences in cognitive approaches are particularly prominent in the specific manifestations of these two major cultural systems.

The perspectives of collectivism and individualism provide an essential dimension for understanding the cultural differences between East and West. In cultures with a collectivist orientation, people's regional sentiments, social relations, and value concepts exhibit distinct group-oriented characteristics. In contrast, in individualistic cultures, there is a strong emphasis on the independence of individuals, self-realization, and the maximization of personal value. These differing cultural characteristics provide rich resources and possibilities for cross-cultural communication, as Feng (2020) points out, and create favorable conditions for cultural exchange and mutual understanding.

A deep analysis of the differences between Eastern and Western cultures is a critical step in improving the efficiency of cross-cultural communication, breaking cultural barriers, and promoting cultural exchange and integration. The cultural differences between China and the West are not only in superficial social organization and thinking habits but are more deeply rooted in their respective unique philosophical systems and value concepts. Chinese philosophy, especially the thoughts of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism, provides a valuable perspective for understanding these

differences, as Dian-xing (2021) mentioned. Similarly, Western philosophical schools such as rationalism and existentialism also provide a theoretical basis for understanding Western cognitive patterns and value orientations.

In comparative literature and cultural studies, the difference in ways of thinking is crucial for exploring the mutual influence, borrowing, and integration between different cultures. As Zhi-jie (2005) pointed out, comparative literature studies reveal cultural elements and ways of thinking in literary works and help us identify and understand the unique attributes of different cultures and the complexity of their interactions in broader cultural exchanges. Through such academic exploration, we can better recognize the differences between Eastern and Western cultures and find paths to promote understanding and respect, fostering harmonious development in global cultures.

4 Chinese Collectivism and Western Individualism: Practical Fusion and Innovation:

The mutual influence and transformation between individualism and collectivism show significant trends in today's society. In China, with the opening of the economy and the acceleration of globalization, Western individualistic values are gradually permeating traditional Chinese collectivist culture. This penetration is evident in business practices and economic activities and significantly impacts social behavior and value orientations. For example, while pursuing personal career development and self-realization, China's younger generation still values family and social collective interests, reflecting the fusion of individualism and collectivism.

Conversely, in Western societies, although individualism remains dominant, the values of collectivism are gradually gaining attention. In some Western countries, governments and societies promote social responsibility and public welfare while focusing on individual rights. For example, in some European countries, the government emphasizes the overall interest of society by providing universal health insurance and social welfare policies, reflecting the concept of collectivism to some extent.

At the global level, the mutual influence and transformation between individualism and collectivism are forming a new social and cultural dynamic. This dynamic promotes cultural diversity and inclusiveness and encourages societies with different cultural backgrounds to focus more on balancing individual freedom with social responsibility. This fusion is becoming an important force driving social innovation and progress in fields like economics, politics, and education.

The new paradigm of Chinese-Western cultural fusion represents a new driving force in societal models. Under this new paradigm, society values rapid economic development and pays attention to cultural diversity and inclusiveness. For instance, in China, combining traditional collectivism and Western individualism has formed a unique model of social development. This model promotes economic growth while also valuing cultural heritage and social stability.

In the field of education, this new Sino-Western paradigm has fostered reform and innovation in the educational system. In China, the education system incorporates more Western educational concepts, such as encouraging students' critical thinking and creativity, while retaining the traditional emphasis on teamwork and social responsibility. This transformation in educational models helps cultivate a new generation with an international perspective and promotes mutual understanding and respect between cultures.

This new Sino-Western paradigm demonstrates its significant practical value in international exchange and cooperation. As globalization deepens, the blend of Chinese and Western cultures influences domestic and international societies. For example, in international business activities, management models and business strategies that integrate Chinese and Western cultural characteristics are gradually becoming a trend, promoting international trade and investment and providing new paths for mutual understanding and cooperation between countries and regions of different cultural backgrounds.

The new paradigm of Chinese-Western cultural fusion is a cultural phenomenon and a vital force driving comprehensive societal development and innovation. This fusion promotes cultural exchange and mutual learning, providing possibilities and momentum for building a harmonious, diverse, and progressive global society.

5 Conclusion:

In the context of globalization, the blend and fusion between Chinese collectivism and Western individualism have attracted widespread attention in the international academic community. Current research shows a new trend: Fusing these two value orientations may lead to more efficient socio-economic outcomes. This view is supported by numerous scholars, including McLaren (2016), who points out that under the conditions of China's market economy, the stimulation and cultivation of entrepreneurship, especially those business practices that combine traditional Chinese collectivism with Western individualism, will significantly promote economic innovation and social development. This fusion provides a new impetus for economic growth and opens new perspectives for social development.

This combination of collective and individual aspects has been significantly exemplified. Chinese entrepreneurship, viewed as an essential engine for social development in the new era, continues to drive the fusion of traditional Chinese values with Western modern thought. This new form of collectivism emphasizes the formation of independent personalities and equality in social relations and maintains collective interests at its core while affirming and respecting individual value and autonomy. This phenomenon is particularly evident in China's corporate culture and management practices, emphasizing individual growth and coordination with corporate overall goals. Furthermore, scholars advocate for a deep understanding of the profound values of traditional

Chinese culture and their combination with modern practices to form a new collectivism. This new collectivism is not merely an imitation of Western individualism. However, it incorporates the positive elements of individualism based on the inheritance and promotion of traditional Chinese collective values, creating a cultural value system more aligned with China's national conditions. This system combines China's long-standing ethical views of benevolence and integrity with modern utilitarianism and the pursuit of interests, forming a comprehensive cultural value system.

In this complex cultural value system, while collective interests and community welfare are still core values, individual self-realization and development needs should not be neglected. On the contrary, this new value orientation provides broader development space and possibilities for individuals while ensuring the overall interest of the collective and social harmony and stability. Compared to traditional collectivism, this new value orientation reflects the dynamic changes in Chinese society and provides new perspectives and practical examples for global cultural exchange and integration. Through such deep integration, it can be anticipated that China will exhibit a more unique and dynamic posture in the global economic and cultural landscape, contributing Chinese wisdom and solutions to the development of global multiculturalism in the future.

In the field of business and corporate management, the fusion between Chinese collectivism and Western individualism has led to innovations in management models and business strategies. Chinese companies are adopting more Western management concepts, such as individual innovation and autonomy, while retaining the Eastern tradition of emphasizing teamwork and collective goals. This shift in models enhances corporate competitiveness and fosters creativity and team spirit within organizations. Additionally, this fusion is also reflected in corporate employee care and welfare systems, reflecting a dual emphasis on individual value and collective welfare.

In the economic field, this Sino-Western fusion of cultural values is reshaping China's market economy. Under the influence of traditional collectivism, China's economic development has long emphasized collective interests and national goals. However, with the gradual incorporation of individualistic values, the market economy has begun to place more emphasis on innovation, competition, and individual entrepreneurship. This change drives rapid economic development and fosters social diversity and innovation. This fusion of cultural values has also led to more flexible and open economic policies, providing more opportunities for domestic and foreign investors and entrepreneurs.

In international exchange and cooperation, the fusion of Chinese and Western cultures plays a significant role in building more harmonious international relations. As China becomes increasingly active on the international stage, this cultural blend provides new perspectives for China's interactions and cooperation with other countries. Chinese businesses and government institutions, in their cooperation with foreign partners, not only convey traditional Chinese cultural values but also

demonstrate understanding and respect for Western cultural values. This mutual understanding and respect help narrow cultural differences, promote international cooperation and understanding, and offer new solutions to global issues.

Furthermore, the fusion of Chinese and Western cultures also provides new impetus for China's social development and cultural innovation. This fusion has inspired new ways of thinking and creativity in fields such as education, art, and technology. The education system incorporates more critical thinking and innovative teaching methods while respecting traditional knowledge and values. The art field has witnessed the fusion of traditional and modern, creating unique artistic styles and forms of expression. Technological innovation is also positively influenced by this cultural blend, driving rapid development and the application of new technologies.

Exploring the impact of Chinese-Western cultural fusion on individual lifestyles and values, we find that this fusion plays a crucial role in shaping a more open and diverse social environment. At the individual level, the intersection of Chinese and Western cultures has led to significant changes in Chinese people's lifestyles and value concepts. Under the background of traditional collectivism, individuals often place social and family interests above personal interests. However, with the penetration of Western individualism, an increasing number of Chinese people are pursuing personal freedom, independence, and self-realization. This change is not only reflected in career choices and lifestyles but also in broader social areas such as education, marriage, and family relations.

In daily life, this cultural fusion has led people to place greater emphasis on personal psychological health and emotional needs. Western culture's emphasis on individualism, self-care, and personal happiness is gradually being accepted and practiced in China. The importance of mental health is gaining attention, and more people are seeking psychological counseling and support. Simultaneously, this cultural fusion also fosters the development of personal expression and creativity, with people more willing to explore themselves, express individuality, and pursue personal interests and passions.

In terms of values, the fusion of Chinese and Western cultures has made the dialogue and exchange between traditional values and modern values more frequent and in-depth. Traditional ethical concepts and family values merge with the individualism of self-development and independence, forming a new value system. This value system fusion helps build a more inclusive and harmonious society and provides new ways to resolve social conflicts caused by cultural differences.

Exploring the impact of Chinese-Western cultural fusion on China's international image and global role, we see that this cultural blend significantly enhances China's position and role in the international community. With China's rapid economic rise and increasing international influence,

the fusion of Chinese and Western cultures allows China to play a more active and constructive role in the process of globalization.

In the fields of international politics and economics, China is exhibiting a unique diplomatic style that blends elements of Eastern and Western cultures. China's foreign policy not only reflects traditional collectivist thinking, such as emphasizing harmony and cooperation between nations, but also incorporates Western individualistic characteristics, such as emphasizing autonomy and equality. This unique fusion enables China to communicate and cooperate more effectively with countries of different cultural backgrounds, promoting multilateralism and international cooperation.

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