

**SOCIAL VALUES IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE:
AN ANALYSIS OF CHINESE AND YORUBÁ ETHICAL TRADITIONS****Authors & Affiliations****BANWO, ADETORO OLANIYI**

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This study examines the morally accepted principles by two different societies across the globe. This work argues that each society creates principles that are formed by the traditions and the cultural beliefs of the people in these societies. Data for this work were obtained through homogeneous purpose sampling, and a content analysis approach was adopted. Scholarly materials related to ethics, morals, values, etiquette and responsibilities were downloaded from the internet. This work adopts the Hofstede's cultural dimension theory as the guiding theoretical framework. It recognizes that different cultures in its predominant society have an influence on the development of certain values that affect their behaviour. It also observes that the relationship across members of the society based on power is a critical component of how the values are developed. Furthermore, it identifies the formation of societies which are characterized by certain degrees of integration of either individualism or collectivism. Similarly, it shows how societies accept thoughts or ideas to guide and regulate their behaviour and actions. This study agrees with the notion that values are designed through the traditions across cultures. It suggests that certain values are unique across all cultures to preserve their identity, culture and traditions. This study observes that Chinese and Yorubá values have a convergence of ideas in areas of respect, moral leadership, family and virtue ethics while showing a divergence in concepts of gender relations, social organisation, religious and metaphysical foundations.

Keywords: Chinese culture, Yorubá culture, social values, comparative ethics, Hofstede theory

Introduction

Values are seen as the fundamental underlying functioning of cultural units in a culture and they are vital to grasping the cultural differences exhibited by different cultures. Scholars have focused on the contrast amongst cultures in which values differ, they have observed that values can be individualistic, autonomous, collectivist and hierarchical. They argue that values can be seen or associated with human behaviors or self-concepts and they are of different dimensions. For instance, in the individual level, they see values as motivational goals which regulate human lives and serve as the guiding principles accordingly. They observe that individuals have hedonistic and traditional values in which they place more emphasis on their behaviour of action on the former rather than the latter (Smith & Schwartz, 1997). Schwartz (1994) also observes that certain countries emphasize one value type like egalitarianism over the other and this represents what is the socially shared ideas of what is right and wrong, invariably they

characterize the cultures of different social groups and are seen as cultural values.

Since values are an integral part of culture, it's imperative to examine the notion of culture. Taylor (1871) sees culture as that complex structure that embodies human beliefs, arts, knowledge, morals, customs, laws and all the inherent habits and capabilities of people in a particular society. Hofstede (1980) opines that culture is the collective programming of the human mind and Herskovits (1948) sees culture as an environment made by humans. Thus, cultures are cognitive structures which exhibit patterns which are unique to each social group. They include values and behaviors that are presumed to influence human behaviour (Hofstede, 1980). Baldwin et al. (2006) posit that these cultural values exist for a reason and purpose; they exist as the most important characteristic of a culture which is to guide human actions. They see culture as a vital force that organizes the collective life of the social groups and provides problem-solving solution to their daily activities. The sense of order embedded in each culture is what people transmit through their cultural values to new members which can be their children, employees and migrants within a new social entity. Trandis (1972) states that people are therefore constrained by culture if they want to be accepted as group members to conform to the standards of these social groups which reinforces learning processes and internalization of cultural values. Matsumoto (2001) therefore asserts that values shared in a social group serve a unique purpose, they regulate human behaviour, they ensure that human life is organized and enable smooth interaction in its community. There are implicit and explicit training for its new members on what is socially desirable, acceptable and appropriate in this culture. Thus, Matsumoto sees values in cultures as drawing boundaries and limits to human freedom through its constraints on what this social group has defined as accepted, desirable or appropriate in this social group. He also asserts that these values are used to judge as what is right or wrong and defines the notion of morality. Durant (2012) posits that man is primarily a value-conscious and value pursuing human being. He draws his inferences from the thinkers of different schools and thoughts.

Certain philosophers adopt the notion of values as ideals that ought to exist naturally, they transcend the objective and the real while they are incapable of complete realization. They are acknowledged and felt when they appear and they are neither foreseen by any mind, divine or human or pre-planned by human mind. The aim of this research, therefore, is to identify, describe, and examine the different kinds of values that have shaped two distinct societies. In a world shaped by aggression, conflict, hatred, jealousy, bribery, nepotism and converteousness, this study remains of core essence to inform, educate, enlighten and bring back to the fora the core and foundational beliefs that have shaped our societies. Values guide human behaviour across cultures. Although Chinese and Yorùbá cultures have a convergence of values as regards respect, moral leadership, family and virtue ethics, they have distinct cognitive structures, patterns, habits, customs and behavior that have evolved within their traditional, philosophical and religious beliefs. Therefore, it is imperative to understand how philosophies, religion and social relationships have become frameworks in the construction of values in these societies. Existing studies often examine cultural values independently without making comparative analysis across cultures, this gap makes it difficult to understand the universality and uniqueness of values in shaping human behavior in our societies. Cross-cultural studies have the ability to improve communication and offer intercultural education in understanding people's behaviors and actions across the globe.

Literature Review

This work is located within the precincts of the social sciences, in which the different works of scholars will be investigated and examined on the notion of values across cultures, starting with Rickert's work.

Rickert (1926) describes values as encompassing all cultural phenomena. He also sees it as the primary data of all human experiences which forms the main basis of every culture, and it is the most important frame and component. They exhibit the quality and character of every culture and subjugate individuals to their compliance. They could be positive forces in some cultures and negative forces in other cultures depending on how these values function and serve their purposes. They are to be preserved, admired and transmitted, and if they are destroyed, they will be reconstructed simultaneously, thereby shaping the humanity that exists in humans. Lynd (1939) sees values as the internalization of human behavior that can predict their tendencies to avoid contradictions in the society. He opines that values offer the orientation of human activities and the social institutions. He asserts that values ensure the proper function of the social institutions such as the family, religious, political, economic and educational institutions. Urban (1941) claims that values which can be seen in aesthetics and moral forms are creative evolution's products which are in the realization process, and they include truth, beauty, goodness, justice, righteousness and love. In a society lacking trust and where suspicion often arises, values are the vital elements that influence human behaviour most especially when it is observed that people hold different values. Parsons and Shils (1951) assert that values are symbolically represented by human behaviors such as gestures and rituals or visual objects such as monuments and badges, and they are carefully represented in words and thoughts. They involve a social group abstraction or generalization which is designed by the orientation of each social system.

According to Gerth and Mills (1953), values are what guide human actions that influence human perception and feelings. They further explain that values provide a vocabulary of motives which helps us to explain, justify, interpret and criticize other people's behaviors as well as one's own. Snyder (1962) traces the development of values to the primitive society in which people regulated their actions by traditions and customs, a situation in which the community universally agreed on the way to act and think. He sees it as the ideal and goals that govern the actions of people.

Spindler (1963) uses certain traits as developing from the traditional society to characterize how values are formed and developed. Traditional societies were hinged on values such as puritan morality of self-denial, sexual constraint and self-denial. He also believes that the values of hard work and success can be attained through consistent hard work were fundamental traditional values. He posits that the worth and the importance of an individual were engraved values emanating from traditional societies.

Similarly, the notion of time as a valuable orientation was carefully crafted as an important value on the people in ancient times. Kluckhohn (1969) argues that values are the framework for understanding a culture and grasping its knowledge about what is right and wrong. Rokeach (1973) describes values as the beliefs a society endures for a long period of time that regulate the conduct of the people or states the existence of such in its community. England (1978) argues that values are seen in the communal framework of a group of people to influence individual behaviour and actions. Hofstede (1984) contends that values are distinct to each social group and they are seen as the established norms or standards to judge every single human action. Values are seen in societal wants, needs, experiences and meets; they are formed in ideas, such as love that can be expressed through a kind gesture or a friendly word or a gift that reminds both parties of the alliances they have, or they have formed. They are embedded in freedom, truth or justice and are expressed in customs,

spiritual products, laws, institutions and human behavior (Rodziński, 1989). Luhmann (1996) describes values as the dimensions of social, temporal, substantive and generalization of a symbolic means of communication in a community. They build habits and assemble all forms of their customs. They build on norms that lead to stability and design the expectations that should be derived from them.

Egbeke (2000) sees value as the designed quality of life of a society; it also includes the principles and moral standards that shape the code of conduct of any given society. It is a valuable and worthy act that makes life meaningful in any culture. Deresky (2003) posits that values are the driving force that guides individual behavior and responses in any given situation. Antia (2005) sees values as emanating from every societal cultural consideration in which certain conducts are widely approved of and others are highly disapproved of by the community. White (2006) claims that values are what drive human decisions and motivations in solving human problems in their societies. He argues that values cluster together in cultures that are similar together; some values can oppose each other, while values can exist simultaneously across cultures. He identifies that values can be grouped into intrinsic or self-transcendent values and extrinsic or self-enhancing values. To him, intrinsic values are those values communities place on a sense of belonging to a community, the relationships and ties built with friends and families and the process in which we can attain self-development. On the other hand, he sees extrinsic values as those that are dependent on the views, ideas and opinions of others. They are often influenced by certain factors such as environment, cultural and social conditions.

Chuta (2006) perceives values from the spiritual aspects of culture, and they exist to humanize culture, monitor and pilot the activities of humans. Asogwa (2008) argues that civilized and rational minds flourish with the existence of values in their communities. They are actionable behaviors that are designed to show esteem and precious attitudes a social group has made. Idang (2007) describes values as human beliefs about what is right, wrong, worthy and treasured. He also asserts it as a point of conviction or view that people live with, live by and can even die for. To him, it permeates every human life as seen in the political, religious, social, aesthetic, cultural, personal and moral values.

Values can also be understood through the concept of world vision and identify them as seen in cultural traits and norms. They are seen in cultural values, rules, unconscious habits and communication of the people. These values are used to influence behavior within a particular culture and are seen as procedures or norms to uphold and follow to exhibit the best behavior. They are attitudes that people exhibit naturally without being able to explain why and are clearly manifested in words, deeds, thoughts, feelings and actions (Young, 2008). Hanel et al. (2018) and Pincus (2024) see values as the standard, adopted and coherent set of attitudes that has evolved by a person, society or organization to set a standard for its people.

Understanding the value system of people helps in predicting human behaviour and actions in different situations or actions. Values are used to assess human behaviour, however there are certain constraints that can arise from the situation that need to be comprehended. Indeed, values form the basis of moral judgment and they are generated from a deep feeling of humans rather than their intellect. It can be seen as how people feel about a situation, topic or choice. Values can signal affective feelings as well as cognitive thinking responses. They provide codes or principles that guide actions generally. Values provide the desirable sanctions for our behavioral actions and reward the actions of others. Values expose human likes and dislikes, humans pleasantness and unpleasantness or what a social group agrees as a success or a failure (Thome, 2015).

Haidt (2012) asserts that values are created through a union of moral reasoning that creates standards in a

communal environment; they create judgments between good and evil, true and false, beautiful and ugly, right and wrong, or good and bad. They are often created with codes to influence moral judgments and are peculiar to social contexts. They design a moral matrix that creates moral judgments between different cultures and social groups. Korporowicz (2016) asserts that values are what define an active, free-thinking individual in a society because they are generally agreed upon by members of that community. They form the basis of their identity and determine the behaviors of that social institution. They act to stimulate and bind the society together and unite the fragmented elements of its social group by universalizing what is temporary and individual. These types of values are seen as native or central and they determine the specificity of a culture and its quality of life. He posits that as cultures develop both individual and social characters, values hold the social group together as they develop them over time. To him, values stimulate new actions as new generations arise and the heritages of the cultures are never lost but transmitted and preserved. He claims that values carry a social message and the creation of them is based on human efforts of identifying what is priceless in a social group to maintain their core heritage.

Etuk (2002) posits that the fabrics of the community and its core existence are held together by the values it designs, upholds and practices. They are approved forms of behaviors, actions and conducts that are held sacred, when violated can lead to penalties and are shameful in nature. African values have zero tolerance for theft, which brings personal shame, disgrace upon his immediate family, friends and relations. It is a disapproved behaviour that connotes the loss of human dignity and respect (Idang, 2009). In conclusion, we can see that universally, scholars have a consensus on what values are. Values hold the society together by regulating human behavior through moral codes or laws that ensure that the freedom and rights of the people are not trampled or infringed upon. They foster unity and a sense of belonging in the society through the traits they promote and give identity to cultures globally. They promote attitudes that guide the conscious and unconscious mind of people across cultures.

Theoretical Framework

This research adopts Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory as developed by Geert Hofstede (2011). His work examines the cross-cultural differences that exist in the national cultures of nations. Specifically, his works observe the mindset of people and the distinguishing features of people across cultures. In investigating social values across societies, Hofstede's work provides a basis for describing how values are created and formed. Hofstede opines that each group has a unique way of communication and this interactive process is engineered through the socialization process of cultures. Values in a society's culture are created through many factors, such as the interpretation of the power dynamics among the different statuses of people in that culture. He asserts that social order is created through the acceptance of the economic and social inequalities in a culture. It posits that people with a higher power in a culture make decisions to guide and regulate the activities of their community; this reality is generally accepted by the members of that community immediately.

Furthermore, he states that these rules and laws become a belief that is not challenged by the members of that community and it becomes an established way of action in the specific community. The core idea here is to create an absolute way of tolerating, relating and guiding actions within a culture. Hofstede uses his research to identify the differences that exist among people in the areas of roles and sexes and asserts that cultures create certain accepted principles that guide the rights of people against each other to eliminate conflict and misunderstandings. He posits that people's attitudes, beliefs and feelings are carefully designed through the

traditional beliefs of a culture. The central focus is to create attitudes that control human needs and ensure the satisfaction of life which can be guaranteed through human restraint and strict laws. Hofstede argues that societies create values that ensure respect for one another, the pursuit and realization of happiness and govern all activities. Hofstede's theory applies to this research because it brings insights into the way in which values of cultures can be understood, investigated and examined in a society. Distinctively, this theory explains how these values influence the behaviour of people in that society.

Methodology

This research work adopted a qualitative research methodology to examine the concept of values within the Chinese and Yorùbá cultural group. Data were obtained through homogeneous purpose sampling and content analysis approach was adopted in the examination of the data. This is mainly because both societies hold esteem their traditions, virtues, philosophies, religion, human relationships and metaphysical foundations. Scholarly materials related to ethics, morals, values, etiquette and responsibilities were downloaded from the internet. Articles were screened based on their titles, abstracts and keywords, articles that didn't focus on Chinese or Yorùbá value systems were excluded. Data were sourced from two databases. First, the internet was applied in the download of relevant materials regarding the types of values with an emphasis on Chinese and Yorùbá societies. Chinese academic databases such as CNKI, VIP, and Wanfang were accessed to obtain documents and scholarly reports relevant to the research theme. Similarly, Western academic repositories, including Google Scholar, CORE, RefSeek, Virtual LRC, and iSeek Education, were also utilized to provide diverse insights, opinions, perspectives, and factual information on the existing values in the Yorùbá society. Scholarly books, articles, peer-reviewed publications, authoritative academic sources and official reports all directly related to the research them were adopted for this work.

Discussion

This section aims to offer a platform for the discourses around the social values embedded in the two different cultures. Specifically, it would delve into the social, moral, religious, political, aesthetic, and economic values of these two different cultural groups.

Chinese culture is grounded on three pillars, and they are Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism. These three philosophical ideologies share similar elements, and they greatly influence Chinese traditional values. Confucianism emphasizes sincerity, loyalty, duty, honor, filial piety, seniority and respect. Taoism stresses Wu Wei, which means letting things take their own course. Similarly, it can be seen as people observing its fundamental principles while adapting to change only when it is necessary. Buddhism stresses the development of mind and character to make progress on the path to enlightenment. It urges people to abstain from stealing, lying, sexual misconduct and killing others (Chan, 1963).

Chinese culture is built on the five basic relationships proposed by Confucianism, which are the father-son, emperor-subject, husband-wife, elder brother-younger brother, and friend-friend. Three of these relationships exist within the family; the society is seen as an extension of the family in Chinese culture. The father is seen as an ideal ruler who should use his authority for the welfare and benefit of the people and not for self-interest. He must be governed by virtues of righteousness and human-heartedness. The relationship between parents and children in this culture is very elaborate, and it is defined in Filial Piety. Parents demand love, reverence, obedience and respect from their children. Children expect love, wisdom, and benevolence from their parents. In this culture, filial piety is a lifelong endeavor. When your parents are alive, comply with the rites in serving

them, when they die, comply with the rites in burying them; comply with the rites in sacrificing to them (Tu, 1998).

Chinese culture emphasizes Confucian virtues as seen as benevolence *ren* (仁), righteousness *yi* (義), propriety *li* (禮), wisdom *zhi* (智), and sincerity *xin* (信), as the fundamental values to live a moral life. These virtues are not only applicable to the people but also to the leaders as well. Leaders are expected to govern their country with benevolent minds and attitudes towards the people. This culture stresses benevolence *ren* (仁) and should be demonstrated through gentleman *Junzi* (君子), a person of virtue and righteousness who influences others with his behavior of the highest morality. It is believed that his proper conduct *li* (禮) will facilitate harmony *hé* (和) in the society. These attributes aim to encourage people to act with humanity, act with the codes of tradition, show respect and have dignity, exhibit virtues such as sincerity, humility, trustworthiness, compassion and righteousness (Vincent et al., 2023).

Chinese people believe in the Mandate of Heaven *Tiānmìng* (天命), which legitimizes the rulership of a person in the country. It was based on the premise that Heaven *Tian* (天) gave its mandate on a virtuous person to rule, and he is also called the Son of Heaven *Tianzi* (天子). He is seen as the supreme universal monarch who will rule the world *Tianxia* (天下). The ruler is guided by his mandate and principle of benevolence; his interests must be based on the people and he has the moral obligation to always do good for his people, otherwise he would lose his mandate to rule the people. The Mandate (命) means command, while Nature (性) is the principle (理) guiding it. Chinese culture believes Heaven uses *yin* (陰) and *yang* (陽) and the five elements (五行) to transform and generate all things. They believe that when people are born, each receives their endowed principle, which becomes the virtues of the five constant virtues (benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and faith), which are the fundamental elements of nature that guide the mandate (Zhu, 2002).

Yorùbá traditional society is built on social values which constitute the structures of the society and invariably form the bedrock of its culture. Its social values are included in the concept of good human relations, hospitality, respect for authority and elders, family and religiously oriented (Olufayo & Jegede, 2014). This culture values hard work, which is carefully illustrated in their taboos, poetry, drama, music, myth and all forms of creative and artistic displays (Ogunleye, 2013). In this culture, parents are seen as the first teachers of their children, they are to train their children and make them aware of the potency of curses and blessings, teach the concepts of reward and punishments, taboos, guide and counsel while enforcing the values of uprightness and morality, respect for elders, honesty, perseverance, truthfulness (Babatunde & Setiloane, 2013). Parents should have the values of love (*Ìfẹ́*), responsibility (*Ojúṣe*), good character (*Ìwà Pẹ̀lẹ́*), discipline (*Ìbáwí*), wisdom (*Ogbón*), patience (*Sùnrì*), honesty (*Òtítọ́*), hard work (*Ìṣiṣẹ́ Takuntakun*), generosity (*Ìfẹ̀ràń Ìránwọ́*), respect (*Ìbòwọ́*), selflessness and sacrifice (*Ìrúbọ Ara ẹ̀ni*) and spiritual leadership (*Ìtónisọ̀nà Ẹ̀mí*) to shape the character, attitude, behavior of their children (Ayandele et al., 2020).

Lawal (2013) also argues that the Yorùbá culture places a lot of value on the family as seen in the perception of the family members, the woman occupies different positions, she can either be a mother, daughter, priest or a witch. Her role depends on the position she holds, and these roles are identifiable in their work of arts, language, religion and music. The most revered value given to a woman is motherhood, this is clearly demonstrated in a proverb, “Mother is gold, father is a mirror (*Ìyá ni wúrà, Baba ni dínḡ*). Motherhood promotes a woman to an esteemed position in this culture; however, being barren is strongly frowned at and

disapproved of by the society. A traditional song encapsulates it in a child is a coral bead; a child is silver, a person who has none has not lived a fulfilled life (*Omọ l'okùn, omọ n'idẹ, Ènìyàn t'ó wá sáyé tí kò bímọ, Ayé asán ló wá*). Children, therefore, are seen in the form of royalty, conferring on the mother the right, power and prestige to exercise authority in her husband's home. Children are seen as beads (*okùn*), which represent an important tool of the royal family and give authority, respect and prestige to the personality of the person wearing it.

Traditional Yorùbá society was ruled by Monarchs known as *oba* (king), which had a council of notable elders called *Ògbóni* (traditional secret society or council of elders), *Ológun* (council of military elders), *Ìyálójà* (the lady of the market), *Olóyè* (paramount Chiefs), and so on that assisted the *Oba* in administering the kingdom. The *Oba* was seen as a highly respected spiritual leader who had authority and power over all things in his domain and territory. Kings are not only rulers in this culture, but they are to preserve all values enshrined in the traditional culture; they are seen to exhibit knowledge-*làákà'yè*, *Ogbón* (wisdom) and *ìmò òyè* (understanding), the application of knowledge, wisdom & understanding. They have valour or bravery - *Akinkanjù* or *Akin*, likewise they must have honour (*iyì*). Amongst all these, they must govern fairly, justly and rightly by preserving the essence of the throne, ensuring stability of the land and upholding its traditions (Fadipe, 1970).

Yorùbá culture believes that its people must exhibit *ìwà rere* (good behaviour) as seen in its model of *Omọlùàbí*. The characteristics, among others, are seen in your *òrọ̀ síso* (spoken word), *ìteríba/ìbòwòfún* (respect), *inú rere* (having a good mind towards others), *òtítọ̀* (truth), *akinkanjù* (bravery), *isẹ̀-àsekára* (hard work) and *opọ̀lọ̀ pípé* (intelligence) (Bewaji, 2004). Yorùbá philosophy, rooted in *Ifá*, centres around *ìwà* (character) as a vital channel through which people can receive good fortunes from both man and the divine. The most important feature of Yorùbá ethics is *ìwà* (character) in Yorùbá culture, and this shows how valuable a man's character is to himself and his society, bringing good fortune to himself and peace and harmony to his community. Therefore, the Yorùbá believe, according to the *Ifá* philosophy, that the essence of humans is to cultivate good character, known as *ìwà rere*, which is one of the crucial values that the Yorùbá cherish.

The *odù Ogbè Alará*, an *Ifá* Corpus, states that *Ìwà* (character) was a woman renowned for her beauty but notorious for her difficult nature, who was indolent, provocative, and sharp-tongued. Over time, *Ọ̀rúnmìlà*, unable to endure her behaviour or support her, sent her away. However, her absence plunged him into despair and loss: his status, wealth, friendships, and happiness quickly faded. *Ọ̀rúnmìlà* then consulted *Ifá* to know the foundation of his problem and realised that his misfortune was self-inflicted, the consequence of sending his wife away. To restore his life, *Ifá* instructed *Ọ̀rúnmìlà* to offer a sacrifice to *Egúngún* (masquerade), and he performed the sacrifice. His obedience to the instruction of *Ifá* endowed him with the ancestral wisdom, and he searched tirelessly for *Ìwà*, visiting all sixteen kings before finally finding her at the *Egúngún* grove in the house of *Ọlójọ̀*. He brought her back, learning a profound lesson: *ìwà rere* (good character), is cultivated with patience, as captured in the proverb: “*Sùúrú ni baba ìwà rere*” (Patience is the father of good character). The *Ifá* Corpus cautions against harsh judgment and criticism, both of ourselves and others. It invites reflection on the meaning of *ègbín* (dirt or waste), which is often used to label undesirable behaviour or people (Frisvold, 2016), among the Yorùbá. By describing *Ìwà* as beautiful yet flawed, the story warns against condemning others, reminding us that *Ifá* recognises creation's inherent order. *Ifá* also “teaches that a bed of tranquillity and peace awaits those who take *ìwà rere* (good character) as their compass. Hence, the Yorùbá proverb 'If you

don't know what road to take, develop good character” (Frisvold, 2016).

Abimbola (1975) argues that to possess good character can be difficult at times, just as a rebellious wife of *Ọ̀runmìlà* was a burden to her husband. However, the great value the Yorùbá placed on it makes it mandatory for every member of the Yorùbá society to possess it. Hence, people are expected to cultivate it. This is so because the presence of any person who possesses makes their community and the larger society a better place. They then admonish members of their communities to abstain from social vices, such as corruption, dishonesty, stealing, lying and other bad behaviours. Frisvold (2016) adds that some people perceive the presence of a truly good person as unsettling, simply because the light and genuine joy of someone with good character starkly contrasts with those consumed by selfish desires and material pursuits. This is why true expressions of good character, such as humility, kindness, generosity, and inner calm, stand out so powerfully. Ultimately, only those who embody good character will find fulfilment in all aspects of life, as stated in *Ifá* thus:

<i>Ẹ̀ní o lówó,</i>	<i>He who is rich,</i>
<i>Tí ò níwà,</i>	<i>But has no good character,</i>
<i>Owó olówó ni o ní.</i>	<i>His riches belong to another person.</i>
<i>Ẹ̀ní láya,</i>	<i>He who has a wife,</i>
<i>Tí ò níwà,</i>	<i>But lacks good character,</i>
<i>Aya aláya ni ó ní.</i>	<i>His wife belongs to another man.</i>
<i>Ẹ̀ní bímọ,</i>	<i>He who gives birth to a child,</i>
<i>Tí ò níwà,</i>	<i>But lacks good character,</i>
<i>Ọ̀mọ ọ̀lọ̀mọ ló bí.</i>	<i>His child belongs to another person.</i>

The *Ifá* excerpt above highlights the Yorùbá reverence for good character as a vital social value. It suggests that those who lack good character ultimately possess nothing, as their negative behaviour will drive away fortune and invite misfortune, much like what happened to *Ọ̀runmìlà*. Although *Ìwà*, his wife, was rebellious, the incident underscores the importance of her role in his life, implying that *Ọ̀runmìlà*'s decision to send her away was a grave mistake.

According to Awolalu (1977), “the Yorùbá attach great importance to *iwà* (character). They know it is the one thing that distinguishes a person from an animal”. Meanwhile, Idowu (1961) has observed that “When the Yorùbá say of someone *o ẹ̀'nia* (He acts the person; he behaves as a person should), they mean that he shows in his life and personal relations with others the right qualities of a person. A person of good character is called *omoluwabi* (*ọ̀mọ-oní-ìwà - ibi*), or one who behaves as a well-born person; and a person of bad character is *enia-k'enia*, a mere caricature of a person, a reprobate”.

Furthermore, the Yorùbá value respect for elders, communal spirit, formal education, community and family solidarity and a strong sense of spirituality (Mueller & Thomas, 2000). They exhibit the culture of love, respect and a deep sense of belonging. The society is stratified based on age groups, with responsibilities to achieve synergy in the society that would keep their life flourishing with a beautiful ambience (Oyewumi, 1997). They cooperate deeply in communal practices such as building houses together, cultivating farmlands

together, training of children in the community and offering help and support to the community generally (Ojelade et al., 2024). This ethnic group places a lot of emphasis on the supernatural; therefore, rituals, rites and worship are key fundamentals that this society upholds. They use rituals and rites to express their form of religion through experiences with the supernatural world; it is an act of worship, communion or communication between one and the object of worship. The *Àwòrò* or *Ìwòrò* (priests) are the ritual performers and they are core devotees of *Òrìṣà* (divinities), they have traits of divinity in them, they worship and absorb the *Òrìṣà* into their being and they begin to manifest it (Adelowo, 1990).

This discussion has delved into the different values of the Chinese and Yorùbá culture. Specifically, it has identified that Chinese values are shaped by Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism. Its essence lies in sincerity, loyalty, duty, honor, filial piety, seniority, respect, mind development, enlightenment path, non-action and harmony with nature. Yorùbá culture, on the other hand, values hard-work, respect, good human relations, hospitality and family-oriented values or principles.

Findings

This research has identified a convergence and divergence of ideas as relates to virtues between these two cultures. A major convergence on the concept of social values for Yorùbá and Chinese cultures is that they are deeply rooted in the regulation of human behavior and conduct in the family as a basic and then the society at large. Hofstede states that values exist to promote social order in the society through guiding human decisions and activities. They both argue and champion for the respect for authority and elders in the family. The Yorùbá culture values respect for parents dearly, and the Chinese culture does the same. Good human relations are clearly obvious when *ìwà* (behaviour) is imminent in *òrò-síṣò* (spoken word), *ìtẹ́rìbà* (respect), *inú rere* (having a good mind towards others), *òtítọ́* (truth), *akinkanjú* (bravery), *isẹ́ àṣekára* (hard work) and *ọpọlọ pípé* (intelligence). Chinese culture built its relationship on the strata of five associations, which are father-son, emperor-subject, husband-wife, elder brother-younger brother, friend-friend. These relationships are governed by the virtues of righteousness and human-heartedness. It also encourages people to act with humanity, tradition, respect, dignity, sincerity, humility, trustworthiness, compassion and righteousness. While Chinese culture clearly identifies the types of relations and values that should govern each of its five relations, Yorùbá culture clearly believes in a general code of conduct for the society. This can also be seen as it places a lot of responsibilities and ethical conducts on the parents. Chinese culture stresses more on the father, the king and the male child, cultivating these values to regulate his human action.

Similarly, another area of convergence is seen in the virtues of leaders, kings or rulers of these two cultures. Both cultures believe that rulership should exhibit a lot of virtues such as selflessness, honesty, kindness, fairness, benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and faith. Hofstede opines that each culture has a way of communication; therefore, in both cultures, kings are seen as representative of god on earth and as such must rule fairly. Chinese culture believes a lot in the Mandate of Heaven, and that all their kings are called the son of heaven on earth. This is a deviation from Yorùbá culture, for the Yorùbá simply believe that kings are representatives of god on earth and have to act according to traditional values, systems and beliefs.

Additionally, they have set models of behaviour in their distinct societies, while the Yorùbá exemplifies the concept of virtues to be imbibed in *Ọmọlúàbí*, Chinese culture uses Junzi to illustrate the ethical conduct people should follow. Hofstede argues that societies create values that ensure respect for one another, the pursuit and realization of happiness and govern all activities. *Ọmọlúàbí* is a person of civilized behaviour and

his tradition is widely practised in Yorùbá culture. His character is seen in how he behaves through respect, integrity, self-control, humanity, courage, hard work, empathy, humility and high morals. Junzi, the gentleman, nobleman, superior person, refers to who Confucius sees as the ideal man who always cultivates virtue and improves his character. Confucius believes that his proper conduct, Li (禮), will bring about a harmonious society. He is an embodiment of humanity and humaneness, a person that exhibits respect, humility, dignity, sincerity, righteousness, compassion and trustworthiness.

Comparative Analysis of Chinese and Yorùbá Values			
		Chinese Values System	Yorùbá Values System
1)	Traditional Values	Sincerity, loyalty, duty, honor, filial piety, seniority respect, non-action, righteousness, human-heartedness, filial piety, mind and character development	Social values are good human relations, hospitality, respect for authority and elders, family and religiously oriented. It values hard work, which is carefully illustrated in their taboos, poetry, drama, music, myth and all forms of creative and artistic displays
2)	Communal Orientation	The five basic relationships are the father-son, emperor-subject, husband-wife, elder brother-younger brother, and friend-friend. The father should be an ideal ruler who uses his authority for the welfare and benefit of the people and not self-interest. He governs by the virtues of righteousness and human-heartedness.	Interlocking relationship, the father heads the family, he is seen as the reflection of the family, and the mother is seen to be precious when she has a child. Children give the family respect, prestige and royalty.
3)	Family Ethics	Filial Piety demands children should love, reference, obey and respect from their parents. Similarly, parents should show love, wisdom, and benevolence to their children.	Parents are role models of their children; they train and educate their children. They exhibit the values of love, responsibility, good character, discipline, wisdom, patience, honesty, hard work, generosity, respect, selflessness and sacrifice and spiritual leadership to shape the character, attitude, behaviour of their children.
4)	Virtue Ethics	Act with humanity, codes of tradition, show respect and have dignity, exhibit virtues such as sincerity, humility, trustworthiness, compassion and righteousness	Good character should be cultivated and family members should abstain from bad social vices like corruption, dishonesty, stealing, etc.

1)	Philosophical Values	Confucianism: benevolence <i>ren</i> (仁), righteousness <i>yi</i> (義), propriety <i>li</i> (禮), wisdom <i>zhi</i> (智), and sincerity <i>xin</i> (信), as the fundamental values to live a moral life	<i>Ifá, ìwa</i> (character), <i>o,se'nia</i> (He acts the person; he behaves as a person should), personal relations with others the right qualities of a person, <i>omoluwabi</i> (omọ-oní-ìwà - ibii), or one who behaves as a well - born person
2)	Personal Values	<i>Junzi</i> (君子, gentleman), proper conduct <i>li</i> (禮), harmony <i>hé</i> (和), dignity, sincerity, humility, trustworthiness, compassion and righteousness	<i>Ọmọ̀lúàbí, òrò síṣo</i> (spoken word), <i>ìteríba/ìhòwòfún</i> (respect), <i>inú rere</i> (having a good mind towards others), <i>òtító</i> (truth), <i>akínkanjú</i> (bravery), <i>ìṣé-àsekára</i> (hard work) and <i>opoḷo pí pé</i> (intelligence).
3)	Metaphysical Values	Mandate of Heaven <i>Tiānmìng</i> (天命), principle of benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and faith.	<i>Ọrúnmìlà, ìwà rere</i> (good character), is cultivated with patience, as captured in the proverb: “ <i>Sùúrú ni baba ìwà rere</i> ” (Patience is the father of good character).

Conclusion

This study set out to explore the convergence and divergence of virtues in Yorùbá and Chinese cultures, with particular attention to how each tradition conceptualizes moral values, regulates social behaviour, and constructs models of ideal personhood. The findings demonstrated that both cultures share a deep commitment to regulating human conduct through respect, moral discipline, and communal harmony. They converge in their emphasis on respect for elders, the moral responsibilities of leaders, and the cultivation of virtues such as honesty, humility, hard work, and righteousness. Divergence emerges in the structural organization of values: Chinese culture codifies virtues through hierarchical relational categories, whereas Yorùbá culture promotes a more generalized moral code applicable across society. The study also revealed how *Ọmọ̀lúàbí* and *Junzi* serve as cultural archetypes of ethical behaviour, reflecting each society's vision of the ideal moral agent.

This research contributes to cross-cultural ethics and value theory by offering a comparative framework that bridges African and East Asian moral traditions—two regions rarely examined together in virtue scholarship. It enriches existing literature by demonstrating that traditional societies, despite geographical and historical differences, often converge on similar moral imperatives aimed at sustaining social harmony. The study has also advanced cultural studies by showing how indigenous concepts such as *Ọmọ̀lúàbí* and *Junzi* can be analysed side-by-side to reveal shared philosophical commitments to character formation, communal responsibility, and moral leadership. Furthermore, the work extends Hofstede's value theory by illustrating how cultural values operate not only at the societal level but also through symbolic figures (kings, fathers, elders) who embody and transmit moral expectations.

The insights from this study have implications for cultural policy, education, leadership development, and

intercultural relations. Policymakers in multicultural societies can draw from the shared virtues identified (respect, honesty, hard work, humility) to design value-based civic education programs that resonate across cultural boundaries. Educational institutions may incorporate indigenous moral models such as *Omólúàbí* and *Junzi* into curricula to strengthen character education and promote ethical citizenship. Leadership training programs can adapt the virtues emphasized in both cultures (selflessness, fairness, wisdom, and benevolence) to cultivate leaders who embody moral authority rather than merely administrative power. Additionally, intercultural dialogue initiatives can use these findings to foster mutual understanding between African and Asian communities by highlighting shared ethical foundations.

This study is limited by its reliance on textual, cultural, and philosophical interpretations rather than empirical fieldwork. The analysis focuses on classical and traditional expressions of virtues, which may not fully capture contemporary transformations within Yorùbá and Chinese societies. The study also centred on two cultures, which restricts the generalizability of the findings to other African or Asian contexts. Furthermore, the research does not incorporate quantitative measures of value orientation, which could provide additional depth and comparative precision.

Future studies should explore how these traditional virtues are negotiated, adapted, or contested in modern urban contexts, especially among younger generations. Comparative research involving additional cultures such as Igbo, Akan, Japanese, or Korean could broaden understanding of cross-cultural virtue ethics. Empirical studies using interviews, surveys, or ethnographic methods would help validate how deeply these values are embedded in contemporary social behavior. Scholars may also investigate how globalization, digital culture, and transnational migration influence the transmission and transformation of virtues in both Yorùbá and Chinese societies.

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