

Chapter 2

The Shaping of Academic Culture in Higher Education in Taiwan: Confucianism, Historic Legacy, and Western Influences



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Abstract Academic culture represents a distinct climate within academic institutions, such as universities or research institutes. This article depicts elements of academic culture of higher education in Taiwan. Academic culture in Taiwan is a mix of globalization, internationalization, religion, historic legacy, national policy, and local knowledge. The Chinese influence on Taiwanese higher education can be traced back to Qing and Ming dynasties. A contemporary challenge for higher education policy is to rethink the problems of pursuing world-class status, which requires that local practices of higher education resist and supersede the global movement. Higher education in Taiwan is finding its own versions of academic culture. Ethical concepts of Confucianism such as collectivism, patriotism, harmony of human relationship, and an individual's responsibility for family and society and the core tenant of "Ren(仁)" influenced the academic culture of higher education in Taiwan, but it was consistently challenged and mixed with international standards and western notions of what was considered to be *great universities* and *excellent scholars*. Buddhism, Daoism, local folk religion, and Christianity are the main religions of Taiwan, and they not only integrated with local culture but also mildly influenced universities' culture by spiritually and economically supporting higher education. The conceptual framework presented in this chapter focuses in on higher education epistemology rooted in Confucianism, as well as the influence of local and regional culture, in addition to international standards of higher education. A redefinition of academic culture of higher education in Taiwan is necessary to describe its mixed, hybrid, fluid, changing, and diverse nature, especially as it addresses modern higher education institutions. This chapter includes implications for the future studies that are needed to explore the academic culture of higher education institutions of Taiwan.

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Introduction

Culture, according to Cambridge Dictionary (2018a), is “the way of life, especially the general customs and beliefs, of a particular group of people at a particular time.” When reviewing the history of Taiwan, one can see the impact of a diverse culture that has been influenced epistemologically by China (Ming Dynasty and Qing Dynasty), as well as colonial histories related to dominance by Holland, Spain, and Japan (Morris, 2002). The current modern culture of Taiwan is one with the main core of Chinese customs and beliefs and was influenced by pop culture from other neighboring East Asian countries (such as Japan, South Korea, and Hong Kong). In the context of an ever-globalizing world, modern culture of Taiwan is also highly influenced by western and European countries, especially the United States and the United Kingdom.

The word “academic,” according to Cambridge Dictionary (2018b), has been defined as “relating to schools, colleges, and universities, or connected with studying and thinking, not with practical skills.” Thus, the term academic culture can be understood as representing the culture of a specific academic discipline, such as the field of medical science or the norms, values, and cues embedded among sociologists. Professors and students oftentimes represent an institutional as the primary actors of academic culture. In this article, I depict elements of academic culture within higher education in Taiwan. I argue that academic culture in Taiwan is a mixture of globalization, internationalization, religion, historic legacy, national policy, and local knowledge. All these influential factors can be further differentiated as internal, which I define as deeply epistemic (e.g., Confucianism or Daoism) or external, such as globalization and internationalization. Additional forms of external factors will also include religious traditions, such as Christian or Islamic faiths, that have shaped the academic culture of universities in Taiwan.

To briefly review the development of higher education in Taiwan, it can be traced back to a period of Japanese imperial rule (1895–1945). In the year of 1899, the Japanese government established the first modern medical school in Taipei (Li, 2005). Before the establishment of this medical school, medical doctors in Taiwan received training from China. Chinese medicine is the major medical skill for healing patients. Thus, medical higher education started to have western science influence from the time of Japanese colonial rule (Li, 2005). In 1919, the new Taiwan education law published by the imperial Japanese government allowed Taiwanese citizens to receive general college education (before the new law, Taiwanese can only attend medical schools); the Japanese government established one agricultural and forestry related college in Taipei and one business college in Tainan. In 1928, the Japan government established the first modern comprehensive university in Taiwan named “Taipei Imperial University (臺北帝國大學)” with a specific focus

on medical science in a tropical region, agriculture, humanities, and geographic studies of Southern China region (Li, 2005). This university is the original institution of National Taiwan University and now is considered the flagship university of Taiwan. It also has the largest number of students, faculty, staff, and academic departments and programs.

After the Japanese imperial rule came to an end in the 1940s, the government of the Republic of China did not expand the university sector in the beginning. Instead, many junior colleges were established to meet the industrial needs and national economic goals of enhancing manufacturing competitiveness. In 1986, there were 16 modern universities and 12 colleges in Taiwan, and about 50% of these institutions were private (Ministry of Education in Taiwan, 2018). While in the same year, there were 77 junior colleges to prepare vocational human resources for the Taiwanese economy (Chan & Yang, 2017). After 30 years of development, educational reform in Taiwan was focused primarily on learning from educational trends from outside of Asia to rebuild higher education institutions (Schofer & Meyer, 2005) while also being responsive to local voices that addressed needs such as workforce education and the public good domestically (Wang, 2003). In 2017, there were 129 modern universities and 15 colleges in Taiwan (Ministry of Education in Taiwan, 2018).

The macro expansion of higher education in Taiwan happened from 1980s to 2005. After 2005, the number of total institutions stabilized to about 160 (Ministry of Education in Taiwan, 2018). To enhance the international competitiveness of best universities in Taiwan, several higher education policies was implemented to the system, such as the policy of “Development Plan for World Class Universities and Research Centers for Excellence (發展世界一流大學計畫)” between 2006 and 2016 (Yang, 2015). However, the most recent developments in higher education policy sought to rethink the challenges and problems of pursuing world-class status. There was public outcry criticizing emphasis on the government committing too many social resources on international research excellence and less care for local development. Some scholars also warned of the dangers in pursuing world-class status in Asia, which would intensify the growing educational inequalities among of higher education institutions in Taiwan (Mok, 2016) and could also increase work pressures of academic staffs (Tian & Lu, 2017). But still, global rankings highly influenced national education policies, and thus research universities in Asia gradually became similar (Deem, Mok, & Lucas, 2008). International journal articles are too emphasized in Taiwan, and local voices diminished (Chou, 2014). Marketization dominated the core value of higher education instead of teaching students well. All these critiques pushed the Taiwanese government to introduce a new policy, “Higher Education Deep Root Project (高等教育深耕計畫)” in 2017. This new policy altered the only focus of reinforcing universities to achieve one single model of “research-type university” and encourage universities to choose their suitable development models, such as “teaching university,” “local contribution university,” “international university,” or “social justice university” (Chan and Yang, 2017).

Wider Factors that Can Affect Academic Culture

Heretofore, I have reviewed the development of higher education in Taiwan. The Chinese influence on the Taiwanese higher education can be traced back to Qing dynasty (清) and Ming dynasty (明). Although in Ming and Qing, higher education did not exist as the form of modern university. When Zheng Cheng-Gong (鄭成功) entered Taiwan and to set the Ming dynasty government in Taiwan in 1661, there was no modern university on this island. Students would enter primary schools to receive traditional Chinese education and textbooks (such as Four Books四書 and Five Classics五經) and to learn classic Chinese literature and Confucian philosophy (Yeh, 2009). This is the start of Chinese education and Confucian philosophy to educate Taiwanese aborigines (原住民) and Han ethnics (漢人) (moved from China to Taiwan). Before the Ming dynasty, Dutch missionaries educate Taiwanese aborigines by Christian knowledge and education (Chang, 2009).

Schein (2010) divided organizational culture into three levels: artifacts and behaviors, espoused values, and assumptions. Artifacts are identifiable and visible elements. They could be captured by the form of visible and tangible structures and observed behaviors. Examples of artifacts include architecture, furniture, regulations, and documents. Schein's framework of organizational culture to academic culture of higher education in Taiwan suggests that some Japanese influences can still be captured in current modern universities of Taiwan. For example, many buildings of National Taiwan University are those architectures that were built by the Japan polity. As Gallery of NTU History (2018) stated: "Gallery of NTU History is locating in the main library and this building is built in 1929 by the former Taipei Imperial University (臺北帝國大學(1928.3–1945.8)) and it is also an official Taipei city protected historical site." Buildings only represent one part of artifacts of Japanese cultural influences on Taiwanese universities. Nevertheless, many official documents, paintings, statues, and images of old Taipei Imperial University reserved in National Taiwan University gallery, library, and museum. Some academic structures of modern universities in Taiwan also formed in the Japan period.

Confucian Epistemology Rooted in Taiwanese Higher Education

In Schein's (2010) framework of organizational culture, espoused beliefs and values means ideals, goals, values, and aspirations of organization. Basic underlying assumptions mean an unconscious and taken-for-granted beliefs and values. Thus, I submit that the espoused beliefs and values can be partly observed via mottos and institutional goals of modern universities. But the basic underlying assumptions could be a mixture of diverse influential factors as I analyzed in the start of this article. These influential factors could include globalization, internationalization, religion, historic legacy, national policy, and local knowledge. This underlying assumptions could be the core of academic culture of higher education in Taiwan,

and it will be changing gradually time by time, not fixed, but is with a status of mixture and hybridity of external and internal forces.

When reviewing higher education development in Taiwan, despite the Japanese imperial period, Chinese philosophy and education was another core element to continuing influence values and assumptions of modern universities in Taiwan. Confucian philosophy emphasized the role of education on helping social development. The functions of education are very important for the society. Education is to educate students to have “morality and ethics” and “knowledge,” but morality is even more important (Chang, 2010; Miao, 2002). In terms of teaching philosophy of Confucianism, “teachers have to teach students based on individual differences (因材施教),” “everyone has a equal right to receive education (有教無類),” “teachers and students can learn from each other through education process (教學相長),” “learning is as important as thinking (學思並重),” “learning is as important as action (學行並重),” and “teacher is center and authority of learning and teaching process”(Chang, 2010; Liang, 2003; Miao, 2002). Education is to prepare scholars (士) for the society, and scholars are selected by national examination (Chang, 2010).

Confucianism affects culture and ethics of society. Indeed, important ethical codes and precepts of Confucianism such as collectivism, patriotism, harmony of human relationship, and an individual’s responsibility for family and society are all hallmarks to Confucian ideological thought. Furthermore, the concept of “Ren(仁),” or person, is the core of the ethics of Confucianism, and it means people have to care for others and to control themselves (Chang, 2010).

Traditionally, two universities are seen as symbolic research-focused universities in Taiwan: National Taiwan University (NTU) and National Tsing-Hua University (NTHU). National Tsing-Hua University was established in 1911 in Beijing, China. The original name of NTHU is “Tsing-Hua Academy清華學堂”(National Tsing-Hua University, 2018). Because of the Civil War of China, the Kuomintang (國民黨, hereafter as KMT) moved to Taiwan, and some symbolic modern universities of China were also reestablished in Taiwan (National Tsing-Hua University, 2018). NTHU was one of them and was rebuilt in Taiwan in 1956. National Tsing-Hua University was relocated in Hsinchu City (新竹市) and shared the same name as Tsinghua University in Beijing, and there continues to be two Tsinghua Universities. They also shared the same motto “Self-Discipline and Social Commitment (自強不息，厚德載物)” given by the famous Chinese scholar Liang Qichao (梁啟超) (1873–1929). The meaning of this motto reflects the Confucian depiction of the ideal scholar (士).

The historic development of NTU has been introduced in the above sections. Though it has Japanese origin, after the KMT government moved to Taiwan, KMT appointed many Chinese scholars to be NTU’s presidents. These presidents transmit Confucian philosophy into the governance picture of this best university in Taiwan. The first Chinese president of NTU is Luo Zongluo (羅宗洛), his university governance idea is to reform the original Taipei Imperial University to become a university with Chinese cultural values and to restore Chinese ethnic sense of identity for students (National Taiwan University, 2018a). The origin of NTU’s motto “Integrity,

Table 2.1 Mottos of two flagship universities in Taiwan

Two flagship universities in Taiwan	Establish time and place	Origin institute	Motto
National Taiwan University	1928 in Taiwan	Taipei Imperial University	Integrity, Diligence, Fidelity, and Compassion (敦品勵學，愛國愛人)
National Tsing-Hua University	1911 in Beijing, China	Tsing-Hua Academy	Self-Discipline and Social Commitment (自強不息，厚德載物)

Source: Author compiled from two universities' main websites

Diligence, Fidelity, and Compassion (敦品勵學，愛國愛人)" is from the president Fu Ssu-nien's (傅斯年) speech in 1949 (National Taiwan University, 2018b). As Confucian philosophy is viewed as the social and cultural center in East Asian countries (Shin, 2012), we can see some Confucian ideas relate to the mottos of these two universities in Taiwan. Confucianism emphasized the role of education in the society, and people who received high-level education should be considered as a special status in the society. The word Shi (士) represented someone with elevated knowledge and good education, who might ultimately be considered a strong candidate to become a public official, and he should possess high social responsibility and to loyal to the state and the Chinese race (Hwang, 2017). And thus scholars have to cultivate themselves (修身), to harmonize their families (齊家), to manage their state (治國), and to help China's peace (平天下). These ideas can be seen in the motto's meaning of two universities (Table 2.1).

Religious Elements of Universities in Taiwan

From the analysis of the above sections, we can see some influential factors that existed in the formation of academic culture in Taiwan, the historic legacies from Japan and China, and the cultural roots of Confucianism. Confucianism is sometimes also considered as a religion. And yet there are also some other religious influences that can be found in the Taiwanese higher education system. The main religions in Taiwan include Buddhism, Daoism, Confucianism, Christianity, Islam, and Chinese folk religion. The majority of religious populations are Buddhism, Daoism, Christianity, and other Chinese folk religions. The main religious impact on higher education is still Confucianism, as Shin (2012) pointed out some core concepts of Confucianism such as "exam-based filter system of higher education," "higher education as the way to improve personal social status," and "high emphasis on higher education both from the public sector and private sector." Because many scholars (士) are university professors, governmental officials, and school leaders, Confucianism can be seen as the core of the higher education system in Taiwan. However, other religions also influence the system by investing universities or even help the government to establish universities. Table 2.2 is the list of all current religious universities in Taiwan; there were now 11 religious universities in Taiwan.

Table 2.2 The List of religious universities in Taiwan

Religious universities in Taiwan	Founded year	Religion
Fu Jen Catholic University	Founded in Beijing in 1925	Catholic
	Reestablished in Taiwan in 1961	
Providence University	Established in 1963	Catholic
Tunghai University	Established in 1955	Christianity
Aletheia University	Established in 1965	Christianity
Mackay Medical College	Established in 2009	Christianity
Tzu Chi University	Established in 1994	Buddhism
Hsuan Chuang University	Established in 1997	Buddhism
Fo Guang University	Established in 2000	Buddhism
Nanhua University	Established in 1996	Buddhism
Huafan University	Established in 1990	Buddhism
Dharma Drum Institute of Liberal Arts	Established in 1998	Buddhism

Source: Author compiled information from these universities' main websites

Three most historic religious universities are Fu Jen Catholic University, Tunghai University, and Tzu Chi University. They are also the three most symbolic religious universities due to their length of history and their representative religion sponsors. We can observe the fact that in their motto and mission, to integrate Christianity into teaching and learning and build students' characters are same values shared by Fu Jen University and Tunghai University. Tzu Chi University directly stated that to educate students with the spirit of Tzu Chi Humanities as their higher education goal (Table 2.3).

Western Influence of Taiwanese Universities

In the above sections, this article analyzed wider factors that can influence academic culture in Taiwan including historic legacy, Confucianism, and religions. But, there is another important source that will influence academic culture. That is the western ideas of modern university. Altbach (1989) argued that since the idea of modern university is western, thus western academic models shaped the nature of higher education systems in Asia. But he also highlighted that the Taiwanese system is influenced by Japanese colonial period. Altbach (1989) mentioned that modern universities in Japan learned from the German academic model after the Meiji Restoration (明治維新) in 1868. Nakayama (1989) analyzed Japanese higher education history and concluded that although German model influenced the early development of medical and law schools of Japan after the Meiji Restoration, the British higher education concepts also influenced some parts of early engineering in Japan. Some Japanese historians also argued that the whole Japanese education system was highly influenced by the United States. Thus the modern higher education in Japan was influenced by diverse western countries, so the early Taiwanese higher education was indirectly influenced by the multi-western mixed model.

Table 2.3 Motto, goal, and mission of the three symbolic religious universities in Taiwan

Three symbolic religious universities	Location	Religion	Motto	Goal and mission
Fu Jen Catholic University	Taipei, Taiwan	Catholic	Veritas, bonitas, pulchritudo, sanctitas (真善美聖)	Fu Jen is committed to a dialogue leading to the integration of Chinese culture and Christian faith; to academic research and the promotion of genuine knowledge; to the development of society and the advancement of humankind
Tunghai University	Taichung, Taiwan	Christianity	Truth, faith, deeds: truth attained through faith expressed by deeds (求真、篤信、力行)	To highlight spiritual education; labor education and service learning; to prepare talents with Christian faiths
Tzu Chi University	Hualien, Taiwan	Buddhism	Kindness, compassion, joy, giving (慈悲喜捨)	Our goal is to prepare professionals who are committed to lifelong learning, analytical and critical thinking, and working with others; moreover, prepare those who embrace the spirit of Tzu Chi Humanities and are willing to tend to those in need

Source: Author compiled information from three universities’ main websites

Before the Japanese colonial period, Chinese education and Confucianism shaped Taiwanese scholars’ ways of behaviors and thinking. There could be a hypothesis stated here. The structure and organization of modern universities of Taiwan may be similar with the western academic model, but the way of managing and decision-making inside the university and especially the academic culture is the mixture or hybridity of the western ideas, the Japanese colonial legacies, the religious unconscious influences (Buddhism, Taoism, local folk religion, or Christianity), and the core Confucianism. There is an old Chinese saying that widespread during the end of Qing dynasty is “Chinese philosophy as the core and western knowledge as the tool (中學為體，西學為用)” can describe this kind of hybrid and mixed academic culture of modern universities in Taiwan.

Belief Systems and Modern Taiwanese Higher Education

In an era of rapid globalization, the Republic of China has been poised to use their belief systems to impact modern university culture. Taiwanese professors, for example, are highly influenced by western ideals of European and North American universities and epistemologies of scientific thinking because of their education and

study abroad experiences. As I mentioned in the beginning section, the current higher education system of Asia and Taiwan has encouraged scholars to publish in international journals. The Taiwanese government also encouraged local and talented students to study abroad for master and doctor degrees in the United States and European countries. The tradition of sending gifted students to study in western countries can be traced back to the late Qing dynasty in 1872. This program is called “public sponsored study abroad (公費留學制度),” and Chou (2000) noticed that most of the awarded students went to the United States and the United Kingdom for their master and doctoral degrees. Many of them became university professors in Taiwan. Globalization of higher education also facilitates the westernization of behaviors of Taiwanese professors. Top universities as well as the Taiwanese government encourage professors to publish in international journals that are indexed in western databases (such as SCI and SSCI) to promote domestic universities’ rankings in the world (Chou, 2014). To attract international students, many elite universities in Asian countries encourage their professors to teach in English (Jon & Kim, 2011), and Taiwan is no exception of this trend (Tsou & Kao, 2017). Tsou and Kao (2017, p.11) found that many Taiwanese universities encouraged their professors to use English as instruction medium for manifold reasons. Now structures of universities in Taiwan are westernized; writings, publications, teaching, and textbooks could be gradually westernized too for coping with international trends of academic excellence and the emergent global model of research university (Deem, Mok, & Lucas, 2008).

Conclusion

The net effects of history, religions such as Christianity and Buddhism, as well as the influence of western ideologies have intertwined to create a unique system within Taiwanese higher education system. These synthesized set of eclectic values offer much in the way of many graduating cohorts of global-minded citizens. The academic system and culture of higher education in Taiwan can be traced back to the Ming Dynasty in China, influenced by Japanese philosophy, and modern China’s reshaping of educational foundations. Now globalization and international standards of higher education have become another super power of academic model. Schein’s (2010) framework of organizational culture helps us to rethink the levels of cultural factors as artifacts, values, and assumptions. Future studies ought to continue to explore the effects of academic culture of Taiwan, including a deeper interrogation of western culture that is manifested by scholars who fail to capture some the epistemologies and assumptions unconsciously embedded in and influencing foreign professors and the impact of their behaviors at universities in Taiwan. Artifacts including the mission, goal, motto, documents, architectures, buildings, and paintings could be a basis for analyzing academic culture of Taiwanese universities. Values of Confucianism, the core Ren (仁), are an important facet of exploration in academic culture. Human relationships are important. Individualism is not

quite encouraged. The whole university's development is important for each individual on campus because of internal collectivism unconsciously affects university members. The Japanese values of working hard and respecting senior teachers are common features of both Confucianism and Japanese culture. The nexus of internal and external, global and local, history and modern, Confucianism and Western could help the academic culture of higher education in Taiwan move toward innovation.

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