

The duality of identity: Exploring postcolonial paradoxes and cultural oxymorons in the Philippines



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Abstract Understanding Filipino identity is a complex challenge, shaped by contradictions and cultural tensions that can often seem like opposing forces. This article explores these contradictions, which we call cultural oxymorons, to shed light on how they define the Filipino experience in a postcolonial world. Using a qualitative literature review approach, the study highlights key cultural paradoxes such as how "Filipino hospitality" can coexist with the harsh realities of poverty, or how the community spirit of "Bayanihan" contrasts with the rise of individualism in urban areas. It also examines the contrast between the warm national greeting "Mabuhay" and the ongoing struggle to build a unified national identity in a globalized context. Theoretical perspectives, including postcolonial theory and cultural studies, are used to explore how the legacies of colonialism still shape Filipino identity today. By looking at case studies from universities and using tools like comparative and discourse analysis, the research shows how Filipinos have remained resilient and adaptable in navigating these paradoxes. Ultimately, the study emphasizes the importance of recognizing these contradictions in understanding what it means to be Filipino in today's world and calls for more research into the ever changing and multi layered nature of cultural identity in the Philippines.

Keywords: cultural oxymorons, duality of identity, postcolonial paradoxes, qualitative literature review

1. Introduction

In postcolonial studies, identity is a pivotal concept, intricately shaped by the historical, cultural, and social forces that define societies. For nations like the Philippines, which gained independence in 1946 yet still carries the enduring marks of colonialism while simultaneously grappling with the pressures of globalization, exploring identity becomes a profoundly significant endeavor. The complexities of Filipino identity go beyond academic debate—they resonate deeply in the lived experiences of individuals navigating a world rife with contradictions and cultural tensions. Understanding these complexities is crucial for appreciating how colonial legacies continue to influence contemporary identities.

For example, the concept of *Filipino hospitality* coexists with the harsh realities of socio-economic inequality, illustrating a paradox of generosity amidst poverty (Antolihao, 1999). Similarly, the practice of *Bayanihan*, which emphasizes communal solidarity, contrasts with the individualistic ethos prevalent in urbanized areas, highlighting a tension between collectivism and personal ambition (David, 2001). Furthermore, the reverence for *Mabuhay*—a symbol of national pride—intersects with the struggle for a cohesive Filipino identity in an increasingly globalized world, underscoring the complexities of national unity in the face of global fragmentation (Constantino, 1976). These instances of cultural contradictions are not isolated; they reflect deeper, ongoing tensions that influence how Filipinos define themselves today.

Central to this investigation is the concept of cultural oxymorons, where seemingly opposing ideas coexist and inform one another. In the context of the Philippines, cultural oxymorons manifest in the interplay between tradition and modernity, local and global influences, as well as the dichotomy of being both colonized and resilient. The tension between tradition and modernity is particularly stark, as traditional practices and values are continuously challenged by the rapid influx of modern technologies and global cultural shifts. These paradoxes encapsulate the Filipino experience and serve as a powerful lens through which we can better understand how identity is continuously shaped by both historical legacies and contemporary realities.

This article argues that the duality of Filipino identity is best understood through the lens of cultural oxymorons. By examining these paradoxes, we can uncover the complexities of what it means to be Filipino in a postcolonial context. The study aims to address the following research questions:

1. How do cultural oxymorons reflect the duality of Filipino identity?
2. What implications do these paradoxes hold for understanding contemporary cultural dynamics in the Philippines?

The significance of this study lies in its multifaceted contributions. First, it enriches the field of postcolonial studies by offering a nuanced understanding of identity formation in the Philippines. Second, it enhances our understanding of the



cultural dynamics at play in a society shaped by historical colonization and ongoing globalization. Additionally, the findings are relevant to Filipino society, offering insights that can inform policies aimed at promoting cultural preservation and inclusivity. Furthermore, this study identifies critical gaps in existing literature, proposing new avenues for exploration. Lastly, it provides educational value as a resource for scholars, students, and researchers interested in cultural studies and identity discourse, thus contributing to a global understanding of Philippine postcolonial identities.

1.1. Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on three primary theoretical perspectives: Postcolonial Theory, Cultural Studies, and Intersectionality. Each framework provides valuable insights into the complexities of identity, particularly the paradoxes and cultural oxymorons that characterize the Filipino experience.

Postcolonial Theory: Propagated by scholars such as Edward Said in *Orientalism* (1978), Postcolonial Theory examines the cultural, political, and social impacts of colonialism and imperialism. This framework is essential for understanding how the historical context of colonization has led to enduring contradictions in Filipino identity. The legacies of colonial narratives often create cultural oxymorons, where traditional values clash with modern influences. By applying Postcolonial Theory, this study critically analyzes these paradoxes, revealing how historical injustices and cultural impositions shape contemporary Filipino identity.

Cultural Studies: Significantly influenced by Stuart Hall in the 1990s, Cultural Studies emphasizes the role of culture in shaping identities and social dynamics. Hall's concept of cultural identity as fluid and constructed facilitates an examination of the cultural oxymorons that emerge as Filipinos navigate their identities in a globalized world. This theoretical perspective provides tools to analyze how representations in media and literature reflect and challenge societal norms, further complicating the understanding of identity in the Philippines. By integrating Cultural Studies, this research contextualizes Filipino identity within broader cultural narratives, illustrating the paradoxes inherent in a society marked by both tradition and modernity.

Intersectionality: Coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, Intersectionality analyzes how various social identities—such as race, gender, class, and sexuality—interact to create unique experiences of oppression and privilege. This framework is vital for understanding the multiple layers of identity in the Philippines and how these intersecting identities contribute to cultural oxymorons. For instance, the experiences of a middle-class, urban Filipino woman may differ significantly from those of an indigenous farmer, highlighting the complexities within the notion of a singular Filipino identity. By incorporating Intersectionality, this study uncovers the layered experiences of individuals, demonstrating how paradoxes arise from the convergence of diverse identities.

The integration of Postcolonial Theory, Cultural Studies, and Intersectionality enriches the analysis of cultural oxymorons in the Philippines. Each framework provides a distinct lens through which to examine the contradictions that define Filipino identity, allowing for a holistic exploration of how historical, cultural, and social factors interact. Together, they create a robust theoretical foundation for analyzing the complexities of identity in a postcolonial context, ultimately guiding the investigation into how these paradoxes manifest in contemporary Filipino society.

By utilizing these theoretical perspectives, this study aims to deepen the understanding of Filipino identity and its cultural oxymorons, contributing to the broader discourse on postcolonial identities and cultural dynamics.

2. Literature review

The exploration of identity in the Philippines traverses a complex landscape shaped by historical legacies, cultural narratives, and social dynamics. As a nation deeply impacted by colonialism and globalization, the Philippines serves as a unique case study for understanding the dualities that define Filipino identity. This literature review delves into key themes, historical contexts, and cultural representations, uncovering the paradoxes and oxymorons that characterize the Filipino experience. By synthesizing scholarly perspectives, we aim to illuminate the intricate interplay of factors shaping identity in this vibrant society, setting the stage for a deeper understanding of what it means to be Filipino today.

Historical Context: The historical trajectory of the Philippines, marked by over three centuries of Spanish colonial rule followed by American occupation, profoundly influences contemporary Filipino identity. Scholars like Agoncillo (1990) emphasize that colonial experiences have created a complex legacy, shaping national consciousness and individual identities. Understanding this historical context is crucial for grasping how past injustices and cultural impositions continue to reverberate in the present, resulting in a society where identity is often experienced as fragmented and paradoxical.

Cultural Representation: Cultural representation plays a pivotal role in shaping perceptions of Filipino identity both domestically and internationally. Works by Fernandez (2018) and Malek (2019) examine how literature, media, and the arts portray the Filipino experience, often oscillating between stereotypes and authentic representations. These cultural narratives reflect societal values while simultaneously challenging or reinforcing existing identities, thereby contributing to the discourse on cultural oxymorons.

Intersectionality: The concept of intersectionality is essential for analyzing the complexities of identity in the Philippines. By considering factors such as gender, class, ethnicity, and sexuality, scholars like Vale (2023) reveal how these intersecting identities create diverse experiences of oppression and resilience. This perspective is crucial for understanding the varied ways Filipinos navigate their identities amid colonial legacies and contemporary societal pressures.

Diaspora Experiences: The Filipino diaspora adds another layer to the discussion of identity. Aguilar (2015) and Juan (2001) highlight how migration alters perceptions of self and community, leading to a reconfiguration of cultural identity. Filipinos abroad often confront the challenge of balancing their heritage with the demands of host societies, creating a dynamic interplay of cultural identities that reflects both adaptation and resistance.

Indigenous Perspectives: Indigenous perspectives are vital for enriching the discourse on Filipino identity. They challenge dominant narratives shaped by colonial histories and highlight the resilience of indigenous cultures. Scholars like Tiongson (2019) argue that acknowledging these perspectives is essential for a holistic understanding of Filipino identity, emphasizing the need to integrate indigenous voices into the broader narrative of national identity.

Despite the rich body of literature, significant gaps remain in exploring Filipino identity through the lens of cultural oxymorons. Most existing studies focus on singular aspects of identity—historical, cultural, or social—without sufficiently addressing how these elements interact to create paradoxes. Furthermore, there is a need for more interdisciplinary approaches that integrate insights from literature, sociology, and cultural studies. This study aims to fill these gaps by providing a comprehensive analysis of how cultural oxymorons reflect the duality of identity in the Philippines, ultimately contributing to a deeper understanding of contemporary Filipino experiences.

3. Materials and Methods

This paper employs a qualitative literature review approach to explore the duality of identity and cultural oxymorons in the Philippines. By synthesizing existing research and theoretical frameworks, this methodology facilitates a comprehensive understanding of how cultural paradoxes inform Filipino identity. The qualitative nature of this study allows for an in-depth exploration of nuanced concepts and themes that quantitative methods may overlook.

Data Sources and Search Strategies: Data for this literature review were gathered from a diverse array of academic sources, including peer-reviewed journals, books, and reputable online databases, as well as through in-depth library readings. Key databases such as JSTOR, Google Scholar, and the Philippine E-Journals were utilized to ensure a robust selection of literature. The search terms included "Filipino identity," "cultural oxymorons," "postcolonial Philippines," and "intersectionality in Philippine culture." The selection criteria focused on works published from the 1970s to present to capture contemporary discussions and insights, thereby ensuring the relevance of the findings to current cultural dynamics.

Data Selection Criteria: The literature was selected based on its academic rigor and relevance to the central themes of Filipino identity, cultural oxymorons, and postcolonial dynamics. Priority was given to works that engaged with contemporary issues or provided critical perspectives on historical legacies shaping current cultural paradigms in the Philippines. Additionally, the selected works were required to have empirical support or theoretical grounding, ensuring a balanced approach to analyzing the complexities of identity formation.

Acknowledging Potential Limitations: While this methodology facilitates a thorough exploration of the literature, it is important to acknowledge some limitations. The focus on peer-reviewed publications and scholarly sources may exclude alternative, non-academic viewpoints or indigenous perspectives that could offer additional insights. Furthermore, the search terms and criteria may have inadvertently limited the selection to English-language sources, potentially overlooking important works in Filipino or other local languages. These limitations are recognized and should be considered when interpreting the findings. Despite these potential gaps, the review aims to provide a robust synthesis of the most relevant and widely recognized academic discussions on Filipino identity.

3.1. Validity and Reliability

To ensure the validity and reliability of the findings, the study adhered to rigorous academic standards in source selection. Peer-reviewed articles and scholarly publications were prioritized, as they provide vetted and credible insights. Additionally, the research incorporated a diverse range of perspectives, including historical, cultural, and sociological analyses, to triangulate findings and strengthen the overall argument. By integrating multiple sources and viewpoints, this study aims to present a balanced and comprehensive picture of the complexities surrounding Filipino identity, thereby enhancing the reliability of its conclusions.

4. Results and Discussion

This section provides an in-depth analysis of Filipino paradoxes and cultural oxymorons through various case studies and analytical approaches, showcasing how these complexities manifest across different contexts. By examining case studies from prominent universities and employing diverse analytical methods such as comparative, discourse, narrative, and visual analysis, this section aims to elucidate the intricate ways in which Filipino identity is shaped by historical, cultural, and social

factors. Each approach offers unique insights into the ongoing tensions and contradictions inherent in Filipino society, ultimately contributing to a richer understanding of the cultural landscape. Current insights from national dailies, such as the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, further strengthen this analysis by providing contemporary context and relevance.

Three notable case studies conducted by prestigious Filipino researchers highlight the nuances of identity, paradoxes, and cultural oxymorons, deeply embedded in postcolonial frameworks. Bernad (1971) explores the juxtaposition of traditional Filipino values and modern consumerism in urban settings, illustrating how colonial legacies still shape identity as Filipinos navigate the conflicting demands of maintaining cultural heritage while embracing globalization. This represents a cultural oxymoron where tradition and modernity coexist uneasily, as theorized in Postcolonial Theory's focus on the enduring impacts of colonialism. Sanchez (2015) examines the portrayal of Filipino women in media, contrasting the "Maria Clara" archetype with contemporary representations, thereby uncovering the paradox of the idealized Filipino woman as both submissive and empowered. This paradox reveals the tensions within gender roles, linking to Cultural Studies by emphasizing how media and cultural production inform societal identity, particularly through gender. Orbeta and Paqueo (2022) analyze the impacts of the Philippine educational system on national identity, discussing the paradox of striving for global competitiveness while simultaneously prioritizing local values. This highlights the cultural oxymoron of being both globally minded and locally grounded, showcasing how educational systems serve as sites of cultural negotiation and identity formation, viewed through the lens of Intersectionality.

Several analytical approaches further enrich the understanding of Filipino paradoxes and cultural oxymorons. Comparative analysis by Espia et al. (2021) reveals disparities between urban and rural Filipinos, particularly in terms of resource access and cultural perceptions, creating paradoxes in identity formation. These findings resonate with Postcolonial Theory's exploration of how geographical and socio-economic divisions continue to reinforce colonial and neocolonial legacies. Constantino (1976) examines the contrasting narratives of Filipino history in educational materials versus popular media, showcasing how different representations lead to conflicting identities. This aligns with Cultural Studies, which critiques the power dynamics in cultural representation and the shaping of identity through dominant and counter-narratives.

Discourse analysis provides significant insights, with Rafael's (1995) *White Love and Other Events in Filipino History* critiquing the romanticization of colonial narratives and their impact on contemporary Filipino identity. This aligns with Postcolonial Theory's focus on how colonial discourses continue to shape national identities. Orig's (2006) *The Politics of Identity and Mimetic Constructions in the Philippine Transnational Experience* analyzes national identity discourse, addressing contradictions inherent in postcolonial narratives. The exploration of mimicry and hybridity in this study connects with both Postcolonial Theory and Intersectionality, highlighting how Filipino identity is constantly redefined in relation to global power structures.

Narrative analysis emphasizes the stories of two prominent Filipino figures. Miriam Defensor-Santiago's life embodies the paradox of being both a fiercely independent politician and a symbol of traditional femininity, challenging gender norms while navigating a patriarchal society. Lea Salonga, as an internationally acclaimed performer, represents the oxymoron of being a global icon while maintaining a strong connection to her Filipino roots. These narratives reflect the intersection of gender, nationality, and global identity, drawing from the theory of Intersectionality, which examines how multiple axes of identity intersect to create unique experiences of power and representation.

Phenomenological analysis, as reflected in studies by Cordero et al. (2021) in *The Unwavering Faith of Filipino Catholic Workers in Macau*, uncovers individual experiences of cultural identity shaped by historical and contemporary factors. David (2001), in *Philippine Society and the Challenge of Modernity*, examines how personal experiences reflect broader societal paradoxes in the face of modernization. These works contribute to understanding how lived experiences and individual narratives reflect larger, collective identities shaped by colonial and postcolonial histories.

Visual analysis also contributes significantly to the discussion, with significant artistic works conveying messages about Filipino paradoxes. The "Kapitbahay" sculpture by Benson R. Abad symbolizes community resilience amid urban challenges, reflecting the paradox of connection and isolation in modern Filipino life. The "Oblation" statue at the University of the Philippines represents the Filipino spirit of self-sacrifice and nationalism while embodying the tensions between idealism and the harsh realities faced by many Filipinos today. These works highlight how art and public symbols mediate postcolonial identity and national memory.

Ethnographic analysis is evidenced by studies such as Chan's *Understanding the Filipino Youth: Navigating Agency between Tradition and Modernity*, which explores how cultural shifts affect youth identity formation. Mulder's *Filipino Identity: The Haunting Question* examines urbanization's impact on cultural identity, revealing the paradoxes of modernization. These ethnographic studies offer insights into how identity is shaped by the intersection of personal agency, tradition, and modern influences, aligned with Intersectionality's focus on how multiple social factors converge to form identity.

Finally, critical cultural studies analysis includes works that cover concepts about Filipino paradoxes. Bauzon's *Filipinas Everywhere: Essays in Criticism and Cultural Studies from a Filipino Perspective* compiles essays examining the complexities of Filipino identity in a postcolonial context. Lopez's *Decolonising the Philippine Language: The Ebb and Flow of Spanish Influence on Filipino Culture* critiques dominant narratives in Philippine studies, advocating for a more nuanced understanding of cultural

contradictions. These works engage with the ongoing process of decolonization and the role of cultural studies in unpacking the legacies of colonialism.

Intertextual analysis uncovers significant texts depicting Filipino paradoxes. José Rizal’s *Noli Me Tangere* highlights the contradictions of colonial society and the complexities of Filipino identity. Additionally, contemporary articles in the *Philippine Daily Inquirer* discuss social issues such as poverty versus prosperity, revealing ongoing cultural oxymorons within Filipino society.

Overall, this analysis of Filipino paradoxes and cultural oxymorons reveals how historical, cultural, and social factors converge to shape identity, like a karaoke night where everyone sings their own tune, yet somehow manages to harmonize. Grounded in Postcolonial Theory, Cultural Studies, and Intersectionality, this framework digs into colonial legacies and cultural representations as if we’re unraveling a long-lost family recipe: a pinch of history, a dash of confusion, and a whole lot of flavors. This analysis not only clarifies the tensions within Filipino society but also highlights the richness of its cultural landscape, ultimately contributing to a more nuanced exploration of identity in a postcolonial context.

4.1. Thematic Analysis

This thematic analysis is based from a laborious qualitative literature review of diverse academic sources. It explores ten prevalent themes that surfaced in the literature on Filipino paradoxes and cultural oxymorons, each illuminating the complexities of identity and the cultural tensions that define the Filipino experience, ultimately reinforcing the intricate interplay between these paradoxes and cultural oxymorons.

4.1.1. Tradition vs. Modernity

One of the most pervasive themes is the tension between tradition and modernity. Scholars like Antolihao (1999) highlight how Filipinos strive to honor ancestral customs while embracing contemporary lifestyles. This duality creates cultural oxymorons, as individuals navigate conflicting values, illustrating the struggle to maintain cultural heritage in an increasingly globalized world (Table 1).

Table 1 On tradition, modernity and cultural heritage.

Paradox	Oxymoron
The tension between tradition and modernity, where Filipinos strive to honor ancestral customs while embracing contemporary lifestyles.	The coexistence of conflicting values that arise from this duality, referred to as "cultural oxymorons," illustrating the complexities of maintaining cultural heritage in a globalized world.

4.1.2. Nationalism and Globalization

The juxtaposition of nationalism and globalization emerges prominently in studies like Ramos (2000). This paradox reflects the desire for national pride while engaging in global economic systems. Filipinos find themselves caught between celebrating local culture and adapting to international standards, leading to complex identities that embody both influences (Table 2).

Table 2 On nationalism and globalization.

Paradox	Oxymoron
The juxtaposition of nationalism and globalization, where Filipinos experience a desire for national pride while simultaneously engaging in global economic systems.	The complex identities that emerge from this duality, embodying both local cultural celebration and adaptation to international standards, illustrating the conflicting influences of nationalism and globalization.

4.1.3. Gender Roles and Empowerment

The exploration of gender roles reveals significant cultural oxymorons. Cruz (2020) discusses the portrayal of women as both subservient and empowered figures, highlighting contradictions within societal expectations. This duality challenges traditional gender norms, demonstrating how women navigate their identities amidst conflicting pressures from cultural heritage and modern feminist movements (Table 3).

4.1.4. Poverty and Resilience

A recurring theme is the paradox of poverty and resilience. Scholars emphasize the Filipino spirit of "bayanihan," or communal unity, as a response to socioeconomic challenges. This resilience often coexists with the harsh realities of poverty, creating a cultural oxymoron where hope and struggle are intertwined in the Filipino narrative (Tiongson, 2020) (Table 4).

4.1.5. Urbanization and Displacement

Rapid urbanization gives rise to themes of displacement and alienation. As rural residents migrate for better opportunities, studies by Jensen & Quijano (2020) illustrate how this shift creates identities rooted in nostalgia for the past while aspiring for the future, revealing the paradox of progress at the cost of cultural dislocation (Table 5).



Table 3 On duality of women and feminism.

Paradox	Oxymoron
The duality of women being portrayed as both subservient and empowered figures, reflecting the contradictions within societal expectations regarding gender roles.	The term "cultural oxymorons" refers to the coexistence of these conflicting identities, showcasing how women navigate pressures from both traditional cultural heritage and modern feminist movements.

Table 4 On poverty, resilience and socioeconomic realities.

Paradox	Oxymoron
The coexistence of poverty and resilience, where the Filipino spirit of "bayanihan" represents communal unity in response to socioeconomic challenges.	The cultural oxymoron that arises from the intertwining of hope and struggle in the Filipino narrative, illustrating the complex relationship between resilience and harsh socioeconomic realities.

Table 5 On progress and urbanization.

Paradox	Oxymoron
The paradox of progress, where rapid urbanization leads to better opportunities but also results in cultural dislocation and alienation.	The cultural oxymoron reflected in identities that are simultaneously rooted in nostalgia for the past and aspirations for the future, highlighting the conflicting experiences of urbanization.

4.1.6. Religious Faith and Skepticism

Religious faith is significant in Filipino culture yet coexists with skepticism and critique of established beliefs. This theme reflects a cultural oxymoron where deep spirituality contrasts with questions about social justice and morality, influencing both personal and collective identity formation (Peracullo et al., 2019) (Table 6).

Table 6 On belief and identity formation.

Paradox	Oxymoron
The paradox of holding deep religious faith while also experiencing skepticism and critique of established beliefs.	The cultural oxymoron where deep spirituality coexists with questions about social justice and morality, illustrating conflicting influences on identity formation.

4.1.7. Individualism vs. Collectivism

Filipino culture traditionally emphasizes collectivism, yet there is a growing trend toward individualism, particularly among the youth. This tension creates paradoxes in social behavior, as young Filipinos struggle to balance personal aspirations with familial obligations (Nolasco, 2023) (Table 7).

Table 7 On tradition and social behaviors.

Paradox	Oxymoron
The tension between traditional collectivism and the rising trend of individualism among young Filipinos.	The cultural oxymoron of balancing personal aspirations with familial obligations, highlighting conflicting social behaviors.

4.1.8. Historical Memory and Amnesia

The theme of historical memory versus collective amnesia highlights how Filipino identity is shaped by both remembrance and forgetting. Scholars like San Juan (2017) argue that national narratives often overlook significant events, creating a paradox where cultural identity is constructed from selective memories serving contemporary political and social agendas (Table 8).

Table 8 On historical memory and the past.

Paradox	Oxymoron
The tension between historical memory and collective amnesia, where significant events are remembered or forgotten based on current narratives.	The cultural oxymoron of constructing identity from selective memories that simultaneously acknowledge and obscure parts of history, reflecting a fragmented understanding of the past.

4.1.9. Colonial Legacy and Cultural Pride

The enduring impact of colonialism on Filipino identity generates a complex relationship with cultural pride. Many scholars note that while the colonial legacy can instill a sense of inferiority, it also spurs a resurgence of cultural pride as Filipinos reclaim their heritage (Rafael, 2017). This theme underscores the cultural oxymoron of embracing a history that is both a source of shame and pride (Table 9).



Table 9 On feelings and Filipino identity.

Paradox	Oxymoron
The conflict between feelings of inferiority stemming from colonial legacy and the resurgence of cultural pride in reclaiming heritage.	The cultural oxymoron of embracing a history that simultaneously serves as a source of shame and pride, reflecting the duality of Filipino identity.

4.1.10. Education and Identity Formation

The role of education in shaping Filipino identity presents another paradox. While the educational system aims to foster national identity and critical thinking, it often perpetuates colonial narratives and reinforces social hierarchies. Maca & Morris (2015) discuss how this duality creates challenges for students reconciling their identities within a system that is both liberating and constraining (Table 10).

Table 10 On education and student’s identity formation.

Paradox	Oxymoron
The dual role of the educational system in fostering national identity and critical thinking while simultaneously perpetuating colonial narratives and reinforcing social hierarchies.	The cultural oxymoron of an educational system that is both liberating and constraining, highlighting the conflicting influences on students' identity formation.

This analysis emphasizes the intricate and multifaceted nature of Filipino identity through the lens of paradoxes and cultural oxymorons. Case studies from prestigious universities reveal profound insights: UP’s examination of tradition versus modernity highlights the ongoing struggle Filipinos face in balancing cultural heritage with contemporary influences. UST’s exploration of gender roles underscores the conflicting expectations placed on women, revealing dual narratives of empowerment and subservience that shape their identities. Meanwhile, DepEd’s investigation into education illustrates how the system simultaneously fosters national pride and perpetuates colonial narratives, complicating students' sense of self.

Employing diverse analytical methods enhances our understanding of these complexities. Comparative analysis unveils contrasts between urban and rural identities, while discourse analysis reveals how historical memory and selective amnesia shape national narratives. Narrative analysis of figures like Miriam Defensor-Santiago and Lea Salonga illustrates how individual stories encapsulate broader cultural tensions. Visual analysis of artworks communicates deep-rooted messages about resilience and identity, emphasizing the cultural oxymorons inherent in Filipino expressions.

This thematic analysis sheds light on the multifaceted nature of Filipino identity through the lens of paradoxes and cultural oxymorons. Key insights that emerge from the literature include the ongoing tension between tradition and modernity, where Filipinos struggle to preserve cultural heritage while adapting to globalization. The juxtaposition of nationalism and globalization highlights how individuals navigate the complex balance of local pride and global influences. Gender roles reveal a paradox of empowerment and subservience, with women navigating societal expectations shaped by both tradition and modern feminist movements. The resilience demonstrated through poverty underscores the intertwining of hope and hardship in the Filipino narrative. Rapid urbanization creates identities rooted in nostalgia for the past while aspiring to a more modern future, reflecting the costs of progress. Religious faith exists alongside skepticism, creating a complex spiritual landscape. The rise of individualism among youth clashes with the traditional emphasis on collectivism, while historical memory and amnesia form a fragmented identity built on selective remembrance. The enduring colonial legacy fuels both pride and inferiority, complicating the reclamation of Filipino culture. Lastly, the educational system fosters national identity while perpetuating colonial narratives, presenting a dual role that challenges students' sense of self. These interconnected paradoxes provide a deeper understanding of the Filipino experience, emphasizing the fluid and evolving nature of identity shaped by historical, cultural, and social factors.

5. Conclusions

This research has delved into the complex nature of Filipino identity, using cultural oxymorons and paradoxes to better understand the contradictions that define the Filipino experience. The findings highlight how Filipino identity exists in a delicate balance—between tradition and modernity, nationalism and globalization, and empowerment and subservience in gender roles—showing the resilience and adaptability of Filipinos. Through a qualitative literature review, this study has provided a deeper understanding of how colonial legacies continue to shape the Filipino identity today. Recognizing these cultural contradictions is essential to fully understanding the broader dynamics of Filipino society, emphasizing that identity is fluid, constantly shaped by historical contexts and personal experiences. To make this study more impactful, it is important for policymakers, educators, and community leaders to take these findings into account when developing strategies for preserving culture, shaping education, and fostering social unity. For example, creating policies that embrace both traditional and modern Filipino identities can help strengthen national cohesion, while educational approaches that include diverse perspectives on Filipino identity can encourage young people to engage more deeply with their heritage. Moving forward, it is crucial to engage with these paradoxes through meaningful discussions that celebrate diversity. In education, curricula that explore the



complexities of identity can empower students to better navigate their cultural roots with confidence. Additionally, policymakers should consider community-led initiatives that make sure both urban and rural voices are heard in national conversations about identity. Overall, the question of where Filipinos go from here and how they can move forward in an ever-changing world reflects the nation's ongoing search for identity and a call for collective action to engage with these challenges in a globalized world.

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Ethical considerations

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Conflict of Interest

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