

# Dimensions of Personal Culture of Excellence and The Effects on Innovation Performance

An Da<sup>1</sup>, Boo Ho Voon<sup>1\*</sup>, Wen Chiat Lee<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Faculty of Business and Management, UiTM Sarawak Branch, Jalan Meranek, 94300, Kota Samarahan, Sarawak, Malaysia

\*Corresponding Author: [bhvoon@uitm.edu.my](mailto:bhvoon@uitm.edu.my)

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**Abstract:** *Over the years, China has been developing in all aspects, not only as an economic power, but also as an innovative scientific and technological power, which is inevitably related to China's long history of excellent culture. Meanwhile, considering that colleges and universities are important carriers for cultivating innovative talents, our study focuses on college students in Ningxia, China. The purpose of the study is to explore how personal culture of excellence (PCE) affects the innovative performance (IP) of individuals in Chinese universities. This study utilizes Hofstede's theory of cultural dimensions and divides Chinese excellent culture into 10 dimensions based on the characteristics that Chinese excellent culture exhibits in individuals. In this study, the questionnaire method was used to survey the students of 10 universities in Ningxia. The collected questionnaires were also sorted and analyzed using SPSS methods, and the entire research process was modelled using Smart PLS Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis. The study found that the personal cultural values of excellence have a positive impact on the innovative performance of individuals (i.e., students) in higher education institutions. This study aims to clarify the different dynamics between IP and PCE, which relatively contributes to a deeper understanding of how a culture of personal excellence influences expected innovation performance.*

**Keywords:** Personal Culture of Excellence, innovation performance, Ningxia

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## 1. Introduction

Chinese outstanding culture is the national spirit inherited by the Chinese nation in the course of thousands of years of development. It embodies the experience and wisdom summed up by the working people of all ethnic groups in China in the practice of production, and is the spiritual culture of the Chinese people of all ethnic groups in their unremitting self-improvement (Wang, 2021). As a result, China now constantly emphasizes cultural confidence in its economic development. As Chinese culture is broad and deep, such as the cultural values of Confucius, it is an important source of economic development and is emphasized by the Chinese government. The Chinese government highly values its people with good cultural values and encourages them to create innovative products for economic development.

China's rapid economic development could not have been achieved without the thousands of years of cultural heritage behind it, as this achievement did not happen overnight, but thanks to the high importance placed on different aspects, especially the incorporation of different cultural practices and traditional values into the country's development, which has been crucial

to China's economic growth over the years (Yin & Zhang, 2012). One of the main aspects of this particular cultural renaissance has been the promotion of a culture of personal excellence among Chinese people, with a close focus on students in higher education institutions. By implementing and placing greater emphasis on a culture of personal excellence, individuals graduate from institutions of higher learning and their innovative performance is then positively influenced and impacted (Swedberg, 2000). We can ascertain that the culture of personal excellence in China is representative of a multifaceted system that incorporates a variety of values that have been well preserved since ancient times (Gordon, 2020). This study focuses on the increasingly important role played by the culture of personal excellence (PCE) in the formation of innovation performance (IP) and pays close attention to individuals in higher education institutions (especially those in the Ningxia province of China).

The process of preserving and developing PCE is crucial because of its relevance to the development of Chinese society. PCE encompasses a wide range of virtues, from personal values, from the individual to the drivers of achieving self-improvement, to different qualities such as passion for entrepreneurship, integrity and resilience. Different values not only shape one's personal moral character, but also change one's mindset to closely consider economic development and the desire to achieve more in different fields. Considering Ningxia's high population and relatively large number of higher education institutions, it is a key reference point for Chinese scholars to explore particular studies of PCE and IP.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Culture and Innovation**

The Chinese government has always attached importance to the cultivation of personal culture of excellence of college students. The process of product production technology has been further shortened, which is caused by information globalization and fierce economic competition (Tian, et al., 2018). In the current business environment, a large number of researchers are studying the current situation. At the same time, business practitioners and policymakers begin to pay attention to the importance of innovation for competitive advantage and sustainable economic development (Howells, 2005; Fagerberg and Srholec, 2008; Fagerberg et al., 2010; Goktan and Miles, 2011; Brem et al., 2016; Naqshbandi, 2016). From the measures and policies adopted in recent years to encourage and build an innovative society, we can see the importance the Chinese government attaches to economic innovation (Tian, et al., 2018). The Chinese government put forward a national strategy for building a creative society in the next 20 years (Development Research Centre of the State Council and The World Bank 2013) and the Korean government announced the launch of 'creative Korea' as a new national brand (Kwon 2016). These policies are the most powerful evidence that some Asian countries and businesses have begun to turn to market-leading technology-intensive economies based on creativity and innovation, thus helping them maintain their economic growth level. (Mccreeedy 2004).

Since the 1990s, the research on the impact of culture on economic innovation has increased significantly, especially the qualitative and quantitative research methods that have become the most important research methods. During this period, the study began to explore the impact of specific cultural dimensions on innovation, such as entrepreneurial culture (Deshpandé et al., 2004). In the 21st century, economic globalization has led more and more enterprises to enter the stage of high-speed development. At the same time, innovation-oriented culture has attracted much attention. Therefore, many fruitful results have been achieved, and people's understanding of innovation has become more and more standardized (Kenny et al., 2006).

Culture is a very important human phenomenon. It is important content and spiritual driving force for the development and progress of human society. It is also an important symbol of this development and progress in the spiritual field. It also refers to the sum of human activities and achievements in transforming the objective world and the subjective world (Li et al., 2010). Innovation refers to the activity in that people use known information and conditions to break with Convention and discover or produce novel, unique, and valuable new things and ideas to meet the needs of development (Li et al., 2010). From the perspective of ecology, the lack of academic morality and academic corruption are problems in the operation of the academic ecological chain (Guo, 2021). College teachers should integrate Chinese excellent culture into the classroom and affect the quality of students from the ideological level, which is more conducive to cultivating high-quality innovative talents (Wang, 2020).

## **2.2 Personal Culture of Excellence and Innovation Performance**

Some innovative methods emphasize that innovation is a deliberate and organized action taken by entrepreneurs to achieve specific economic goals, more accurately meet market needs and make rational use of existing or available resources (Sty's, 2018). The understanding of different definitions of innovation can be summarized as that innovation is the result of knowledge and invention progress, that is, innovation is the process of discovering and producing new products (Szczepańska-Woszczyna, 2016). In the evaluation of higher education, the economic benefit evaluation of higher education is an indispensable part. According to the different starting points and realization processes of investment, the economic benefit of higher education can be divided into internal economic benefit evaluation and external economic benefit evaluation. The former focuses on the output benefits after the input of internal resources and the economies of scale resulting from the cost-saving; The latter focuses on the social and economic benefits generated by the combination of higher education achievements and means of production. Different from other types of evaluation, higher education economic benefit evaluation focuses on how to evaluate and promote the optimal allocation of higher education resources in the face of limited education investment, to improve the efficiency of higher education investment. Macroscopically, it is an important task for higher education to play a greater role in the development of the national economy.

The long-lasting cultural values that have set a solid foundation for PCE have a tremendous impact on economic behavior. In his study, Li (2001) draws to our attention the fact that emphasis that has been put in place concerning hard work and diligence encourages an individual to put more effort in order to achieve excellence in their different professions. Similarly, different values such as entrepreneurship and innovation are guided or rather align relatively well with economic derivations hence nurturing the availability and presence of an environment that encourages economic growth and development. It is therefore taken into account that PCE is deeply entrenched in the Chinese way of life which an important role in the entire process of shaping societal norms and the behaviors of different individuals who are in higher learning institutions in China. Based on the above arguments, it is hypothesized that the dimensions of personal culture of excellence have a positive impact on the innovation performance

## **2.3 The Theoretical Framework**

The core strength universities and colleges is knowledge advancement and product innovations. Innovation can bring development to a country, and innovation is created by a person called an entrepreneur (Schumpeter, 1949). The cultivation of these cultural traits and personalities is essential to the formation of well-educated individuals that could benefit the society and nation through product innovations. Innovative goods and services can bring

desirable economic development to a nation by being commercialized. Through Hofstede's cultural dimension theory, this paper divides the dimensions of Chinese excellent culture. The framework (Figure 2.1) demonstrates the cultural dimensions that will lead to innovation performance. These cultural dimensions are a collection of Confucian values. These cultural dimensions can lead to innovation performance.

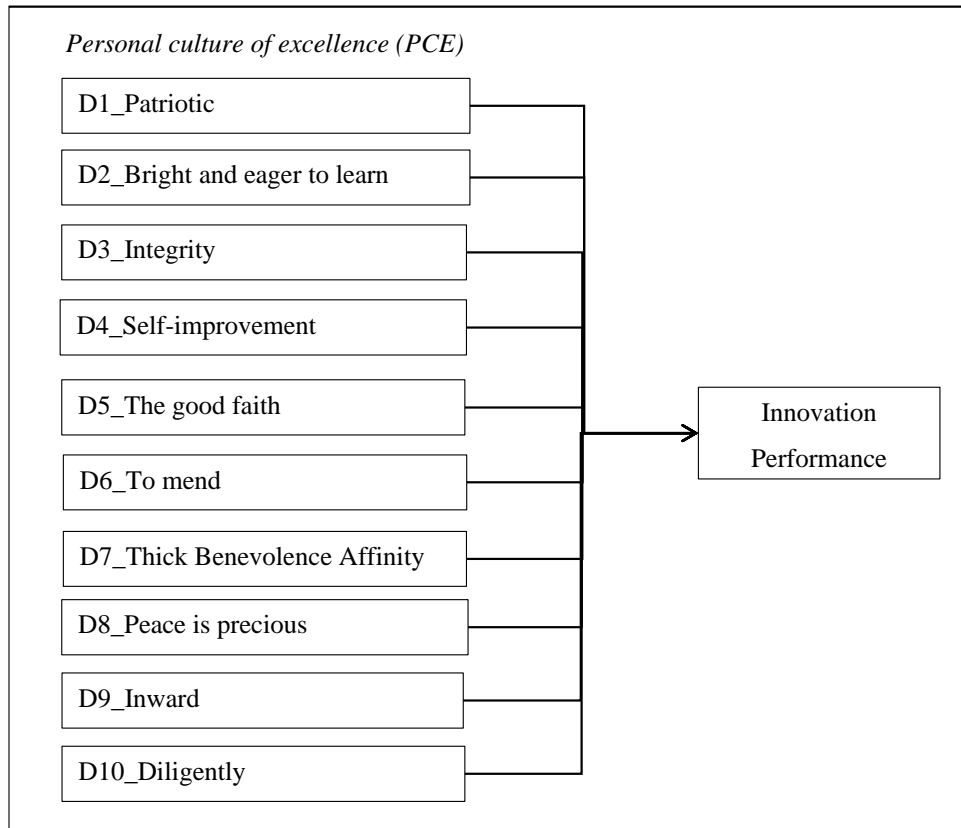


Figure 1: Dimensions of personal culture of excellence and innovation performance

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Research Design

To effectively collect the required information of the relationship that is there between PCE and IP, this research implements quantitative research method. This is well conducted through the use of a cross-sectional survey method that serves as a great deal in the process of capturing cultural values of the participants and their innovative behaviors at a specific time in higher learning institutions in Ningxia, China. Additionally, for the research to be a success it further deploys the use of stratified random sampling techniques to ensure the representation of all the individuals who are targeted from the whole population hence increasing the level of accuracy. The use of stratification provides a wide room for the of capturing insightful information that could be used to draw conclusions without any form of assumption. This increases the level of accuracy. As a result of using quantitative research method, in order to determine the relationship that is there, in other words correlation between PCE dimensions and IP, SPSS will be used in the process of data analysis. The entire research process was also modeled using Smart PLS, using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis.

#### 3.2 Data Collection

For the process of data collection to be a success, a total of 2100 questionnaires were distributed to students from ten (10) higher education institutions in Ningxia, China, the types of which

include comprehensive universities, teacher training universities, medical universities, ethnic universities, and several vocational and technical universities. The projected and planned sample size will be approximately 2,000 students, which is 1.05 times the required sample size (2,000 samples) considering the potential low response rate. The classification of each higher education institution is based on the characteristics of the institution, and the different specialized disciplines offered. The staff in charge of student management at these schools were contacted in advance and they were responsible for providing guidance, distributing and collecting the questionnaires from the students in their charge. Since the questionnaire was filled out in the form of a mobile client, the staff only needed to distribute the QR code of the questionnaire to the students and stipulate that they fill it out within a fixed period of time, because the target group of the survey was students, and in order to ensure the efficiency of the data collection, the staff was given three days to perform the task. A total of 2089 questionnaires were collected, with a return rate of 99.5%. The high return rate of the questionnaires was based on the design of the online questionnaire, where all the questions were mandatory and the students were required to give feedback to the person in charge of the questionnaire's completion interface. The questionnaire distribution and collection process lasted for a total of 1 month from July 2023 to August 2023, where most of the time was used to contact the student managers of the relevant programs in each higher education institution.

### **3.3 Data Cleaning**

After the entire process of data collection, not all the data collected for the different higher learning institutions were as accurate as required to be. There were some instances of inaccuracy in the process. The finding from the data collected expected a total return of well answered 2089 questionnaires which was not well achieved as a total of 18 answered questionnaires were unavailable. This indicates that they could not be traced in order for further analysis to be conducted from the results. This therefore indicates that a total of 2071 questionnaires were well available and were therefore used for further analysis. Hence facilitating the completion of the whole process of data analysis. This return of fully answered questionnaires indicated that the return success rate was at 99.14% which was tremendously useful in the process of coming up the required results to the shoe the relationship that is there between dimensions of PCE and IP. The missing parts (Unavailable questionnaires) did not affect the statistics of the data, and these missing data were used as a reflection of the respondents' attitudes towards Chinese outstanding culture. After repeated comparison, the sources of these data were reliable.

### **3.4 Ethical Consideration**

To ensure that the process of data collection was carried with highest level of integrity and credibility to the whole research, a number of activities were conducted. The participants were given prior information concerning the whole process that they were to undertake. The participants were informed deeply about the whole process before they were fully committed to the activities that was required of them. they were informed of the potential risks that could associated with the process; they were also informed of the possible benefits of the whole process. The different were further informed that they had the right to withdraw from the whole activity without being forced to stay and undertake the tasks. This helped in the crucial process of getting consent of the participants freely. The confidentiality and the privacy of data to be collected from the participants was also assured the data collected was to be anonymized which relatively done so in the whole process.

## 4. Findings and Discussion

### 4.1 Profile of the Respondents

Considering that the diversity of the survey objects can greatly improve the reliability and validity of the research data and play a decisive role in the purpose of the research, the researcher conducted a large-scale visit to colleges and universities in Ningxia and issued questionnaires based on the authenticity and reliability of the research data and the feasibility of the research results.

Respondents were asked to provide their gender, age, grade, discipline, and professional category in the questionnaire. Table 1 shows the profile of the respondents.

**Table 1: Profile of Respondents**

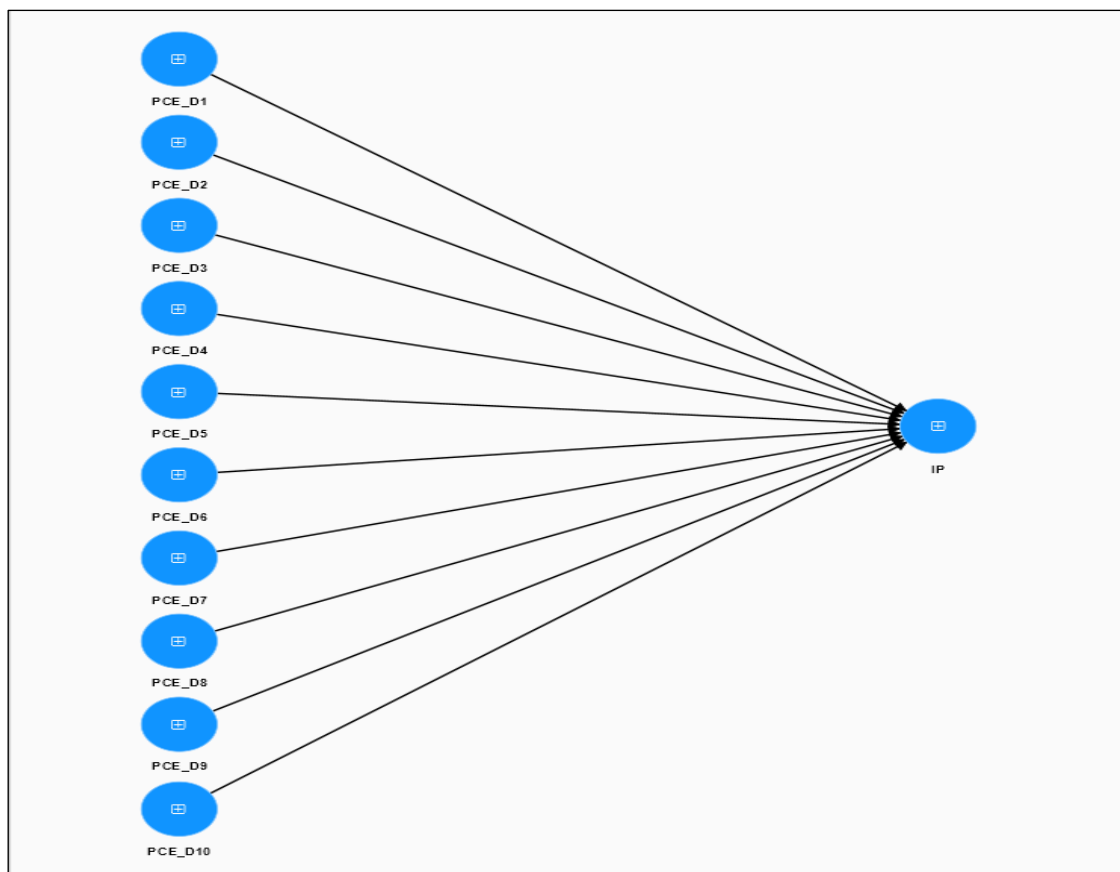
Frequency analysis results				
Items	Categories	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
1. Your gender?	Male	678	32.74	32.74
	Female	1393	67.26	100.00
2. Your age (years):	16.0	2	0.10	0.10
	17.0	6	0.29	0.39
	18.0	153	7.39	7.77
	19.0	582	28.10	35.88
	20.0	672	32.45	68.32
	21.0	389	18.78	87.11
3. Your grade?	22.0	208	10.04	97.15
	23.0	59	2.85	100.00
	Freshman year	597	28.83	28.83
	Sophomore year	577	27.86	56.69
	Junior year	566	27.33	84.02
4. Subject category you studied?	Senior year	331	15.98	100.00
	Literature and history	180	8.69	8.69
	Science and engineering	62	2.99	11.69
5. Your major category:	Art	716	34.57	46.26
	Other	1113	53.74	100.00
	Humanities	1134	54.76	54.76
	Social Sciences	567	27.38	82.13
	Natural sciences	370	17.87	100.00
Total		2071	100.0	100.0

It can be seen from the above table: from the perspective of gender, there are relatively many "female" in the sample, with a proportion of 67.26%. And 32.74% of the sample were male. In terms of age, 2 (0.1%) were 16 years old, 6 (0.29%) were 17 years old, 153 (7.39%) were 18 years old, 582 (28.10%) were 19 years old, 672 (32.45%) were 20 years old, 389 (18.78%) were 21 years old, 208 (10.04%) were 22 years old, 59 (2.85%) were 23 years old, more than 30% of the samples were 20 years old. It can be seen from the above table: from the grade

distribution, most of the samples are "Freshman year", with the proportion of 597 (28.83%), 577 (27.86%) are sophomore year, 566 (27.33%) are junior year, and 331 (15.98%) are senior year. It can be seen from the above table: from the perspective of the subject categories, other Category of subjects were 1113(53.74%), literature and history were 180(8.69%), science and engineering were 62(2.99%), art were 716(34.57). Based on the analysis of the data in the category of specialization, humanities are 1134(54.76%), social sciences are 567(27.38%), natural sciences are 370(17.87%).

#### 4.2 Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

Structural Equation Modeling SEM is a multivariate data analysis methodology which can be used to investigate the situation of the influence relationship between multiple latent variables. The model (Figure 2) is set up based on theoretical framework, in order to verify that dimensions of personal culture of excellence and the effects on innovation performance. It is important to note here that PEC\_01-10 represents the 10 dimensions of a culture of personal excellence.



**Figure 2: The Outer model**

#### 4.3 Outer model evaluation

The PLS methodology was used to test the relationship between personal values of cultural excellence and economic innovation behavior. The first step in evaluating the external model in PLS was to determine the accuracy of the theoretically defined constructs by considering the factor ladder, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct to ensure that the questionnaire had adequate levels of reliability and validity.

**Table 2: Construct reliability and validity**

Items	Loading	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
IP	0.879	0.731	0.863	0.807	0.777
PCE-D1	0.798	0.921	0.951	0.937	0.683
PCE-D2	0.922	0.969	0.971	0.975	0.865
PCE-D3	0.910	0.958	0.959	0.967	0.828
PCE-D4	0.843	0.971	0.972	0.976	0.853
PCE-D5	0.951	0.967	0.968	0.976	0.911
PCE-D6	0.939	0.972	0.972	0.978	0.900
PCE-D7	0.835	0.962	0.963	0.970	0.843
PCE-D8	0.943	0.971	0.974	0.978	0.898
PCE-D9	0.940	0.956	0.958	0.967	0.853
PCE-D10	0.936	0.957	0.958	0.967	0.855

When outer external models, the extent to which multiple items measuring the same concepts are interrelated is assessed by measuring convergent validity. As suggested by Hair et al. (2011), convergent validity can be assessed by considering the values of factor loadings, CR and AVE. To ensure the validation of constructs and indicators; loading of each item were assessed which indicated that loadings of all items measuring the respective construct is higher than 0.50 (Hair, 2011), the results showed that all values were positive and greater than acceptable levels, and the factor loadings for all 11 items ranged from 0.819 to 0.943, as shown in Table 2. The composite reliability (CR) values reported in Table 2 indicate that the CR values for all 17 variables were between 0.825-0.72, which is an acceptable threshold of 0.70, thus confirming the reliability (Hair et al., 2011). The average variance (AVE) of each construct was further extracted. The value of AVE reveals the volume of variance of the latent variable with respect to the observed variable associated with the measurement error (Ramayah et al., 2012). According to Hair et al. (1995), the recommended acceptable minimum value of AVE is 0.50. Therefore, the results showed that all 11 values of AVE were within the acceptable range of 0.683-0.911, confirming the condition of convergent validity.

#### 4.4 Discriminant validity

The discriminant validity (the extent to which items distinguish between different concepts) between the different constructs was tested by comparing the criterion of correlation between the constructs and the square root of the AVE (Fornell et al., 1981). All values on the diagonal are greater than the corresponding row and column values, indicating that the metric is discriminative (Shahrukh et al., 2019). There has been a recent criticism of the Fornell and Raket criterion because it does not reliably detect the lack of discriminant validity in common research situations (Henseler et al., 2015). Therefore, a multitrait-multimethod matrix was proposed to assess discriminant validity based on the Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) - Matrix correlation ratio. We used the criterion that the HTMT value was a critical value of 0.85, and all HTMT ratios were below 0.85, indicating that discriminant validity was determined.



**Table 3: Discriminant validity**

	IP	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7	D8	D9	D10
IP											
PCE_D1	0.811										
PCE_D2	0.794	0.751									
PCE_D3	0.764	0.759	0.694								
PCE_D4	0.740	0.734	0.843	0.905							
PCE_D5	0.718	0.706	0.715	0.759	0.727						
PCE_D6	0.733	0.688	0.795	0.750	0.794	0.723					
PCE_D7	0.626	0.673	0.776	0.834	0.876	0.889	0.937				
PCE_D8	0.664	0.674	0.775	0.824	0.761	0.773	0.704	0.738			
PCE_D9	0.719	0.672	0.768	0.817	0.750	0.755	0.681	0.608	0.738		
PCE_D10	0.682	0.663	0.755	0.746	0.751	0.728	0.730	0.745	0.796	0.780	

#### 4.5 Inner model evaluation

The second stage of PLS-SEM is the assessment of internal models. The purpose of the internal model evaluation was to test the hypothesized relationship between the different dimensions of PCE and innovation performance. It is the testing of hypothesis 1. As can be seen in Table 4, the analysis of the T-value and P-value shows that the effect of the different cultural dimensions on economic innovation behavior is significantly positive, in addition, we tested the value of the coefficient of determination,  $R^2$ , to measure the amount of variance in each structure, which indicates that Hypothesis 1 is supported.

**Table 4: Hypothesis testing**

Hypothesis	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics	P values	Decision	$R^2$
PCE_D1 -> IP	0.005	0.005	0.034	2.451	0.047	Supported	0.19
PCE_D2 -> IP	0.005	0.005	0.046	3.006	0.014	Supported	0.19
PCE_D3 -> IP	0.001	0.001	0.045	2.225	0.022	Supported	0.19
PCE_D4 -> IP	0.004	0.004	0.054	2.702	0.008	Supported	0.19
PCE_D5 -> IP	0.008	0.008	0.058	2.299	0.009	Supported	0.19
PCE_D6 -> IP	0.002	0.002	0.053	2.376	0.007	Supported	0.19
PCE_D7 -> IP	0.005	0.005	0.058	2.852	0.039	Supported	0.19
PCE_D8 -> IP	0.005	0.005	0.061	2.829	0.007	Supported	0.19
PCE_D9 -> IP	0.000	0.000	0.057	3.042	0.010	Supported	0.19
PCE_D10 -> IP	0.004	0.004	0.055	3.744	0.005	Supported	0.19

#### 5. Discussion

The study is guided by the H1 hypothesis, which has been extensively tested, leading to conclusions that support particular research exploring this relationship, which has been crucial to China's economic development over the years.

Personal culture of excellence (PCE) has a positive impact on the innovative performance of individuals (i.e., students) in higher education institutions, with a significant impact of IP. This result suggests that there is a strong link between a scholar's PCE and its impact on IP outcomes. The findings are also consistent with the hypotheses and empirical evidence (Tischler et al., 2002; Duchon et al., 2005). Culture is a very important human phenomenon. It

is an important element and spiritual motivation for the development and progress of human society. It is also an important symbol of development and progress in the spiritual realm. Innovation refers to the activity of transforming things as a whole or in part, based on following the law of development of things, and transforming them into new things needed for the development of society, so as to increase their value and promote their development. It can be seen through the study that colleges and universities still attach great importance to the cultivation of cultural heritage and innovation ability in the training of students. The innovation ability of college students is a kind of potential quality dependent on the human body, which needs to be enhanced through specialized training. According to the results of the study, students maintain a positive attitude towards the recognition of Chinese excellent culture and the formation of their own innovation ability, so this influence is positive. At the same time, it also shows that Chinese culture has always been valued, and the different dimensions of these cultures are the criteria by which we recognize and consider a person, and their transmission must be comprehensive. Through education, especially in higher education institutions, these important cultures and values have been passed on more effectively, thus positively influencing young people by raising their PCE levels. Higher education institutions can also build on their innovative performance to provide more targeted and comprehensive training of skilled personnel, which is urgently needed in the context of economic development.

## **6. Conclusions and Recommendations**

The focus of this study was to reveal the relationship between PCE and IP of students in Ningxia universities in China. The results of the study show that there is a close relationship between different dimensions of PCE and IP, which verifies Hypothesis 1. Therefore, this suggests that there is a positive correlation between PCE and EIP among students in Ningxia colleges and universities. Higher education students can learn about the importance of traditional Chinese culture through different channels, and these cultures play an important role in shaping students' personal values, which in turn affects PCE, which in turn is related to IP and further positively influences IP.

This study has a number of limitations that might not make the findings to be fully effective: the whole study entirely focuses on students who are in higher learning institutions Ningxia, China. This indicates that the study entirely focuses on one region as much as China has different regions that have different cultures and they are not well represented in the study. The study is also restricted or rather bounded to students only and the topic or rather the question at hand should involve the whole population. This is with close consideration to the age group, people from other age groups are not well represented. Similarly, the data collected might have instances of biasness as it involves answering questions from people who are far away and it also depends on one form of data collection to draw findings and conclusions from it. hence it might be fully accurate.

In future endeavors, the study should be more inclusive through expanding the region of study. This should include other regions that are there in China as whole, this will serve as a great deal in increasing the level of accuracy of the data collected and the findings will have a higher score of relevance and representation of the different regions. Throughout this particular research, it has been well tied only to look for data among students, this indicates that they are in the same age group which leaves out different people in the society who are not in that particular age gap. In future endeavors the study should be inclusive of people from all the age groups in order to have a clear picture of the relationship that is there. To increase the level of

accuracy of the data collected, the research in future should include other method of data collection apart from the use of questionnaires only as from this case.

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