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Philosophical practice and its development in China: opportunities and challenges

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This paper examines the application and evolution of philosophical practice in China, which employs philosophical principles and methods to facilitate insights and address life's complexities. We aim to bridge the knowledge gap regarding the trajectory and contemporary landscape of China's philosophical practice and its impact on individual and societal flourishing. Guided by the research question, "How has philosophical practice evolved in China, and what are its challenges and future prospects?" this study adopts a qualitative research methodology, including a literature review, historical analysis, and case studies from Chinese philosophical communities. Findings indicate a burgeoning growth of philosophical practice in China, with traditional Chinese philosophies being adapted to provide practical guidance for contemporary issues. The spread of philosophical practice communities across China reflects a growing embrace of these practices. This paper outlines the hurdles and prospects for philosophical practice, pinpointing opportunities for further research and cross-cultural engagement. The insights furnished by this study offer a framework for scholars, practitioners, and policymakers to enhance philosophical practice's role in personal growth and societal well-being, both within China and internationally.

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Introduction

Philosophical practice, also known as philosophical counseling or therapy, is a burgeoning discipline that applies philosophical theories, concepts, and methods to everyday life, fostering critical thinking and personal development (Amir, 2004; Cohen, 2013; Ding and Yu, 2022; Grosso, 2002; LeBon, 2001). It aims to connect abstract philosophical thought and the tangible challenges of everyday life, empowering individuals to tackle deep questions and gain insights into themselves and their environment (Gindi and Pilpel, 2015; Grimes and Uliana, 1998; Lahav, 1996, 2017; Louw, 2013).

Drawing from ancient philosophical traditions, philosophical practice has become a global movement, enhancing personal well-being and stimulating intellectual exchange (Cooper, 2012; Fatic, 2013; Ferraiolo, 2010; Hadot, 1995, 1998; Knox, 2014; Sharpe and Ure, 2021; Shevchuk et al., 2022). The establishment of the Institute for Philosophical Practice and Counseling by Gerd Böttcher Achenbach in 1981 marked a pivotal milestone for philosophical practice in Germany and Europe (Achenbach, 1998; Lahav and Tillmanns, 1995; Schuster, 2004). However, as reminded by an anonymous reviewer, similar underpinnings were concurrently developing in the United States, notably through Pierre Grimes' work on Philosophical (or Socratic) Midwifery, influenced by Plato's *Theaetetus* and manifested through the Noetic Society since 1967 (Grimes and Uliana, 1998). Pierre Grimes, as the Director of the Noetic Society's Philosophical Midwifery Program, played a crucial role in demonstrating and teaching the art of philosophical midwifery, using the Socratic dialectic for understanding human problems and thereby attaining excellence.

American philosophers like John Dewey and Mortimer Adler, and less-known Seymon Hersh, also anticipated this movement. As a leading philosopher of education and an influential American Pragmatist, John Dewey asserted in 1917 the necessity for philosophy to address real-life issues, claiming that "Philosophy recovers itself when it ceases to be a device for dealing with the problems of philosophers and becomes a method, cultivated by philosophers, for dealing with the problems of men" (Dewey, 1917). Mortimer Adler criticized the insularity and "suicidal epistemologizing" of 20th-century analytic philosophy in 1965, suggesting that philosophy "must cease to be an activity conducted by moles, each burrowing in its own hole, and become a public and cooperative enterprise" (Adler, 1965). Seymon Hersh foresaw the role of philosophical counselors in 1980, envisioning how counselors can help people update their personal philosophies by helping them understand their motivations, think critically, take inventory of their lives, and become familiar with alternative viewpoints (Hersh, 1980).

These early American philosophers championed an engaged and communal philosophy, setting the stage for what would later become the modern movement of philosophical practice. This philosophy revival, which seeks to reinvigorate ancient wisdom in contemporary life, has gained international momentum (de Paula and Raabe, 2015; Knapp and Tjeltveit, 2005; Marinoff, 1999, 2001; Raabe, 2002, 2013; Schuster, 1999). China's engagement in this movement is a recent yet significant addition to the global philosophical landscape, bringing a unique cultural perspective to this growing field.

China's engagement with philosophical practice, grounded in its rich philosophical heritage, represents a notable integration of traditional introspection into contemporary life (Hsu, 2004; Lee, 2017; Lu, 2004b; Su, 2011). In the early 21st century, philosophical practice in China emerged from academia into the public domain, introducing philosophical counseling and Socratic dialogues to those seeking personal growth and ethical clarity (Ding, 2016; Pan, 2016).

This movement has since grown, with various philosophical practice communities fostering philosophical discourse and offering support to navigate the complexities of modern life (O'Neill and Wang, 2021; Wang, 2019). Academic inquiry has also deepened, examining the theoretical frameworks, methodologies, and applications of philosophical practice, with Chinese scholars contributing to its evolving landscape (Li, 2017; Pan, 2017; Xia, 2017, 2019).

However, integrating philosophical practice within China's unique cultural context presents challenges, such as aligning cultural values with universal philosophical principles without compromising the discipline's authenticity (Ma et al., 2021; Zhang, 2019). Despite these hurdles, philosophical practice in China has fostered a vibrant platform for philosophical engagement (Huang, 2019; Xia, 2017, 2019; Zhang, 2015).

This paper will trace the development of philosophical practice research in China, confront its challenges, and explore prospective pathways. Addressing these concerns is pivotal for advancing philosophical practice's potential for profound impact within China and, potentially, on a global scale.

The historical roots of philosophical practice in China

Chinese philosophy, with its emphasis on practicality, has long provided a compass for everyday life (Cheng, 1971; Hansen, 1985). The historical underpinnings of philosophical practice in China are deeply rooted in its rich and diverse traditions, particularly Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism, each contributing to the nation's intellectual heritage and informing the contemporary manifestation of philosophical practice with centuries of wisdom and practical insights.

Confucianism is central to China's philosophical tapestry, advocating a life of moral rectitude and harmonious social relationships (Ding et al., 2022; Lu, 2004a; Pan, 2022; Su, 2011; Tan, 2004). Central to this tradition is the Five Constant Virtues (i.e., benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and trustworthiness), which underpin the practical ethos of Confucian thought (Ramsey, 2016). The enduring influence of Confucianism is evident in the moral and ethical frameworks that permeate Chinese society (Fukuyama, 2016; Jiang, 2018; Low and Ang, 2013).

Daoism offers a contrasting philosophical perspective that values harmony with the Dao, or the essential nature of the universe (Ding et al., 2022; Hsu, 2004; Wang and Ren, 2019; Wu, 2013). This school promotes simplicity and adaptability, advocating for a deep, intuitive connection with the world and peaceful coexistence with its rhythms (Saso, 2012; Thompson, 1990; Tucker, 1993). The Daoist approach is often sought for personal tranquility and a balanced response to life's vicissitudes (Simpkins and Simpkins, 2015).

Buddhism, though of foreign origin, has become intimately woven into the fabric of Chinese philosophical thought (Ch'en, 2015; Ding et al., 2022; Hsu, 2011; Yang, 2013). It foregrounds the cessation of suffering through the development of wisdom and ethical living (Ding et al., 2023; Gethin, 2011; Kang and Whittingham, 2010). Chan Buddhism, in particular, prioritizes meditation and the direct apprehension of reality as pathways to enlightenment and liberation from suffering (Fromm, 1959; Kasulis, 1980; Shih, 1953; Steffney, 1977; Wright, 1992).

The resonance of Chinese philosophical doctrines extends beyond its borders, influencing the intellectual and cultural fabrics of other East Asian nations such as South Korea, Japan, Singapore, Vietnam, and others, shaping their intellectual and cultural landscapes (Chang and Kalmanson, 2010; Ding et al., 2022). These countries have absorbed and adapted Chinese philosophical traditions, integrating them into their own cultural

contexts. The practical and applicable nature of Chinese philosophical traditions has made them continue to resonate with individuals across East Asia, providing guidance on ethical conduct, spiritual fulfillment, and a balanced existence (Rošker, 2017; Tu, 1996).

The introduction of philosophical practice into China

Philosophical practice's advent in China represents a fusion of Western methodologies with the country's philosophical traditions, a blend of modern movements and age-old Eastern wisdom. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the influence of Western philosophical practice began to permeate Chinese intellectual circles, fueled by an international surge in applying philosophical inquiry to everyday life (Chen, 2012; Ouyang, 2012). Key figures from both West and East Asia introduced these concepts to China, sharing their expertise and approaches (Brennifer and Gong, 2013; Ding and Marinoff, 2021).

Chinese intellectuals, in turn, began assimilating Western practices with their philosophical heritage, tailoring philosophical practice to their distinct cultural milieu (Ding, 2016; Zhang, 2015). This cultural synthesis, drawing on Confucian, Daoist, and Buddhist doctrines, led to a unique iteration of philosophical practice in China that resonated deeply with local sensibilities (Hsu, 2004; Lee, 2017; Su, 2011; Wang and Ren, 2019; Yang, 2013). This cross-pollination has enriched the field, with Chinese contributors enhancing theoretical and methodological aspects of philosophical practice (Ding, 2016; Pan, 2017; Xia, 2017, 2019; Zhang, 2015). The result is a distinctive Chinese mode of philosophical practice that contributes to a global, intercultural dialog within the field.

Reflecting its burgeoning stature, philosophical practice is now recognized by more and more Chinese academic and professional bodies. Universities and research institutions have established dedicated programs and departments, while conferences, workshops, and publications have proliferated, facilitating scholarly exchange (Pan, 2017; Xia, 2017). Professional organizations have also been formed to promote the development and standards of philosophical practice in China, fostering collaboration and networking among practitioners (Li, 2017). The growing recognition of philosophical practice within academic and professional spheres reflects the increasing acceptance and appreciation of its value as a practical and applied discipline.

The expansion of philosophical practice communities in China

The expansion of philosophical practice communities in China has witnessed the emergence of various institutions and initiatives dedicated to promoting and advancing the principles and methods of philosophical practice.

Philosophical practice in Chinese mainland. The Laboratory of Thought Analysis, established by Tianqun Pan at Nanjing University in 2012, stands as a prominent institution in China's philosophical practice landscape. The laboratory advocates for "Thought Analysis," a method combining Socratic dialog and logical analysis to alleviate mental distress stemming from confusion. This technique promotes philosophical inquiry as a means to clarify complex philosophical and personal challenges (Pan, 2013, 2016). Furthermore, Pan's establishment of the Philosophy for Children academic society in Jiangsu province in 2021 reflects his dedication to exploring philosophical practice in diverse contexts and for different age groups.

Nanjing University's Laboratory of Thought Analysis has been instrumental in advancing philosophical practice in China. A key activity includes hosting international workshops that bring together esteemed Western practitioners like Lou Marinoff, Oscar

Brennifer, and Peter Harteloh. These events offer Chinese scholars hands-on training and exposure to diverse philosophical methods, significantly bolstering the field's growth and academic recognition in China. The exchange of Eastern and Western philosophical insights during these workshops has enriched the discipline's local application and understanding.

The influence of Nanjing University's philosophical practice initiatives reaches beyond its campus. The collaborative "Nanjing Circle," comprising professors and students from neighboring institutions such as Anhui University and Anhui Normal University, is deeply invested in philosophical counseling research and the translation of pertinent texts. This collective's work is vital to the progression of philosophical practice in China, deepening the appreciation for the discipline and enhancing its practical integration across various settings.

Beyond the Laboratory of Thought Analysis at Nanjing University, other prominent academic institutions in China have actively engaged in and advanced the field of philosophical practice. Xiamen University's Nanqiang Philosophy for Children (P4C) Research Center, founded by Jianbo Cao in 2019, epitomizes this trend by promoting P4C within the region (Chen, 2023). The center has distinguished itself through initiatives such as the annual P4C Summer School, which equips educators with the tools to incorporate philosophical inquiry into their pedagogical practices.

The Nanqiang P4C Research Center extends its influence through a series of lectures and demonstration classes, drawing millions of participants both online and offline. By 2023, it has established thirteen practice bases across cities including Xiamen, Fuzhou, Quanzhou, Nanjing, and Changzhou. These centers facilitate the spread of P4C, allowing a diverse cohort of educators and students to delve into philosophical practice.

The 1957 Café at Inner Mongolia University, inaugurated in 2017 by Huiling Wang, represents a pioneering philosophical café within a Chinese university, offering a novel setting for philosophical engagement (O'Neill and Wang, 2021; Wang, 2019). The Café's Philosophical Dramas provide an immersive experience that invites participants to explore philosophical dilemmas, interact with classic philosophical texts, and appreciate various perspectives, nurturing personal philosophical thought. Its Philosophical Games utilize a "cross-questioning" approach that melds philosophical understanding with playful elements, perpetuating intellectual traditions through linguistic and theatrical gaming experiences (Wang and He, 2021). As a hub for critical discourse, ethical reflection, and philosophical exploration, the 1957 Café exemplifies how philosophical practice can be integrated into educational contexts, demonstrating the significance of philosophy in intellectual and personal growth.

Philosophical practice in Hong Kong. Philosophical practice in Hong Kong has made significant strides, championed by initiatives that encourage philosophical dialog and practical applications of philosophy. The Hong Kong Philosophy Cafe, established in 1999 under the vision of Stephen R. Palmquist from Hong Kong Baptist University, serves as a testament to this movement (Palmquist, 2017, 2018). This forum has been pivotal in cultivating a community engaged in philosophical discourse, holding monthly sessions, and inspiring similar cafes citywide. Through the Hong Kong Philosophy Cafe, the practice of philosophical inquiry is extended beyond academic settings, making it accessible to the general public and promoting a broader understanding of philosophy in everyday life.

Higher education institutions in Hong Kong have recognized the importance of practical philosophy for fostering personal development and critical thinking. Hong Kong Polytechnic

University and Lingnan University, among others, offer dedicated courses and programs in practical philosophy. These academic offerings are designed to impart life skills, encourage ethical deliberation, and facilitate self-discovery and comprehensive world understanding.

The professionalization of philosophical counseling in Hong Kong has been bolstered by strategic alliances and collaborations. The Hong Kong Practical Philosophy Society (HKPPS), founded in 2010, has aligned with the American Philosophical Practitioners Association, enriching the local scene with international expertise. Notably, the HKPPS offers certification courses led by prominent figures such as Lou Marinoff, enhancing the skill set of practicing and prospective philosophical counselors. This certification process not only ensures adherence to high professional standards but also solidifies the reputation of philosophical counseling as a credible and effective discipline in Hong Kong's helping professions.

Philosophical practice in Taiwan. In Taiwan, philosophical counseling has evolved significantly, merging traditional Chinese philosophy with modern practices and gaining institutional support through academic programs. Pioneering this evolution is Jess Fleming from Tamkang University, whose extensive work has facilitated the synthesis of ancient Chinese philosophical principles with contemporary counseling methods (Fleming, 1996, 2000, 2003, 2009). Fleming's efforts have yielded a distinctive counseling approach that aligns with local cultural nuances and juxtaposes Eastern and Western philosophies, enhancing the practice within Taiwan's psychological and philosophical landscapes.

Universities like Huafan University and Fu Jen Catholic University have recognized the pertinence of philosophical counseling, integrating it into their curricula. Such academic integration signals an increased valuation of philosophical counseling's role in surmounting life's challenges. The educational programs crafted by these universities empower students to delve into philosophical counseling, fostering a cadre of professionals steeped in the cultural richness that Chinese philosophy contributes to the discipline (Li, 2004).

A milestone in this field was the establishment of a philosophical counseling curriculum at Fu Jen Catholic University's Department of Philosophy, spearheaded by Bernard Li in 2003 (Li, 2007). Li's contributions continued with the founding of the Taiwan Philosophical Counseling Association (TPCA) in 2011, a pivotal entity in the professional growth of philosophical counseling in Taiwan (Li, 2017). The TPCA's certification courses offer comprehensive training to aspirants, covering both the theoretical and practical dimensions of philosophical practice while adhering to established professional and ethical standards. The association also provides a Logic-Based Therapy certification, developed by this therapeutic approach's creator, Elliot D. Cohen. Through such educational initiatives, the TPCA fosters expertise in philosophical counseling, propelling its recognition and advancement across Taiwan.

Advancements in philosophical practice research in China

Chinese scholars have embarked on a comprehensive examination of philosophical practice or philosophical counseling, delving into its intrinsic essence, tapping into the wealth of philosophical thought, and shedding light on its applicative merits in contemporary settings, yielding a body of noteworthy scholarly contributions (Huang, 2019). Philosophical practice research in China has made substantial strides, with academics exploring the relationship between philosophical and psychological counseling and the application of philosophical principles in counseling

contexts (Feng, 2010; Wei, 2013; Zhou and Liu, 2009). Xi Yang's (2015) work particularly emphasizes the value of philosophical counseling in the Chinese milieu, suggesting its capacity to augment psychological counseling. The potential of philosophical counseling to disseminate and apply Marxist philosophy and Marx's life philosophy has also been a focus (Feng and Huang, 2010; Xu, 2021).

These researchers are actively summarizing and adapting Western philosophical counseling methods for local use. Research has been conducted on the Socratic method (Chen, 2014; Lu, 2007; Pan, 2007), the FITT stages (Chen, 2018; Su, 2007), the PEACE process (Chen, 2012, 2015; Yu, 2007; Zhang, 2016; Zhou, 2008), and the worldview interpretation (Zhang, 2023). These works have been instrumental in tailoring Western approaches to the cultural contours of China, enhancing the practice of philosophical counseling in the nation.

Moreover, Chinese scholars are pioneering original counseling techniques. Tianqun Pan developed the "Thought Analysis" method, while Xisheng Wang introduced "Thought Counseling" or "Ethical Counseling," exploring its narrative therapy, moral healing, and adaptation in the Chinese context (Wang, 2014, 2015, 2020). Xiaojun Ding (2016) constructed "Analytic Philosophical Practice" based on analytic philosophy techniques such as clarifying concepts, disclosing presuppositions, eliminating conflicts, and inquiring into reasons. Bernard Li (2007) proposed the C.I.S.A. method—Consciousness, Insight, Spiritual Moving, and Ascend, emphasizing its potential for fostering "physical and psychological maturity".

Significantly, Chinese scholars contribute to the integration of national philosophical traditions into practice, analyzing Confucianism (Lu, 2004a; Pan, 2022; Su, 2011; Tan, 2004), Daoism (Ding et al., 2022; Hsu, 2004; Wang and Ren, 2019; Wu, 2013), Buddhism (Ding et al., 2023; Hsu, 2011; Yang, 2013), and other schools of thought (Lee, 2017; Yang, 2016). These endeavors elucidate how ancient wisdom can inform modern living, promoting virtues, ethical behavior, and societal harmony. Such scholarly work not only enriches the knowledge base of practitioners but also fosters the growth and contextual application of philosophical counseling in China. Continued research in this domain promises to further refine and contextualize philosophical practice to meet the nation's specific needs and aspirations.

Nevertheless, when juxtaposed with the dynamic developments in global academia, it becomes evident that philosophical practice research in China encounters certain challenges that need addressing (Huang, 2019). A particular concern is the tendency toward practical application at the expense of theoretical depth (Ding, 2016). While the application of traditional Chinese philosophy to everyday life is well-explored, there is a pressing need for a more rigorous theoretical investigation to uncover the full depth of these philosophical systems. Additionally, the practical emphasis has sometimes led to oversimplifications, with insufficient attention to the logical and reasoned aspects integral to these philosophies (Ding, 2016). Chinese philosophy's intellectual rigor and logical structure are as crucial as its life guidance principles; thus, equitable treatment of both dimensions is required for a holistic understanding.

To overcome these obstacles, Chuangen Huang (2019) further identifies a quintet of focal enhancements essential for the maturation of philosophical practice research in China: the meticulous translation and interpretation of seminal texts on philosophical practice, the rigorous inquiry into foundational theoretical and practical quandaries in philosophical practice research, the revitalization of (eastern and western) classical philosophical resources with practical wisdom, the encouragement of philosophical practice's real-world application, and the increased public recognition and impact of philosophical practice.

In particular, Chinese scholars must engage more deeply with theoretical aspects and consider Western philosophical contributions. Western philosophies provide robust analytical tools and logical structures that can enhance the study of Chinese philosophical practice (Ding et al., 2022; Ma et al., 2021). Such integration will not only fortify theoretical foundations but also facilitate a richer, more nuanced perspective on philosophical practice in China. Furthermore, the pursuit of a more balanced approach that honors both the practical and theoretical will enrich the academic development of philosophical practice in China. This endeavor will not only advance the discipline within China but also contribute to the global discourse, encouraging cross-cultural dialog and intellectual exchange (Li, 2017; Pan, 2017; Xia, 2017, 2019). The goal is to cultivate a field that is both deeply rooted in Chinese tradition and broadened by global philosophical thought, fostering a dynamic and diversified academic landscape.

Discussion

The expanding pool of philosophical practitioners is paralleled by a rising client base seeking philosophical insights into personal, organizational, and societal issues. Despite this global trend, the practice within China remains nascent, necessitating robust theoretical exploration and practical applications attuned to the Chinese context (Ding, 2016; Wang, 2014). Internationally, the discipline garners increasing acknowledgment; however, it still struggles to achieve similar recognition within Chinese academia. This obscurity hampers the ability of philosophical practitioners to publish works or obtain research funding, thereby impeding the field's progression. Moreover, as a field that continues to evolve, philosophical practice presents numerous issues that are worth exploring. The involvement of Chinese scholars in this process can provide unique interpretations and methods based on their own cultural backgrounds and philosophical traditions.

Current challenges and trends of philosophical practice in China. In China, philosophical practice is experiencing a burgeoning phase marked by an uptick in practitioners and the establishment of institutions dedicated to the field (Li, 2017; Pan, 2017; Xia, 2017). This increase is a testament to the rising acknowledgment of philosophy's potential to address China's unique societal and personal challenges.

Yet, the integration of philosophical practice into the Chinese societal fabric faces cultural obstacles. Traditional mindsets and established problem-solving paradigms may impede the acceptance of philosophical practice. To mitigate this, educational initiatives that elucidate the benefits of philosophical practice and the creation of culturally congruent counseling techniques are necessary (Wang, 2014).

A pivotal concern is the preservation of Chinese philosophical heritage amid global influences, ensuring that globalization does not erode the essence of China's philosophical identity. Safeguarding this authenticity demands a deliberate approach to applying Chinese philosophical tenets within philosophical practice (Li, 2017; Pan, 2017; Xia, 2017).

Practitioners in China are responding to these challenges by integrating modern approaches and tackling contemporary issues, striving to tailor philosophical practice to the intricacies of modern Chinese society (Ding et al., 2022, 2023; Li, 2010; Wang, 2014). This adaptation is crucial for the discipline's relevance and impact on individual and societal well-being.

Moreover, there is an ongoing initiative to enhance the international stature of Chinese philosophical practice through active participation in global dialogs, contributing to international publications, and fostering collaborative relationships with global

counterparts (Li, 2017; Pan, 2017; Xia, 2017). These efforts serve not just to elevate the discipline's profile worldwide but also to encourage a reciprocal enrichment of philosophical practice across cultural divides.

The growth and development of philosophical practice in China. The advancement of philosophical practice in China hinges on educational initiatives, community involvement, and government endorsement. These elements are vital for nurturing a flourishing community that contributes to individual and societal enrichment, as well as intellectual advancement.

Educational integration is a cornerstone, with philosophical education beginning in schools (e.g., philosophy for children (P4C); Daniel and Auriac, 2011; Lipman et al., 1980; Vansieleghem and Kennedy, 2011) and extending into lifelong learning opportunities. Infusing curricula with philosophical content equips students with critical thinking and ethical reasoning skills from a young age (Chen, 2023; Pan, 2007, 2022; Yu, 2021). Moreover, adults benefit from continuous development through lifelong philosophical engagement, promoting a sustained commitment to philosophical inquiry (Lahav and Tillmanns, 1995; Marinoff, 1999, 2001; Schuster, 2004; Raabe, 2002).

Community engagement is equally critical. Philosophical organizations and forums facilitate intellectual exchange, foster a sense of community, and advance the application of philosophy in daily life (Ding, 2019; Wang and He, 2021). These platforms also play a key role in propagating philosophical knowledge and showcasing its practical benefits (O'Neill and Wang, 2021; Wang, 2019; Yang, 2016).

Government backing is indispensable for creating a supportive environment for philosophical practice (Marinoff, 1999, 2001). Governmental initiatives could include the funding for research, the establishment of institutes for philosophical practice, and resources for philosophical practitioners' professional development. Such support not only emphasizes the government's commitment to fostering critical and ethical capacities but also encourages collaborative pursuits among practitioners and scholars, thereby stimulating the field's progression (Kono et al., 2017; Rhee, 2017).

The future of philosophical practice in China. The trajectory of philosophical practice in China is marked by the potential for significant expansion, with an increasing appreciation for critical thinking and personal development. Given the societal emphasis on intellectual growth and holistic well-being, philosophical practice is well-positioned to flourish. It provides a framework for individuals grappling with complex issues to engage in reflection, self-discovery, and personal growth (de Miranda and Loughlin, 2023; Ding, 2016).

Innovation and adaptation are essential for the evolution of philosophical practice in China. Philosophical practitioners must remain responsive to societal shifts and emerging challenges by leveraging technology, including online platforms and virtual counseling, to broaden access and adaptability, particularly in response to crises like the COVID-19 pandemic (Bogdanova and Rezvushkin, 2021; Feary, 2020; Marinoff, 2023; Schumm, 2020).

Furthermore, Chinese philosophical practice could act as a conduit for cross-cultural exchange, deepening global understanding and dialog. Given China's profound philosophical traditions and increasing global influence, philosophical practitioners can facilitate intercultural appreciation and identify common values, thereby contributing to global harmony (Yu, 2020).

The field is also expected to gain broader acceptance academically and publicly. As the benefits of philosophical

counseling become more widely experienced, the demand for practitioners will rise. Academic recognition is growing, with philosophical practice being integrated into mainstream academia, enriching the discipline with practical applications (Li, 2017; Pan, 2017; Xia, 2017).

The prospective establishment of a national philosophical practice association in China is pivotal for addressing the cultural specifics of the Chinese populace. This body would standardize practices, uphold ethical standards, and foster professional development, ensuring the field's integrity and cultural congruity.

Lastly, philosophical practice is poised to democratize philosophy, transitioning it from an academic discipline to a practical tool for everyday life. This shift empowers individuals to apply philosophical concepts in practical ways, leading to more considered life choices and societal advancement (Gregory, 2004; Marinoff, 1999, 2001; Raabe, 2002).

Conclusions

In conclusion, philosophical practice in China has made considerable progress, gaining traction within educational settings, scholarly research, and public discourse. Chinese scholars have adeptly intertwined the nation's rich philosophical traditions with modern-day counseling techniques, providing tangible benefits for personal and societal well-being.

Despite its nascent stage and the hurdles in achieving widespread recognition, the potential for philosophical practice to deeply integrate into Chinese society is significant. The ongoing development of this field relies on the continuous refinement of practice, addressing the dynamic needs of the populace. Collaboration across academics, practitioners, and institutional spheres will be instrumental in enhancing the reach and impact of philosophical counseling.

As the discipline garners increased legitimacy, its influence on personal growth and life satisfaction is expected to grow. With sustained investment in research, application of innovative practices, and dedication to public engagement, the future of philosophical practice in China appears promising, with a trajectory that points towards greater societal influence and transformative potential.

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It does not apply to this article as it does not contain any studies with human participants.

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