
China's “One Belt, One Road” (OBOR) Cooperation Project in the Cultural Industry Trade of Southeast Asian Countries

SHIWEN ZHANG, Ilham Sentosa, Sheikh M.Hizam
Business School/ Universiti Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

ABSTRACT: *The One Belt One Road initiative by the Chinese government focuses on enhancing cultural industry trade among the Southeast Asian countries. The cultural industry trade is established on the sociocultural dynamics as a result of international trading. The communities in the regions of One Belt One Road projects encounter cultural integration and hence positive impact on the cultural industry trade. The study analyses the international cultural integration in the trade, focusing on the Chinese One Belt One Road initiative. The key elements of the Chinese initiative are the development of transportation, energy and economic sectors through culture integration and economic empowerment of respective communities. Globalization is essential in the international cultural industry trade on the basis of political, economic and sociocultural integration in the regional trading bloc. The cultural industry trade is incorporated into the community through hybridization, accommodation, and transformation to have an impact in the globalization. Therefore, the Chinese One Belt One Road initiative has established cultural industry trade in the Southeast Asian countries as well as other regions.*

KEYWORDS - *One Belt One Road, culture integration, economic empowerment, globalization*



1. INTRODUCTION

The Chinese government's One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiative that focuses on building railroads and shipping networks to improve trade of Southeast countries. The infrastructural network focuses on trade development in countries across Oceania, Asia, Europe, and Africa. The Chinese government OBOR initiative has been joined by countries like Russia, Poland, and India, New Zealand as well as Pakistan and hence creating a cultural industry of trade. The OBOR Initiative is a strategic development that aims in enhancing the cooperation and connectivity among the European, Asian and African countries through trading and culture (Soong & Nguyen, 2018). The Chinese government is pioneering the global economic development through creating trading network basing on the global affairs and transport sector. The study focuses on evaluating the development strategy of cultural industry trade as a result of OBOR Initiative by the Chinese government.

2. CHINA'S "OBOR" COOPERATION PROJECT

The Chinese government has initiated OBOR project to bring together countries that sharing similar economic features and culture. The Chinese initiative is identifying trading cooperation and connectivity among the Eurasians that is European and Asian countries and demarking trading territories (Chenyang & Shaojun, 2018). Globalization has enabled to identify the economic features that countries should consider in engaging in international trades. China through the OBOR initiative has focused on setting the framework that gives its way in becoming an economic pioneer globally. More so, China has a fast-growing economy, especially in the industrialization. The industrialization culture by the Chinese economy would influence other countries, especially in OBOR project. The countries that would benefit from the industry culture are majorly from Asia, Africa, and Europe. Therefore, the OBOR initiative is designed to fast track the industry culture and economic development.

The OBOR initiative is formulated to revolve in different aspects that are transport, energy, production and international trade among the countries. The connectedness of the countries under OBOR initiative tends to embrace the industry culture and production (Wilson, 2016). Under the OBOR project, the countries would have similar initiative and hence setting a trading ground of different cultures and products among the involved countries. Furthermore, the OBOR would contribute to opening up a new market of the countries under the initiative (Kuo & Kommenda, 2019). In this regard, the economic development and globalization aspect would be boosted and hence paving the way to international trading. The Chinese OBOR initiative is paramount in setting the new industrial culture, targeting countries with a similar economic projection of industrialization. Therefore, OBOR project would greatly contribute to enhancing economic development and cultural integration along the trading belt identified.

3. TRANSPORT, ENERGY, PRODUCTION, AND TRADE ALONG ONE BELT ONE ROAD INITIATIVE **TRANSPORT**

The OBOR initiative has a projection of enhancing transportation in the region. The countries in Southeast Asia, Africa, and Europe are among the targets in the OBOR project. The connection of the countries would open up the industry culture and trading leading to enhanced globalization. Roads, railway and telecommunication are major projects under the transport aspect. Improvement in the road network along the OBOR initiative would enhance movement of the manufactured products into the market (Soong, 2018). Good road network would enhance trade among the countries under the OBOR initiative. Most of the countries targeted by the Chinese government initiative under OBOR project would benefit from increased transport network by enjoying quality road constructions. More so, technology development has enabled improvements in the construction of the road in terms of quality and efficiency by the contractors. In this regard, the transport culture would be enhanced to embrace the changes being experienced in the region. Therefore, road networks are core in the OBOR initiative to enhance movements of the manufactured products to market hence improving trading. Technology enhancement is fundamental in the OBOR initiative, especially in the telecommunication sector. The OBOR initiative contributes to enhancing telecommunication in opening up the trading region among the targeted countries. The aspect of culture in communication is clearly manifested whereby the countries with different cultural background share similar OBOR interest (Punyaratabandhu & Swaspitchayaskun, 2018). In so doing, cultural integration, especially on the trading perspective, would contribute to unity and harmonious trading environment along OBOR project. Railway connection along the OBOR would enhance the transportation of the cargo from one region to other destinations. Railway transport would play a greater role in trading and hence economic development.

Industrialization process would be boosted by the transport connectivity whereby the OBOR would open a new market for the manufactured products. Therefore OBOR initiative under the transportation approach would contribute to industry culture boosting and economic development in the region.

4. ENERGY APPROACH

OBOR initiative has greatly invested in the energy sector to ensure the countries under the initial program have enough power to support development and industrialization. For instance, Pakistan has been facing a shortage of 500 million megawatts in the country's grid during summer. Through the OBOR initiative, Pakistan has constructed Hydropower station by building a dam on Nehru River. The hydropower generation has enabled Pakistan to obtain enough energy and distributing to the neighboring countries. In this regard, power generation is critical in economic development, especially in the industrial operations (Zhu, 2018). More so, other institutions that are critical in economic development, such as hospitals and learning facilities depend on the electric power in undertaking their mandates. The commercial and residential buildings also depend on the electric power to facilitate business operations and improving the livelihood of the community. Therefore, the energy concept under the OBOR initiative is critical in boosting economic development.

Energy generation is fundamental within the OBOR initiative would contribute to improving economic development. The mega energy projects are important in lighting the OBOR initiative countries and increasing their industrial culture. Accessibility of cheap power attracts many small scale and medium enterprises to enter into industrial production and hence job creations and economic growth. The industry culture focusing on the small and medium enterprises transforms the countries under OBOR initiative. The cultures would lead different communities to the production of cultural related products that are unique to trade with other communities with different products (Kaczmarek, 2017). In so doing, the OBOR would be promoting industry culture and hence opening up the regions in terms of economic empowerment. Therefore, energy creates more opportunities for small and medium enterprises and hence empowering the communities under OBOR initiative.

5. PRODUCTION AND TRADE

The OBOR initiative provides a good environment for business and industrial operation and hence increased production. The countries along the OBOR project have diversified their production due to the increased transport network and availability of affordable energy. Industrial manufacturing, especially in China, has captured the global industry performance prospects by diversification of different industrial operations (XINGANG, WENTAO, & YULONG, 2017). China industrial operations are being translated to the countries along the OBOR initiative to offer markets and source of raw materials. Furthermore, the OBOR has opened more marketing and trading sectors whereby the country's trade among themselves to enhance economic development.

Trade is another approach critical in the industry culture whereby the communities living along the OBOR utilize in undertaking their businesses. The Chinese government initiative on the OBOR is to ensure trade has been enhanced in a diverse manner. The international trade contributes to economic development and increased in the cultural diversifications. Increased production would allow the countries under the OBOR initiative to trade among themselves and hence exchanging good services at a cheaper price (Yu, 2017). More so, mutual benefits among the countries along the OBOR would be established as the authorities would define the mode of trade. Some countries are rich with raw materials and hence engaging with industrialized countries for manufacturing. More so, in the process, the countries would enjoy the culture of manufacturing and hence setting simple industries. The level of employment is another concern, and hence with the OBOR initiative, the countries would create more opportunities to create jobs. In this regard, the living standards of the communities living along the

OBOR projects would improve with the standards of economic development. Therefore, the trade and production approach would also contribute to changes in the industry culture, economic growth and empowerment of the community at large.

6. GLOBALIZATION AND IMPACT ON SOUTHEAST ASIAN COUNTRIES CULTURE

Globalization entails the processes that intensify economic, political and sociocultural across the international boundaries. Countries working together in enhancing their political, economic and sociocultural have common goals and enjoy mutual trade benefits. The Chinese OBOR initiative focuses on uniting countries along the trade corridor and establishes strong economic, political and socio-cultural aspects. The Southeast Asian countries are relatively common in terms of trade, culture, and economic aspects. The expansion of the OBOR initiative is to ensure all countries are united and working on extensive economic and sociocultural development (Summers, 2016). The OBOR initiative impacts are based on how to influence industrialization and trade among the Southeast Asian countries for a strong economic background. More so, the formulation of the OBOR projects focusing on every Southeast Asian country's contribution towards the sociocultural wellbeing of their citizens. Therefore, the project of OBOR initiative under globalization focuses to enhance the trade and sociocultural in achieving economic development.

Globalization under OBOR initiative contributes to culture hybridization, transformation, and accommodation of the social practices. Hybridization of the culture entails synthesizing the local cultural phenomena in producing distinctive cultural practices. More so, the aspects of institutions and the meaning of the culture also influenced to develop a new approach to the sociocultural aspects. The Southeast Asian countries have distinctive cultures with respect to their community background (Soong & Nguyen, 2018). Introduction of the OBOR projects in different countries by the Chinese government has enabled cultural integration. Globalization has enabled cultural integration and hence hybrid of the distinctive culture focusing on industrial development. The partnership of the companies under the OBOR initiative is greatly influencing on the operations and managerial concepts. Countries are using the Chinese culture in terms of management and operations and achieving the milestone required in enhancing industry culture (Tai & Huang, 2018). Furthermore, the hybridized industry culture is becoming more useful as it incorporates different dimensions of the Chinese and locals sociocultural to enhance performance and development. Therefore, the hybridized culture synthesizes the operations and improving the economic empowerment in Southeast Asian countries.

Another impact of OBOR projects in the Southeast Asian countries is the sociocultural accommodation. In this aspect, the absorption of the cultural practices, its institutions, and meaning by other societies helps in maintaining superior elements basing on the local culture. The Southeast Asian countries tend to absorb the Chinese culture, especially the culture that is related to the OBOR projects initiated in respective countries. The industry culture is formulated in terms of the projects being undertaken as the locals tend to accommodate and absorbs the manner on how the projects are undertaken. The Chinese culture to achieve high-quality projects, completion and maintenance of the projects are some of the industry cultural elements are being absorbed by the locals in Southeast Asian countries (Chen, 2018). More so, the accommodation of the Chinese culture by other countries, especially the Southeast Asian helps in absorbing essential; practices that contribute positively to economic development. Furthermore, sociocultural institution formulates organizational culture that is absorbed in enhancing management, organizational leadership, and code of conduct. Therefore, absorption of culture through integration leads to more enhanced sociocultural elements that meet the standards of the communities involved.

Cultural transformation under globalization entails procuring fresh form of culture involved parties to abandon their original culture and embracing the alternative. Good cultural practices are embraced in the community and especially in the business and trade operations. Industry culture of the Southeast Asian countries has been enhanced by the Chinese industrialization under the OBOR initiative. Most of the projects of OBOR initiative by the Chinese government are leading to positive impacts on the cultural industry and trade (Nazarko, Czerewacz-Filipowicz, & Kuźmicz, 2017). The connection of cultural diversity and globalization is to create more diverse opportunities to the locals. The Southeast Asian countries' cultural transformation has improved over time to accommodate the changes and improving the economic development the globalization has been defining in different approaches focusing on the OBOR initiative and sociocultural perspectives. Therefore, the Southeast Asian countries have embraced the industry and trade culture that has been pioneered by the Chinese through OBOR initiative.

7. CULTURE INDUSTRY AND TRADE DEVELOPMENT

OBOR initiative of the Chinese government has enabled cultural development in different countries under the proposed projects. The Chinese government has funded different projects along the OBOR initiative corridor to enhance trade and economic empowerment. Over a period, the Chinese government has focused on the industrialization and hence becoming among the leading countries in exportation. In the expansion of the industrialization, there are other various aspects that the Chinese government has concentrated on especially on OBOR initiative (Wilson, 2016). The One Belt One Road initiative has been packaged as a development agenda, but having a positive impact on the cultural industry and trade globally. Empowerment of other economies through OBOR project, the Chinese government has continually changed how other countries approach various concepts in industrial and cultural development. Therefore, the industry and trade development agenda in the countries along OBOR corridor are basing their culture to Chinese initiative. The cultural industry and trade development are addressed in different aspects including cultural entrepreneurial skills and trade, creative industry and trade policy development. Cultural entrepreneurial skills and trade focus on information technology development and how it assists in the creative industries such as artisan and visual art among others. The entrepreneurial skills are critical in economic development as it provides greater opportunities in terms of job creations. The entrepreneurial skills are based on cultural development and embracing the changes initiated toward economic empowerment. The OBOR initiative by the Chinese government has increased exposure to the culture industry and skills in different countries (FERDINAND, 2016). Most of the countries have embraced the entrepreneurial skills from Chinese culture and using it to enhance trade. The OBOR projects in various countries set the standards to provide skills and expose the communities to various cultural dynamics essential in development.

The creative culture industries are based on the cultural talents that are tapped and given opportunity in terms of exposure. The OBOR initiative has developed culture industries that enable Chinese companies and corporation under the projects to utilize available talents in respective countries. The Chinese firms under the OBOR projects outsource resources and human capital from the respective countries and hence creating a great chance to expose skills and talents. Culturally, the communities absorb the Chinese culture in terms of the operations and running institutions to achieve the set targets (Chenyang & Shaojun, 2018). For instance, some of the projects under OBOR initiative are operated on twenty-four hours economy and hence workers working on shifts. The introduced culture of working on shifts is embraced by the locals and hence changing the working pattern. The economic development is realized by the creative culture and talents of the locals to realize the full potential of the community.

The OBOR initiative provides a platform in terms of trade and culture industries to improve the sociocultural and transform the region. Therefore, OBOR projects in different countries have contributed to the creative culture industries and trade as well as economic empowerment to the community. Policies developments are aligned to the nature of the economic and trading approaches as a result of the OBOR initiative. The projects by the Chinese government through the OBOR initiative are formulated on mutual benefit grounds. The policies are developed to ensure as the countries benefit from the OBOR projects, the cultural integration is also enhanced through working together as a unit (Soong, 2018). The firms undertaking the OBOR projects are supposed to involve the community in resources development and human capital. In so doing, the society members benefit from the cultural features that are learned through the process. The local and regional communities embrace the culture industry trade that later is used in transformation purposes. More so, the involved authorities under OBOR projects are supposed to embrace the positive culture industry to enhance the trade and empowerment. Therefore, the policies by the authorities are supposed to concentrate on mutual benefits obtains as a result of the culture industry trade.

4. CONCLUSION

The OBOR initiative by the Chinese government plays a critical role in cultural integration and enhancing the culture trade. The OBOR projects are being undertaken in different countries to enhance transport, energy and economic development. The Chinese government pioneers the OBOR initiative with the intention of enhancing industrialization, telecommunication, and trade leading to globalization. The approach of globalization focuses on the political, economic and sociocultural aspects of countries with common agendas and hence the Chinese establish trading bloc under the OBOR initiative. The Southeast Asian are among the countries enjoying OBOR projects that have enlightened the economic empowerment and enhanced trade. Expansion of OBOR initiative has led to the development strategy of the cultural industry trade of the Chinese government with other countries. As a result economic development, industrialization and empowerment of the communities have been realized and hence achieving high living livelihood. The cultural industry trade is established on the sociocultural dynamics as a result of international trading. The regional economies are formulated in a manner of enhancing economic development through trade and exchange of cultural experiences. The cultural creativeness, transformation, accommodation, and social practices are critical in developing cultural industry trade that is embraced by the Southeast Asian Countries. The communities in the regions of OBOR projects encounter cultural integration and hence positive impact on the cultural industry trade. Therefore, the Chinese government through OBOR initiative has contributed to cultural industry trade not only to Southeast Asian countries but also to other global regions.

REFERENCES

- Chen, S. A. (2018). The Development of Cambodia-China Relation and Its Transition Under the OBOR Initiative. *Chinese Economy*, 51(4), 370-382. DOI: 10.1080/10971475.2018.1457317.
- Chenyang, L., & Shaojun, S. (2018). China's OBOR Initiative and Myanmar's Political Economy. *Chinese Economy*, 51(4), 318-332. DOI: 10.1080/10971475.2018.1457324.
- FERDINAND, P. (2016). Westward ho-the China dream and 'one belt, one road': Chinese foreign policy under Xi Jinping. *International Affairs*, 92(4), 941-957. DOI: 10.1111/1468-2346.12660.
- Kaczmariski, M. (2017). Two Ways of Influence-building: The Eurasian Economic Union and the One Belt, One Road Initiative. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 69(7), 1027-1046. DOI: 10.1080/09668136.2017.1373270.

- Kuo, L., & Kommenda, N. (2019). What is China's Belt and Road Initiative? Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/ng-interactive/2018/jul/30/what-china-belt-road-initiative-silk-road-explainer>
- Nazarko, J., Czerewacz-Filipowicz, K., & Kuźmicz, K. A. (2017). Comparative analysis of the Eastern European countries as participants of the new silk road. *Journal of Business Economics & Management*, 18(6), 1212-1227. DOI: 10.3846/16111699.2017.1404488.
- Punyaratabandhu, P., & Swaspitchayaskun, J. (2018). The Political Economy of China-Thailand Development Under the One Belt One Road Initiative: Challenges and Opportunities. *Chinese Economy*, 51(4), 333-341. DOI: 10.1080/10971475.2018.1457326.
- Soong, J.-J. (2018). China's One Belt and One Road Initiative Meets the ASEAN Economic Community: Propelling and Deepening Regional Economic Integration? *Chinese Economy*, 51(4), 291-297. DOI: 10.1080/10971475.2018.1457335.
- Soong, J.-J., & Nguyen, K. N. (2018). China's OBOR Initiative and Vietnam's Political Economy: Economic Integration with Political. *Conflict. Chinese Economy*, 51(4), 342-355. DOI: 10.1080/10971475.2018.1457333.
- Summers, T. (2016). China's 'New Silk Roads': sub-national regions and networks of global political economy. *Third World Quarterly*, 37(9), 1628-1643. DOI: 10.1080/01436597.2016.1153415.
- Tai, W.-P., & Huang, Y.-F. (2018). Political and Economic Relationships Between China and the Philippines Under the OBOR Initiative. *Chinese Economy*, 51(4), 356-369. DOI: 10.1080/10971475.2018.1457328.
- Wilson, J. (2016). The Eurasian Economic Union and China's silk road: implications for the Russian-Chinese relationship. *European Politics & Society*, 17(1), 113-132 DOI: 10.1080/23745118.2016.1171288.
- XINGANG, W., WENTAO, Z., & YULONG, Y. (2017). Ideology, Global Strategy, And Development Of The Islamic State And Its Influence On China's "One Belt, One Road" Initiative. *Journal of Global South Studies*, 34(2), 139-155. DOI: 10.1353/gss.2017.0016.
- Yu, H. (2017). The motivation behind China's 'One Belt, One Road' Initiatives and Establishment of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. *Journal of Contemporary China*, 26(105), 353-368. DOI: 10.1080/10670564.2016.1245894.
- Zhu, J. (2018). China's One Belt One Road Initiative and Opportunities for US Companies. *Proceedings of the Northeast Business & Economics Association*, 348-350.