

The Cooperation Between the Philippines and China in the Field of Culture, Education and Tourism (2001-2021)

Tran Thai Bao¹ and Nguyen Thi Phuong Thao²
¹University of Sciences, Hue University, Vietnam
²Duy Tan University, Danang, Vietnam

Date Submitted: March 20, 2022
Date Accepted: June 20, 2022

Originality: 82%
Plagiarism Detection: Passed

ABSTRACT

Cultural exchange is becoming increasingly significant in international relations as a result of globalization. The use of culture as a new and independent kind of diplomacy in global relations is highly valued by countries all over the world. In their bilateral relationship, the Philippines and China are highly active in building cultural diplomacy to improve mutual understanding, cooperation, and friendship, and settle issues and conflicts of interest through peaceful means, in addition to political and diplomatic accords. To clarify the cooperation process between the Philippines and China in the fields of culture, education, and tourism, the author has flexibly applied statistical, analytical, synthesis, and systematic methods, as historical and logical methods to contribute to the research work. From comparative and contrasting analyzes throughout the history of cooperation between the two countries in the first two decades of the 21st century, the author clarifies the achievements of cooperation through cultural diplomacy, thereby proposing some solutions for the two countries to maintain good relations, contributing to promoting the friendship between the two peoples.

Keywords. *Philippines, China, culture, education, tourism*

INTRODUCTION

China has identified the Philippines as a true regional power hub among Southeast Asian countries. "China and the Philippines are friendly neighbors, merely a stretch of ocean, and the two peoples have experienced a time of friendship and cooperation over 1700 years ago," China's Ambassador to the Philippines said in October 2003" (Baker, 2004). As a result, China is always looking to extend and improve cooperation with the Philippines in a variety of areas (Philippine Embassy in Beijing, China, 2020). The Philippines, for example, has long prioritized collaboration with major countries, notably China. Because of the necessity for exchanges and a desire to learn about Chinese cultural identity, the Philippines has undertaken a variety of strategies to strengthen bilateral cooperation in areas such as culture, education, and tourism (Wong, 2014).

According to historical texts, the Philippines and China have comparable social and cultural foundations. Material culture was constructed on the foundation of wet rice civilization, which is

regulated by relatively comparable natural conditions, resulting in closeness in people and worldviews. This resemblance lays the groundwork for direct bilateral contact between the two countries from the start. According to historians, the first Philippine-Chinese trade occurred in the 7th century, when Chinese traders traded Chinese ceramics, iron, lead, and zinc for Filipino handicrafts (Malindog-Uy, 2021). The Philippines remained an important transshipment node in marine trade between the continent and the rest of the world until after the 10th century. Chinese merchants arrived in the Philippines to export Cantonese pottery, and a small population of Chinese merchants stayed to create towns. Manila became an important transit place for Western galleons as well as a trading destination for Chinese agents and brokers during the Spanish colonization. Some of these merchants married local women, resulting in the Philippines' mixed Chinese community. Before the two countries established formal diplomatic relations, they established a non-governmental organization

called the Association for Philippines- China Understanding (APCU) based in the Philippines (Malindog-Uy, 2021). APCU strives to promote cultural interchange, academic collaboration, city twinning, and commercial operations between the two countries. This organization served as a foundation for the two countries later nationalization of relations. By 1975 and thereafter, the two countries' connection had progressed significantly, and numerous fields had been inked in turn.

Additionally, the Philippines and China have signed numerous Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) in relation to education, such as the one that was signed on March 12, 2003, in Manila between the Higher Education Commission of the Republic of the Philippines and the National Office for Language Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language of the People's Republic of China; Memorandum of Understanding on the Philippine Preparatory Chinese Teachers Cooperation Program between the Higher Education Commission of the Republic of the Philippines and the Confucius Institute Headquarters of the People's Republic of China, signed in Beijing on October 2, 2007; Memorandum of Understanding between the Higher Education Commission of the Republic of the Philippines and the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, signed in Manila in March 2007. The Higher Education Commission of the Republic of the Philippines and the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China signed the Agreement on Mutual Recognition of Academic Degrees in Higher Education (MRA) on November 19, 2009, in Manila. Additionally, the two nations have created and developed a number of initiatives to introduce their respective cultures. Children aged 6 to 15 from elementary and secondary schools in Tianjin participated in the program "Young Ambassadors of Chinese Culture" presented by the Philippine Embassy in 2018, where they learned about Philippine traditions and holidays (Philippine Ambassador to Beijing, 2018).

In the sector of tourism, The Philippine government issued statements in 2001 endorsing tourism as one of the fundamental bases for sustained economic expansion. The Philippines

then adopted the National Ecotourism Strategy (NES), which outlines the following ecotourism objectives: i) develop ecotourism products that are competitive on the global market; ii) develop ethical ecotourism markets; and iii) maximize community benefits and raise the standard of ecotourism tourist experiences. To achieve the nation's national goals of poverty alleviation, employment creation, and poverty reduction, the Philippines' Medium Term Development Plan (MTPDP) for 2001–2004 contains a chapter on tourism and its contribution to the economy. Infrastructure should be built and strengthened. The tourism industry was given a boost in 2009 when RA 9593, often known as the Tourism Act 2009, was passed. According to the Philippine government, tourism is a vital part of the economy and an industry that is vital to the country's interests. Tourism must be promoted as a vehicle for socioeconomic development and cultural affirmation to attract investment, foreign currency, and jobs as well as to boost Filipinos' sense of national pride. Tourism cooperation between the Philippines and China is a priority sector for sustainable economic development goals and strategies, as it may promote socioeconomic growth, alleviate poverty, and safeguard heritage cultural, and natural goods.

Cultural promotion and cooperation have laid a strong foundation for the two countries' friendship, contributing to the development of a comprehensive relationship between the Philippines and China, in line with the wishes of the two peoples and the spirit of neighborliness and friendship expressed by both governments.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The term soft power was first mentioned in 1973 in the book *Power and Wealth the Political Economy of International Power* by scholar Klaus Knorr (Knorr, 1973). After that, the concept of "soft power" was studied and defined into a famous theory by Joseph Samuel Nye, John F. Kennedy School of Public Administration - Harvard University. Joseph S. Nye asserts: "Soft power is a type of ability whereby an end can be achieved through attraction, not through coercion or coercion. This attraction comes from the cultural, political, and

foreign policy values of a country" (Nye, 2004). Even in the document of the 17th Chinese Communist Party Congress in 2007, it was emphasized that "in the current era, the role of culture in the country's synergy competition is increasing. Whoever captures the pinnacle of cultural development can take the initiative in this fierce international competition" (Phuong, 2015). Therefore, after strengthening "hard power" in the economic and military aspects, China began to also pay attention to "soft power" in the aspects of cultural diplomacy. Through cultural spillover, China will gradually increase its competitiveness in international relations.

Based on China's development direction in the 21st century with neighboring countries, a new direction is to apply "soft power" in cultural diplomacy. This article examines the role of soft power in promoting friendly relations between the Philippines and China in the 21st century. China's application of soft power has completely changed the controversy in relations. Philippines-China in previous decades. In particular, soft power has significantly reduced the Philippines' perception of the threat from China and seems to have gradually moved the country away from its closest security ally, the United States. Therefore, the article presents three areas of cooperation between China and the Philippines, namely culture, education, and tourism, to address the central question: China's use of soft power has transformed the Philippines-China relationship. How did countries go from confrontation to cooperation?

DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

Cooperation in the Field of Culture

Based on the "Joint Declaration between China and the Philippines on the framework of bilateral cooperation in the twenty-first century," which was signed in 2000, bilateral relations between China and the Philippines have steadily developed into a long-term and stable collaboration. And based on good neighbors, cooperation, trust, and mutual benefit Following a high-level agreement reached during President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's visit to China in September 2004, the two countries agreed to enhance their strategic partnership and cooperate in all areas,

with a focus on their bilateral relationship. Cooperation in the cultural field. The Philippine and Chinese governments have staged numerous high-level visits to improve cultural understanding between the two nations, and many cooperation documents in the fields of culture and society have been signed during this time. This is one of the most essential foundations for advancing the bilateral relationship between the Philippines and China in the first decade of the twenty-first century.

Promoting cultural interactions and assisting in the resolution of social problems can be said to play a significant role in developing the Philippines- China relationship, particularly in the setting of political and security challenges. There are no signs that relations between the two countries are improving. President Benigno Aquino III's official visit to China from August 30 to September 3, 2011, resulted in the signing of nine cooperation agreements in a variety of categories, including economy, aid, investment, physical training, tourism, information, and culture. Film screenings, art exhibitions, music performances, and cuisine festivals are all held on a regular basis as a result. Also, within the framework of cultural cooperation between the two countries, in 2013, the Philippine Consulate in Shanghai organized the program "Taste of the Philippines", with activities to promote intangible cultural heritage values. As if food, traditional music, and folk dance came to China (Wong, 2014). This not only raises cultural knowledge but also fosters cross-cultural understanding. In addition, the two nations held the Manila Forum on China-Philippines Relations and the Philippine-China Knowledge Promotion Award to promote understanding of Chinese territory, culture, and people in the Philippines. Beginning in January 2021, the country will be operational (Chinese Embassy in the Philippines, 2021).

The Chinese Embassy and the China International Publishing Corporation also created the Book Center at the University of the Philippines (UP) in Diliman, Quezon City. (CIPG) (Rocamora, 2019). On March 18, 2019, China International Publishing Corporation gave 1000 books in both English and Chinese about Chinese history, geography, people, and culture

at the center's inauguration ceremony for the Book Center, while also stating that the beneficial connection between China and the Philippines will continue to grow to new heights (The Chinese Embassy in the Philippines, 2019).

Since mid-2018, China Radio International and the State Radio Administration Philippines have co-produced the program "Wow China" on the local radio channel Radyo Pilipinas to further strengthen cooperation forms in the field of television to meet the needs of cultural exchange and information exchange between the peoples of the two countries (Hung, 2021). The China Drama show has debuted on the Philippines' People's Television Network (PTV4), as well as Chinese entertainment channels such as ABS-CBN and Global Media Arts. In the Philippines, (GMA) is also televised (Rocamora, 2018). These communication channels have helped to deepen the Philippines' and China's historic friendship, unique solidarity, and comprehensive cooperation. Furthermore, numerous provinces and cities in the Philippines and China are twinned, like Hangzhou and Baguio, Guangzhou and Manila, Xiamen and Cebu, Shenyang and Quezon, and Fu cities. Shandong Province and Ilocos Norte, Anhui and Nueva Ecija Provinces, Hubei and Leyte Provinces, Jiangxi and Bohol Provinces, Fujian and Laguna Provinces, Thuan and Lipa, Zibo and Mandaue City, Shandong Province and Ilocos Norte, Anhui and Nueva Eci (Consulate of the People's Republic of China, 2020). The connection between localities has contributed to supplementing the people-to-people diplomacy channel between the two countries, actively supporting in promoting the image of people and the country coming together in the spirit of peace and friendship.

In terms of society, China has actively aided the Philippines in social security issues in the twenty-first century, including providing 10 million Renminbi (73.2 million Pesos) in materials, primarily blankets and tents, to communities devastated by Typhoon Yolanda in 2013 and \$250,000 in aid to victims of major typhoons that flooded the Philippines in November 2004; support the reconstruction of Marawi City's infrastructure and promote the drainage system project in rural areas of the Philippines, assisting Filipinos in improving their

livelihoods, reducing poverty, and achieving sustainable development; loans of 232.5 million USD to renovate urban infrastructure (Chinese Embassy in the Philippines, 2013). Thanks to China's active support, a number of projects have been completed and put into operation, which has contributed to helping the Filipino people gradually stabilize after the end of natural disasters and the Covid pandemic. Kaliwa Dam can supply at least 600 million liters of water per day to Manila; The Chico River Irrigation Pumping Project is expected to supply water to 8700 hectares of rice land and benefit 4,250 farmers across 22 bays. The Nam Long Railway, built by the Philippine National Railways, will drastically cut the amount of time it takes to travel between Manila and Legazpi and will significantly improve the transportation infrastructure covering more than ten cities and towns connecting Manila to South Luzon. The Philippine-Sino Agricultural Technology Center has built a large-scale hybrid rice growing area of 260 hectares and provided on-site agricultural services to more than 730 farmer households. Up to now, a total of 18,000 hectares of hybrid rice has been produced, increasing production by 21,000 tons and benefiting more than 9,370 households (Chinese Embassy in the Philippines, 2020).

To solve the job situation for Filipinos, the Chinese government also encourages businesses to invest in building industrial parks and companies in this country. In addition, China and the Philippines also signed a number of documents to ensure border security and social stability, such as the Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in Combating Transnational Crime (2001), and the Treaty on Cooperation in Combating Transnational Crime (2001). Against Illicit Trafficking and Drug Abuse (2001), Treaty on Cooperation in Youth Affairs (2005), Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in Sanitary and Phytosanitary (2007) sanitation cooperation (2008).

In the struggle against Covid-19, China and the Philippines became allies, standing side by side, assisting one another, and writing new chapters in their friendship. At a critical time in China's fight against COVID-19, the Philippines stepped in to help. China has boosted its assistance and support to the Philippines, including giving

critical medical supplies, dispatching a team of medical professionals to combat the epidemic, assisting the Philippines in purchasing medical supplies in China, and exchanging medical goods. Experience exchange will continue to labor and generate to help the Philippines recover and prosper. At the beginning of the outbreak, the Chinese Embassy handed the Philippine government 2,000 test kits. The Chinese government subsequently sent three packages of medical supplies to the Philippines, including 1,870,000 surgical masks, 130 ventilators, 250 000 test kits, and 130 ventilators. The Chinese government also sent 3,075,000 kg of rice to the Philippines this year, which will aid over 500,000 Filipino families (Chinese Embassy in the Philippines, 2020). Chinese local governments, businesses, and civic groups have donated millions of sets of PPE and other medical supplies to various local governments and hospitals in the Philippines. In 2020, the Chinese Embassy in the Philippines donated to Manila citizens 5,000 "Friendship Bags" containing essential daily necessities such as rice and canned sardines to distribute to those in need to help them overcome difficulties. In addition, the Chinese Embassy in the Philippines, together with the Consulate General in Cebu, Davao, and Consulate in Laoag, are donating daily essential items to the local people, with a total value of about 17.5 million pesos (Chinese Embassy in the Philippines, 2020).

Soft power, in the form of sports diplomacy, is also employed in diplomatic ties between the Philippines and China to balance the two nations' usually unbalanced relationship. Sports activities are also becoming more important in promoting understanding between Filipinos and the Chinese. Yao Minh, a former NBA basketball player, visited the Philippines on May 7, 2013, for a friendly contest with local basketball teams. The Philippines will compete in the 2022 Winter Olympics in China. "China and the Philippines can maintain the cordial connection that began at the Winter Olympics," said Mr. Huang Xilian, China's ambassador to the Philippines" (Xinhua, 2020).

Indeed, the continuous organization of cultural, sports, and medical aid initiatives contributes to strengthening the relationship between the two countries.

Cooperation in the Field of Education

The Philippines and China have developed multilateral, diverse forms of cooperation, including collaboration in education, training, and scientific research. During the President's visit, the Philippine Higher Education Commission (CHED) and the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China (MOE) inked a memorandum of understanding to strengthen higher education cooperation. In 2016, President Rodrigo Duterte paid a visit to China. The following are the key contents of this Memorandum of Understanding: 1. Mutual recognition of qualifications in both nations to promote lifelong learning and professional practice; 2. Increase the number of universities listed in both countries' registers. 3. Lecturer and student exchanges through scholarships, training programs, and country visits; 4. Disseminate information about higher education structure, learning quality, performance standards, result assessment, methodological development, student issues, and qualification frameworks. 5. Make a credit transfer contract; 6. Encourage participation in educational congresses, conferences, seminars, symposia, training courses, and exhibitions; and 7. Strengthen cooperation in language research and construct additional Confucius Institutes in the Philippines. On August 29, 2019, Chinese President Xi Jinping and Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte signed two Memorandums of Understanding: one on higher education cooperation between the Philippine Higher Education Authority and the Chinese Ministry of Education, and the other on scientific and technological cooperation between the Philippine Department of Science and Technology and the Chinese Ministry of Science and Technology.

Language studies are an important aspect of cultural interaction. Learning and being proficient in Chinese is essential for Filipinos to penetrate and comprehend Chinese society, politics, and culture. The Philippine Department of Education has officially included Chinese as a primary foreign language of the general curriculum system of Philippine public secondary schools. There are currently 82 public middle schools in the Philippines that offer Chinese language classes, and several Chinese courses have been developed for Filipino teachers (Bianji (2018). Filipinos are

becoming increasingly eager in studying this language, particularly for purposes of study, work, and business. The Higher Education Commission of the Republic of the Philippines and the People's Republic of China's National Office for the Teaching of Chinese as a Foreign Language signed a memorandum of understanding in 2003. Chinese courses began to be taught in the Philippines as a result of this incident. Four Confucius Institutes were established in the Philippines between 2006 and 2015 to encourage more Filipinos to learn the language: the Confucius Institute at Ateneo de Manila (2006), the Confucius Institute at Bulacan University (2009), the Confucius Institute at the University of Angeles (2010), and the Confucius Institute at the University of the Philippines (2015). The four Confucius Institutes are run as a three-part cooperation, with host institutions in the Philippines and China, partner universities, and the Confucius Institute Headquarters (Xu, Wang, 2019). Furthermore, one of the achievements in terms of education and training cooperation between the Philippines and China is student exchange between the two nations. According to statistics, the Chinese government gave 198 scholarships to Filipino students between 1978 and 2015. The total number of Filipino overseas students studying in China in 2015 was 3,343. 106 more Filipino overseas students arrived in China to study from January to October 2018. Similarly, the Joint Statement between the People's Republic of China and the Republic of the Philippines on November 21, 2018, said that China will grant 50 scholarships to Filipino students each year from 2019 to 2021 (Huy, 2021).

Increased collaboration in online education training is one of the new approaches in the Philippines-China education-training cooperation mechanism in the wake of the severe breakout of the Covid-19 pandemic. The China-Philippines educational exchange seminar 2020 (51Talk) was held in Beijing through the online form in October 2020, with the Chinese Ambassador to the Philippines Huang Xilian, and the Philippines Ambassador to China Jose Santiago Sta. on the 45th anniversary of the two countries establishing of diplomatic ties (Chinese Embassy in the Philippines, 2020). The event provided an opportunity for Filipino educators to share their

experiences, discuss scientific topics, and help Chinese students improve their English skills.

Tourism Cooperation

Tourism has been regarded as a "key" economic sector - a "smokeless" business that contributes significantly to the economic development of the Philippines and China. The Philippines-China bilateral tourism cooperation produced some results in the first two decades of the twenty-first century. The Philippines became one of the first countries to open its doors to groups of Chinese nationals traveling overseas in 1997 when group tours of Chinese nationals to the Philippines were officially inaugurated. More than 40,000 Chinese visitors visited the Philippines in 1998, and the number of Chinese tourists visiting the Philippines has climbed year after year to varied degrees. More than 500,000 Chinese tourists have visited the Philippines so far, making it the ninth most popular foreign tourist destination for Chinese residents (Consulate General of China in Cebu, 2006).

The Philippines has the main benefits of early opening, short distance, and relatively low price as a tourism destination for Chinese travelers. However, as the number of international tourist destinations for Chinese citizens grows, so does the number of Chinese tourists visiting the Philippines. In 2005, 119,000 Chinese nationals visited the Philippines, up 16 percent from 2004, but still far less than the 370,000 Chinese nationals who visited Malaysia, 480,000 in Singapore, and 600,000 in Thailand in the same year. Chinese tourists pick other tourist locations for a variety of reasons. To begin with, Chinese people are increasingly adopting more routes to travel abroad, and their preferences for places are improving. Simple sightseeing trips are no longer sufficient to meet the needs of Chinese visitors. Second, the 2004 earthquake and tsunami, as well as the subsequent avian flu outbreak and poor travel safety in various parts of the Philippines. Third, despite the proximity of China and the Philippines, and the addition of direct flights, the frequency is minimal, and most Chinese visitors will not pick the Philippines as their first choice. Fourth, Chinese tourists lack an adequate understanding of Philippine tourism products (Consulate General of China in Cebu, 2006).

However, to improve the tourism situation between the two countries, the Chinese Government has many policies to encourage Chinese citizens to come to the Philippines for tourism. For example, to further promote tourism exchange and cooperation between China and the Philippines, the China National Administration of Tourism made the following proposals: (1) The tourism management agencies of the two governments need to strengthen dialogue and communication to enhance mutual understanding and trust. Take advantage of existing mechanisms and platforms to constantly enrich content, and forms of cooperation, and promptly exchange the latest information and policies. The China National Administration of Tourism will actively implement the tourism cooperation plan and other documents signed with the Philippines, and cooperate more closely; (2) Faced with the situation of Chinese citizens coming to the Philippines to travel, it is recommended that Philippine tourism departments and businesses do a thorough analysis of China's source market, constantly developing new products to meet the needs of tourists, and further strengthen promotional efforts in China to attract more Chinese tourists to learn about the Philippines; (3) Encourage airlines to increase direct flights, encourage exchange and cooperation between tourism businesses Consulate General of China in Cebu, 2006).

On January 3, 2008, Chinese Ambassador Song Tao met with Philippine Tourism Minister Durano, and the two sides held a pleasant and deep exchange of views on how to develop the bilateral tourism cooperation partnership. Ambassador Song Tao stated that China and the Philippines have had a cordial relationship for a long time, particularly in recent years, with the comprehensive and rapid expansion of bilateral relations and tourism cooperation between the two nations. Both China and the Philippines have abundant tourism resources, and tourism cooperation between the two countries holds enormous promise. It is hoped that the two parties would work together to advance tourism cooperation even further. In response, Durano welcomed Ambassador Song to the Philippines and stated that the Philippines-China tourist cooperation relationship had yielded exceptional outcomes.

Chinese tourists to the Philippines have risen year after year to become the Philippines' fourth largest source of foreign visitors. The Philippines values China's tourism market and will continue to invest in tourism infrastructure, increase service quality, and welcome more Chinese visitors to the country.

The Philippine Tourism Board has been pushing "It's More Fun in the Philippines" as a marketing campaign for tourists and expats throughout the world since 2014. Visitors will be able to access listings for all tourist attractions, as well as a database system of hotels, resorts, and travel agents throughout the Philippines. Visitors will be able to arrange their long-distance trips and experiences in the Philippines cost-effectively and efficiently from there. Therefore, this is one of the reasons that more and more Chinese tourists come to visit the Philippines. According to data released by the Department of Tourism (DOT, Department of Tourism), China is one of the largest tourist markets of the Philippines. Despite the maritime dispute with the Philippines, the number of Chinese visitors to the country peaked at 490,841 in 2015 - 24% higher than in 2014 and also the third largest market after South Korea and the United States (Chinese Embassy in the Philippines, 2018).

China-Philippines ties have improved and gained speed since President Rodrigo Duterte took office in 2016. The Philippines' largest trading partner, largest export market, largest import source, and second-largest source of tourists at the moment is China. Tourism-related revenue in the Philippines reached \$9.31 billion in 2019, increasing 20.81% from \$7.71 billion in 2018. Based on data from the Planning Office Tourism Development, Research and Information Management, the leading customer market is South Korea with the highest spending on tourism with about \$2,614,685,263, followed by China with \$2,330,491,557 and the United States with 1,208,907,514 USD (Rocamora, 2020). The country's aims are being realized as a result of the government, business, and civil society working closely together, according to Bernadette Romulo-Puyat, the minister of tourism. The National Tourism Development Program 2016–1022 (NTDP) is the country's master plan for inclusive and sustainable tourism, created to support stakeholder livelihoods and disperse advantages

that are advantageous to rural areas. As a result, more and more visitors from the Philippines are traveling to China. Statistics provided by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism show that

whereas there were just 996 thousand visitors in 2013, there were 1.205 million visitors by 2018 (Xinhua, 2020).

Table 1. Number of Chinese tourists to the Philippines from 2008 to 2020

Years	Number of Tourists <i>(per 1000)</i>
2008	163,689
2009	155,019
2010	187,446
2011	243,137
2012	250,883
2013	426,352
2014	394,951
2015	490,841
2016	675,663
2017	968,447
2018	1,257,962
2019	1,743,309
2020	170,432

Source: Philippine Department of Tourism (DOT)

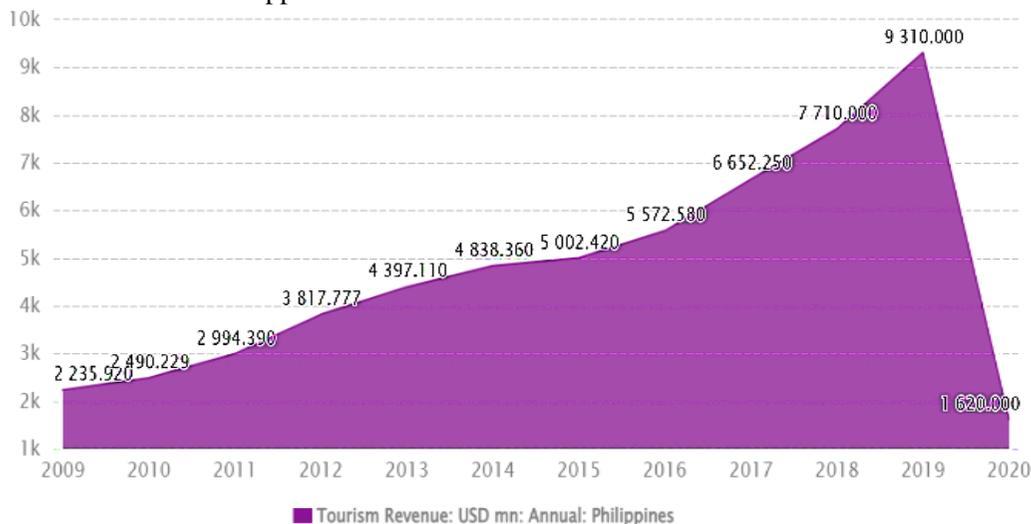
The number of visitors and businesses asking for visas to enter the Philippines grew by a record 200 percent, according to Philippine Ambassador to China Jose Romana, confirming that the "golden days of the Philippine tourism industry are back." Mr. Jose Romana further stated that during times of poor relations between China and the Philippines, Chinese people traveled to Southeast Asia but did not visit the Philippines. Tourists and traders have been returning to the Philippines in greater numbers as Chinese media has reported on the situation more fully (Duong Van Huy, 2021).

1.33 million Korean tourists visited in the first ten months of 2017 alone, making up 24.33% of all visitors, according to DOT statistics that were made public. Americans came in third with 785,269 arrivals, or 14.34% of the market, followed by Chinese tourists in second place with 810,807 arrivals, or 14.81% of the market. Chinese tourists climbed by 39.28% over the same period in 2016, while Indian visitors increased by 20.28%. These increases increased overall international arrivals by 11.54% to 5.47 million in the first ten months of the year from 4.91 million in the corresponding period of 2016. That also generated more revenue for the Philippines, with visitor income recording a double-digit increase of 36.28% or 243.23 billion pesos in the January-September period, up from 178 billion

pesos in the same period in 2016 (Rappler, 2017). The main reason for the sudden increase in the number of Chinese tourists is that the visa policy has been relaxed in China-friendly countries, including the Philippines (Punongbayan, 2019). Direct international flights from Philippine cities to newly developed Chinese cities such as Chongqing, Tianjin, Anchuan, Baicheng, and Suzhou. Finally, the Chinese government is using "tourist diplomacy" as a form of "soft power".

In 2019, China was the second largest source of visitors with 1,743,309 arrivals, an increase of 38.58% compared to 2018. In the first two months of 2019, 107,164 tourists visited the island off the coast of Alkan province. After the month of closure last year, the island of Boracay, the Alkan government's decision to reopen, has attracted many Chinese to visit here. According to the city's Department of Tourism, the number of visitors from China to this island spiked by 155.64%. At the same time, the Philippine Department of Tourism (DOT) said that Chinese tourists spent a total of 2.33 billion USD while visiting the Philippines in 2019. DOT data shows a total of 1.74 million visitors. Chinese tourists visited the Philippines in 2019, an increase of 38.58% compared to 2018. (See table 1 of Chinese tourists to the Philippines from 2008 to 2020).

Table 2. View the Philippines' Tourism Revenue from 2009-2020



Source: *Philippines Tourism Revenue*

The DOT reports that 8.2 million foreign tourists visited the Philippines in 2019, bringing in \$9.31 billion in visitor revenue, a 20.81% increase over the 7.71 billion USD of 2018. However, the COVID-19 Pandemic affected the tourism sector in December 2019 because, in addition to concern, the implementation of anti-epidemic measures caused a major decline in tourist demand. Due to travel restrictions put in place by the government to stop the COVID-19 pandemic, the Philippine tourism industry has suffered greatly. International visitor arrivals decreased by 22% during the first quarter of 2020, the time when travel restrictions and bans were implemented in the majority of countries, resulting in an estimated \$80 billion loss in global tourism earnings (PWC Philippines, 2020). Approximately 400 billion pesos (more than 8.3 billion USD) in tourism earnings were lost by the Philippines in 2020 as a result of the rapid decline in visitor numbers brought on by the COVID-19 epidemic (Xinhua, 2021).

According to the data above, China has always been a significant market for the Philippines. Meanwhile, the number of Filipino travelers to China has been continuously increasing. Many Philippine destinations have become popular with Chinese tourists, who are particularly interested in the types of beach resorts available in the Philippines. Many actions, such as participating in tourism fairs, inviting tourism survey delegations from enterprises and the press, and coordinating

tourism introduction and development programs, represent the two countries' tourism cooperation. Cooperation initiatives in the domains of culture and tourism have helped to strengthen the relationship between the Philippines and China.

Relations between the Philippines and China have endured territorial disputes that have gotten worse since the naval battle at Scarborough Shoal in April 2012. These disputes were made worse by China's illegitimate occupation, construction of infrastructure, and encroachment into the Philippines' exclusive economic zone. The two governments continued to educate the populace, though, in an effort to prevent needless conflict. The Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs arranged a "Travel to get to know the Chinese people" in August 2013 (Wong, 2014). The event invited representatives of the Chinese media to come to learn about the Philippines' history, politics, and foreign policy to facilitate the production of factual news. Festivals and cultural exchanges between the embassies in the two countries are other endeavors to overcome the large gap in mutual awareness between the two countries and their citizens.

CONCLUSION

Soft power has grown more significant than ever in today's era of globalization, with the support of media that promotes a country's culture faster. With this in mind, governments in the early twenty-

first century bolstered their soft power by using cultural diplomacy efforts to improve mutual understanding and collaboration. Countries promote trade cooperation and aid investment through cultural diplomacy. China and the Philippines used soft power successfully in their cultural diplomacy at first.

However, on the way to implementing cultural diplomacy measures, the two governments also encountered many obstacles: China encountered the rejection of a part of Filipinos who supported the US, and the Philippines encountered barriers because of the Chinese language. It is important for the Philippines and China in their diplomatic relations to prevent frequent provocative actions in disputed maritime areas from generating hostile reactions by the citizens of the two countries. This means not setting aside maritime conflicts and territorial issues entirely, but simply taking them out of focus in diplomatic relations, to create more opportunities for focus. focus on other positive and productive areas. And just one incident of hostilities at sea could completely destroy the long-established relationship between the Philippines and China. For the Philippines, China is an important economic partner with which it must work to achieve financial benefits for national development. For China, the Philippines is an important country that it must work with to earn the trust and respect of other countries in Southeast Asia, especially as it is on its way to proving itself as a responsible power. China will join hands with the Philippines to maintain peace and stability in Southeast Asia - an area with world development potential. This doesn't happen easily and requires double efforts on both sides. As two important members of this association, China and the Philippines should continue to commit to an independent, ASEAN-centered foreign policy, and further deepen the global strategic partnership. China-ASEAN representation and contribution to the stability and prosperity of the bloc.

The Philippines and China's tourism collaboration has advanced in leaps and bounds. The two administrations have made every effort to create conditions that allow the two people to meet and share ideas. The people of the two countries share a lot in terms of culture and society, and when they work together, they can accomplish a lot more. Regular and continuous tourism activities are the most visible sign. China has traditionally been one of

the Philippines' most important tourist destinations. Many Philippine destinations have become popular with Chinese tourists, who are particularly interested in the types of beach resorts available in the Philippines. Cooperation activities in the fields of culture and tourism have contributed to strengthening the relationship between the two countries, the Philippines and China. The Philippines benefits from China in many different ways, so this relationship will continue to grow strong. The close cooperation with China in the field of tourism has helped the Philippines develop its economy, gradually stabilize the domestic situation and improve its position in the international arena. One thing can be seen, in recent years, the Philippines has increased its relations with major countries in the region and the world. The voice of the Philippines in regional and international forums is increasingly enhanced.

REFERENCES

- Andrea Chloe A. Wong (2014), *Philippines-China Relations: Beyond the Territorial Disputes*, Cirss commentaries, vol. I, no. 3.
- Anna Malindog-Uy, *Public Diplomacy and China-Philippine Relations*, <https://thaseanpost.com/article/public-diplomacy-and-china-philippine-relations>, accessed 12/5/2022.
- Carl Baker (2004), *China - Philippines Relations: Caution Cooperation*, <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA627494.pdf>, accessed 11/5/2022
- Chinese Embassy in the Philippines (2020), *Ambassador Huang Xilian: China's online education enterprises provide thousands of job opportunities for Filipinos*, <https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/ce/ceph/eng/sgdt/t1824571.htm>, accessed 6/4/2022.
- Chinese Embassy in the Philippines (2020), *Chinese Embassy presents "Friendship Bags" to Manila citizens*, https://www-fmprc-gov-cn.translate.google.com/ce/ceph/eng/sgdt/t1785819.htm?_x_tr_sl=en&_x_tr_tl=en&_x_tr_hl=en&_x_tr_pto=sc, accessed April 1, 2022.
- Chinese Embassy in the Philippines (2020), *Original Interview with Ambassador Huang Xilian*, https://www-fmprc-gov-cn.translate.google.com/ce/ceph/eng/sgdt/t1798935.htm?_x_tr_sl=en&_x_tr_tl=en&_x_tr_hl=en&_x_tr_pto=sc, accessed 3/4/2022.
- Chinese Embassy in the Philippines (2021), *China, and the Philippines jointly launched the forum, awarding prizes to promote bilateral relations*, <https://www.mfa.gov.cn/ce/ceph/eng/sgdt/t1846963.htm>, accessed April 5, 2022.
- Chinese Embassy in the Philippines (2018), 中国驻菲律宾大使宋涛与菲律宾旅游部长谈两国旅游合作, <http://ph.chinese>

- embassy.org/sgdt/200801/t20080104_1212527.htm, accessed on 20/4/2022.
- Consulate General of China in Cebu (2006), 中国旅游业现状和中菲旅游业的发展情况, http://cebu.chineseconsulate.org/jlyhz/14/200607/t20060704_5643164.htm, accessed on 14/5/2022.
- Consulate of the People's Republic of China in Laoag (2020), *Twin Provinces and Cities*, <https://www.mfa.gov.cn/ce/cglaoag/eng/yhwl/spc/t339056.htm>, access updated on April 1, 2022.
- Duong Van Huy, (2021) *Adaptation of island Southeast Asian countries to the increasing influence of China since the 19th Congress of the Communist Party of China*, Social Science Publishing House, p. 237.
- Hongyu, Bianji (2018), *China and the Philippines recognize the strong development of cultural exchanges*, <http://en.people.cn/n3/2018/1121/c900009520883.html>, accessed 4/4/2022
- Knorr, K. (1973). *Power and Wealth: The Political Economy of International Power* Basic Books, New York.
- Jason Hung, (2021), *China is using its media and pop culture expansion in the Philippines to promote pro-Chinese narratives and content*, <https://thediplomat.com/2021/02/chinas-soft-power-grows-in-the-Philippines/>, accessed March 23, 2022.
- Jc Punongbayan (2019), *Why the influx of Chinese in the Philippines?* <https://www.rappler.com/voices/thought-leaders/233238-reasons-influx-chinese-philippines/>, accessed on 14/5/2022.
- Josef S. Nye, Jr. (1990), *Soft Power*, Foreign Policy, No. 80.
- Joyce Ann L. Rocamora (2018), *PTV will broadcast Chinese series*, <https://ptvnews.ph/ptv-air-free-chinese-series-docus-soon/>, accessed 4/4/2022.
- Joyce Ann L. Rocamora (2019), *China opens new book center UP in the Philippines*, <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1064938>, accessed April 5, 2022.
- Joyce Ann L. Rocamora (2020), *PH tourism revenue hits all-time high \$9.31-B in 2019*, <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1095319>, accessed on 10/5/2022.
- Joseph S. Nye (2004). *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*. Public Affairs, New York (p 5-6).
- Lili Xu, He Wang, (2019) *Analyses on the Present Situation and Prospect of Confucius Institutes in the Philippines*, Proceedings of the 2019 5th International Conference on Social Science and Higher Education (ICSSHE 2019).
- Nguyen Thu Phuong, (2015), *China's increasing cultural soft power in Southeast Asia*, <http://vnics.org.vn/Default.aspx?ctl=Article&aID=178>, accessed 12/5/2020.
- Philippine Ambassador to Beijing, (2018), *Welcome Young Chinese Cultural Delegates*, <https://dfa.gov.ph/dfa-news/news-from-our-foreign-service-posts-update/16704-embassy-in-Beijing-welcomes-Chinese-young-cultural-ambassadors>, accessed 12/5/2022.
- Philippine Embassy in Beijing, China (2020), *Philippine-China Relations*, <https://beijingpe.dfa.gov.ph/list-of-bilateral-agreements/84-phl-chn-relations>, access Updated on 4/4/2022
- Philippine Embassy in Beijing, China (2020), *Philippines-China Relations*, <https://beijingpe.dfa.gov.ph/phl-china-relations>, accessed May 10, 2022.
- PWC Philippines (2020), *Impact of COVID-19 on the Philippine Tourism industry*, <https://www.pwc.com/ph/en/publications/tourism-pwcphilippines/tourism-covid-19.html>, accessed on 11/5/2022.
- Rappler, (2017), *Koreans, Chinese are top PH tourists in first 10 months of 2017*, <https://www.rappler.com/business/191242-koreans-chinese-tourists-philippines-october-2017/>, accessed on 14/4/2022.
- The Chinese Embassy in the Philippines (2019), *the Chinese Embassy, and the China International Publishing Corporation (CIPG) inaugurated the China Book Center at the University of the Philippines*, http://ph.china-embassy.org/eng/zfgx/whhjy/201903/t20190319_1336172.htm, accessed April 5, 2022.
- Xinhua, (2020), *Chinese tourists spend more than 2.3 billion dollars in the Philippines in 2019*, https://www.chinadaily.com.cn.translate.google/a/202003/03/WS5e5daae4a31012821727bc4e.html?_x_tr_sl=en&_x_tr_tl=en&_x_tr_hl=en&_x_tr_pto=sc, accessed 6/4/2022.
- Xinhua (2021), *Chinese tourists spend more than \$2.3b in the Philippines in 2019*, <https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202003/03/WS5e5daae4a31012821727bc4e.html>, accessed on 20/4/2022.
- Xinhua (2021), *Philippines loses over 8 bln USD in tourism revenue in 2020*, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2021-02/03/c_139718244.htm, accessed on 10/4/2022.
- Xinhua (2022), *Philippine officials laud China for Beijing Winter Olympics' success*, <https://english.news.cn/20220222/8c24fbc27f54c9791211aefbbe4a251/c.html>, accessed May 13, 2022