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Mapping Workplace Inclusion in Hierarchical Collectivist Societies: A Causal Loop Diagram Approach

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Abstract: Workplace integration in hierarchical collectivist societies is shaped by structured social mechanisms rather than collectivist values alone. While collectivism is often assumed to foster inclusiveness, its structural manifestations regulate workplace inclusion through feedback loops of hierarchical loyalty, trust building, and kinship-based exclusivity. This study employs causal loop diagrams (CLDs) to conceptually map how cultural structures regulate workplace inclusion—not to assert empirical causality, but to illustrate the culturally grounded feedback loops in Indonesia and the Philippines. The findings identify the reinforcing loops that sustain hierarchical exclusivity in Indonesia and a counterbalancing loop that facilitates immediate kinship-based trust in the Philippines. By conceptualizing workplace inclusion as an emergent property of interdependent social mechanisms, this study highlights how structured exclusivity stabilizes hierarchical workplaces while limiting adaptability. Unlike frameworks that treat collectivism as a static cultural trait, CLDs provide a dynamic lens to analyze how workplace inclusion evolves through structured feedback loops—revealing how structured exclusivity in collectivist systems governs trust, inclusion, and legitimacy not through ideology alone, but through relational sponsorship, time-dependent trust, and group-based gatekeeping. These insights contribute to cross-cultural management and organizational studies by demonstrating how structured exclusion functions as a self-reinforcing mechanism. The findings have implications for multinational corporations, policymakers, and organizational leaders seeking to design adaptive strategies for workplace integration in hierarchical collectivist environments. While both countries are analyzed, Indonesia serves as the primary site of investigation, with the Philippines providing a contrast to illuminate structured exclusivity mechanisms in hierarchical collectivist contexts.

Keywords: causal loop diagrams; complex adaptive systems; workplace inclusion mechanisms; inclusive collectivism; exclusive collectivism

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Academic Editor: Maurice Yolles

Received: 25 March 2025
Revised: 18 April 2025
Accepted: 29 April 2025
Published: 4 May 2025

Citation: Tambun, T.; Yudoko, G.; Aldianto, L. Mapping Workplace Inclusion in Hierarchical Collectivist Societies: A Causal Loop Diagram Approach. *Systems* **2025**, *13*, 351. https://doi.org/10.3390/systems13050351

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1. Introduction

Collectivism is a defining characteristic of many Southeast Asian societies, which shapes social cohesion and group loyalty. Although both the Philippines and Indonesia share Austronesian roots [1], their collectivist values manifest differently. Filipino collectivism fosters immediate social belonging through kinship-based trust, whereas Indonesian collectivism follows a hierarchical structure where politeness is extended to outsiders, but deeper social integration requires prolonged structured trust building and status-based validation [2].

Yet, the dominant cultural models, such as Hofstede's collectivism index [3], do not differentiate between inclusive and exclusive collectivism, nor do they account for the

dynamic mechanisms that regulate workplace inclusion [4]. Most cross-cultural studies assume that collectivist cultures inherently facilitate integration [5], but empirical research suggests that trust formation, hierarchy, and relational openness create significant variations in inclusion processes [6–10]. Many corporations misinterpret collectivism as an automatic enabler of workforce integration, failing to recognize how structural gatekeeping mechanisms, status validation, and hierarchical exclusivity govern inclusion in Indonesian workplaces [2,5]. This gap necessitates a closer examination of how collectivist societies regulate inclusion through cultural mechanisms rather than collectivist values alone.

The insights presented here are especially relevant to leaders unfamiliar with how collectivism does not automatically lead to openness. Drawing on Parsons' Pattern Variables, we clarify how inclusion depends on who the individual is with, how long they have built relational trust, and whether their presence reinforces or threatens in-group stability.

This study applied a narrative literature review design within a pragmatist paradigm. The selection process involved identifying secondary academic sources that explain kinship-based and hierarchical inclusion mechanisms using established frameworks (Hofstede, Trompenaars, Parsons, Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck). These were analyzed thematically and translated into systemic representations using causal loop diagrams (CLDs). No primary data were collected. While PRISMA provides a rigorous framework for systematic reviews, this study adopted a narrative review design [11,12] to support conceptual modeling and theoretical synthesis. This choice reflects this study's aim to explore dynamic cultural mechanisms rather than to aggregate empirical findings.

Recent educational trends suggest that universities across Southeast Asia, especially in Indonesia and the Philippines, have increasingly championed System Dynamics modeling through entrepreneurial education initiatives. These institutions serve not only as training grounds for adaptive thinking but also as living systems that reflect hierarchical or kinship-based collectivism structures—making them fertile environments for applying CLDs for cultural analysis.

To ground this analysis, this study employed a narrative literature review within a pragmatist research paradigm, systematically comparing Filipino and Indonesian collectivism through established cultural frameworks that explain kinship-based inclusion, hierarchy, and workplace integration mechanisms. To ensure relevance and timeliness, newer literature was added from a curated research archive of over 1700 thematically coded sources.

Instead of relying solely on Hofstede's broad dimensions, this study integrated Trompenaars' cultural model, Parsons' Pattern Variables, and Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck's cultural orientations to analyze how collectivism manifests in different societal structures. Unlike positivist approaches that seek universal principles, a pragmatist perspective prioritizes context-specific explanations [13–15], providing a deeper understanding of how collectivist values interact with trust, hierarchy, and structured forms of inclusion.

By integrating its cultural analysis with causal loop diagrams (CLDs), this study provides a novel framework for understanding how collectivist mechanisms—not just collectivist values—govern workplace inclusion. If both Filipino and Indonesian societies emphasize collectivism, why do newcomers experience immediate acceptance in one but face restrictive conditions in the other? More importantly, how do cultural mechanisms—not just collectivist values—determine whether outsiders are integrated or excluded? Although collectivism is often assumed to encourage openness, this assumption overlooks the structured exclusivity of hierarchical collectivist cultures, where inclusion is mediated by structured trust building, status recognition, and institutionalized hierarchy.

From a practical perspective, this study offers critical insights for multinational firms, HR professionals, and policymakers seeking to navigate the complexities of workforce

inclusion in hierarchical collectivist societies. Understanding the systemic barriers to workplace integration is essential for designing effective organizational strategies that balance hierarchical stability with adaptive inclusion models.

2. Methodology

This study adopts a CLD approach combined with a narrative literature review to examine the feedback structures governing workplace inclusion in hierarchical collectivist cultures. By integrating the cultural analysis with systems modeling, it systematically compares Filipino and Indonesian collectivism through established frameworks that explain kinship-based inclusion, hierarchy, and structured trust building.

Using a systems-based comparative approach, this study models collectivist workplace inclusion as a dynamic process shaped by reinforcing and balancing feedback loops. The Filipino model enables immediate inclusion through kinship-based relational trust, whereas the Indonesian model relies on structured trust building and status validation. Rather than collecting primary data, it systematically analyzes existing cultural research, historical contexts, and cross-cultural management literature to construct a nuanced understanding of workplace inclusion mechanisms.

This study adopts a bounded narrative literature review [11,12] guided by a pragmatist philosophy that values contextual explanation over procedural replicability. The review does not aim to measure collectivism's empirical traits, but rather to synthesize theoretical mechanisms that explain how structured exclusivity governs inclusion in hierarchical collectivist societies.

The boundaries of this review are conceptually defined. Sources are selected based on their contribution to four intersecting themes: (1) hierarchical trust building and relational gatekeeping in Southeast Asian cultures [2,16]; (2) structured inclusion frameworks from cultural theorists, such as Parsons, Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck, Hofstede, and Trompenaars; (3) ritualized belonging and kinship logic in organizational systems; and (4) the applicability of System Dynamics and causal loop diagrams to represent social feedback structures [17].

Geographically, the scope focuses on Indonesia and the Philippines, while thematically the emphasis is on works that have explored social integration, identity negotiation, and cultural gatekeeping. This study includes literature from anthropology, organizational behavior, and systems modeling, spanning from Geertz's early ethnographies to recent systemic approaches in organizational studies up to 2023 (latest entries from the curated research archive of over 1700 thematically coded sources compiled during the lead author's thesis work). The result is a conceptual foundation that is used to build explanatory CLDs, not a catalog of collectivist traits.

Traditional sociocultural frameworks explain structural aspects of collectivism but do not capture the dynamic processes regulating workplace integration over time. To address this limitation, this study employs causal loop diagrams (CLDs) to analyze collectivist workplace inclusion as an evolving system [17,18]. Feedback loops are fundamental to System Dynamics, as they determine whether a system stabilizes, grows, or reinforces exclusionary patterns over time [17,19].

A System Dynamics approach is particularly suited for this study because it models how different cultural mechanisms interact dynamically rather than treating collectivism as a static characteristic. CLDs help visualize emergent properties of complex social systems, enabling a structured representation of reinforcing and balancing dynamics that shape workplace inclusion, allowing for a comparative analysis that moves beyond fixed cultural dimensions [20,21]. The CLD presented in this study models feedback structures of interpersonal and organizational integration within hierarchical collectivist societies. Its scope is limited to cultural trust-building dynamics—specifically, how individuals are

either integrated or experience delayed integration based on social sponsorship, status legibility, and relational conformity. The diagram does not extend to legal policy, economic access, or cross-sectoral diversity programs.

The research follows three methodological steps:

1. Modeling Cultural Inclusion Mechanisms—Synthesizes theoretical frameworks (Trompenaars, Parsons, and Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck) to define structural components of workplace inclusion in hierarchical collectivist cultures. In this conceptual model, Trompenaars is used to examine how trust and status are expressed and built in interpersonal relationships, especially through dimensions like Universalism vs. Particularism, Achievement vs. Ascription, and Neutral vs. Affective Communication. Parsons' Pattern Variables inform the social structure of inclusion/exclusion, offering dichotomies like Specific vs. Diffuse and Particularism vs. Universalism. Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck's ideas offer deeper cultural orientation lenses, such as the assumptions about time, human nature, and behavior regulation that guide inclusion.
2. Constructing Feedback Loop Models (CLDs)—identifies reinforcing and counterbalancing loops that regulate workplace integration using System Dynamics mapping techniques.
3. Comparative Analysis of Dynamic Inclusion Mechanisms—the CLDs are analyzed to determine how cultural mechanisms either accelerate or hinder expatriate inclusion in hierarchical collectivist societies.

By integrating System Dynamics with cultural analysis, this study offers a structured framework for modeling collectivist workplace inclusion as a dynamic system of reinforcing and balancing feedback loops. This approach moves beyond static cultural classifications, providing a systems-based understanding of how inclusion mechanisms evolve over time and under different social conditions.

3. Findings and Analysis: Diverging Applications of Collectivism

Although both the Philippines and Indonesia share Austronesian heritage [1,22], their collectivist values manifest differently. Empirical studies have indicated that collectivism is not a uniform construct, as its manifestations depend on relational openness, hierarchy, and trust formation [23]. Filipino collectivism is outward-facing, prioritizing relational openness and immediate inclusion through kinship-based social bonds [24]. Psychological research supports the idea that collectivist societies vary in their mechanisms of inclusion, with some prioritizing immediate relational bonding while others emphasize structured trust building [23]. Foreigners are seamlessly integrated into social circles through kinship terms, such as *Kuya* (older brother), *Ate* (older sister), *Tito* (uncle), and *Tita* (aunt), reinforcing belonging even in non-familial relationships [24,25]. This relational openness is further demonstrated in *pakikisama*—a cultural emphasis on social harmony—where hospitality extends beyond politeness, actively incorporating outsiders into daily interactions [24,26].

Additionally, hierarchy in Filipino collectivism is flexible, allowing personal relationships to override formal status distinctions, which facilitates rapid integration into both social and professional settings [24,27]. These dynamics align with Trompenaars' Universalism vs. Particularism, as Filipinos emphasize kinship-based inclusion over rigid societal rules [6] p. 20, [8,10]. Moreover, the Philippines' low Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI: 44) encourages spontaneity and social adaptability, reinforcing the culture's openness to new relationships [3].

By contrast, Indonesian collectivism is structured, hierarchical, and selective in its workplace inclusion. Unlike Filipinos, Indonesians restrict the use of kinship terminology strictly to biological family and trusted insiders, reinforcing social boundaries and limiting immediate access to outsider inclusion [2,22]. However, Hofstede's collectivism index does

not account for these variations, as it treats collectivism as a singular construct without distinguishing between immediate social absorption and structured exclusivity [4,28]. While politeness and hospitality are extended to newcomers, deep social integration follows a gradual process requiring sustained interaction and demonstrated reliability [16]. This structured trust-building mechanism aligns with Parsons' Specific vs. Diffuse relationships, as Indonesians separate their personal and professional interactions, ensuring that workplace inclusion follows a regulated trajectory rather than spontaneous relational engagement [7,9]. Additionally, the higher Hofstede's Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI: 48) for Indonesia reflects a preference for predictable, long-term relationship building rather than immediate kinship-based inclusion [3]. Yet, Hofstede's framework does not fully differentiate between collectivist cultures that prioritize immediate social belonging and those that regulate inclusion through hierarchical endorsement [4,28].

In Indonesia, full workplace integration follows a hierarchically regulated model, where foreign professionals may be welcomed on the surface but must navigate a structured approval process before gaining full inclusion [22,29].

These differences illustrate that collectivism does not inherently lead to inclusiveness but is shaped by cultural mechanisms regulating trust, status, and social hierarchy. Table 1 summarizes these key distinctions.

Table 1. Comparative summary: Filipino vs. Indonesian collectivism.

Dimension	Filipino Collectivism (83)	Indonesian Collectivism (95)	Theoretical Explanation
Openness to Foreigners	High—Foreigners are quickly treated as family [1,2]	Low—Foreigners must undergo a gradual trust-building process [3,4]	Hofstede's IDV (Collectivism)—Filipinos extend social belonging faster, while Indonesians prioritize in-group loyalty [5]
Kinship Terms	Extended to non-relatives (Kuya, Ate, Tito, Tita) [1,2,6]	Restricted to biological family & trusted insiders [3]	Trompenaars' Universalism vs. Particularism—Filipinos emphasize relational trust, Indonesians require formalized social bonds [7–9]
Hospitality	Highly active—Foreigners invited to meals, family events [1,10]	More passive—Hospitality shown through politeness, but deeper integration takes time [3,11]	Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck's Human Nature Orientation—Filipinos assume inherent goodness, Indonesians require proof of trustworthiness [12–14]
Social Hierarchy	Flexible—Personal connections override hierarchy [1,2]	Strict—Status dictates social inclusion [3,11]	Parsons' Specific vs. Diffuse Relationships—Filipinos allow overlap between personal & professional life, Indonesians maintain clear distinctions [15,16]
Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI)	Low (44)—Comfortable with social ambiguity [5]	Higher (48)—Prefers structured, predictable relationships [3]	Hofstede's UAI—Filipinos are more open to social spontaneity, whereas Indonesians prefer structured inclusion [5]

These findings refine the understanding of collectivism by demonstrating that workplace inclusion is not an automatic function of group orientation but is mediated by structured cultural mechanisms. Rather than assuming that collectivist societies inherently foster inclusiveness, these distinctions illustrate how power structures and relational frameworks shape integration. This structured differentiation can be further contextualized through key theoretical perspectives.

First, Hofstede's Power Distance Index (PDI) and Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI) clarify how collectivist values interact with authority structures and trust. The Philippines' relatively lower PDI allows relational connections to moderate hierarchical barriers, while Indonesia's high PDI reinforces a status-based system where professional inclusion is contingent on hierarchical endorsement. Additionally, Indonesia's higher UAI reflects a preference for structured, long-term relationship building, requiring predictability before integrating outsiders [3].

Second, Trompenaars' framework on interpersonal trust and Parsons' model of social structures explain why trust functions differently in each society. Filipino collectivism operates on relational familiarity, reducing the need for extensive vetting. In contrast, Indonesian collectivism follows a structured endorsement model, where acceptance into professional networks depends on structured trust building and senior validation rather than immediate competence [6–10]. These mechanisms influence how expatriates and returning professionals must navigate workplace hierarchies.

Lastly, Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck's worldview orientations provide a deeper lens into these patterns. While Filipino collectivism assumes goodwill and immediate relational bonding, Indonesian collectivism relies on a structured vetting process to regulate inclusion, ensuring that trust is built systematically rather than granted spontaneously [30–32].

4. Discussion

The assumption that collectivist societies naturally facilitate inclusiveness is challenged by Indonesia's structured model of social integration, where inclusion is mediated by hierarchy and an extended process of structured trust building rather than immediate acceptance [2,3,5,33]. While collectivism fosters strong in-group loyalty, workplace inclusion remains conditional on hierarchical validation and extended trust building, distinguishing it from more relationally open collectivist cultures [2,16]. In contrast to Filipino collectivism, where social bonds are established quickly through kinship-based familiarity and affective engagement [24,27], Indonesian workplaces impose status-based gatekeeping, requiring individuals to undergo structured vetting before gaining full inclusion [5,33].

4.1. Structural Barriers to Social and Professional Inclusion in Indonesia

Each of these mechanisms restricts immediate inclusion, making it difficult for foreign professionals, returning expatriates, and even Indonesians from different regional backgrounds to integrate smoothly.

First, the hierarchy dictates social and professional acceptance, meaning that new entrants must demonstrate deference to the existing structures before gaining legitimacy [2,16]. Unlike work cultures that emphasize competence and team-based relationship building, Indonesian workplaces require status recognition before granting newcomers access to leadership or decision-making roles [5,6,8,10]. The prevalence of the application of *Nrimo* (acceptance of hierarchy) and *Tata Krama* (formal etiquette), in addition to the adoption of *Gotong Royong* (community-driven collaboration) and *Musyawarah* (consensual decision-making) to ultimately achieve success, demonstrates that professional integration in Indonesia requires alignment with the existing cultural norms rather than direct disruption [29].

Second, structured trust building follows a structured, long-term process rather than immediate relational acceptance [10,33]. Unlike corporate environments that rely on team collaboration to establish trust, Indonesian workplaces require newcomers to demonstrate reliability over time, often delaying their meaningful participation in key decision-making processes [7,9]. This aligns with Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck's human nature orientation, which suggests that societies with structured trust mechanisms prioritize stability over spontaneous social bonds [30–32].

Third, professional access in Indonesia is granted through social endorsement rather than a meritocratic evaluation of skills and experience. Many returning expatriates struggle to reintegrate into Indonesian workplaces because their global experience does not automatically confer local credibility [3,6,8,10]. Unlike in systems where expertise and qualifications determine workplace legitimacy, Indonesian professionals must secure endorsements from influential figures before gaining full participation in decision-making networks [2].

4.2. Causal Mechanisms of Workplace Inclusion in Indonesia and the Philippines

Contrary to the assumptions that collectivist cultures inherently promote inclusiveness, our findings suggest that Indonesian collectivism enacts exclusivity through structural mechanisms of trust and in-group validation. Drawing on Parsons' Pattern Variables, we find that inclusion is governed not by individual performance or status (Achievement) but by ascriptive markers, such as relational sponsorship, seniority, and group compatibility. Social entry depends on who vouches for a newcomer, how long they have spent earning trust, and whether their presence aligns with the unspoken interests of the group or its informal leader. These dynamics mirror what Trompenaars described as Diffuseness and Particularism, where relationships shape system logic more than abstract principles. The causal loop diagrams make visible the feedback structure of this process—wherein premature inclusion is resisted (balancing loop) until sufficient status or relational capital is validated (reinforcing loop).

This study's causal loop diagram is anchored in three non-Hofstede frameworks to reveal how collectivism produces exclusivity. Trompenaars' framework helps clarify behavioral gatekeeping based on ascriptive logic and affective neutrality. Parsons' Pattern Variables expose the cultural assumptions about who qualifies for role entry, with inclusion governed by Specificity/Diffuseness and status legibility. Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck add ontological depth—explaining how assumptions about the time and trust sequence determine whether inclusion is extended proactively or only after hierarchical endorsement.

This theoretical triangulation directly informs the construction of the causal loop diagram (CLD) by assigning each framework a unique function (See Table 2). Trompenaars' interpersonal dimensions help define the reinforcing loop of "sponsor-required trust" and the balancing loops that resist outsider inclusion. Parsons' dichotomies shape how gatekeeping roles, legitimacy signaling, and relational vetting are structured in the model. Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck offer the ontological assumptions—particularly about time orientation and human nature—that explain the sequential inclusion patterns and the resistance to immediate adaptation. Each loop in the CLD is thus grounded in the cultural behaviors observed in Indonesia and contrasted with the more openly integrative Filipino norms.

Table 2. Conceptual mapping of cultural frameworks onto inclusion mechanisms.

Framework	Core Contribution	Applied Loop or Concept
Trompenaars	Ascription, Affective Neutrality, Particularism	Social Vetting, Sponsor Required
Parsons	Specific vs. Diffuse, Universalism vs. Particularism	Gatekeeping Role Entry, Legitimacy Structures
Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck	Time Orientation, Human Nature, Relational Assumptions	Trust Building Duration, Sequential Inclusion

The findings highlight that workplace inclusion in Indonesia is largely governed by hierarchical loyalty, whereas the Philippines adopts a kinship-driven approach. While both models have cultural and historical justifications, their implications for global workforce

integration are significant. Indonesia's strong hierarchical structures, while fostering stability, may slow the inclusion of foreign professionals, creating barriers to knowledge transfer and workplace integration [2,33]. This contrasts with the Philippines, where kinship-based collectivism facilitates a faster adoption of expatriates into professional networks [24,26].

This model complements prior frameworks, like the GLOBE and Hofstede's, by introducing CLDs as a dynamic modeling tool. Unlike fixed trait-based approaches, our method focuses on how social structures produce emergent inclusion outcomes—an angle aligned with Geertz's contextual anthropology and Trompenaars' affective cultures. While the GLOBE and Hofstede's frameworks provide valuable static comparisons of national cultures, our approach uses feedback structures to model how inclusion is gated, reinforced, or delayed over time through relational trust, sponsorship, and hierarchy-dependent norms.

A systemic comparison of Indonesia's and the Philippines' workplace integration mechanisms provides deeper insights into why hierarchical loyalty (R1) reinforces exclusivity, how gradual structured trust building (B1) moderates but does not eliminate barriers, and why kinship-based inclusion (B2) leads to immediate integration. These key intersecting variables, along with their role in shaping workplace inclusion, are detailed in Table 3. This comparative analysis demonstrates how R1 and B1 interact to create Indonesia's selective and slow expatriate inclusion model, while the Filipino B2 model bypasses hierarchy to facilitate workplace integration.

Table 3. Key intersecting variables across loops.

Variable	Loop R1 (Reinforcing: Hierarchical Exclusivity Trap)	Loop B1 (Balancing: Trust & Inclusion in Indonesian Workplaces)	Loop B2 (Balancing: Kinship-Based Inclusion–Filipino Model)
Hierarchical Loyalty	Core driver (Source) → Increases status-based acceptance	Inversely reduces trust in outsiders (−) → Slows inclusion	Not relevant (Filipino collectivism does not emphasize hierarchy)
Status-Based Acceptance	Key mechanism → Determines who is included/excluded	Limits trust formation, reinforcing exclusion	Not relevant (Filipino workplaces emphasize kinship, not status)
Trust in Outsider	Not a direct focus (trust is earned via status)	Critical link between hierarchy and inclusion (−)	Replaced by kinship-based trust in Filipino workplaces
Social Inclusion of Foreigners	Limited unless status is proven	Directly affected by trust in outsiders	Key driver of workplace integration in Filipino collectivism
Workplace Integration	Final outcome (Pool/Stock) → Low due to exclusivity	Gradual improvement as trust increases	Immediate in kinship-based inclusion (Filipino model)
Kinship-Based Inclusion	Not present	Not dominant but may coexist	Core driver (Source) of the Filipino model → Immediate inclusion

The introduction of automated CLD generation tools, such as the System Dynamics Bot, has significantly streamlined the modeling process, allowing for more precise causal analyses from textual data [34]. Additionally, CLDs have been successfully applied in diverse fields, including organizational security [35] and public health intervention modeling [36]. The adaptability of CLDs makes them an effective tool for dissecting Indonesia's structured workplace inclusion, particularly for understanding the interplay of hierarchical loyalty (R1), structured trust-building mechanisms (B1), and kinship-based inclusion (B2), as seen in Figure 1. The figure illustrates how hierarchical collectivist norms regulate workplace inclusion through reinforcing and balancing feedback loops. This diagram is

not empirical or predictive; it is a theoretical model derived from cultural frameworks to support conceptual sensemaking.

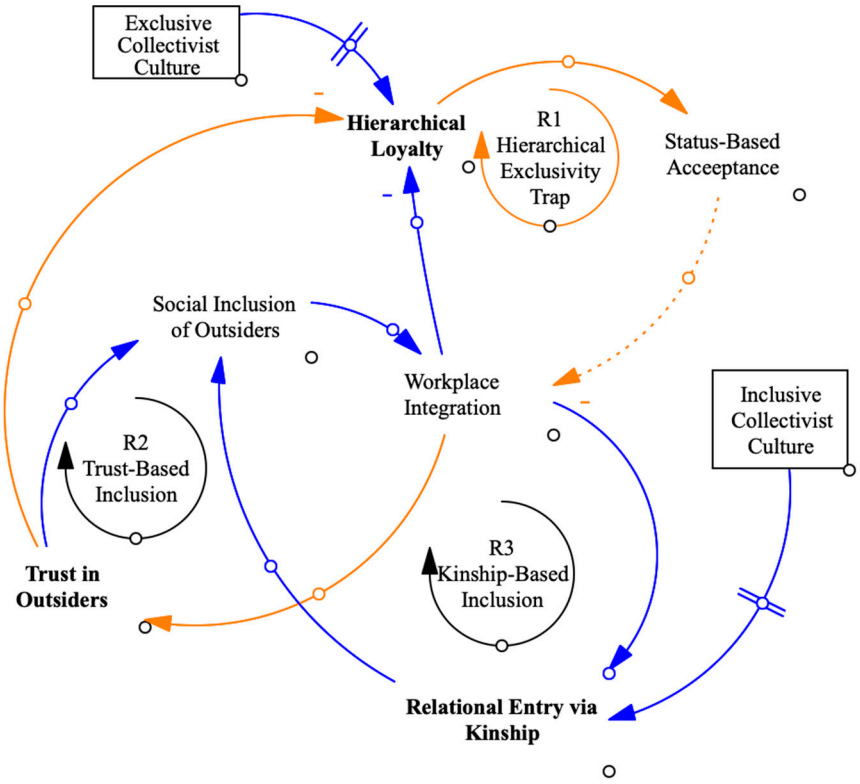


Figure 1. Conceptual causal loop diagram.

Indonesia's hierarchical exclusivity trap (R1) is rooted in a deeply embedded exclusive collectivist culture, where hierarchical loyalty is strongly reinforced over time. This high reliance on hierarchy means that workplace entry and social acceptance are determined by status-based validation rather than an openness to newcomers. The stronger the emphasis on hierarchical loyalty, the lower the trust in outsiders, as individuals outside established networks are perceived as potential disruptors to the structured order. This lower trust in outsiders further reinforces hierarchical loyalty, making status-based inclusion the dominant mechanism for workplace integration. As trust in outsiders erodes, social inclusion for individuals from different cultural backgrounds becomes increasingly restricted. It limits their workplace integration, as professionals continue to rely on status and hierarchy rather than competence or adaptability as the basis for acceptance. Over time, this cycle self-reinforces, ensuring that workplace inclusion remains tightly controlled, with little opportunity for structural change. The less trust in outsiders, the stronger hierarchical loyalty becomes, completing the reinforcing feedback loop that maintains exclusivity in professional and social spaces.

For foreign professionals or simply outsiders, navigating R1 requires adopting leadership strategies that emphasize status recognition, senior endorsements, and patience in relationship building [5,6,8,10,29,33,37]. Indonesia's high Power Distance Index (PDI) can facilitate the workplace adoption of newcomers under the right conditions, but with significant caveats. In a high-PDI culture, deference to authority is deeply ingrained, meaning that directives from senior leaders can override rigid inclusion barriers. If a high-ranking figure endorses a newcomer, lower-ranking employees may extend social and professional acceptance based on hierarchical alignment rather than personal familiarity. This can provide a strategic entry point for outsiders, enabling them to integrate more efficiently through top–down sponsorship. However, this form of inclusion remains conditional. An

endorsement from leadership does not necessarily translate to deeper social belonging, as hierarchical loyalty is distinct from relational trust. Even when a newcomer is formally accepted, they may still be regarded as an outsider unless they continuously demonstrate alignment with existing social norms and workplace etiquette. In this way, a high PDI provides an avenue for workplace inclusion but does not dismantle the underlying exclusivity trap—it merely circumvents it temporarily. True integration still requires navigating trust-building mechanisms, securing multiple layers of validation, and demonstrating long-term reliability within the hierarchical structure.

Trust-based inclusion (R2) reinforces workplace integration by increasing trust in outsiders. As trust grows, more outsiders are socially included, which in turn improves workplace integration. This expanded integration further strengthens trust in outsiders, creating a positive feedback loop. Unlike hierarchical exclusivity (R1), which reinforces exclusion, R2 fosters an expanding cycle of inclusion. However, while R2 promotes workplace openness, its effectiveness depends on long-term exposure and sustained interactions. Multinational firms operating in Indonesia should implement structured trust-building mechanisms, such as mentorship programs and long-term relationship management, to strengthen R2 and improve talent retention [38,39].

The kinship-based inclusion model (R3) operates by extending trust relationally, bypassing hierarchical gatekeeping and accelerating workplace integration. Unlike status-driven acceptance, this model fosters immediate inclusion by the forming of social bonds that do not require prolonged validation. As kinship-based trust expands, workplace integration strengthens without the constraints of hierarchical loyalty. Instead of requiring status validation, social bonds are immediately extended to outsiders, creating an inclusion mechanism that operates independently of hierarchical gatekeeping [24,25,27]. Multinational firms seeking to accelerate newcomer adaptation in Indonesia may attempt to incorporate elements of R3 by fostering informal relational ties and localized networking opportunities. However, the success of the R3 model depends on its cultural foundation, which originates from an inclusive collectivist culture. While this model is effective in the Philippines, where kinship-based inclusion is dominant [29,40], it is unlikely to be seamlessly integrated into Indonesia's workplace dynamics, which are predominantly shaped by an exclusive collectivist culture. Given Indonesia's deeply embedded hierarchical structures, efforts to introduce kinship-based inclusion may face significant resistance. Any attempts to foster a more inclusive approach must navigate and align with Indonesia's structured social norms rather than expecting a direct transfer of Filipino-style relational openness.

Indonesia remains locked in R1's reinforcing cycle of exclusivity due to the dominant role of hierarchical loyalty, creating challenges for multinational organizations as expatriates must navigate a slow, status-driven adoption process. Strengthening B1 (structured trust-building mechanisms) is critical to counterbalance R1's entrenched exclusivity and mitigate its slow-moving nature. Without an external disruption, the system will remain stagnant, limiting workforce integration. By contrast, the Filipino model (B2) bypasses both R1 and B1, enabling immediate inclusion through kinship-based trust. This directly disrupts the exclusionary loop of R1, fostering a more open and adaptive workforce system. Recognizing these systemic loops is essential for understanding how structured exclusivity shapes professional access and leadership adaptation in hierarchical collectivist environments.

Those who approach leadership through status-based legitimacy and relational alignment rather than direct authority assertion will be more successful in gaining long-term influence [2,5,6,8,10,16,38].

5. Conclusions

This study challenges the assumption that collectivism inherently fosters inclusiveness, demonstrating that exclusion and inclusion are not static cultural traits, but dynamically regulated processes. The findings reveal that Indonesian workplace integration follows a hierarchically structured validation process, while the Filipino model facilitates immediate kinship-based inclusion. Filipino collectivism (B2) operates through kinship-driven trust, enabling expatriates to integrate seamlessly. In contrast, Indonesian collectivism is governed by hierarchical loyalty (R1) and gradual structured trust building (B1), requiring prolonged endorsement before full inclusion is granted.

The CLD clarifies why collectivist values alone do not dictate inclusiveness. Instead, workplace integration is regulated by structured feedback mechanisms that reinforce exclusivity unless balancing forces intervene. In Indonesia, R1 sustains workplace exclusivity by prioritizing hierarchical approval over competence. While B1 provides a pathway for gradual inclusion, it does not override the constraints of R1. The Filipino model (B2) accelerates workplace inclusion by emphasizing kinship-based relational bonds, reducing the need for formal hierarchical endorsement.

From a managerial perspective, multinational firms must align their onboarding strategies with Indonesia's structured trust-building mechanisms. For policymakers, fostering a more open talent market requires addressing the systemic barriers embedded within structured exclusivity. A hybrid approach—combining hierarchical trust building with relational inclusiveness—may prove effective. Institutions could leverage kinship-like cultural rituals (B2), such as meal sharing, language familiarity, or peer endorsement, to accelerate adaptation without violating cultural norms.

This study's primary contribution lies in its integration of cultural frameworks with System Dynamics modeling to map the inclusion mechanisms of hierarchical collectivist societies. It offers a conceptual representation of cultural trust gating and relational inclusion logics using a causal loop diagrams (CLD). However, this study is limited by its narrative and theoretical nature. It does not validate the diagram empirically, nor does it provide a statistical generalization. The CLD is not based on field data or a simulation, and its scope excludes legal, institutional, and economic mechanisms of inclusion.

Future research should transition from conceptual modeling to empirical validation by incorporating Behavior Over Time (BOT) graphs, stock-and-flow formalization, and scenario simulation. These efforts could be enriched by Group Model Building (GMB) or participatory systems mapping with organizational stakeholders in hierarchical collectivist settings. Such approaches would strengthen and refine the causal structures proposed here, and support their practical application in HR policy, intercultural onboarding, and inclusion strategies.

In addition, future research may extend System Dynamics methodologies beyond corporate environments to explore inclusion mechanisms in political, academic, and entrepreneurial settings. Analyzing how reinforcing and balancing feedback loops shape institutional inclusiveness could offer valuable insights for policy design, cross-cultural workforce management, and economic integration strategies. Recognizing that structured exclusivity—not collectivism itself—regulates inclusion is essential for businesses, policymakers, and professionals navigating Indonesia's complex cultural framework.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, T.T.; methodology, G.Y.; validation, T.T., G.Y. and L.A.; formal analysis, T.T., G.Y. and L.A.; investigation, T.T., G.Y. and L.A.; resources, T.T., G.Y. and L.A.; data curation, T.T., G.Y. and L.A.; writing—original draft preparation, T.T.; writing—review and editing, T.T.; visualization, T.T.; supervision, G.Y. and L.A.; project administration, T.T. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Data Availability Statement: No new data were generated or analyzed in this study. This study is based on a conceptual literature review and System Dynamics modeling, with all the relevant sources cited in the reference section.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflicts of interest. The funders had no role in the design of this study; in the collection, analyses, or interpretation of the data; in the writing of the manuscript; or in the decision to publish the results.

Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used in this manuscript:

CLD	Causal Loop Diagram
UAI	Uncertainty Avoidance Index
PDI	Power Distance Index

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