

Full Length Research Paper

Confucius, Confucian Values and their Applications on Marketing-The Brunei Perspective

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In this article, the practitioners/academicians examine the impact of Confucian values on marketing in South East Asia, more so, in the Brunei Darussalam context. Using Chinese sayings and proverbs, the authors present and interpret Confucian values derived from the sagely wisdom of Confucius. From Confucius comes the emphasis on filial piety which is linked to positive, harmonious relationships as well as to the value of quality service and service excellence that bring many benefits to business prosperity including Confucian marketing. The practice of Confucian teachings can bring much peace, learning, and growth for business sustainability.

Keywords: Marketing, Confucian Values, filial piety, benevolence/ humanness.

INTRODUCTION

Marketing is an important aspect of the business. Kotler defines marketing as the social process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating and exchanging products and value with others. This definition describes the process of marketing including exchange of products and value. Similarly, the Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM) defines marketing as the management process that identifies, anticipates and satisfies customer requirements profitably. (CIM, 2009). In this definition, customer's satisfaction and corporation's profitability are emphasized. Agreeably, in order to sell well, one should know how to market one's product that cater for the customers' needs and preferences, and also serve the customers satisfactorily.

Low's study (2010, pp. 14) pointed out that in strategic leadership, Chinese who claim themselves the descendants of the dragon, 龙的传人, *hanyu pinyin*: *lóng de chuán rén*, embrace long-termism; the term means long term thinking, being patient and applying foresight for business longevity. Interestingly, effective marketing

requires leaders who have vision and long-term planning that grows their corporations' strengths and success.

It can also be said that understanding the size of the market and the economy of the country are also important for the success of one's business. Take, for example, according to CIA world Factbook 2011, the People's Republic of China (PRC), a big country, is ranked as the world's second largest economy after the United States. It has been the world's fastest-growing major economy, with consistent growth rates of around 10 percent over the past 30 years. China is also the largest exporter and second largest importer of goods in the world. It has GDP (purchasing power parity) of 10.09 trillion (country comparison to the world is 3).

On the other hand, Singapore, a small country, has a highly developed and successful free-market economy. It enjoys a remarkably open and corruption-free environment, stable prices, and a per capita GDP higher than that of most developed countries. It has GDP (purchasing power parity) of USD 291.1 billion (country comparison to the world is 41). Its real growth rate is 14.5 percent. In comparison, Brunei has a smaller market than Singapore. The country's GDP (purchasing power parity) is USD 20.38 billion (country comparison to the world is 123). The real growth rate is 4.1 percent. In

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this respect, Singapore has a GDP (purchasing power parity) which is 14 times higher than Brunei and a real growth rate which is about 3.5 times higher.

Paper's Aim And Objectives

A Chinese saying has it that, "customers are jade; merchandise is grass." In business, customers are important for our corporate existence and sustainability. More customers buying our products (goods or services) mean that our business will flourish and grow. Therefore, we should value our customers and attract them to purchase our products by good marketing strategies. In this paper, marketing is examined through the Confucian visor, and it is intended to highlight several key concepts of Confucianism that promote marketing and service excellence. The academicians/ researchers examine the applications of Confucian values in marketing in South East Asia, more so, in the Brunei Darussalam context.

Chinese Bruneians

Historically, Chinese Bruneians are immigrants of South East Asia and they are the Overseas Chinese. Either they themselves or their ancestors have migrated from the impoverished villages to come to other countries such as Brunei Darussalam; searching for greener pastures to make a living and to survive. Most Chinese Bruneians are in the line of business and trade; this is similar to what Low's study (2009) has said that most Overseas Chinese in South East Asia have established themselves in trade, commerce and finance. In Brunei, some of them work for the Brunei government and others work for private companies and firms. Most Chinese Bruneians carry responsibilities and burden to look after the well being of their families and relatives. They brought along the Confucian teachings which were taught to them in their villages. These Confucian teachings are built on values such as filial piety, benevolence/humanness and rites. It is true that a person's values or key beliefs would make or motivate him or her to act accordingly. Understanding where they came from and their key values, one can say that Chinese Bruneians are more susceptible or prone to making money for their families and sometimes supporting families/relatives living in the villages where they came from. Furthermore, those who are business owners or working for the private companies are more prone to money-making because they don't usually depend on the government support system to help them. Chinese Bruneians who are permanent residents can not register and own businesses in Brunei, hence they can work only for the company. They would very much depend on their hard work to make and save money. For the business owners, some of them may need their close families/relatives/friends to help them initially to start up

the business. When their businesses pick up, they expect to sail smoothly on their own. They would pay off their debts (what they have incurred at the beginning) only when they make some profit at a later date. Some of the Chinese Bruneians are easily moved by money but not all. Those who are educated especially those who are influenced by Confucian teachings would not be easily moved by money. They would strived for the success of their businesses based on Confucian values.

Brunei Marketing

Brunei's revenues are very much dependent on the exports of crude oil and natural gas which account for more than ninety percent of all its exports. This means that most of things that Bruneians need and use are imported overseas. Take, for example, much of the food consumption, including almost 99 percent of the staple rice, are imported from outside the country. Consequently, Brunei marketing of imported goods is of a competitive nature and promotions in Brunei are most frequently sales and discounts. (Freeman and Low, 2011, pp. 35). Purchasing of goods in big quantities (in bulk) with lower prices would surely win the competition for more customers and drive the small market competitors out of away. Bruneians also travel a lot during weekend and school holidays to neighbouring ASEAN: Association of South East Asian Nations countries such as East Malaysia (Miri, Limbang, Kota Kinabalu, and Kuching), West Malaysia (Kuala Lumpur, Malacca and Penang), Indonesia Kalimantan and Singapore to have leisure time and holidays with their families as well as buying products and services that are cheaper than or not available in Brunei Darussalam.

Literature Review

For this marketing research, it is important to note that many studies have shown that Confucian values influenced Overseas Chinese on their motivations and livelihood. Various literatures and books written on key values that motivate Overseas Chinese are researchers such as de Bary, Chan and Watson, (1960), Chia (1980:26-27), Clammer (1980), Song (1923, 1984), Wu (1977:48), Redding (1990), Lien Kraar (1994:57), Thin (1997:13), Owyang (1998:130), Lien Kraar (1994:110), Sim (1950:4), (Loh and Lee (1998:14), (Long,1999:2) and Min Chen (1995:81).

Together with these researchers, Low (2002, 2006, 2007 and 2009) and Hussin (1996) have also shown that the Overseas Chinese leadership and management ways of running their businesses are very much influenced by Confucian values.

These values are tabulated as shown in Table-1:

Table1. Some core values identified as motivating Overseas Chinese

Category	Values	References
Confucian values	Benevolence (仁)/Humanism	de Bary, Chan and Watson, (1960) , Low (2006, 2009)
	Loving, Affectionate, Compassionate and Tender	
	Teamwork and Team Spirit	Lien Kraar (1994:110), Sim (1950:4), (Loh and Lee (1998:14), (Long,1999:2)
	Sense of Unity, Sharing, Brotherhood and Relationship. Accumulate wealth and contribution to society	
	Filial Piety	Chia (1980:26-27), Clammer (1980), Song (1923, 1984), Low (2002, 2006)
	Dutiful, Respectful, “Bonds bound families” and Respect Elder	(Griggs, 1994: 19), Low (2009a)
	Junzi (gentleman/lady)	
Character, Integrity and Justice. Leads with example and integrity		
Resilience	Wu (1977:48), Redding (1990), Lien Kraar	
Self-Discipline, Self- Reliance, Self-Sufficient, Hard working/Achievement, and Thrifty	(1994:57), Thin (1997:13) Owyang (1998:130), Low (2006, 2007)	
Working-Hard	Min Chen (1995:81)	
Initial hardships of migration cultivated values of survival		

The Concept of MIB (Malay Islam Beraja) And Confucian Values: Their Influences On Brunei Marketing

For centuries, Brunei Darussalam has been an Islamic Sultanate. The concept of Melayu Islam Beraja (Malay Muslim Monarchy, MIB) is a national ideology for the citizens to embrace the long history of monarchy, Brunei Malay culture, and Islamic values. Low (2008) in his paper remarked that Brunei Darussalam, similar to “several other countries in Asia such as India, Kazakhstan, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore, their leaders and governments practise a benevolent type of leadership, the father leadership style”. Low further clarified that the term ‘father leadership’ in this context refers to “both male and female leadership, and more so, it reflects paternal or maternal leadership”. Most importantly, it raised an important belief or key value that people should be treated like the leader’s family members (Low and Mohd Zain, 2008). This virtuous value of nurturing “all-in-the-family” feeling was also echoed in several literatures. (Low and Mohd Zain, 2008, Low and Tabyldy, 2007; Low, 2007a; Low, 2006a; Low, 2005). Furthermore, the Malay proverb “Awar Galat” which is uniquely Bruneian when directly translated means “humble and respectful”. The saying specifically applies to the younger generation who should have a strong reverence for the elderly. In Brunei, a family unit normally consists of grandparents, parents and grandchildren and so far, the laws in the Sultanate do not permit the establishment of nursing homes for Muslim

seniors. Care of the Muslim elderlies has always been entrusted to their children or close relatives. The currently available nursing home in Kuala Belait District is only meant for the non-Muslim elderlies. In this respect, His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanah Bolkuah Mu’izzaddin Waddaulah’s (the 29th ruler of the sole surviving ancient Malay kingdom in South-east Asia) leadership based on the national philosophy of *Melayu Islam Beraja* (Malay, Muslim and Monarchy) can, in some ways, exemplified father leadership in action. Figure 1 depicts the father leadership style of the Sultan and a summary of his leadership characteristics is derived from Low’s study (2008). Interestingly, the father leadership (or the concept of MIB) shares some similar characteristics with the Confucian leadership (Values). Table 2 shows the similarities of the key values such as respecting talent, sense of unity, charitable and giving, loving-kindness, filial piety, sincerity and integrity and virtue ethics are significant in both styles of leadership.

Data from two literatures:

- 1) Low, K. C. P. (2008). ‘Father Leadership with Special Reference to Negara Brunei Darussalam’, *E-Leader, Chinese American Scholars Association: CASA Conference*, Krakow, Poland. 9 – 11 June 2008.
- 2) Low, K. C. P. and Ang, S. L. (2011). ‘Confucian Ethics And the Stakeholder Theory In Business’, *i-manager’s Journal on Management*, Volume 5, No.4, March-May 2011.

In sum, there are no significant discrepancies of influence or conflict of interest between the concept of MIB and the Confucian values on Brunei marketing. In this respect,



Figure 1. Characteristics of Father Leadership
 Low, K. C. P. (2008). 'Father Leadership with Special Reference to Negara Brunei Darussalam', E-Leader, Chinese American Scholars Association: CASA Conference, Krakow, Poland. 9 – 11 June 2008.

Table 2. The Similarities between Father Leadership and Confucian Leadership.

Values	Father Leadership (MIB)	Confucian Leadership
Respecting Talent	Expert and Knowledgeable	Continuous Learning; Talent Management
Sense Of Unity	Treating People Like The Leader's Family Members;	Teamwork and Team Spirit; Unity; Peace
Charitable and Giving	Nurturing "All In Family" Feeling Fatherly, The Provider, Caring And Showing Concern For The Welfare And Wellbeing Of The People	Contribution To The Society; Caring For The Environment;
Loving-Kindness	Gentle and Nurturing; Showing Empathy And Being Considerate To Others	Benevolence; Resilience, Patience; Prudence
Filial Piety	Respecting Elders; Obedience To Parents And Loyal To The Nation	Filial Piety; Good Governance
Sincerity and Integrity	Personal Commitment In Taking Responsibility	Personal Commitment In Taking Responsibility; Sincerity and Integrity
Virtue Ethics	Stressing On And Practicing Islamic Virtue	Stressing On And Practicing Virtue; Ethics

the application of Confucian values on Bruneian marketing is valid.

Family Values/ Sense of Togetherness And /Or Unity

Family values are political and social beliefs that hold the nuclear family to be the essential ethical and moral unit of society.

In Confucianism, family values, familial relationships, ancestor worship, and filial piety (孝; *Hanyu pinyin: Xiào*) are the primary basis of the philosophical system, and these concepts are seen as virtues to be cultivated.

Traditionally, most Bruneians have close-knit family ties

and they often stay together under one roof. Bruneians have strong family values; sense of togetherness and unity. Filial piety is practised; members of the family, living together, help each other, and this is common in Brunei. In general terms, being filial refers to the duties, feelings, respect or relationships which exist between a son or daughter and his or her parents. Piety is a strong religious belief, or behaviour that is religious or morally correct. Originating with Confucianism which was significantly practiced in China, filial piety or respect is an essential element of Chinese culture. Filial piety is not a religious concept in the Chinese culture, but it has formed an acceptable part of the way the Chinese relate to their parents and ancestors, or elders.

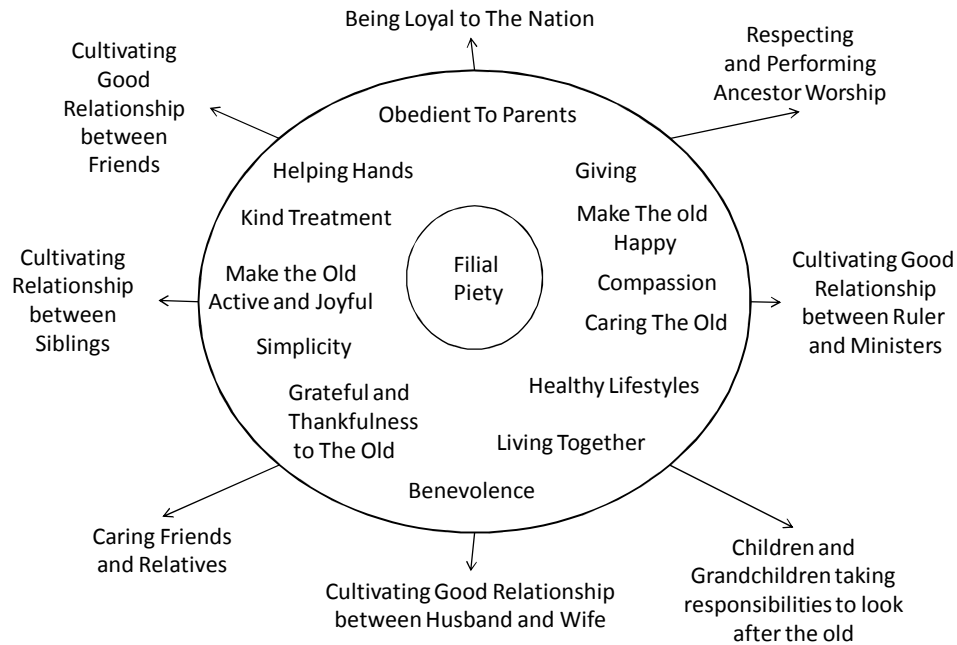


Figure 2. Filial Piety and The Positive Social Relationship

Basically, filial piety is one of the correct relationships for which Confucius advocated. *Zi You* (a disciple of Confucius) asked about being filial and Confucius said, "Nowadays, one is called a filial son only because one is able to support one's parents. Actually, even dogs and horses are no less able to do this. If one does not treat one's parents with reverent respect, what is then the difference between him and animals?" (*Analects of Confucius*, II : 7). Filial piety includes each person's responsibility to respect their parents, obey them, take care of them as they age; each person also advises one's parents, and to overall takes care of them and loves them. Loving one's parents and offering them respect is the starting point from which other forms of filial piety flows. A relationship with one's parents must be based on love and respect. The practice of filial piety starts at home with the son doing and practising loving kindness and respect to the elders. This good behaviour would then apply and extend to the community at large. There are four other relationships, which Confucius expounded, that are of importance and if we do them right, then it is believed that the society we live in would be peace and social harmony. They are namely: 1) The relationships between ruler and the ministers; 2) the relationship between husband and wife; 3) the relationship between siblings 4) the relationship between friends. This concept of filial piety is also expanded to apply to obedience of subject to ruler, wife to husband, younger brother to elder brother. (Palmer, 1986). "*Awar Galat*": This Malay proverb which is uniquely Bruneian when directly translated means, 'humble and respectful'. The saying specifically applies to the younger generation who should have a strong

reverence for the elderly. In Brunei, a family unit normally consists of grandparents, parents and grandchildren and so far, the laws in the Sultanate do not permit the establishment of nursing homes for Muslim seniors. Care of the Muslim elderlies has always been entrusted to their children or close relatives. The currently available nursing home in Kuala Belait District is only meant for the non-Muslim elderlies.

There is a Chinese saying that goes, "百事孝为先" *Hanyu Pinyin*: *bǎi shì xiào wéi xiān* meaning amongst all things, filial piety is the utmost virtue. All the positive relationship to attain peace and harmony in a society should start with the practice of filial piety or respect at home.

Figure 2 shows the influence of filial piety on the stability of social relationship.

Successful marketing requires positive social relationship. Without consumers/customers, firms cannot survive, so it is vital that they are satisfied when making purchases, so that they continue to support the firm. Thus, it is important that customer satisfaction is achieved. When consumers/customers are treated with respect and they are explained politely about the benefits of the products/services one sells/serves and they positively like/want them, the market will successfully grow and flourish. Confucian marketing involves good relationship between producer/supplier/service provider and the consumer/client. (Freeman, 2009, pp. 28). Furthermore, respecting stakeholders' opinions is important because stakeholders play a crucial role in influencing the producer/supplier that impact upon the products/services. One can conclude that communication and positive social

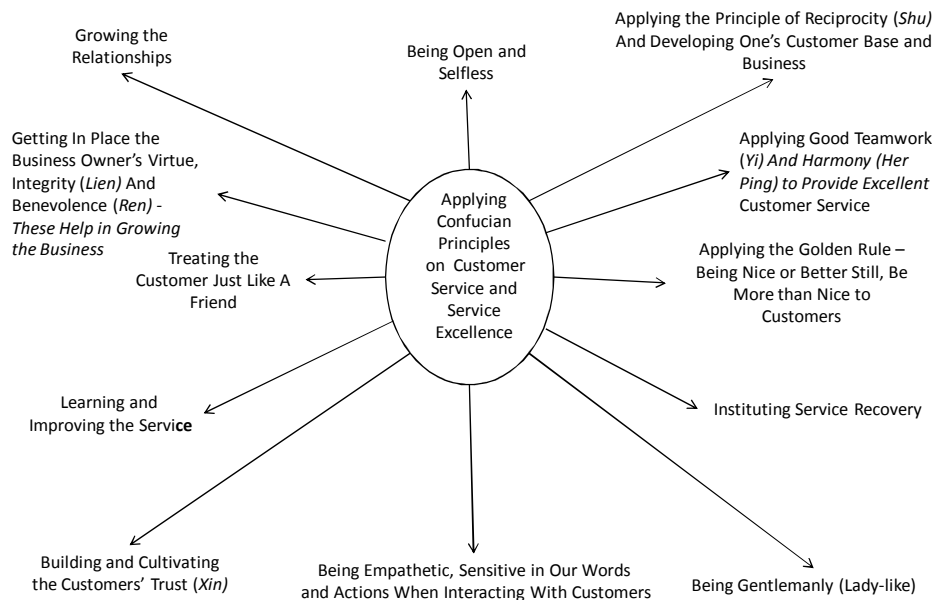


Figure.3 Applying Confucian Principles on Customer Service and Service Excellence
 Low, K. C. P. (2010 a). 'Confucius, Customer Service And Service Excellence', Conflict resolution and negotiation, volume 2010 issue 4, pp. 53 – 61

relation would not exist without filial piety or respect. Low and Ang (2011, pp. 9) pointed out that "...Business cannot avoid communication but has to enter into dialogue, do something, and engage with its stakeholders – market or non-market – in an ongoing responsive relationship."

The Value of Planning

A successful company needs to plan various marketing and promotional strategies. In this connection, Confucius has these to say: "Good preparation secures success. Poor preparation leads to failure." (Zhou, 2005: 184); "A craftsman must prepare his tools beforehand in order to do well." (Zhou, 2005: 186). Furthermore, Confucius was in favour of long term planning and he remarked, "Worries will soon appear if one gives no thought to a long-term plan." (*Analects of Confucius*, XV: 12). In successful marketing, one requires good preparation for sale and a long-term strategic plan for selling the products or providing services. This means that one requires to know the size and number of customers' preference and requirement; the strategic position to market of the products and the competing price of the products.

Value of Experience and Exposure (Value of Self-cultivation and Growth)

This can be interpreted in the entrepreneurial sense of risk taking whereby a person takes risks or enters into

business while growing him(her)self. This value can thus be logically seen as being associated more with and in line with the traditional Confucian value of self-cultivation and personal growth. For Confucius, the stress is on being critical and analytical of other people's opinions about oneself; and from there, improving oneself by correcting one's mistake. He remarked, "Is it possible not to listen to correct opinions? But they are only of value if you correct your mistakes after listening. Is it possible not to be pleased when you hear amenable words? But they are only of value if you can analyse them correctly." (*Analects of Confucius*, IX: 24).

Value of Service/ servant Leadership

Low (2010a) highlighted that, when interacting with or serving customers, one should apply and practise the Golden Rule and several key concepts of Confucianism. This includes that an individual is to be polite and sensitive in his or her words and actions so that the customers are always satisfy with his or her service. To do so, one should be selfless and empathetic to customers' needs and in this way one promotes service excellence. When one is in touch with the customers, respects them and satisfy their needs either in selling goods or providing services, this would enhance the company's good reputation for quality goods and services. In this regard, one can apply Confucian values in doing business to survive, if not to thrive, especially in today's economically competitive modern world. Figure 3 illustrates the key concepts of Confucian principles in the betterment of serving customers and service excellence.

Table 3. The Interviewees' Responses On Confucian Values Contributing to the Marketing Strategies and Ways

Responses	Number of Interviewees	Percentage of Interviewees
<p>Quality Service And Service Excellence “In running my business, yes. I want to make sure that we deliver quality and up to standard products for the customer needs.”; “Quality cannot be compromised and it is non-negotiable. I am very strict on this.”; “I always make sure that we deliver what we promise”; “I want to give quality products to my customers”; “Yes, quality service is important for customer satisfaction and business reputation”.</p>	143	94.7
<p>Family Values and Retailing Techniques “I own a supermarket based on the concept of one-stop shop and family needs”; “My shop sells disposable diapers for the young and for the adult. This is for the convenience of my customers who either have new born baby or sickly adult at home to look after.”; “My restaurant is equipped with big round tables for functions like birthday parties, wedding banquet and clans/associations anniversary and festivals”; “For my shop, I always estimate and order enough goods to sell especially during peak time or seasons festival such as Hari Raya, Chinese New Year and Christmas”; “My furniture shop sells best during festival seasons such as Hari Raya and Chinese New Year.”</p>	138	91.3
<p>The Value of Peace And Harmony “I must thank His Majesty and His Government for making Brunei a stable and peaceful country to do business”; “I am grateful to Brunei because the country allows Chinese Bruneian to do business in a peaceful and harmonious environment.”; “Brunei is a peaceful country so business should flourish if you know how to market your products.”</p>	125	82.7
<p>The Value of Entrepreneurship “I always want to be my own boss and I want to have freedom to adopt my own approach to work”; “I want to build something for my own family that is why I become an entrepreneur”; “I want to make an idea or innovation happens”; “I want to be like Steve Job, an innovative entrepreneur and make a lot of money for my family”; “my parents, family members and successful businessperson have shaped my view on entrepreneurship, today I become one”; “when I was young, I have an ambition of making a lot of money to help the poor to alleviate poverty for the society, that’s why I become an entrepreneur.”</p>	110	72.8
<p>The Value of Sustainability “Although I am already well past 60 years of age, I am still finding time to do this business and to meet people”; “I don’t know what to do about my life if I don’t continue to do what I am good at.”; “I feel happy when I do business and keep in touch with people”; “I will continue to do what I like until I can not do it any more.”</p>	86	57

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Currently, no study has been made on the marketing of Confucian values in this country; hence this research fills the gap. The study was carried out by interviewing one hundred and fifty-one (151) in the four districts of Brunei Darussalam namely Bandar Seri Begawan, Tutong, Kuala Belait and Seria. The method used in this research is the qualitative research method (interviewing), and the researchers adopted a semi-structure form of interview (RWJF, 2011). A semi-structured interview is a method of research commonly used in the social sciences. A structured interview would have a formalized, limited set of questions, however, for this study; the researchers preferred a semi-structured one because the method enabled flexibility, allowing new questions to be brought up during the interviews as a result of what the interviewees said. The interviewer in a semi-structured interview generally has a framework of themes to be explored. In this case, the framework of themes is the marketing of Confucian values. This method helped the authors to have a deeper understanding of the interviewees' thinking and perceived values. (Low, 2009, pp.124 – 134). The researchers also applied and moved from open-ended questions to closed questions, adopting what Festinger and Kartz (1996) call the funnel approach (cited in Low, 2009, pp.160). This gives the interviewees opportunity to freely express themselves in the beginning and slowly moving towards specific topics at the later stage of the interview. The interview questions were carefully worded as follows:

- 1) What do you need to know when you want to do the marketing of a product?
- 2) Do you think that family values and retailing techniques are important in marketing?
- 3) What do you mean when you say quality service and service excellence?
- 4) What is the favourable environment or strategic position in marketing?
- 5) What is your opinion on entrepreneurship?
- 6) When are you planning to retire?
- 7)

FINDINGS

One hundred and forty-three interviewees or 94.7 percent emphasized on 'Quality Service and Service Excellence' in marketing and remarked that "In running my business, yes. I want to make sure that we deliver quality and up to standard products for the customer needs."; "Quality cannot be compromised and it is non-negotiable. I am very strict on this."; "I always make sure that we deliver

what we promise"; "I want to give quality products to my customers" and "Yes, quality service is important for customer satisfaction and business reputation".

One hundred and thirty-eight interviewees or 91.3 percent stressed on 'Family Values and Retailing Techniques' in marketing and said that "I own a supermarket based on the concept of one-stop shop and family needs"; "My shop sells disposable diapers for the young and for the adult. This is for the convenience of my customers who either have new born baby or sickly adult at home to look after."; "My restaurant is equipped with big round tables for functions like birthday parties, wedding banquet and clans/associations anniversary and festivals"; "For my shop, I always estimate and order enough goods to sell especially during peak time or seasons festival such as Hari Raya, Chinese New Year and Christmas" and "My furniture shop sells best during festival seasons such as Hari Raya and Chinese New Year."

One hundred and twenty-five interviewees or 82.7 percent expressed that a stable, peaceful and harmonious society is essential to do business and remarked that "I must thank His Majesty and His Government for making Brunei a stable and peaceful country to do business"; "I am grateful to Brunei because the country allows Chinese Bruneian to do business in a peaceful and harmonious environment." and "Brunei is a peaceful country so business should flourish if you know how to market your products."

On the issue of Chinese Bruneian entrepreneurship, one hundred and ten respondents said that "I always want to be my own boss and I want to have freedom to adopt my own approach to work"; "I want to build something for my own family that is why I become an entrepreneur"; "I want to make an idea or innovation happens"; "I want to be like Steve Job, an innovative entrepreneur and make a lot of money for my family"; "my parents, family members and successful businessperson have shaped my view on entrepreneurship, today I become one" and "when I was young, I have an ambition of making a lot of money to help the poor to alleviate poverty for the society, that's why I become an entrepreneur."

One hundred and eight-six interviewees or 57 percent observed that "Although I am already well past 60 years of age, I am still finding time to do some work and to meet people"; "I don't know what to do about my life if I don't continue to do what I am good at."; "I feel happy when I do business and keep in touch with people" and "I will continue to do what I like until I cannot do it anymore."

Table-3 summarises the Interviewees' responses on Confucian values contributing to the marketing strategies

and ways.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Quality Service and Service Excellence

Quality service is the performance of one's service that meets customer's need and satisfaction. Generally, when a customer requests for a service, (s)he expects that the service is being provided, realised, delivered or consumed by the customer in a satisfactory manner. Service excellence would enable a company to stay focus on quality to meet customer's needs and at the same time remaining economically competitive in the market place. In this regard, Confucius said, “君子喻于义，小人喻于利。 *Hanyu pinyin: jūnzǐ yù yú yì, xiǎo rén yù yú lì*” meaning “*Jūnzǐ* (Gentleman or lady) sees righteousness, petty man sees profit or gain.” Applying this into business, it is important to perform service in the right manner for the customer's needs and satisfaction, and not just merely seeking for short term profit or gain.

In this study, one hundred and forty-three interviewees or 94.7 percent emphasized on 'Quality Service and Service Excellence' in marketing and some remarked that “In running my business, yes. I want to make sure that we deliver quality and up to standard products for the customer needs.”; “Quality cannot be compromised and it is non-negotiable. I am very strict on this.”; “I always make sure that we deliver what we promise”; “I want to give quality products to my customers” and “Yes, quality service is important for customer satisfaction and business reputation”.

Agreeably, Low's study (2010a, pp.54) emphasized that being a service provider; one should be empathetic with the customer's need and serve him or her in a polite manner to satisfaction. With quality service, service excellence and effective marketing, corporate business development and growth are assured. This study shows that Chinese Bruneians do embrace long-termism for their business sustainability which agrees with Low's study (2010, pp.14) on the topic of Chinese strategic leadership.

Family Values and Retailing Techniques

According to Freeman and Low's study (2010), Bruneians are strong in upholding family values and that 'Within relationships, the family, including the extended family of cousins, aunts, and uncles, and close friends, form the focal point of the social structure. Family units tightly knit and link together with the expectation of intra-loyalty among members. These closely linked families form the basis of the hierarchical Bruneian social structure, with age and position key determining factors.' In this respect,

because of the collectivist nature of the Bruneian society, the culture of harmony and tolerance influences much of the daily life in Brunei, including building goodwill. Goodwill ensures the recognition of the foundational importance of relationships, which in turn suppresses conflicts. These familial values have, in fact, helped companies/ departmental stores when running sales promotion, particularly so during festive seasons. One hundred and thirty-eight interviewees or 91.3 percent stressed on 'Family Values and Retailing Techniques' in marketing and said that “I own a supermarket based on the concept of one-stop shop and family needs”; “My shop sells disposable diapers for the young and for the adult. This is for the convenience of my customers who either have new born baby or sickly adult at home to look after.”; “My restaurant is equipped with big round tables for functions like birthday parties, wedding banquet and clans/associations anniversary and festivals”; “For my shop, I always estimate and order enough goods to sell especially during peak time or seasons festival such as Hari Raya, Chinese New Year and Christmas” and “My furniture shop sells best during festival seasons such as Hari Raya and Chinese New Year.”

One can see that applying marketing strategies and retailing techniques for family needs in Brunei would create more business opportunities. This would also help the existing business to prosper by networking, growing and developing into a dynamic and innovative market.

The Value of Peace and Harmony

Peace refers to absence of hostility. It refers to a harmonious environment that is characterized by healthy interpersonal and international relationships, acknowledgment of equality and fairness. The value of peace and harmony is important because we need a continuously better world for our next generations. Furthermore, we can enjoy the benefits of the latest technological and scientific advancements only in times of peace.

To market products well, such a value is useful as we require a peaceful environment to do business. In a peaceful and harmonious environment, businesses can grow or strengthen. This is in line with what Low (2010) who propound 'prosper-thy-neighbour attitude' towards each other because 'when there is big peace, there is big prosperity.' In this study survey, one hundred and twenty-five interviewees or 82.7 percent expressed that a stable, peaceful and harmonious society is essential to do business and remarked that, “I must thank His Majesty and His Government for making Brunei a stable and peaceful country to do business”; “I am grateful to Brunei because the country allows Chinese Bruneian to do business in a peaceful and harmonious environment.” and “Brunei is a peaceful country so business should flourish if you know how to market your products.”

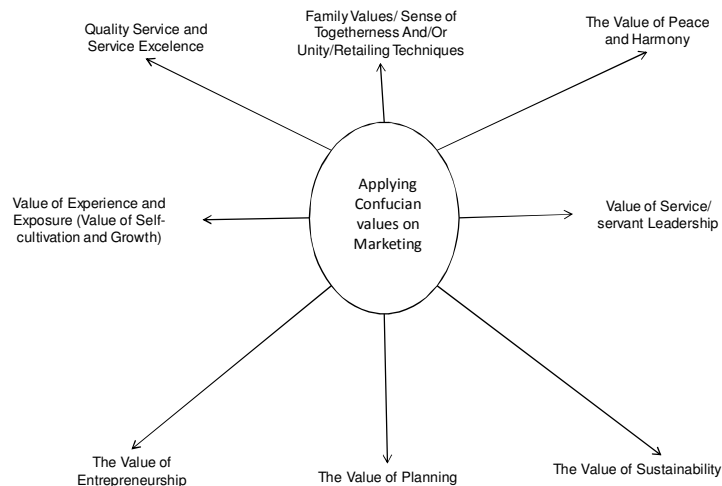


Figure 4. Applying Confucian Values on Marketing

The Value of Entrepreneurship

Although traditional Confucianism despise merchants and traders who were regarded as belonging to the lower class strata in a typical traditional Chinese society (and it instead valued learning and scholarships), if Confucianism is to be given a new modern relevance, it should factor in entrepreneurship in the form of risk-taking.

As Brunei is on its way to diversifying its business, not totally dependent on oil and gas industries anymore, it is good to promote entrepreneurship in the Sultanate of Brunei so that Bruneians can find some other ways making of a living for themselves instead of depending on the government or private corporations. On the subject of Chinese Bruneian entrepreneurship, one hundred and ten respondents said that “I always want to be my own boss and I want to have freedom to adopt my own approach to work”; “I want to build something for my own family that is why I become an entrepreneur”; “I want to make an idea or innovation happens”; “I want to be like Steve Job, an innovative entrepreneur and make a lot of money for my family”; “my parents, family members and successful businessperson have shaped my view on entrepreneurship, today I become one” and “when I was young, I have an ambition of making a lot of money to help the poor to alleviate poverty for the society, that’s why I become an entrepreneur.”

The Value of Sustainability

This value of sustainability can be linked to filial piety. A good example of a corporate business sustainability is illustrated by the Singapore *Kwong Wai Siew Peck San Theng*, a 140-year old organisation, and its core business is basically to facilitate ancestor worship or veneration.

This organisation has survived for so long, more than a century and even to date, it is still going strong. Ancestral veneration, in Chinese culture, has its roots in filial piety (孝; *Hanyu pinyin*: xiào) put forth by Confucius. It is the practice of living family members who try to provide a deceased family member with continuous happiness and well-being in the after-life. As a continuing way of showing respect to the dead, the ancestral worship reinforces family unity and lineage. It encourages children and relatives of many generations to come together to know, help and support each other; they are to strengthen the heritage bond, to celebrate on each other’s successes; and to help each other when member(s) of heritage is(are) in difficulty. Showing respect to one’s ancestors is an ideology deeply rooted in Chinese society. By seeking to know one’s ancestors, an individual would return to one’s root. Confucius summed up this teaching as “*shen zong zui yuan*” (慎终追远) meaning “having a proper funeral and not to forgetting to pay respect for years to come”. Because of the influence of the Confucius’ teaching, the purpose of the association is to serve the needs of the community. Indeed, Low (2011, 2009; 2005; 2002) has classified this kind of association as the organization driven by social objectives (*co-operative* culture).

With regard to the personal value of sustainability, in this study, one hundred and eight-six interviewees or 57 percent observed that “Although I am already well past 60 years of age, I am still finding time to do this business and to meet people”; “I don’t know what to do about my life if I don’t continue to do what I am good at.”; “I feel happy when I do business and keep in touch with people” and “I will continue to do what I like until I can no t do it anymore.”

Application of Confucian values on marketing is illustrated as shown in Figure-4.

Benefits and Limitations of Study

One of the key limitations of this study is that the time and the cost constraints of the study, more so, as this research was not sponsored or financed by any organisation. Nonetheless, the key strengths and benefits of this study include the fact that the size and number of the sampling (151 respondents) was reasonably adequate or sizeable, and what more, good qualitative data was derived and analysed.

CONCLUSION

It is true to say that one of the key aspects of Confucian marketing is to create good relationships (respect and tolerance) among each other in a society. This would then critically help the business community to attain a peaceful and harmonious platform or environment for corporate sustainability. Take for example, in Brunei Darussalam, Chinese Bruneians doing business must be aware that the majority of the population is Muslims and that all products must be 'halal' (lawful and permissible, harmful in the Islamic sense) when selling to the Muslim community. Marketing and advertisement of products, such as liquor and food, which are not 'halal' must be banned to show respect for Muslims. Confucian marketing also focus on family values and retailing techniques, quality service and service excellent, corporate sustainability as well as effective planning.

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