

Full Length Research Paper

The Chinese and their daily motivation –The Brunei case study

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The aim and purpose of this article is to demonstrate, using examples, what makes the ordinary Overseas Chinese tick, and what values motivate them in their livelihood – more so, in the Brunei context. The article seeks to understand Chinese Bruneian businessmen, uncovering, examining and identifying their values that motivate them to do what they are doing today. This article hopes to assist readers to better understand the motivations of Chinese Bruneians both at work as well as in their day-to-day living. The method used in this research is qualitative research method (interview), and the researchers adopted a semi-structured form of interview. To have a deeper understanding of the interviewees' thinking and perceived values, the researchers interviewed Chinese employers and employees from Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Brunei. The study samples consisted of two hundred and fifty-seven (257) people, age ranging from 32 to 92 years old, whom the researchers knew/or were referred to them by contacts. Majority of the interviewees responded that they were motivated by good leaders and that they described their leaders as personable, approachable, friendly, caring and showing concern to them. Furthermore their leaders are usually communicable, helpful and inspiring. These characteristics are very much similar to other Overseas Chinese living in South East Asia and that they are said to be influenced by the Confucian and Taoism values.

Keywords - Motivation, Leadership, Chinese Bruneian, Taoism, Confucian leadership.

INTRODUCTION

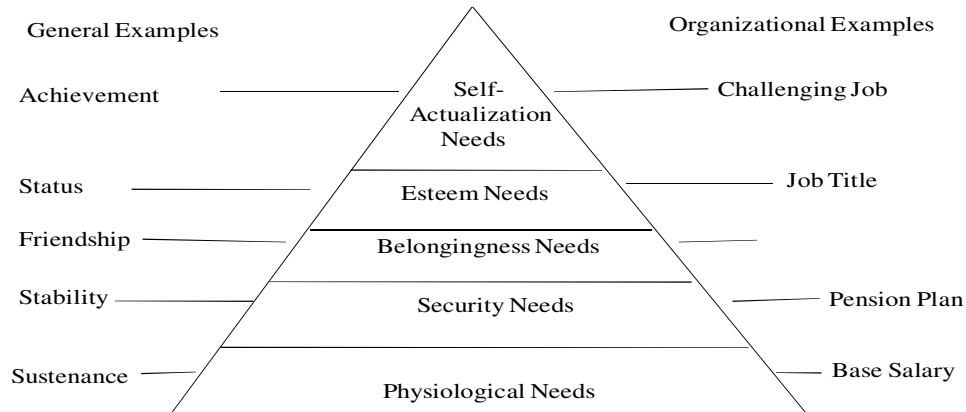
Overseas Chinese, as evidenced in the highly developed economies of Asian Tigers (Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan), have been successful in carrying out their businesses and boosting the economies of their respective country domains (Jain et.al, 2006; Low, 2009). In this paper, the authors examine what makes the ordinary Chinese tick. An attempt is appropriately made to answer the question: what motivates the Overseas Chinese, more so, Chinese Bruneians. The authors look at the words, language and culture to understand the Chinese mind, thinking and values to uncover his or her various sources of motivations at work and in daily living.

Literature Review

What Is Motivation?

Looking from the Western perspective, motivation is derived from human needs (desires); and motivation is made up of at least three distinct components: direction, intensity and persistent. (Ivancevich et.al, 2008. pp. 109-111). Abraham Maslow (1943) postulated a theory that needs could be arranged in a hierarchical manner. (Maslow, 1943; Maslow and Kaplan, 1988). The lowest level needs are the physiological or survival needs such as the need for food, drink, shelter, and relief from pain. Once this need is fulfilled, it is then followed by safety and security needs; the needs for freedom from threat, that is, the security from threatening events and surroundings. The third level is the belongingness, social

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Maslow, A..H. (1943). Psychological review, Vol. 50, 1943, pp. 374-396.

Figure 1. Maslow's Need Hierarchy

and love needs such as the need for friendship, affiliation and interaction. The fourth level is the esteem needs; the need for self esteem and for esteem from others. The highest level needs are the self-actualization needs; the need to fulfil oneself by making maximum use of abilities, skills and potentials. (Ivancevich et.al, 2008. pp. 113) Figure 1 shows Maslow's Need Hierarchy.

Employee motivation in organisations has been researched extensively since 1930s and two categories of motivational theories. There are the content and the process theories of motivation (Ivancevich et.al, 2008. pp. 112-136). The content theories focus mainly on the needs and incentives that cause behaviour. For example, McClelland (1953)'s three motives content theory (Achievement, Power and Affiliation) proposed no lower order needs and are equivalent with Herzberg's intrinsic motivator, Maslow's higher order needs, Hackman and Oldham's growth needs strength and Alderfer's growth needs and relatedness (GR). A major difference between these content theories is McClelland's emphasis on socially acquired needs; Maslow theory offers a static need hierarchy system; Alderfer presents a flexible, three-need classification approach; and Herzberg discusses intrinsic and extrinsic job factors" (See Table 1 and Figure 2). The process theories of motivation are concerned with answering the questions of how individual behaviour is energised, directed, maintained, and stopped in an organisation. Adam's equity theory emphasis on employee perception of fairness between job performance and rewards; Locke's goal setting theory presents challenging goals to improve performance; and Vroom's expectancy theory proposes treatments (rewards or punishments) on work behaviours (See Table 1 and Figure 2).

The motivational theories that are studied in the business schools are Western, i.e., scientific, rational and individualistic. Motivation, looking from the Confucian

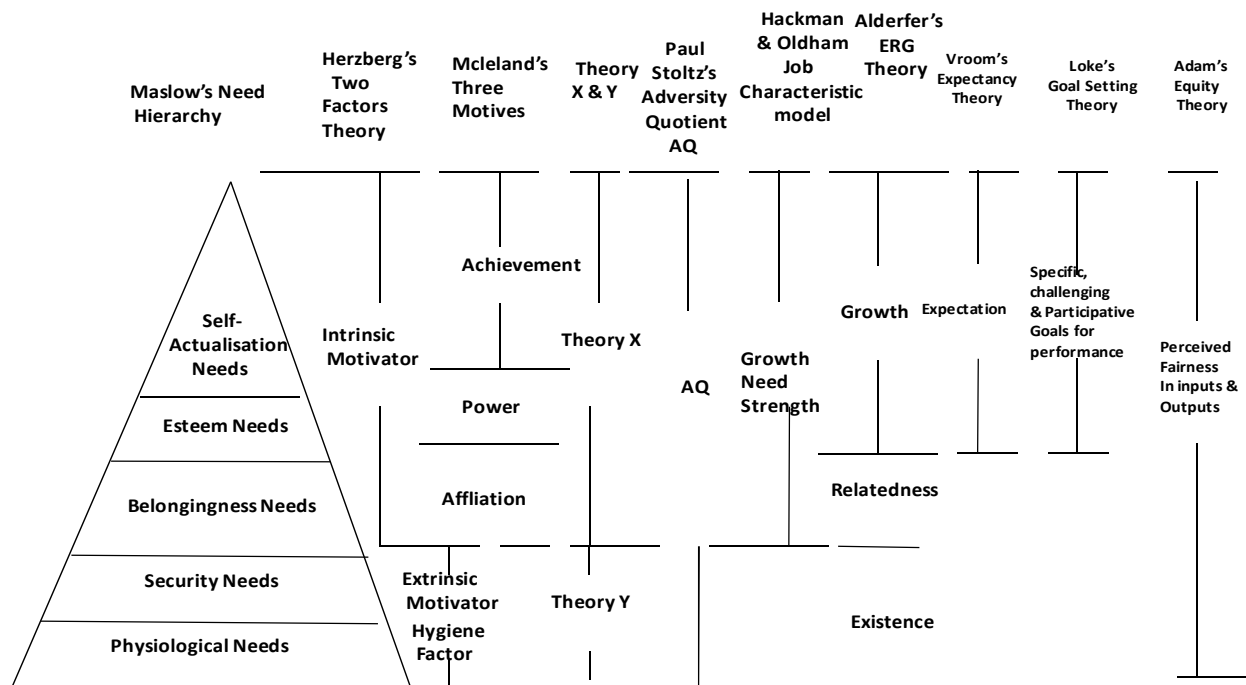
(Eastern) perspective, on the other hand, is guided by cultural values and the individual's needs. Confucius (551-479 BCE) was a thinker, political figure, educator and founder of rú school of Chinese Thoughts (儒家思想, Hanyu Pinyin: rú jiā sī xiǎng). He was honoured as Exemplary Teacher of All Ages (萬世師表, Hanyu Pinyin: wàn shì shī biǎo) and Sage of the Orient (東方聖人, Hanyu Pinyin: dōng fāng shèng rén) by the later generations (Low, C.C. and Associate, 1995). According to him, we cannot change the parameter of our birth, but we are responsible for our actions especially in relation to others. Under the given conditions we determine what we could achieve and remembered for. Hence, in his teaching, he introduced the principle of great learning (大學, Hanyu Pinyin dà xué) with the presumption that each of us is motivated to seek for "natural virtues given by heaven". He explained that one of the key sources of human motivation is perfect virtue (至善, Hanyu Pinyin zhì shàn) and this virtue has to be made very clear so that the will of a person can be set to attain it. Only when a person's will is firmly set that (s)he will be calm and in tranquillity (focus) in pursuing for his or her goals. This state of mind would help him or her in deliberating and judging all matters. When (s) he can judge all matters, (s) he will achieve his or her goal that is the desired state of perfect virtue. And to achieve perfect virtue, Confucius set up eight hierarchical tenets of self-cultivation; self-discipline; self-growth; continuous learning and social relationships. Figure-3 illustrates the hierarchical (eight) principles of Confucius' teachings on motivation.

What Is Value?

Albert Einstein (1879-1955) once said, "Try not to become a man of success. Rather become a man of value." A value is a core belief and what the individual

Table 1. Summary of Content and Process Theories of Motivation

Content (has provided various human needs which can motivate human behaviour and such needs affect work performance and job satisfaction)	Theories	of	Motivation
Murray's List of Needs (1938) (cited in Andrzej A. et al 2007)		27 psychogenic needs	
Maslow Needs of Hierarchy (1943) (Maslow, 1943)		Needs for security, safety, friendship, ego-esteem and self-actualisation	
McClelland's three motives (cited in Andrzej A. et al 2007)		Needs for achievement, affiliation and power	
Needs for achievement, Affiliation and Power		Hygienic factor and motivator	
Alderfer's ERG Theory (1969)		Existence, relatedness and growth	
Hackman and Oldham's Job characteristic Model (1976)		Growth needs strength	
Process (emphasised more on the cognitive approach with the emotional one not completely ignored while the content theories are largely focused on emotional aspects)	Theories	of	Motivation
Adam's Equity Theory		People perceived fairness between their inputs such as hard work, skill level, effort and enthusiasm and their outputs such as financial reward, responsibility and recognition.)	
Loke's Goal Setting		Specific, challenging and participative goals are necessary to improve performance	
Vroom's Expectancy Theory		Specific rewards or punishments are needed from certain types of work behaviours	
Personal Investment Theory		A continued dynamic process of Personal Investment-Product- Evaluation triangle	
Paul Stoltz's Adversity Quotient (AQ)		AQ measured and profiled by analysing four Dimensions (CORE); Control (measures a person's resilience, Ownership (measures a person's accountability), Reach (measures a person's stress) and Endurance (measures a person's hope)	



strongly believes in (Low, 2009; 2002). Values themselves can be very motivating (Low 2005). Knowing

values is critical, as it helps one to understand how an individual ticks (Low 2006). Values are core beliefs held

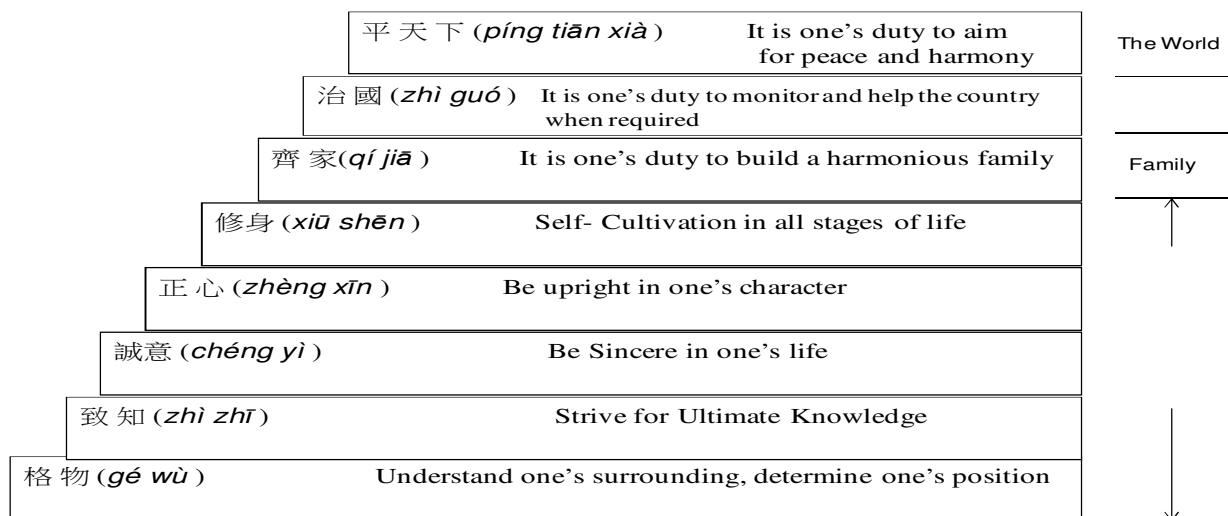


Figure-3 The Hierarchical (Eight) Principles of Confucius' Teachings on Motivation

strongly by individuals (Low, 2010 cited in Pisapia and Lin, 2011).

There are over 40 millions of Overseas Chinese living in South East Asia and the majority of them live in Singapore, 74.1 percent of 5.077 million of the local population (Singapore Population Statistics 2010). A significant minority of the Overseas Chinese lives in Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Philippines, Vietnams and Brunei. (Overseas Chinese, Wikipedia). Brunei has a population of approximately 395,027 people and it consists of about 15 percent of Overseas Chinese. (Brunei Population Statistics, 2010). Most Chinese Bruneians are in the line of business and trade. Some of them work for the Brunei government and others work for private companies and firms. Various literature and books written on Chinese motivation (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) Min Chen (1995:81), Low (2002, 2006, 2009) and the Chinese leadership way of running their businesses have shown that Overseas Chinese are very much influenced by Confucian and Taoism's values.

These values are tabulated as follows:

Data extracted from Low, K. C. P. and Ang, S. L. (2011a). 'Confucius, Confucian Values and their Applications on Marketing-The Brunei Perspective' Journal of Research in International Business Management (ISSN: 2251-0028) Vol. 1(9) pp. 293-303 November, 2011.

In summary, in the literature review, Confucian values such as self-cultivation (self-discipline), benevolence

(humanism) and being 君子, Hanyu Pinyin : Jūnzǐ (gentleman and lady) leading by example and Taoism's three values such as simplicity, patience and compassion have positively motivated the Overseas Chinese in exploring and looking for greener pastures outside China and Taiwan. Most Overseas Chinese in South East Asia have established themselves in Commerce and Finance (Low, 2009).

Currently, no study has been made on the motivation of Overseas Chinese in Brunei; hence, this study fills the gap. In this research, the authors attempt to find out and understand what values and how these values as perceived by Chinese Bruneians, help in motivating them in their way of leading organisations, managing their businesses and going about doing their daily living.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The method used in this research is the qualitative research method (interview), and the researchers adopted a semi-structure form of interview. This method helped the authors to have a deeper understanding of the interviewees' thinking and perceived values. The interviewees are mostly Chinese employers and employees from Small and Medium Enterprises in Brunei, and the period of study was from September 2010 to August 2011. The study sampling consisted of two hundreds and fifty-seven (257) people, age ranging from 32 to 92 years old, whom the researchers knew/or were referred to them by contacts (Ang, 2009). The importance of this research study is that most interviewees were born between the year 1920 and 1960 and that these elder ones have been the first batch

Table 2. Some core values identified as motivating Overseas Chinese

Category	Values	References
Confucian values	Humanism	de Bary, Chan and Watson, (1960) ; Low (2006; 2009; forthcoming 2012 and forthcoming 2012a)
	“Bonds bound families” and respect the elders	Chia (1980:26-27), Clammer (1980), Song (1923, 1984), Low (2002, 2006)
values	Self-Discipline, hard work, and being thrifty	Wu (1977:48), Redding (1990), Lien Kraar (1994:57), Thin (1997:13) Owyang (1998:130), Low (2006),
	Leads with example and integrity	(Griggs, 1994: 19), Low (2009a)
	Accumulate wealth and contribution to society	Lien Kraar (1994:110), Sim (1950:4), (Loh and Lee (1998:14), (Long,1999:2)
	Be simple without ego	Low (2009b)
	Exercise patience	Low (2009b)
	Have compassion	Low (2009b)
	Initial hardships of migration cultivated values of survival	Min Chen (1995:81)

Chinese migrants from China or Chinese Taiwan and have received their traditional Chinese education before migrating to Brunei. The younger ones are the first and the second generation of Chinese Bruneians, and they have received their Chinese education in Brunei where they were born. These interviewees are more familiar with the Chinese culture, thinking and values. Over the years, those Chinese Bruneians who were born after 1970s would have been influenced by the progressive advanced technology such as internet, messaging, iPhone and iPad, they would have different lifestyles because they are living in a multicultural society and would have mixed motivational sources or factors. In Brunei, most Chinese businessmen and employees are members of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce/Chinese Clan/Dialect Associations, and some are also members of the Chinese School management committees, the researchers obtain contacts through the help of the secretaries or members of the bodies.

At the beginning of these interviews, the researchers started with some small talk to put the interviewees at ease. Very often, a light conversation on their personal likes and interests, detected in previous interactions or previous telephone calls, would serve as a springboard for further discussions on the motivational sources of the interviewees. (Low, 2006).

During the interviews, these preliminary questions were asked:

1. What are you doing now?
2. Why are you doing what you do now?
3. What motivate you and what make you tick?
4. What are the key motivators that lead your daily life?

After interviewing thirty Overseas Chinese, the authors modified the standard set of questions by adding four more specific questions in the interviews. The purpose of this is to understand better what makes the Overseas Chinese motivated to work. The key questions asked were:

1. What key aspects of the Chinese culture motivate you to working?
2. What kind of Chinese leadership would motivate you?
3. What key aspects of Chinese culture influence and/or motivate you? And if so, how?
4. Is team spirit or value play apart in motivating you?

The interview method is useful in this study because it enables more qualitative data to be collected from the respondents. Open questions were used, enabling the respondents to express more while allowing the researcher to gather more on the various motivational sources of the interviewees.

The research study was carried out in the four districts in Brunei namely Bandar Seri Begawan, Tutong, Kuala Belait and Seria. One of the researchers grew up in Bandar Seri Begawan and he belongs to the Chinese Hokkien Clan in the capital. He can speak Hokkien dialect fluently. As most of the Chinese residing in Bandar Seri Begawan and Tutong speak Hokkien, the researcher carried out the interviews by speaking Hokkien to them. This made them felt comfortable and enabled them to express better in their own dialect. In this research, about one hundred and forty-eight interviewees (57.6 percent) spoke Hokkien to the researchers during the interviews.

The Chinese reside in Kuala Belait and Seria belong to the three main Chinese clans namely Hakka, Foochow and Cantonese. They speak Mandarin amongst themselves. The principal researcher spoke Mandarin to them during the interviews. About one hundred and nine interviewees (42.4 percent) conversed in Mandarin and only a few spoke English during the interviews. The point is that the researcher spoke to the interviewees in the language in which the latter were comfortable in, hence the interviewees were expressive and the researchers felt that this was overall, an important point in ensuring the success of the interview surveys.

Table 3. The Interviewees' Responses on Motivation

Responses	Number of Interviewees	Percentage of Interviewees
Good leaders are motivating 'The leaders are personable, approachable and friendly'; 'The leaders are caring and show concerns'; 'The leaders are communicable' and 'The leaders are often helpful and inspiring'	237	92.2
Leaders' examples and role models are motivating 'I admire his achievement' and 'I want to follow his example'	229	89.1
The concept of wealth, prosperity and longevity is motivating 'I want to be healthy'; 'I want my business to be prosperous'; 'I want many grand children'; 'I am healthy' and 'I have many grandchildren'	223	86.8
Contribution to the society at large 'I make an effort to give donation to charity bodies every year'; 'I donate to school'; 'I donate to my clans'; 'I donate to Chinese temples' and 'I help the poor and needy people'	213	82.9
Boosting relationships, building goodwill in business, teamwork and team spirit are motivating 'We value teamwork and ensure good team spirit amongst ourselves'; 'We stay united and help each other toward success' and 'We work as a family because many hands make light work'	203	79.0
Religious faith 'I pray to <i>Guān Yīn</i> (the Goddess of Mercy) for my health'; 'I pray to <i>Guān Gōng</i> (the God of War) for my success in business'; 'I carried out charity work because of my Christian faith' and 'I don't eat meat because of my Buddhist faith'	44	17.1

FINDINGS

Two hundred and thirty-seven interviewees or 92.2 per cent voted that "good leaders are motivating" and the characteristic of their good leaders are "personable, approachable, friendly", "caring and showing concerns" and "communicable". Two hundred and twenty-nine or 89.1 per cent of the interviewees felt very strongly that leaders' integrity and good examples are very important factors to inspire and to motivate them. While two hundred and twenty-three interviewees or 86.8 percent voted that the Concept of Wealth, Prosperity and Longevity is motivating, two hundred and thirteen interviewees or 82.9 percent observed that "leaders do good and contribution to the society" and this doing is motivating for it encourages them to be socially responsible to their families and to the society. Two hundred and three or 79 percent expressed their emphasis on "teamwork and team spirit are motivating" and a minority of them, forty-four interviewees or 17.1 per cent remarked that their religious faiths are motivating.

Table-3 shows some key feelings or values verbalised by the interviewees. Here, most of the interviewees were between 32 and 92 years old who expressed their views, which they perceived as the values that motivate them.

Analysis and discussion: sources of motivation

Motivating through examples and role modelling

"The leader's examples matter." (One interviewee's specific comments.) Confucius said, "People will obey you if you promote the righteous men and suppress the

evil men. And they will disobey you if you do the contrary." (Analects of Confucius, 2:19); and the followers are motivated by such role-modelling. The followers look at the leaders for guidance and advice, and their actions speak louder than words. Here, Taoism's idea of leaders should be that of "uniting the separateness of mind and body into one whole" (Griggs, 1994: 19), after all, leaders should practice what they preach, and their credibility and integrity is thus intact. A case in point is that of a 90-years old prominent Bruneian businessman, Pehin Kapitan Lau Ah Kok, who positively believed that there are always opportunities around in business and he used the Chinese saying, "塞公失馬，焉知非福?" hanyu pinyin: "sāi gōng shī mǎ ,yān zhī fēi fú ?", meaning obstacles turn out to be opportunities for him (Sim, 2000 cited in Low and Ang, 2011). This cultural value of resilience in the Bruneian Chinese has also been found in the Singapore study. (Low, 2007) Pehin Kapitan Lau is a successful overseas Chinese businessman and has opened many supermarkets outlets in the four districts of Brunei over his lifetime and with over 2000 of employees. He sets a good example in getting Brunei citizenship at the age of eighty-six to show loyalty to the sultanate (Brunei News Archive, 2004). He is a role model for most Bruneians and he had received the Asia Pacific Entrepreneurship Award 2008 and was described as, "A prominent businessman and a noble Chinese community leader who is highly respected by the Chinese and Malay communities in Brunei". (APEA, 2008). Pehin Kapitan Lau's role model on leadership is "leading by the example, actions that the leader not only speaks of but performs. The leader also needs to be hands-on." (Low and Ang, 2010). The leader's integrity is paramount. A reliable and honest leader motivates the followers to unite

and work for the same objective to achieve a desired goal. This ties-in with what Low (2006a: : 80-90, 2008: 89-104) has argued, “Role models should be assessed in the light of integrity and honesty, if followers question on their leaders’ honesty and integrity, leaders cannot be role models”. This is very true when one of the interviewees expressed dissatisfaction on a leader who arrogantly told off the deceased or bereaved family members that they would not get any monies from the insurance if they wanted to claim more than what he offered, giving them an ultimatum.

Words help

Confucius said, “I am thinking of giving up speaking.” 子貢 **Zǐ Gòng** said hastily, “If you do not speak, what would there be for us, your disciples, to transmit?” Confucius said calmly and matter-of-factly, “What does Heaven ever say? Yet there are four seasons going round and there are hundreds of things coming into beings. What does Heaven ever say?” (Analects of Confucius, 17:19; Yú Dān, 2009). There are no words to describe one’s experience (Shigetmatsu, 1992). More so, spiritual experiences are not to be described. The man who has drunk water just knows it is cold or warm and that degree of coldness and warmth experience by him/her cannot be related to others. The Taoists also believe that there’s no need for words for experience. For them, the words of 莊子, **Zhuāng Zǐ** (cited in Towler, 2007: 130) carry support and significance, “Where can I find a man who had forgotten words? I would like to have a word with him”. On this regard, the authors would like to discuss the use of some key words in the Chinese language which is essential in motivating, if not in inspiring, them. Words, which can be symbols too, are indeed good motivators and have great impact on the Chinese livelihood. One example is the word and symbol (佛) (**Fó**) means Buddha and the Chinese – even if they are the non-Buddhists – look at it as holy, the act of praying (two hands press together). This also represents a livelihood that is related to monk-hood. (Low, forthcoming 2012a). An individual aspires to move to a higher spiritual level and practices being compassionate, kind, soft, non-violent, and yang (strong) as in 太極 **Tàijǐ** (a form of Chinese martial arts). **Fó** motivates the Chinese to be giving, and helpful, serving the weak and being kind to nature and to all living things. In this research, some interviewees wore pendants or bracelets with the symbol (佛) (**Fó**) and some share their religious faiths such as “I pray to 觀音, **Guān Yīn** (the Goddess of Mercy) for my health”; “I pray to 關公, **Guān Gōng** (the God of War) for my success in business” and “I carried out charity work because of my Buddhist’s faith”. Although most interviewees would not reveal his/her religion and belief through a simple conversation with a

stranger unless (s)he knows the interviewer well and treat him like his/her friend. In reality, these interviewees belong to the authors’ close friends and relatives and they expressed freely their beliefs and thinking to the author. Another example is the word (囍) (**Shì**) which stands for double happiness and is used during marriage when the family uses the word on the invitation card, huge symbol in decorating at home or in a banquet. (983Wedding <http://wedding.983.com.hk>). The authors understood from some older interviewees that there is a Chinese saying, “婚姻是一件終生大事 **hānyū pīnyīn : hūn yīn shì yī jiàn zhōng shēng dà shì** ” meaning marriage is considered to be a very important event in one’s life and therefore, the character (囍) (**Shì**) means a lot to the Chinese couple as it signifies two person’s happiness of living together.

In the same way, the symbol (壽) (**Shòu**) is appropriately used for people celebrating their birthdays, especially those who have reached above 60 years old. This symbol/character (壽) (**Shòu**) represents longevity and is always inscribed in Chinese painting and Chinese calligraphy and used as gifts to be given as a token of good luck and good health to the person who celebrates his/her birthday. The Chinese phrase, “松鶴長春, **hānyū pīnyīn: sōng hè cháng chūn** ” written in the Chinese paintings of cranes and coniferous trees in long spring time depicts the meaning of longevity. (Low and Ang, 2010). While interviewing one of the oldest entrepreneurs in Brunei, he was very much looking forward to celebrate his 90th birthday which falls in 2010 with his family, relatives and friends in a grand manner. Next, the word (財) (**Cái**) is always loved by all Chinese when they greet each other during the Chinese lunar New Year with these wishing words (恭喜發財, **gōng xǐ fā cái**) and smiling faces. The symbol and the wish makes all Chinese, young and old, happy. In this research, it had been observed that most Chinese shops would have a square red paper inscribed diagonally with the word (財) (**Cái**) stuck at the cashier point where the customers paid for their goods. This is believed by the business people that it would bring prosperous and good luck for their businesses.

Normally, the Chinese do not like to use words as, like all words, they are insufficient to attribute to things or cannot fully describe what it’s intended to mean. (Griggs, 1994). In Chinese folklore, the Three-legged Money Frogs, also known as Chan Chu [which means frog or toad] are an ancient and popular Chinese symbol of prosperity. They are said to be the bearer of good fortune, which is why one always see them bringing two strings of coins tied behind their back and holding a lucky Ching Dynasty gold coin in their mouths. According to Feng Shui lore, Money Frogs are believed to drive away evil, protect wealth, and increase income. (Low and Ang,

2010). In this study, it was observed that some businessman interviewees placed their Money Frogs (statues) on the certain positions in their living rooms/offices as recommended by their Feng Shui master. In the case of celebrating his/her birthdays, symbol of peach as jewellery such as pendant or food such as cakes with the shape of peach are used to symbolise longevity when given to the person who celebrates his/her birthday. However when words are used, they are very much appreciated. In the authors' view, these words are critical in motivating the Chinese; more so, as the Chinese language being pictorial, conjures visual images to push them to achieve further in their lives.

Being firm while being personable, approachable and friendly

Another key source of motivation among Chinese employees, as argued by Low (2006), is that though the leaders are firm, expecting discipline yet they are personable, friendly and communicable. Father leadership is also deployed (Low, 2006a). In an interview with an eighty-eight (88) years old Brunei's prominent entrepreneur who owns hotels and also provides industrial services to the oil and gas industry, he was very friendly and willing to talking about his hotel management to the authors. He said that hotel management is a service providing business and he has to set a good example of being firm yet being personable approachable and friendly to his customers and his employees. Many interviewees shared similar remarks that "Leaders who are approachable and friendly" are motivating. Chinese leaders, as Taoists, believe that the balance (firm yet personable, approachable and friendly; control but not possessing) should be attained for harmony to prevail. Here, it is put forth that when information is shared and when the leaders also talk and relate well with the employees, the people feel motivated. This is all the more so, when leaders give the employees their personal attention; the employees are energized when their leaders show much caring and concern. These are also echoed in Sheh's (2003: 12) works that indicate that Chinese leadership approach is more people-oriented, rather than task- or performance-oriented. Low (2002, 2009) highlights the notion of 'kit cheng', relationship-based, rather than just hiring and firing; loyalty is thus emphasized.

Being communicable

Leaders need to be communicable (Baldoni, 2003). Communications helps. In this study, two hundreds and thirty-seven interviewees (92.2 percent) share similar remarks that "The leaders are communicable".

Communications and information sharing should indeed be stressed. Employees of Chinese small and medium companies, as a whole, prefer information to be shared and that things are transparent (Low, 2006). This is echoed in Lim and Daft (2004, cited in Low, 2006)'s account of the Singapore-based company, The Hour Glass, in which the corporate leader, Jannie Tay, among other things, strongly believes in communications and information-sharing. Besides, management by talking around and listening around is critical to manage successfully (Tai, 2005; Low, 2001); such Chinese leadership approach can indeed be motivating to the employees. This confirms what Low (2002; 2001) has highlighted in Singapore's small medium companies. Corporate leaders should use more saliva than drinking tea — meaning, talking, coaching and taking personal interest in the employees' welfare. Informal talks with employees help the supervisor to listen, uncover, and find out more about the employees' needs. Such leadership also facilitates bottom up flow of information, and can be motivating too.

Showing care and concern

In Confucius' teachings, the writing (仁) (rén) is made of two radicals. The radical (人) means people and the radical (二) means the close relationship of each other exhibiting humaneness, loving-kindness and benevolence. (<http://zh.wikipedia.org/zh/仁>). Rén means humanity (love to all men; de Bary, Chan and Watson 1960). A wise leader practises rén and pays attention to the people around him. The analogy used here is water. A leader needs to be just as responsive as water is, to its surroundings. He needs to listen, and show care and concern to the people around him. After all, there's a Chinese saying that goes, "a person's success is dependent not on the number of servants he has, but on the number of people the leader serves" (Low, 2006: 84). This coincides with what Taoism's concept of the leader's "selflessly thinking the world" (Griggs, 1994: 79) and being a servant-leader, "lead as if following" (Griggs, 1994: 19). Here, Taoism's celebrated saying comes to mind and is in action — "when the selfless enters the heart of things, this is the heart of doing" (Griggs, 1994: 57). In this study, majority of the interviewees (two hundred and thirty-seven, 92.2 per cent) shares similar remarks that "Leaders are caring and show concerns". An interview at a Kuala Belait kopitiam (coffee shop) was held with a sixty-three (63) years old van driver working for an oil and gas company and whose duty is to provide transport for offshore workers to Kuala Belait wharf and Anduki helicopter landing field from 2.00 a.m. to 6.00 a.m. and back to their homes in the evening from 5.00 p.m. to 10.00 p.m.. He works hard (very often with overtime) for over 40 years and previously with odd jobs to support his family and

also his unemployed brother (who has just passed away a month ago). He was proud to repeat saying that, "I am lucky to have a good boss. He shows care and concern for my daily living and he also likes me for my honest and hard working attitude. This motivates me to work for him continuously."

Boosting relationships, teamwork and team spirit

The Chinese value long-termism (Low, 2009a), and thus stress much on relationship building. During an interview with a fifty-six (56) years old businessman who owns two restaurants in Kuala Belait at different commercial locations, the author asked him about the way he manage his business and he said that he oversaw the financial area of both restaurants which he entrusted his wife and his brother to run the two restaurants separately. This illustrates an example of teamwork and team spirit in family/relative owned business. "More than 50 per cent of businesses in Brunei are run by families and that family owned businesses run by the Chinese are mostly passed down to the second and third generations whilst family owned businesses run by the Malays are less likely to be passed down to the second generation." mentioned by Dr. Habrizah Hussin, an expert in entrepreneurship and SME development from Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD). She also remarked that different cultural and business values between the two communities play a big part in the lifespan of any family business. (Hussin, 2010).

In Brunei, the family-owned businesses run by the Chinese include numerous combinations of teams such as husbands and wives, parents and children, relatives and their extended families. Some businesses have been established for quite a long time over three generations. And this is due to their strong commitments to quality of products and services and upholding of their own family name and pride, and also their care and concern for the wellbeing of their employees are often likened to that of an extended family. For instance, the Lim Teck Hoo Holdings, founded by the late Pehin Temenggong Dato Lim Teck Hoo, are now managed by a team of his children and relatives. Even after his demise years ago, his family members continue to expand his business and also carrying on his legacy of contributing to local Chinese education institutions annually. His established scholarship fund is aimed to help and provide scholarship to underprivileged students who have achieved excellent results in Chinese schools in Brunei (Kon, 2009).

Interestingly enough, about two hundred and nine interviewees (81.3 percent) responded that they worked in family owned business. This family business trend is confirmed to be significant while the author happened to interview with a young lady entrepreneur (organized by the MBA International Business class). She holds a director/shareholder position in a corporation (group),

consisting of eleven companies run by her parents, uncles, aunties and cousins. The value of sense of unity and team work is one of the Chinese enterprises' values (Low, 2006a; 2009). The young lady entrepreneur commented that one of her aunts was still working well past her retiring age and that if there was no successor (relatives) to take over in the near future regrettably, she would close down her aunt's business. This seems to illustrate that in partnership, Chinese trust family and relatives more and prefer family/relative business.

In this study, two hundreds and three interviewees (79 per cent) of share similar remarks such as 'we value teamwork and ensure good team spirit amongst ourselves', 'we stay united and help each other toward success'; 'we work as a family because many hands make light work'. With the leader's care and concern for the employees, and the employees' care and concern among themselves, 'all-in-the-family' feelings emerge. Any conflicts should be and is settled in a harmonious way. A common Chinese saying, "和氣生財" (hé qì shēng cái) meaning "harmonious decision would produce rewards" is often used or referred to when advising or settling a family or a group in dispute or disagreement. Team spirit is also bolstered, and that can be motivating to the employees, more so, when trust is gradually engendered. This is tantamount to Taoism's "separate without separateness and there is togetherness." (Griggs, 1994a: 75).

Using the various motivational visual aids (福祿壽, Fú Lù Shòu)

Fú Lù Shòu refers to the concept of Good Fortune (Fú), Prosperity (Lù), and Longevity (Shòu). This Taoist concept is thought to date back to the Ming Dynasty, when the Fú Star, Lù Star and Shòu Star were considered to be personified deities of these attributes respectively. The term is commonly used in Chinese culture to denote the three attributes of a good life (Seow, 1999; Low, 2010).

The visual aids of Fú Lù Shòu have been a life force and motivation for most Chinese and it is perceived that these three elements are very important in one's life. Most Chinese strive for a complete set of these elements, for lack of one, (s)he is perceived not to have a happy life. This can be illustrated as follows:

The importance of good fortune (福, Fú)

The God of Good Fortune (Fú) is generally depicted in a scholarly dress, holding a scroll, on which is sometimes written the character "福". He may also be seen holding a child, or surrounded by children. He is the visual aid of a good fortune (Seow, 1999). It is not satisfying if a person has a big family and a long life, but (s)he is always short

of money in his or her life to meet ends. This means that (s)he has to toil for his or her whole life to support his or her big family. One can have a long life, but that life may be of a lower quality, even perhaps a painful life. One should have a healthy life. However, money speaks, for without money, one can have a big family but it may not be a happy and prosperous family. (Low, 2010: 96).

The importance of prosperity (祿, Lù)

The God of Prosperity (Lù) denotes the attribute of prosperity, rank, and influence and usually depicted in the dress of a scholarly bureaucrat of the Imperial China (Seow, 1999)

It is also not good if a person has a long life and plenty of money but (s)he is always alone. One also needs a happy and prosperous family. It is worrying when reaching one's old age, there's nobody else, close enough to care and look after the person. (Low, 2010: 96).

The Importance of Longevity (壽, Shòu)

The God of Longevity is recognized by his high, domed forehead and the peach which he carries as a symbol of immortality. He is usually shown smiling and friendly, and he may sometimes be carrying a gourd filled with Elixir of Life. (Seow, 1999).

It is again not complete if a person has plenty of money and a big family but (s)he has a short-life. One then cannot enjoy one's wealth with one's big family and it is also a great concern that the money one has is left behind may not be utilized according to one's own wishes. This means that a person's health is very important, and in this modern world, the medical experts have advised that one should have a healthy lifestyle such as taking healthy food, having good sleep and working out proper daily exercises to maintain and sustain one's life. (Low, 2010: 96).

Striving for Fú Lù Shòu (wealth, prosperity and longevity)

To have a good life, the Chinese mind has been influenced by the fact that their ancestors strove for Fú Lù Shòu, and that is the ultimate goals for most Chinese. The ideas and concepts lie subconsciously in the Chinese mind, perhaps like a guiding star, as they do their work. In this study, two hundred and twenty three interviewees share similar remarks that "I want to be healthy", "I want my business to be prosperous" and "I want many grandchildren". When the authors asked the eighty-eight years old entrepreneur on his wealth, prosperity and longevity, he said that he oversees the

financial aspects of his business and he let his children run his businesses. He proudly asserted, "I can still sing and dance and I enjoy spending time with my friends". In addition to that, he remarks, "I have sixteen grandchildren". He confidently said that he would never retire and that he would continue working in his office. This eighty-eight (88) years old entrepreneur exemplified a role model in pursuing to achieving the wealth, prosperity and longevity in totality.

Being "helpful and giving"

'I make an effort to give donations to charity bodies every year', 'I donate to school', 'I donate to my clan/association'; 'I donate to the Chinese temples' 'I help poor and needy people'; These were mentioned by two hundreds and thirteen interviewees (82.9 percent).

When a person is doing well in business, he may part some of his annual profits into helping the needy such as orphan, disabled or old person's home, and from time to time giving donations to the well being of his community, for example, Chinese temples, Chinese schools and Chinese associations. Majority of the established businessmen felt that it was necessary to pay back to express gratitude to his community for being successful in business. Some seem to agree with the saying that giving away small gifts will receive big reward in return, (小財出大財進, Hanyu Pinyin: xiǎo cái chū dà cái jìn). In Confucius' teachings, 'rén' means humanity (love to all men, de Bary, Chan and Watson 1960 cited in Low, 2006) and most Chinese practices 'rén'. During an interview with the leader of the Brunei Chinese Chamber of Commerce who is sixty-four years old, he recited to the author a common saying, "取之社會用以社會, Hanyu Pinyin: qǔ zhī shè huì, yòng yǐ shè huì" meaning one takes benefits from the society, one will pay back to the society (Ang, 2010; Low, 2006b; Low and Ang 2011). This is one of the key motivators that he adopted when he was a young businessman. To date, he would never forget to give donation to the Brunei community as well as his neighbouring countries' friends and associations. This, for him, is to foster goodwill and enhance networking in business.

In sum, Chinese Bruneian leaders shared similar characteristics or core values with the Overseas Chinese in South East Asia as illustrated in Figure-4.

Limitations and benefits of the study

The authors feel that the key limitations of this research are the time and the cost constraints, more so, as it is not sponsored or financed by any organisation. Therefore, additional interviews or focus group studies have not been made. The sample of two hundred and fifty-seven people may limit the depth of analysis,

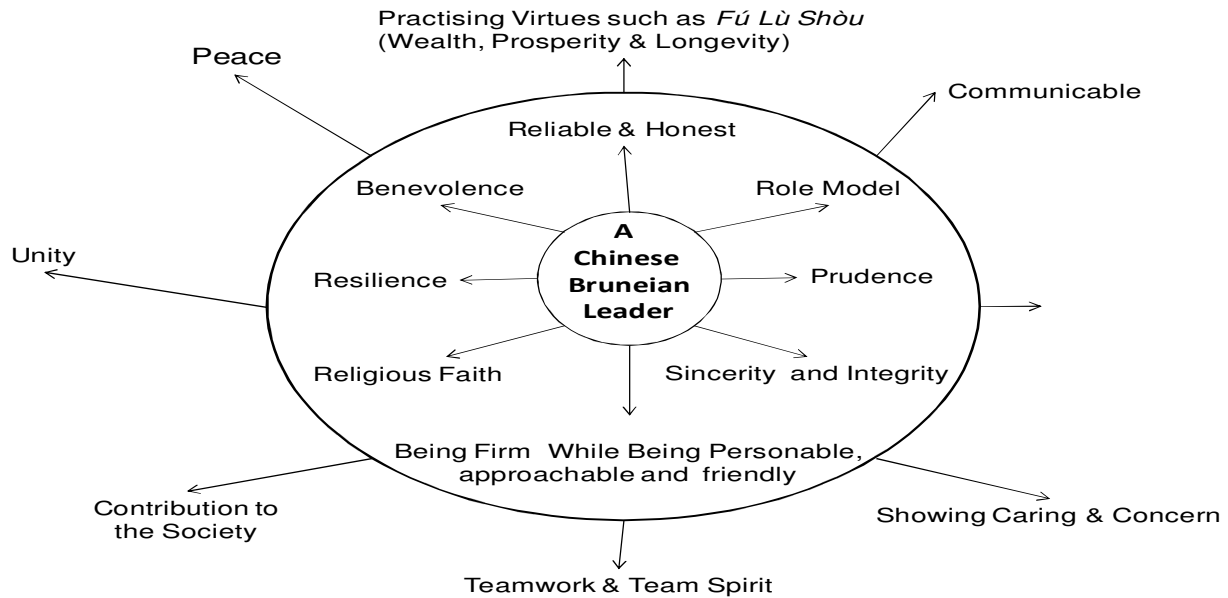


Figure 4 Core Values of A Chinese Bruneian Leader

certainly if time and costs permits, the researchers would like to expand the sampling size to further enrich the data and analysis. Perhaps, a follow-up study can and should be made by other researchers; hence, this study may serve as a starting point for other Chinese and motivation studies in the Sultanate of Brunei.

This study has demonstrated that similar to the other Overseas Chinese in South East Asia, Chinese Bruneians are also influenced by Confucian values and Taoism's values in motivating their daily works. In addition, the Taoist Concept of *Fú Lù Shòu* and Chinese Characters are also some of the visual aids in motivating and inspiring them in carrying out their livelihood. Some successful businessmen give their money to the society to help the poor, the orphans, and the old and needy people. They express their gratitude to the community for their being successful in business. These similar traits of Overseas Chinese are observed in Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan and South Korea.

CONCLUSION

We can thus conclude that Chinese Bruneians do share some similar cultural traits such as "leaders are personable, approachable, inspiring, friendly, helpful, caring and showing concerns to their followers" with the Overseas Chinese living in South East Asia such as Singapore and Malaysia. One interesting aspect that the authors observed about the Chinese Bruneians is that they have adopted a spirit of 'give and take', even accommodating, in maintaining peace and harmony between the Chinese community and the other

communities in Brunei. Most Chinese Bruneians especially big organisations contributed part of their annual profits into helping the needy such as orphans, disables or aged homes at large, and from time to time giving donations for the well being of their community, for example, charitable organisations, Chinese temples, Chinese schools and Chinese associations. Their cultural values provide spiritual guidance, solace, a sense of purpose to many, not just personal calm and a sense of peace but also social responsibility and obligation (Low and Ang, forthcoming, 2012; 2012a), duty to their fellow Bruneians. The key sources of motivation that make them go about with their daily activities are indeed good leadership and good team work; the Confucian philosophy that they embraced through their traditional Chinese education together with other Chinese icons such as 觀音 (*Guān Yīn*), 關公 (*Guān Gōng*), and the striving for (*Fú Lù Shòu*) (Wealth, Prosperity and longevity) as their cultural values.

With the globalisation, the advent of technology and modern ways of living, over time, it is anticipated that the younger generation of Bruneian Chinese who with other cultural influences and might not have the opportunity of going through Chinese education would adopt other sources of motivation in leading their livelihood.

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