
**A STUDY ON HUMANISTIC QUALITIES FOR BUSINESS
MANAGEMENT**

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Abstract

The ancient and modern business owners have made great efforts to upgrade their business performance, and management is the key element for enhancing business performance. Nonetheless, we can hardly fulfill our unlimited ambitions with limited resources. Consequently, this study investigates the substantial meaning of humanistic qualities in Confucian Analects for business operation as well as explores the scientific concepts (including Hawthorne Effect and John Henry effect) and the Confucian core ideas based on a "humanistic" perspective which incorporates eight Confucian virtues (moral injunction of fidelity to one's parents and brothers and to the monarch and friends, the sense of propriety, justice, integrity and shame) and two Buddhist virtues (benevolence and compassion).

Keywords: Performance, management, eight virtues, benevolence and compassion

1. Introduction

For business operations, senior management typically focuses on improving operational performance. Nonetheless, the senior executives are often troubled by enhancing operation performance with only limited resources. Enterprise operators commonly employ incentive system to boost business performance. Yet the executives are confronted with the dilemma that the incentive system cannot completely meet employees' demands. The study primarily presents the Confucian ideas from Confucian Analects and demonstrates how the art of business management benefits from the Confucian eight virtues (moral injunction of fidelity to one's parents and brothers and to the monarch and friends, the sense of propriety, justice, integrity and

shame) and the Buddhist two virtues (benevolence and compassion). These ten virtues are useful for business management and can serve as the basis for establishing sustainable enterprises.

2. Literature Review

The influences of humanistic enlightenment (i.e. Wen and De) can be originated from the cultivation in childhood. According to "The Influence of Parenting Style on 2-Years-Old Children's Social Development", the Zhang et al. (2019) demonstrated the positive character education can assist to form positive social capabilities, exert proactive effects, and raise self-confidence. As presented in "The Relationship Between Economic Confidence and Career Decision Making Self-efficacy of College Students: The Moderator Effects of Attribution and Proactive Personality", Kuang et al. (2011) illustrated that positive characteristics will have positive effects on confidence and decision-making. Regarding the concepts depicted in Confucian Analects, both the ancient and modern scholars hold the same opinions upon "virtues".

Learning can bring us the sense of happiness and this notion can be evidenced by the statement in Confucian Analects (Book I: Learning): Confucius said, "Is it not pleasant to learn with a constant perseverance and application? Is it not delightful to have friends coming from distant quarters? Is he not a man of complete virtue, who feels no discomposure though men may take no note of him?" These segments depict the fun of learning and application. Moreover, if one can learn without being perplexed by the situations and perform "virtuous conducts", he can cultivate profound essences, safely live in the world, and attain the level mentioned by Confucius. This is shown in Confucian Analects (Book IX: Tsze Han): Confucius said, "The wise are free from perplexities; the virtuous from anxiety; and the bold from fear."

This study combines eight Confucian virtues (i.e. xiao, ti, zhong, xin, li, yi, lian and chi) and two Buddhist virtues (i.e. ci and bei) to establish the foundation for sustainable corporates, as illustrated below:

In Confucian Analects (Book I: Learning), Confucius said, "A youth should be filial when at home, and be respectful to his elders when abroad. He should be earnest and truthful. He should overflow in love to all, and cultivate the friendship of the good. When he has time and opportunity, after the performance of these things, he should employ them in polite studies." The statement pointed out ethics and character should be the focus of learning, and character plays a more important role than talents do for us to live in the world. Such ethical education is the spiritual core in Confucian Analects and the fundamental source for mind cultivation and household management. Based on the filial and respectful virtues, one can be brimmed with love to all and cultivate friendship with kind people. Consequently, they can understand the public's apprehension, extend the nurturing influences of Confucianism, maintain a peaceful society and establish the ethical foundation for the world. As the philosopher Youzi said, "The filial and fraternal persons are rarely fond of offending against their superiors, and those do not like to offend against their superiors are rarely fond of stirring up confusion." In other words, those with filial and fraternal virtues are respectful to superiors and caring youngsters; that's the reason why they are almost impossible to offend their superiors and cause riots. According to Wang's

(2017) Confucian Ideas of "Ti and De" and the Modern Revelation, the spirit of Ti and De is an ethic norm similar to fraternity; in the modern context, Ti and De can be further extended to the behaviors of revering elders/superiors and caring others. Several enterprises in Japan, China and Germany have adopted mentorship for business operation and can serve as evidence for this outstanding tradition, and so does Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC, one of the leading enterprises in the electrical industry). The automobile giant TOYOTA transforms the ethical virtues to its core spirit and its operation management aims to cultivate employees to become its partners, create values for the organization, establish steady bases for business development, and further achieve corporate sustainability with the virtues of being loyal to the monarch and friends.

In "A Study on the Concepts of Loyalty and Trustworthiness (Zhongxin) in Early Chinese Political Thought", Sato (2007) explicated the virtues of zhong and xin. The ancient meaning of zhong is different from our current comprehension. Zhong (fidelity to the monarch) meant devoting oneself to national stabilization and social prosperity. Besides, as shown on the Guodian Chu bamboo slips, zhong represented the monarch's sincerity towards common people. The unearthed cultural relics show the concepts of zhong and xin are quite similar and can hardly be distinguished during the Warring States Period. People back then revered loyal and authentic attitudes; those with the two virtues could establish firm footholds, and those without sincerity could barely stand out in the society. This notion can also be evidenced by Confucius's statement: "I do not know how a man without truthfulness is to get on. How can a large carriage be made to go without the crossbar for yoking the oxen to, or a small carriage without the arrangement for yoking the horses?" It is apparently quite significant for people to behave loyal in the world, especially in business management. Only when the company is well governed and managed, will it shows organized order and enjoys consolidated foundation.

Confucius said, "Are gems and silk all that is meant by propriety? -- 'It is according to the rules of propriety,' they say. Are bells and drums all that is meant by music? -- 'It is music,' they say." (Confucian Analects, Book XVII: Yang Ho) The expression of propriety lies in the spirit of internal respect and comity rather than the external form of giving presents. Sending expensive presents without respect should not be considered as proper behaviors. The effects of music are to cultivate ones' character; therefore, the forms of striking bells and beating drums cannot exhibit the actual meaning of music and thus fail to express the innermost meaning of music. Both propriety and music were well-formulated by ancient saints and sages and designed for educating the public, maintaining social stability, and ruling countries. Witnessing that people conducted propriety and music superficially and could not show the inner essence, Confucius felt all sorts of feeling. It is apparently that the essences of propriety lie in respect, exhibit via politeness, reserve with ethics, and organize in orders. According to Lin's "The Pre-Qin Idea of Virtue and the Successful Development of the Rites" (2017), Duke of Zhou formulated propriety to imitate the Nature's order, and the Jin Dynasty took propriety and music as the "rules of ethics". Consequently, we can understand the establishment of propriety is associated with the experiences of virtuous words. As indicated in "The promotion of music facilitates the spread of social ethics", ethical cultivation is of great significance. Moreover,

ethics is especially important to enterprise management and it symbolizes the goal employees pursue for.

In the study "From classic to common works: the transformation of Yi from Zuo Zhuan to Chronicles of the Eastern Zhou Kingdoms", So (2017) cited the statement "Only when the princes are given proper and meaningful names, will they conform to etiquette requirements, conduct proper manners for self-cultivation and administration, and act as role models for common people." from Zuo Zhuan. In other words, the appropriate behaviors of ruling class with the basis of "propriety" can lead to the obedience of the public. In addition, as evidenced by the statement in Zuo Zhuan, "The courtier said to King Zhuang of Chu, 'Kings shall give orders based on justice (yi), courtiers shall perform orders based on fidelity (xin), and the loyal conducts with justice can facilitate countries' benefits' and provide benefits for the whole country and people." Thus, the overall country can benefit from the spirit of propriety (li) and the fidelity to friends (xin) and justice (yi): it is crucial to the common people, including ensuring safety and benefits for the society".

Confucius said, "If you govern the people legalistically and control them by punishment, they will avoid crime but have no personal sense of shame. If you govern them by means of virtue and control them with propriety, they will gain their own sense of shame and thus correct themselves." (Confucian Analects, Book II: Governing)

Based on Records of the Grand Historian (or, Shi Ji), Sima Qian said, "In this mundane and complicated world, orders are omnipresent and people should be educated with the sense of virtues and morality and given punishments and rewards. Consequently, those with noble character and high prestige shall be given higher status because they can be revered by their virtues, and those with outstanding capabilities shall be given higher payment for their performances—these are the guidelines to govern nations and convince common people."

Youzi said, "The application of propriety shall prioritize the formation of peace, and it is the most precious factor of ancient kings' governance. All matters, including important or small things, shall comply with the rules of 'propriety'".

Yan Yuan asked about perfect virtue. Confucius said, "To subdue oneself and return to propriety is the perfect virtue. If a man can subdue himself and return to propriety for one day, all under heaven will ascribe perfect virtue to him. Is the practice of perfect virtue from a man himself, or is it from others?" (Confucian Analects, Book XII: Yan Yuan)

Sedgwick and Greenwood (2015) discussed "Hawthorne Effect": people tend to perform better when they are aware of being noticed. Similarly, the spirit of mutual support in "justice" is the origin which boosts the positive growth of a group and the foundation which drives the achievements and performances in enterprises.

Buchanan, Russo, and Anderson (2015) explored the issue of energy saving. Just like the Confucian spirit of "justice", people will behave particularly outstanding when they are having others' support; similarly, people will give more feedback to the issues in question under the same circumstances.

The ancients' "arrogance" refers to their attitude of not being humble enough, but they stick to the moral principles which are the foundation of all virtues. As shown in Xunzi (Chapter 12: Principles for Kings), "Those at higher ranks shall cultivate their moral character and set good examples with their own conduct in order to earn the trust and respect from the courtiers and the common people and to avoid cheating or greedy behaviors." These principles are especially important to governmental sectors and private enterprises so that they can avoid people from causing damage to public benefits out of their personal interests. It is hoped people today can also revere these principle so they can achieve the standards of "justice" (yi).

Zi Gong asked, "What qualities must a man possess to be eligible to be called an officer? Confucius said, "He who has a sense of shame in his conduct, and will not disgrace his lord's commission when being sent to any land, deserves to be called an officer." As depicted in "The Deviations of Classroom Observation in Study of Education: Cases from Physical Education", Chung et al. (2016) explicated "John Henry Effect" is the demonstration of "shame" (chi). This viewpoint is especially important to management, and its effects on the management at basic level are beyond our imagination. People with a sense of "shame" will act like the brave because they have a profound understanding of things.

The spirit of "shame" (chi) focuses on people's self-examination and self-control when they are alone. If one can reflect on himself about all things, he can firstly correct his conduct and then extend his influence to others, making people to modify their deeds and follow good examples. It is a positive and inspiring power which enlightens people and encourages them to pursue moral deeds and sense of honor— it serves as the best demonstration for the maxim which says "knowing shame is akin to courage". In Hu's (1997) study, "The formation of the traditional "shame" culture in China", it was discovered that shame culture lies in the efforts of self-examination and self-correction which motivated people to make great efforts to achieve success.

Confucius said, "If you govern the people legalistically and control them by punishment, they will avoid crime but have no personal sense of shame. If you govern them by means of virtue and control them with propriety, they will gain their own sense of shame and thus correct themselves." This statement is especially true for management. Although punishments per se are frightening, their negative effects should be much worried about. Consequently, the ancient and modern governments all educate people based on the virtues promoted by saints.

As presented in "A Preliminary Study on the Meanings of Compassion - Perspectives from Students Enrolled in A Buddhist Studies Department" (Huang et al., 2015), the two Buddhist virtues (benevolence and compassion) were performed by Buddha and Bodhisattva. They both kept all beings in their mind by giving happiness and mitigating bitterness with empathic, compassionate and benevolent attitude. They proactively helped people without asking for returns, and their altruist behaviors fully showed their open heart in enhancing people's lives.

In Confucianism, the ten virtues (the fidelity to one's parents and brothers and to the monarch and friends, the sense of propriety, justice, integrity and shame as well as benevolence and

compassion) can be concluded as "kindness" and the expression of "kindness" is the spirit of "righteousness" which can benefit the whole society.

Benign, upright, courteous, temperate, and complaisant are thus the features of Confucian ideology. Whenever Confucius visited a country, he must observe its politics. Because the contemporary politicians were obsessed with interests and failed to see the principles of establishing and ruling countries, he decided to educate them with his personal conduct. Just as Confucius said, "If you govern with the power of your virtue, you will be like the North Star. It just stays in its place while all the other stars position themselves around it." We can see the principle for managing enterprises should put emphasis on moral education. The virtuous deeds will be looked up to and revered by employees.

In "The Mediating Effects of Employees' Organization Commitment between Leadership Styles and Job Performance: Their Well-being as Moderator", Liu et al. (2017) proved that providing external bonus and rewards to employees can be effective in enhancing their job performance. However, physical incentives and punishments are not the only approaches to attain business objectives in real workplaces. In addition, enterprises can truly retain talents, create vitality for business management and establish foundations for sustainable development by soliciting a wide range of employee opinions, cultivating group consensus and shaping future vision.

Confucius said, "Let the will be set on the path of duty. Let every attainment in what is good be firmly grasped. Let perfect virtue be accorded with. Let relaxation and enjoyment be found in the polite arts." As Jiang (2017) discussed in her study, Why "motivation" turned into "resistance"?, the Japanese entrepreneur Kazuo Inamori mentioned that the philosophical core of business management lies in the value of altruism. Just like the Indian proverb goes, "The successes of great people primarily result from their active behaviors based on the spirit of altruism rather than their actions." Similarly, Confucianism held the opinion that "The determined scholar and the man of virtue will not seek to live at the expense of injuring their virtue. They will even sacrifice their lives to preserve their virtue complete." The extreme expression of "benevolent integrity" is generally based on altruism.

3. Empirical Analysis

The best practice for enhancing business operation performance begins with "hearts". Chung and Lin (2016) investigated the deviations of classroom observation in study of education and cases from physical education and they pointed out "John Henry Effect". Moreover, the Hawthorne Effect in Sedgwick & Greenwood (2015) also demonstrated that people tend to perform better when they were paid more attention. Zhang (2016) has presented her views in "Reflections on the measures and plight of pursuing equal education in Taiwan: from the perspective of childhood concepts". As indicated by Zhang's (2016) research, Rife Squish was awarded with "The Best Teacher in America" and "National Medal of the Arts". He dedicated 25 years to a poor community school and transformed the school education towards positive directions with collective efforts. The average performance of the school students is no worse than that of the students from exclusive residential districts— which is called "Pygmalion

Effect". These cases can serve as evidence for the following theory: all the objectives can be achieved with certain outcomes if we start from "hearts".

4. Conclusions

To conclude from the reflections above, the "virtues" and essence in our hearts are the key factors for establishing outstanding corporate cultures. For further elaboration, the fidelity to one's parents and brothers (i.e. xiao and ti) is the basis to encourage mutual respect in enterprises; the fidelity to the monarch and friends (i.e. zhong and xin) is helpful for the enterprises to achieve their objectives; the profound essence of propriety, justice, integrity and shame (i.e. li, yi, lian and chi) can form great moral integrity; the virtues of benevolence and compassion (i.e. ci and bei) contribute to proactive actions. The study intends to combine the Confucian genuine spirit and the Buddhist benevolent virtues and apply these ten virtues to business management in order to form the foundation for enhancing business operation performance.

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