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UNDERSTANDING INTEGRITY ACROSS GENERATIONS IN CHINA: IMPLICATIONS FOR PERSONNEL CHOICES IN CHINESE CORPORATIONS

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Abstract: Superior leadership, ethical decision-making, and integrity are essential qualities for business managers at all levels of an organization, especially in today's quickly-changing global society. This is particularly true in the People's Republic of China (PRC) where relationships and their integrity play a prominent role in all interactions, commercial and otherwise. Multinational corporations devote numerous resources to developing leadership competencies and decision-making skills, which include the ability to navigate the business successfully during influential economic, organizational, and societal changes, like the recent economic crisis, the various business scandals, and the numerous political conflicts. This expectation is even more pronounced upon Chinese companies because their actions impact significantly the global economy. In an effort to learn more about the necessary attributes and skills needed to manage well during this liminal period in the global economy, this paper looks at how generational differences in China shape the leadership styles and decision-making frameworks of successful business leaders. The formative experiences of successful executives, communicated through personal interviews and surveys, lay the groundwork for this paper's eventual recommendations on how to cultivate integrity, social responsibility, and ethical awareness among this new generation of multinational companies, especially across the generational lines of its leadership in the People's Republic of China.

Keywords: Integrity, Taoism, Buddhism, Confucianism, business ethics, China, stakeholder management, generations

Superior leadership, ethical decision-making, and integrity are essential qualities for business managers at all levels of an organization, especially in today's quickly-changing global society. This is particularly true in the People's Republic of China (PRC) where relationships and their integrity play a prominent role in all interactions, commercial and otherwise. Multinational corporations devote numerous resources to developing leadership competencies and decision-making skills, which include the ability to navigate the business successfully during influential economic, organizational, and societal changes, like the recent economic crisis, the various business scandals, and the numerous political conflicts. Chinese companies will do society a significant service by also emphasizing ethics training and development because their actions reverberate across the global economy.

The formative experiences of successful executives, communicated through personal interviews and surveys,[1] lay the groundwork for this paper's eventual recommendations on how to cultivate integrity, social responsibility, and ethical awareness among this new generation of multinational companies,

especially across the generational lines of its leadership in the People's Republic of China (identified respectively as Loyalists, Revolutionaries, Reformers, and Little Emperors). In brief, different generations of business managers in China have different understandings and perspectives about "integrity" and how it applies to business behavior, business ethics, and corporate social responsibility. Accordingly, individual and institutional ethics can and should be cultivated by businesses through personnel, policies, and programs that account for these different generational perspectives. This multi-generational ethics strategy will improve an organization's integrity, retention, and overall performance, as well as provide macro-economic benefits to the global marketplace.

Integrity in China[2]

In China, the concept of "integrity" (de) is of great consequence, "perhaps the most significant word, next to dao, in ancient Chinese macro and micro cosmology" (Boodberg, 1979, p. 32). The Hanyu Da Zidian (the "Comprehensive Chinese Character Dictionary") offers twenty definitions for "de" that describe various virtues and moral conduct, of which integrity is highlighted (Mair, 1990, p. 133-135). The notion of "integrity" has played an important role in Chinese culture throughout the nation's history because of the prominent position it occupies in the various philosophical and and/or religious traditions of China - Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism among them - and it continues to permeate all aspects of Chinese life, including modern business relationships and activities. China's religious heritage has undergone a recent revival - making this an opportune time to examine the understanding of integrity in the hope of discovering some guiding principles that might serve as a starting point for constructing a corporate strategy for social responsibility and leadership development appropriate for Chinese companies of the 21st Century.

Integrity among Asian Wisdom Traditions

Together, Taoism, the recognized religion of China in the 6th Century BCE, and Confucianism, the official national cult around the 5th Century BCE, laid the ideological framework for the concept of integrity that endures in part to this day in China. For instance, the Taoist notion of de/integrity, as expressed numerous times in the Daodejing and Zhuangzi, reflects an "inner power" or "personal virtue" that is the active manifestation of (or behavior in accordance with) the natural order of the universe (i.e., the Tao or the Way) (Sharot, 2001, p. 78). The de/integrity "signifies the personal qualities" and moral make-up of an individual, which is "determined by the sum total of one's actions, good and bad" (Mair, 1990, p. 134). In Taoism, "integrity" was and is seen as an essential quality to lead or manage other people (Waley, 1958, p. 59-68).

In Confucianism, integrity clearly encompasses a moral component, even using the translation "virtue" interchangeably with "integrity" for "de." Confucius (551-479 BCE) held integrity to be one of the essential traits necessary for becoming the extolled "junzi" – gentleman or superior man. Mencius, a disciple of Confucius, developed Confucianism into an elaborate ethical system that superior leaders were supposed to follow. The perfect man with perfect virtue thus adhered to li (rituals), shu (reciprocity), xiao (filial piety), zhong (loyalty), yi (honesty), zhi (knowledge), and xin (integrity), (Ring et al., 1996, p. 707), with each virtue having implications for leadership. Confucianism emphasizes "social harmony" through the practice of these virtues, especially proper respect for the five relations (ruler to subject, father to son, husband to wife, elder brother to younger brother, and friend to friend). A neo-Confucianism can be gleaned from the Communist Party of China's current ideology extolling "social harmony" and from the

international business community's promotion of respect for stakeholder relationships.

Buddhism, by far the dominant religion today in China, outlines its view of "integrity" in the practices of "the Eightfold Path" (i.e., Right View; Right Intention; Right Speech; Right Action; Right Livelihood; Right Effort; Right Mindfulness; Right Concentration). The different sets of Buddhist precepts provide greater direction to the ethical integrity of the path. For example, Mahayana Buddhists, the most common form in China, usually follow the Ten Precepts found in the Mahayana Sutra (Not killing; Not stealing; Not misusing sex; Not lying; Not abusing intoxicants; Not talking about others' errors and faults; Not elevating oneself and blaming others; Not being stingy; Not being angry; Not speaking ill of the Three Treasures). An individual who follows the "path" through the willful actions of Karma attains merit, which leads to a happier next life, freer from suffering, upon rebirth into one of the six realms of existence.

Although Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism did not always enjoy harmonious co-existence, they borrowed frequently from one another. In fact, the three religions were explicitly integrated into one religion named San-i Chiao (literally "Three in One" religion) around 1560 by Lin Chao-en. Today, most Buddhists also consider themselves Taoists with an appreciation of the role of Confucian thought on Chinese culture and practice (SACU). This devotion continued to varying degrees even during the formal suppression of religion during the establishment of the Republic of China in 1912, of the People's Republic of China in 1949, and of the atheistic Communist Party of China (CPC).

In 1978, the governing atheistic CPC relaxed religious repression with its reform policies known as the Four Modernizations (of industry, science and technology, agriculture, and military). The reforms included a new Constitution that guaranteed the freedom of religious belief and expression and encouraged an "opening up to the outside world" designed to help China become an industrialized nation earmarked as "socialism with Chinese characteristics" (MacFarquhar, 1987, p. 320).

Integrity in the West

China's various reforms also "opened it up" to Western philosophies, religions, and their corresponding concepts of integrity. Similar to the Chinese perspective, the Western "concept of integrity is a cluster concept, tying together different qualities of character under the one term" (Cox, La Caze, & Levine, 2008). Adjectival synonyms such as honest, true-to-self, courageous, fair, and principled describe some of the traits associated with integrity in general and moral integrity in particular.

Four fundamental philosophies naturally frame any conversation on Western morality: (1) Ancient Greek philosophy; (2) Judeo-Christian religion; (3) Jurisprudence; and (4) the Scientific Method of discovery. Alatheia, the spirit of truth, was the personification of integrity in Ancient Greek mythology. Socrates taught that "The shortest and surest way to live with honor in the world, is to be in reality what we would appear to be; and if we observe, we shall find, that all human virtues increase and strengthen themselves by the practice of them." The Latin for integrity - integritas (meaning intact or whole) – turns truth into the "quality of being complete, undivided, whole and unified." Thus, the adjective integrity may be used equally to describe the sound condition of a physical structure like a building and to describe the soundness and stability of a person's moral character and ethical behavior.

This completeness or wholeness implies a purity of elements (like the quality of bricks or other building materials for an edifice) that include different qualities that comprise a virtuous character (like honesty, loyalty, and compassion). Thus, truth and integrity reflect adhering to one's deepest values, even

when confronted by conflicting desires. Integrity, and its wholeness, manifests itself in relationships, corresponding well with the Chinese concept of "social harmony."

The Judeo-Christian concept of integrity promotes the adherence to precepts of divinely revealed universal truths. In the Hebrew Scriptures for instance, the Lord said to Solomon, "As for you, if you will follow me with integrity and godliness, as David your father did, obeying all my commands, decrees, and regulations, then I will establish the throne of your dynasty over Israel forever" (1 Kings 9:4). In the New Testament, Paul instructed Timothy to "Run from anything that stimulates youthful lusts. Instead, pursue righteous living, faithfulness, love, and peace" (2 Timothy 2:22). But biblical integrity does not mean blind obedience, but rather a proper motive joined to a good action, as evidenced by David's words to God, "I know, my God, that you examine our hearts and rejoice when you find integrity there. You know I have done all this with good motives, and I have watched your people offer their gifts willingly and joyously" (1 Chron. 29:17).

American Jurisprudence (i.e., the theory, philosophy and practice of law) emphasizes the establishment of enforceable rights and duties by the recognized authoritative body of government. The legal concept of integrity expects "lawmakers to make the total set of laws morally coherent" (Dworkin, 1986, p.176). Legal integrity is an ideal virtue where laws are established and enforced without the compromise of fundamental principles and values (Dworkin, 1986). The Equal Protraction Clause in the United States Constitution is an obvious example of legal integrity. The Fourteenth Amendment's assurance that "no state shall ... deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws" (U.S. Con., Am. XIV) is designed to guarantee that no law compromises the United States' founding principle that "all men are created equal" (Declaration of Independence).

Lastly, the scientific method of discovery - whereby a hypothesis is evaluated and judged by an experiment that provides observable data – adds an objective quality to the Western understanding of integrity. For example, integrity describes decision-making about the rightness or wrongness of actions that is "conceptually clear, logically consistent, apprised of relevant empirical evidence," and devoid of defective logic, fallacious reasoning, or incomplete processes (Halfon, 1989, p. 37).

The similarities between the Western and Eastern concepts of integrity are self-evident. Each appears to try in their own way to balance self-realization with ethical relationships based on fundamental principles rooted in experience and authority. Buddhism seems to focus on self-realization the most, while the Judeo-Christian view, American Jurisprudence, and Confucianism lean more towards social ethics. Taoism and Greek philosophy seem the most adept at balancing or integrating self-discovery with moral behavior in their respective constructs for integrity. The most interesting similarity between the Eastern and Western perspectives on integrity is the comparable questions that each leaves unanswered.

For instance:

1) Is integrity primarily a personal principle or a relational responsibility?
2) Is integrity a static characteristic or developable trait?
3) Is integrity essential to moral behavior and right actions?

Integrity and Business Ethics

Ethics, as the study of morality, describes, analyzes, and judges what is considered to be right and wrong behavior in a given context. Business ethics is the application of that evaluative process to the behavioral norms and standards as designated in the world of commerce. Many of the moral principles utilized in business ethics find parallels in the concept of integrity in both Asian and Western cultures. For example: Utility (determines rightness or wrongness by evaluating the consequences, favorable and unfavorable, that a policy or practice produces);[3] Rights (evaluates an action or policy based on the rights of each stakeholder and upon the corresponding duty of the business to protect such rights); Justice (act in a manner that protects basic rights and distributes benefits and burdens in a relatively fair manner); Care (act in a way that cultivates important stakeholder relationships); Exemplar Ethic (act how the person you admire would act or would advise you to act); Religious Ethic (act according to religious norms and beliefs) (Fort, 1996);[4] Golden Rule (do unto others as you would have done unto you);[5] Virtue Ethic (act in manner that will nurture important virtues like honesty, loyalty, respect, diversity, transparency); Legal Ethic (act in a manner that does not violate the law); Organizational Ethic (follow the values delineated in the company's mission statement or code of ethics) (Bandsuch & Winsor, 2005). Each of these principles represents a distinct and vital intellectual instrument and evaluative tool to assist and support the ethical decision-making process and its resultant business behavior.

Business ethics is an evolving field whose decision-making and actions include corporate social responsibility, sustainable development, and philanthropy among its many forms. Both the Chinese and American concepts of integrity contain ethical perspectives that are applicable to the various dimensions of business – from the acquisition of natural resources to the distribution of the final product or service (and every activity and relationship in between). The need for integrity and ethics in business has never been greater as made clear by the numerous business scandals that have ushered in a new generation defined by unethical behavior. For example, the subprime mortgage crisis that counts Lehman Brothers, Bear Stearns, and 118 U.S. banks among its casualties in 2009 (after only seventeen banks had collapsed in the previous 9 years), the $50 Billion Ponzi Scheme perpetrated by Bernie Madoff, and the SEC's failure to prevent either have become the most recent infamous faces attached to the growing body of corporate scandals.

The business scandals have not been isolated to the financial industry, as executive malfeasance has surfaced in product safety, environmental damage, labor abuses, and deceptive practices at every stage of the production process. Nor have the scandals been limited to business (with sports, media, and government sharing the scandal spotlight) or by geography with Europe, Asia, and Africa experiencing their own continental controversies. In particular, China has taken center stage with its scandals involving lead-tainted toys, anti-freeze-containing toothpaste, and melamine-contaminated milk. The role of globalization and multinational companies further broadens the impact of business improprieties beyond the traditional geographical or economic barriers, which are quickly disappearing. Finally and most ominously, these scandals seem to reveal only the tip of an immense unethical iceberg, whose enormity remains unknown underneath the current murky and tumultuous economic waters.

Together, these scandals are eroding trust in businesses, economies, and in the integrity of their stakeholder relationships. Customers no longer trust producers, employees no longer trust employers, retailers no longer trust suppliers, investors no longer trust executives, lenders no longer trust entrepreneurs, and society no longer trusts business. The impact of this lack of trust and integrity on business, on the

economy, and on overall society is potentially devastating as the current economic crisis indicates. The solution, in part, requires the rebuilding of integrity among all aspects of business and the renewal of trust among all stakeholder relationships. This paper outlines a corporate ethics strategy designed to cultivate stakeholder integrity and business trust across generational lines in China.

Different Generations and Their Views of Business Ethics and Integrity

Cultural factors studied for their impact upon ethical behavior in business include individual characteristics like age, gender, education, class, and job tenure as well as organizational components like company culture, reward structures, and training programs (Dubinsky & Levy, 1985). As influential as religion, education, and class may be on ethical attitudes, the prominent events within one's generation may be that much more formative to one's moral development (Baltes, 1979). This seems especially true in China, where each respective generation displays a slightly different understanding of integrity and of its importance to business based on the formative experiences of their specific generation.[6]

Every culture makes generational classifications based on the political, social, and moral ideas, experiences, and personality of the youth cohort during a specific historical period (Scappini, 2006). Because these experiences and ideas are shared by a vast majority of young people during the formational stage of their lives, deal with profound and fundamental aspects of society, and occupy a significant political, cultural, and moral position during that particular historical period, they essentially form or transform the cultural dynamics of an entire generation of people, significantly influencing most dimensions of their lives – and most likely for the duration of their lives (Scappini, 2006).

In short, a generation is characterized by the fundamental and formative societal experiences that significantly and enduringly shape the social, cultural, political, and moral development of a critical mass of young people, simultaneously distinguishing it from previous or subsequent generations (which are formed from their own defining moments).

The following is a summary sketch of the generations in China,[7] their formative experiences, their view of business ethics and integrity,[8] and some visible members.

Table 1. ***Generations in China***

Generations in China	**Loyalists** Born before 1948 (> 60 years old)	**Revolutionaries** Born 1949-64 (45-60 years old)	**Reformers** Born 1965-79 (30-45)	**Emperors** Born after 1979 (under 30)
Famous Members	Jiang Zemin He Xiangjian	Xi Jinping Peng Liyuan	Hu Chunhua Pan Shiyi	Liu Xiang Zhang Xin
Formative Experiences	Civil War Sino-Japanese War World War II	PRC Mao Zedong Cultural Revolution	Death of Mao Economic Reforms Open to West Tiananmen Square	One child policy Economic Growth Revive Chinese Culture
View of Ethics and Integrity	Loyalty, Respect Formal Authority Identifiable rules Adherence to institutional precepts Chinese Tradition	Distrustful and questioning of formal authority Apprehension and self-protection	Integration of Chinese culture and tradition with western values Individual rights Adapt Principles and Guidelines	Apolitical Self-interested Neo-Confucian Balance Principles and Rules

Party Loyalists (born before 1945 and currently over 65 years of age) were formed by the numerous conflicts that scarred the Chinese landscape. Its members were born into the Republic of China, itself born out of the Xinhai revolution against the corrupt Qing dynasty of the minority Manchus. The country remained divided during the warlord era (1916-28), the New Culture Movement (@1917-23), and of course the Chinese Civil War (@1927-37, 45-49) which pitted the newly formed communist party against the nationalists. The conflicts were not limited to domestic battles, but included World War I (@1914-1919), the second Sino-Japanese War (@1937-45) which merged into World War II (1939-45) , and the Korean War to a lesser degree (@1945).

This war-weary history explains in part why this generation founded the People's Republic of China in 1949 and its party Loyalist members emphasize the well-being of the state and are very apprehensive about engagement with other nations that might compromise that well-being. For the Loyalists, ethics and integrity involve adherence to institutional precepts representative of Chinese culture and tradition embodied in the Communist Party of China, Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism. Former President Jiang Zemin (born 1926) exemplifies this generation, coming to power in 1989 after the pro-democracy demonstrations at Tiananmen Square and re-establishing the stability of the Communist Party, while simultaneously pursuing economic reforms that would make China an economic world power by the time he retired in 2003. A younger member of this generation, He Xiangjian (67 years old), Billionaire President of Midea Appliance Company has benefited immensely from these economic reforms.

Revolutionaries (born between 1949-60, aged 45-65) were shaped by the early formation of the isolationist attitude of the early People's Republic of China as led by Mao Zedong, its Chairman and President from 1949-1976. Mao's anti-imperialism, anti-feudalism, and anti-bourgeoisie philosophy guided the Great Leap Forward of 1958 and the Cultural Revolution of 1966-76, which tried to abolish old

customs, old habits, old culture, and old ideas and replace them with a reconstructed and self-sufficient socialist state embodied and protected by the young members of the Red Guard. However, the early success of the PRC gave way to apparent failure that resulted in China's political exclusion (unrecognized by the United Nations), economic disaster, educational stagnation, and cultural chaos. The dogmatic nature of this generation's xenophobic experiences combined with the substantial failure of its ideology create a conflicted generation, disillusioned and distrustful of the PRC and all authority that it followed wholeheartedly, only to be drastically disappointed by its outcomes. Integrity, ethics and decision-making vacillate between distrust and obedience to authority. Xi Jinping and Peng Liyuan, husband and wife, have turned their potential cynicism into constructive political service for China's CPC and PLA, respectively.

Reformers (1961-79, 25-45) experienced enormous economic reforms and an unparalleled openness to western culture after the death of Chairman Mao in 1976. The Tiananmen Square protests symbolize their understanding of integrity as protecting individual rights and achievement, but as loyal Chinese. Hu Chunhua and Pan Shiyi, with their quick ascent to power, success, and fame in politics and business respectively, exemplify the unlimited potential of the Reformers.

Little Emperors (1980-95, ages 10-25) began with the one child policy in 1978 and coincided with a booming economy and the revival of Chinese culture. Little emperors are self-interested and apolitical so that their ethics and decision-making focus on individual well-being that is tempered by traditional Confucian Ethics and its humaneness for the other. The track star and national idol Liu Xiang and the very successful heiress Zhang Xin typify this generation.

Globalists (born before 2000, <10) will be shaped by the economic growth and political prowess of the People's Republic of China. Born after China was welcomed into the World Trade Organization, the prognosis is that Globalists will push the prominence of China further into the global arena with a nationalistic ethic balanced slightly by multinational implications. Having witnessed the economic and societal tragedies caused by various scandals in all areas of society, Globalists will pursue a Neo-Confucianism integrity that returns to basic honesty, transparent ethics, and just decision-making that pursues and protects equitable relationships. 2008 saw a tremendous outpouring of national pride and cooperation during the Olympic Games, the Sichuan earthquake, and southern snowstorms that will further solidify the cohesiveness and caring of this youngest generation.

Each generation, because it coalesced around its own unique formative experiences and defining moments, has its own particular set of values, decision-making skills, view of integrity and how it relates to business. These generational differences thus have a significant impact on all facets of the workplace, including the harmony of stakeholder relationships, ethical behavior, and overall production and performance. Accordingly, these generational differences must be accounted for and incorporated into any business strategy or program designed to cultivate integrity and ethics in the organization and among the stakeholders. The "generations" in the U.S share a similar chronology,[9] but not the same formative experiences, which raises an entire sub-set of cross-cultural, cross-generational issues between Sino-US business dealings.[10]

Table 2. ***Multi-generational Ethics Program***

Generations	**Loyalists** 1948 (OVER 60)	**Revolutionaries** 1949-64 (45-60)	**Reformers** 1965-79 (30-45)	**Emperors** 1979 (UNDER 30)
Hiring	Mentors Responsibility	Limited Numbers Limited Authority Provide Oversight	Leadership Nucleus	Give Training
Training	Mentors Moral Voice	Detailed Info on goals, purpose, method, reasons Moral Reasoning	Prepare for Leadership Social Networking	Prepare for Leadership Moral Reasoning
Managing	Structure Respect Security	Rewards Guidance	Flexibility Autonomy Responsibility	Teams Mentors Uniqueness

Discussion: Designing a Multi-Generational Business Ethics Program

Recognizing the importance of business ethics to employee loyalty, customer satisfaction, company performance, and overall economic wellbeing, many businesses have implemented business ethics programs. The Chinese government recently issued guidelines for Corporate Social Responsibility,[11] providing evidence that China recognizes that business ethics and CSR are essential components for the economic and societal success of the country and its constituents. While a complete ethics program should consist of three equally important dimensions: 1) ethical personnel, 2) ethics training,[12] and 3) ethical culture[13] (Bandsuch, Pate, & Thies, 2008), the subsequent section explores only the ethical personnel dimension in order to illustrate how generationally-sensitive business ethics programs can help cultivate integrity and ethics across generations in the Chinese corporate context.

Ethical Personnel Policy

A critical factor in determining an organization's ethical culture, reasoning and behavior is of course the ethical disposition of its members – the actual decision-makers. Ethical decision-making is impacted by individual factors like values (Dubinsky & Gwin, 1981), attitudes (Ferrell, Johnston, & Ferrell, 2007), religiosity (Vitell & Paolillo, 2003), moral reasoning skills (Murphy et al., 2005), ethical sensitivity (Sparks & Hunt, 1998), and age/generation/job experience (Hoffman, Howe, & Hardigee, 1991). The ideal interview instrument or portfolio process would be one that could accurately measure[14] a potential employee's moral maturity (i.e., ethical sensitivity, ethical disposition, moral motivation, moral reasoning, cognitive complexity, ethical judgments, ethical actions, and ethical fortitude). Given that all these factors are influenced strongly by generational experiences, the potential employee's particular generation becomes an extremely important consideration in the hiring, recruitment, placement, and promotion of personnel and the resultant development and management of an organization's ethical culture, decisions and actions.[15]

Recruitment and Selection of Ethical Employees

The goal of creating an ethical culture is advanced by the employment of personnel whose personal morality corresponds with the ethics of the company because it naturally decreases ethical conflicts, while

also increasing job satisfaction, performance, and loyalty (Ferrell, LeClair & Ferrell 1998). Hiring for a congruence of values seems to be a logical approach that will eventually lead to a more ethical work force (Schwepker, Jr. & Good, 2007). The importance of the overall employee selection process only increases when one considers the significant influence that peers have on ethical behavior (Ford & Richardson, 1994).

In general, Party Loyalists whose values correspond with the company's values are ideal employees because their integrity and ethics are based strongly on adherence to institutional precepts. Unfortunately, Party Loyalists comprise only ten percent of the Chinese population and are already over sixty years of age. Relying on this generation for the future of any organization will be short-lived and mistaken. However, these Loyalists should occupy isolated leadership positions and play a significant role as mentors in the formation of the business' future leadership. This is a wise strategy given that two-thirds of the Chinese population is under fifty years of age. This youthfulness provides great promise for the future growth and economic well-being of China, but it also raises concerns about ethical maturity and organizational continuity. Ethics training and leadership development logically become critical components within such entities, but so does the composition of employees – the optimal generational mix when trying to cultivate an ethical culture that will endure for generations to come.

Reformers seem to be the generation upon which to build an ethical business. In addition to being the largest generation, they have come of age during the economic reforms, as well as during the openness to Western culture. The generational journey of the Reformers seems to parallel the journey of China in general, thereby creating an ideological synchronicity with the nation's moods and movements. They seem to have recaptured many desirable traditional Chinese values while masterfully and delicately blending them with helpful Western ideas. Reformers seem perfectly situated to lead China and Chinese businesses during this period of "Capitalism with Chinese characteristics."

Other reasons for the privileged place of Reformers include:

1) There are so few Loyalists and many are ready for retirement;

2) The Revolutionaries and their ethically conflicted demeanor do not seem well-disposed to China's trends;

3) The Revolutionaries are also not especially well-respected by the Loyalists who are selecting the new generation of leaders;

4) The Little Emperors are still a little young to assume too much responsibility, especially in a society like China that has historically valued tenure and experience highly.

5) The Little Emperors also exhibit more self-interested tendencies resulting from their youthfulness, their status as only-children, and their overexposure and infatuation with many Western values – at the expense of traditional Chinese values (including that of the common good of the people).

When considering all these factors, it seems that the optimal mix of generations in the workplace would be approximately 10% Loyalists, 15% Revolutionaries, 45% Reformers, 30% Little Emperors, with getting well-trained Globalists into the employment pipeline as soon as possible. These are very general approximations that may fluctuate depending on the industry and other factors. More important is the leadership role that each generation should occupy within a business.

Leadership Development

Organizational theory recognizes the role that leaders have on a company's culture in general and on its ethical culture in particular (Trevino & Youngblood, 1990; Belizzi, 1995; Chonko et al., 2002). Top management exercises its ethical influence over employees through the communication, implementation, and embodiment of the company's values.[16] Executives and managers not only help write the ethical policies, but they play a pivotal role in communicating and implementing their values among the sales force. The degree to which leaders at all levels model and reinforce ethical behavior will have a profound impact on the ethical culture of the organization and others perception of it (Valentine & Barnett, 2007).

Mid-level managers, by the nature of their direct supervision, control strategies, positive mentoring, and more observable modeling, may occupy a more influential role than upper-level executives upon employees. Managers leave an unmistakable imprint on the ethical activity of subordinates through the recruiting and hiring process, through training and control systems, and through their attitudes, words, and actions (Schwepker, Jr. & Good, 2007).

China's Ministry of Commerce CSR Guidelines recognize and promote the importance of leadership by calling for upper level leaders to implement an ethics program, to appoint an ethics or compliance officer, and to promote management support for ethics at all levels (CAITEC, 2008). This makes perfect sense since studies and history have clearly displayed that "superiors have a strong impact on the ethics of their subordinates" (Baumhart, 1961; Carroll, 1975; Kelly, 1987) (Wotruba, 1990, p. 36). Confucianism, Taoism, and Chinese traditions likewise attribute responsibility to those in positions of authority. Leadership development among all generations must be a high priority to ensure the continuity of the ethical culture and institutional integrity of an ethical organization.

Loyalists should be serving as mentors to all generations, a role for which they are well-prepared and disposed. Employees within every generation who possess leadership potential should be identified and trained through a well-developed leadership program. This is especially true for Reformers who will be expected to carry the brunt of the leadership for a long time. But Little Emperors need to be prepared quickly and fully so as to ensure the ethical continuity of the business. Thus, the moral reasoning skills of these leaders need to be particularly refined.

Bass (1997), Grojean et al. (2004) and Ingram, LaForge, Schwepker, Jr. (2007) join others who recognize the incredible potential of managers to influence the ethical culture, which they call "transformational leadership." Transformational leadership "features a long-term holistic perspective whereby leaders interact openly and frequently to achieve organizational goals" (p. 307). Transformational leaders clearly articulate the company's mission; express it in their attitudes, words, and actions, extending its values into their relationships with the sales force (Ingram et al., 2007). Leadership's ability to develop positive relationships with both internal and external stakeholders seems essential for cultivating an ethical culture and ethical behavior. Even though "years of research point to the primacy of organizational factors in determining ethical decisions at work" (Ferrell, 2005; Ferrell et al., 2007) such as ethics training and ethical culture, the role of the individual employees remains significant in itself and to the effectiveness of the other two dimensions of an ethics program.

Benefits of a Multi-Generational Ethics Program

The implementation of a multivalent multigenerational ethics program will improve an organization's ethical sensitivity, ethical analysis, ethical culture and ethical behavior, while also leading to more

traditional business benefits of job satisfaction, loyalty, retention, and performance among its employees (Mulki, Jaramillo & Locander, 2006). Ethical behavior appears to contribute to performance advantages at both the individual and organizational levels (Schwepker, Jr. & Good, 2007), even maintaining and expanding its customer base and reputation (Ingram et al., 2007). These business benefits are attributed to the greater ethical sensitivity, stronger stakeholder relationships, and clearer company guidance and support embodied in well-crafted ethics programs (Mulki et al., 2006). Other benefits include greater "job performance, organizational commitment, satisfaction with company policies, with supervisors, with the overall job, with compensation and promotions, with coworkers, and with customers," as well as lower levels of job stress, "role ambiguity, role conflict, emotional exhaustion, and intention to leave" (Cravens et. al, 246, p. 243).

The highest level of ethical behavior and of corresponding business benefits will be achieved when the three dimensions of ethics training,[17] ethical culture[18] and personnel become fully integrated and mutually-supportive, providing a synchronicity that leads to synergy. The multigenerational dimension of the ethics program needs to be equally balanced in order to maximize its benefits. The social harmony among the generations in the workplace will also facilitate social harmony among the company's various stakeholders. The micro-benefits to the company may also provide macro-benefits to the industry and economy – such as sustainable economic growth, avoidance of scandals, and expanded trade relations.

Although parallels between integrity and ethics clearly exist, a major distinction continues to create confusion – the personal nature of integrity versus the institutional nature of ethics. Descriptions of integrity in business usually are personal – clarifying the person's beliefs or behaviors. Meanwhile, ethics contains an organizational dimension – even to the point that an individual's morality often contains the qualifier of "my personal" ethic. Integrity needs no such qualifier. This distinction raises questions about the role that personal integrity might play in institutional ethics – questions that could be illuminated through additional research.

Conclusion

The different generations of workers in the People's Republic of China (Loyalists, Revolutionaries, Reformers, and Emperors) have different understandings of the meaning of integrity and of its application to business behavior, business ethics, and corporate social responsibility. Yet, individual and institutional integrity and its corresponding business ethics can be cultivated through ethics program that account for these different generational perspectives in the critical areas of: 1) ethical personnel, 2) ethics training, and 3) ethical culture. These multigenerational ethics programs should enhance the "social harmony" among the four generations, which should advance overall stakeholder relationships, ethical behavior, and traditional business benefits like productivity and profit.

Notes

1. The methodology consisted of a two phases: 1) A qualitative study consisting of interviews with executives and entrepreneurs; 2) A quantitative study that included questions on the importance/relevance of the teachings of Confucius, Mao Zedong and Western philosophy on their decision-making processes.
2. The attempt to precisely define a moral concept like "integrity" is laced with linguistic, cultural, contextual, and philosophical limitations. Additional challenges involve interpretations influenced by race,

gender, education, geography, age, income, and other demographic characteristics like generations (which this paper proposes as most determinative). Yet, accepting these inherent challenges, trying to understand the important concept of integrity is a worthwhile endeavor because it helps to provide a more nuanced and layered understanding of a significant moral construct within and between various cultures, which should then assist the communication and interaction between these various cultures in their business, political, and social dealings.

3. Mao himself admitted to reading and admiring western classics like John Stuart Mill on ethics, Adam Smith on capitalism, Rousseau on logic, and Montesquieu on law (Melvin, 2007, p. 11).

4. As to religion, strength of religious beliefs (but not denomination or value orientation) was found to be strongly related to ethical behavior (McNichols and Zimmerer 1985).

5. Comparable sayings to the Golden Rule, found in MTT 7:12 of Christian scripture can be found in other religious traditions. In Confucian teaching, the rule is most prominently presented in a negative form, "Never impose on others what you would not choose for yourself" (Analects XV.24).

6. Preliminary findings indicate that geographical region, urban/rural setting, and type of education also influence the view of integrity and ethics among Chinese.

7. The demarcations of generations are not immutable because some people's development may overlap two generations (beginning at the end of one generation and continuing briefly into the beginning of another). These "cuspers" may exhibit characteristics outside their birth generation and possibly of both generations.

8. Although other characteristics such as political affiliation, family dynamics, and work/leisure balance may be influenced by generational affiliation, the focus here is on ethical perspectives and decision-making in business.

9. Veterans (born before 1945, >65) found their identity in World War II and the earlier Great Depression. They view integrity as loyalty and assistance to the larger group, with ethics and decision-making as adherence to rules and norms. Baby Boomers (1945-60, 45-65) experienced the Civil Rights Movement and other social reform during their formative years. They see integrity, ethics, and decision-making as being rooted in fundamental values and inalienable rights that can be adapted to different situations. Gen-Xers (1961-80, 25-45) were influenced by their absentee parents and early political scandals like Watergate. Thus their ethics and decision-making emphasize individual well-being, self-sufficiency, and self-realization.

Millennials (1981-2000, 10-25) have been raised in prosperity and rapid technological advancements. Integrity, ethics, and decision-making all attempt to balance personal development with societal well-being. Homelanders (2000-2020 <10) have experienced scandals in all areas of society accompanied by an economic downturn. The prognosis is that Homelanders will be very apprehensive of international relationships and will pursue a reform agenda with emphasis on a transparent ethics that pursues and protects equitable relationships and punishes unethical and illegal behavior.

10. The interest in cross-cultural business ethics has paralleled the growth of multinational businesses operations (Sims, 2009), a natural consequence of companies encountering differing ethical perspectives in various countries. Academicians, governments, and businesses alike believe that a fuller understanding of cultural differences will improve multinational business relationships, cross-cultural ethics, and global economic development (Blodgett, et al., 2001). This insightful theory contains at least one major flaw: it

views each nation as possessing an essentially homogeneous culture, which incorrectly oversimplifies the cross-cultural dynamics of the current global economy.

11. The Chinese Academy of International Trade & Economic Cooperation (CAITEC), a subsidiary of the People's Republic of China Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) issued CSR Guidelines in 2008.

12. A well-run ethics training program that utilizes the stakeholder model and social networking can help employees to understand the different perspectives, decision-making approaches, and formative experiences of their co-workers and other stakeholders.

13. Ethical culture usually includes formal policies (mission statement, codes of conduct), control strategies (compensation, discipline), and informal practices (symbols, stories, interactions). Control strategies and informal practices should be tailored for each generation in order to achieve optimal impact.

14. In order to determine the cognitive complexity, ethical sensitivity, personal values, ethical fortitude, and moral stage of development of potential professionals, tests designed to measure these attributes and their optimal levels should be developed and given as part of the application process. Rest's (1986) Defining Issues Test, which looks at moral sensitivity, judgment, motivation, and character, is a good place to start. Christie and Geis' (1970) Mach IV exam, which measures a leader's perspective on the appropriate purpose and use of power in order to anticipate ethical compromise, would be another helpful tool. Similarly useful are the Ethics Position Questionnaire developed by Forsyth (1980) and the Multidimensional Ethics Scale developed by Reidenbach and Robin (1988).

Interestingly, scholars predicted an increase in psychological testing among businesses would eventually occur (Bergen, Dutta and Walker 1993; Verbeke, Ouwerkerk and Peelen 1996). It may be worth the investment to create an exam tailored to one's particular organization.

15. Without diminishing the important role that ethics training plays in improving the ethical behavior of sales people, limits to its effectiveness do exist based in part on the individual's current level of moral development (Ferrell, et al. 2005). Given this limitation, the recruiting and hiring of ethical people takes on added significance and can only enhance the ethical well-being of a sales force. This is especially true since cognitive complexity, empathy, and moral development are critical ethical skills for the stakeholder management framework. Therefore, sales departments might want to organize their candidates' pool in a manner that prioritizes the non-discriminatory attributes of type of education, cognitive complexity, ethical sensitivity, personal values, ethical fortitude, and moral stages of development. Yet, further research is necessary to more clearly understand this area, and to avoid any sort of discriminatory "sales personnel profiling."

16. Influential organizational leaders, however, are not exclusively found among professionals with titles and prestige. Lower level employees are often the most influential leaders through friendships, peer pressure, informal mentoring, humor, and gossip (Bandsuch and Cavanagh, 2005). An organization that touts its ethical culture is rendered mute if its message is unheard or ignored by the many subsidiary employees who serve as a major voice to a company's true ethical message. The union representative, the helpful co-worker, the insightful lunch partner, the successful sales team, even the funny and popular peer have an unprecedented power to impact organizational culture and its ethical climate. Therefore, it may behoove a company to identify both potential formal and informal leaders and work with them in designing and cultivating an ethical climate. The hiring and training of employees at all levels of the business, but especially of informal and formal leaders, will be a significant factor in determining a company's ethical

culture, climate and corresponding behavior.

17. A well-run ethics training program that utilizes the stakeholder model and social networking can help employees to understand the different perspectives, decision-making approaches, and formative experiences of their co-workers and other stakeholders. Such ethics training can help overcome generational differences in ethical reasoning by breaking down the false stereotypes about generations that often hinder inter-generational dialogue and cooperation. Improving the multigenerational communication and social networking, especially among the boundary spanners within the organization, will decrease role ambiguity, expand the ethical reach of the business, and cultivate "guanxi" among internal and external stakeholder relationships.

18. Ethical culture usually includes formal policies (mission statement, codes of conduct), control strategies (compensation, discipline), and informal practices (symbols, stories, interactions). Control strategies and informal practices should be tailored for each generation in order to achieve optimal impact. In general, revolutionaries need much more positive reinforcement for their good behavior and a softer form of admonishment and detailed explanations for their mistakes. This need is rooted in the mixed messages they experienced during the Cultural Revolution. Little Emperors have a similar disposition resulting from the one-child policy. Loyalists and Reformers thrive with a balanced reward system. At the very least, some specific management responses to both ethical and unethical behavior are necessary to influence the ability of the entire sales force to recognize ethical quandaries (McClaren 2000).

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