



A TYPOLOGY OF CONFUCIAN VALUES, ETHICS AND CULTURE: IMPLICATIONS FOR MANAGEMENT

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Background

- With rapid growth in Far Eastern economies it is becoming imperative to understand the culturally driven ethical-value underpinnings of the management processes in this region of the world (Shenkar 2006).
- The world's economic center of gravity may now also be considered to be “tilting East.”
- In business alliances, Western businesses need to understand that their Eastern counterparts have different motivations, morality and philosophies on cooperation and competition (Paul et al. 2006).
- Hence, businesses need to pay attention to the specific philosophies derived from the Chinese context in order to develop better business strategies (Wu & Wokutch, 2015).

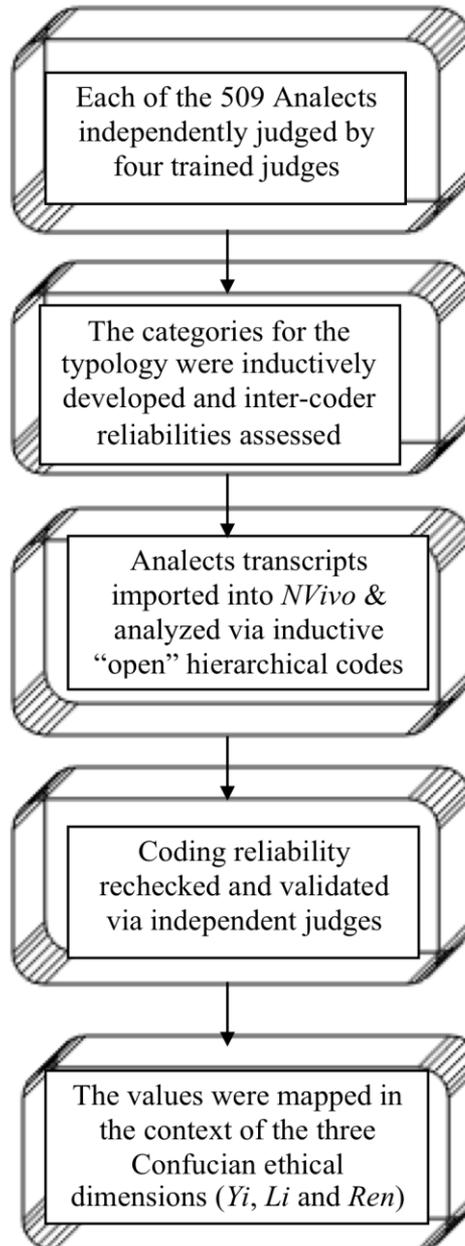
Research Question

- Importance of Confucianism, along with Taoism and Buddhism, in Chinese culture.
- Confucianism is a ‘philosophy of life’ or ‘the way’ in the tradition of non-organized religions (Mukhopadhyay & Paul, 2003).
- We used Eno’s (2015) translations (most authentic and current to date) of Confucius’ teachings or analects (*lunyu*).
- Is it possible to create a typology of these 509 diverse analects?

Methodology and Analysis

- The 509 Analects were initially content analyzed independently reviewed by at least three of the coders. Content analysis allowed us to codify text and content of written narratives into groups or categories based on selected criteria, with the end goal of transforming the material into dimensions that permit further analysis.
- Using a grounded theory approach each “Analect” was carefully reviewed and coded into evolving dimensions. This approach is useful when attempting to build theories that import constructs and logics from existing work.
- As a grounded theory approach involves constant comparative analysis, the emergent theoretical concepts, categories, sub-categories and their properties, were further validated inductively using the *NVivo* software package for data analysis. The values of using this software was in drawing links, seeking and establishing explanations and theories, in order to generate qualitative data analysis.

Steps in the Development of the Typology



Examples of Analects and Their Categories

- Book # 3, Analect # 19: “A ruler in employing his ministers should be guided solely by the prescriptions of ritual. Ministers in serving their ruler, solely by devotion to his cause.”

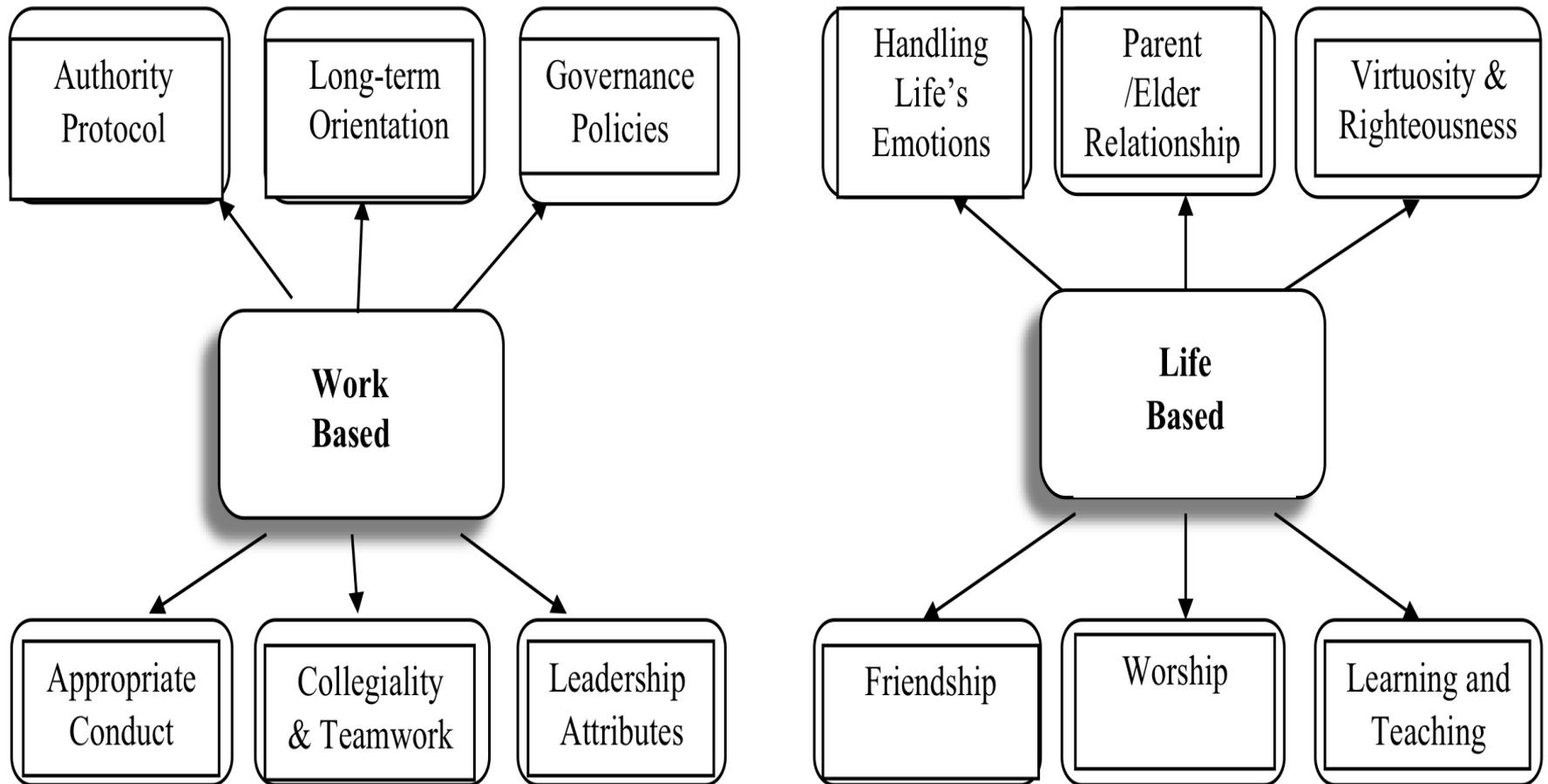
Authority protocol - This refers to the official procedure or system of rules of governance in state and diplomatic affairs.

- Book #1, Analect # 8: “If a gentleman is frivolous, he will lose the respect of his inferiors and lack firm ground upon which to build up his education. First, and foremost he must learn to be faithful to his superiors, to keep promises, to refuse the friendship of all who are not like him. And if he finds he has made a mistake, then he must not be afraid of admitting the fact and amending his ways.”

Leadership attributes - The leader is one who is defined by the good qualities of dignity, approachability, commitment to constant self-improvement, incisive decision-making ability and even-handed justice.

FIGURE 2

Work and Life based Focus Dimensions as per Confucius



• Ethical Dimensions

- Hwang's (2012) analysis of the Confucian ethical systems is divided into the triumvirate model of *Li, Ren and Yi*.
- Confucius proposed that social interaction should be seen through the lens of the relationship between an individual and others based on two social dimensions - intimacy/distance and superiority/inferiority (~ *Ubuntu* ?)
- This resulted in the following three ethical systems:
 - ***Li or Propriety*** is based on acting according to previously established rites or social norms. It refers a concrete guide to human relationships or general ordering of life. It also emphasizes the positives rather than negatives (Do's rather than Don'ts).
 - ***Ren or Benevolence and Unboundedness*** refers to kind and generosity, and encourages people to be caring, thoughtful and selfless. It is what makes an individual distinctively human and gives them their humanity.
 - ***Yi or Righteousness*** denotes moral disposition to do good, and as such a necessary condition for *Ren*, or the superior man. *Yi* connotes a moral sense, the ability to recognize what is right and good, the ability to feel under the circumstances what the right thing to do.

Table 1
Frequency Distributions of the Analects

	Number of Analects	Percentage within Category ^a	Overall Percentage ^b
<i>Ethical:</i>			
Yi (Righteousness)	154	(35.73%)	30.25%
Li (Propriety)	148	(34.34%)	29.08%
Ren (Benevolence and Unboundedness)	129	(29.93%)	29.34%
Total: (Ethical)	431		
Focus:			
<i>Life based:</i>			
Virtuousness and Appropriate Behavior	224	(32.42%)	44.01%
Handling Life Emotions	94	(28.08%)	38.11%
Learning and Teaching	117	(16.93%)	22.99%
Parent/Elder Relationship	78	(11.29%)	15.32%
Friendship	41	(5.93%)	8.05%
Worship	37	(5.35%)	7.73%
Total (Life based):	691		
<i>Work based:</i>			
Leadership Attributes	174	(27.35%)	34.18%
Appropriate Conduct	172	(27.04%)	33.79%
Authority Protocol	96	(15.09%)	18.86%
Governance Policies	74	(11.64%)	14.54%
Long term Orientation	67	(10.53%)	13.16%
Collegiality and Teamwork	53	(8.33%)	10.41%
Total (Work based):	636		

Ethical Dimensions of Work and Life-related Values

Ethical Dimensions

		Li (Propriety)	Ren (Benevolence & Unboundedness)	Yi (Righteousness)	
Life	Friendship	12	10	13	
	Handling Life's Emotions	47	69	54	
	Learning & Teaching	35	24	27	
	Parent/Elder Relationship	27	8	24	
	Virtuousness & Appropriate Behavior	54	84	85	
	Worship	25	5	5	
	Appropriate Conduct	63	39	62	
	Auhority Protocol	51	12	28	
	Work	Collegiality & Teamwork	17	15	16
		Governance Policies	30	7	28
Leadership Attributes		48	76	49	
Long term Orientation		20	13	29	

Life

Focus

Work

Figure 3

Mapping the Life and Work Foci on the Ethical Dimensions:

Life based Focus

Virtuousness & Appropriate Behavior

Handling Life's Emotions

Learning & Teaching

Parent/Elder Relationship

Worship

Work based Focus

Leadership Attributes

Appropriate Conduct

Authority Protocol

Governance Policies

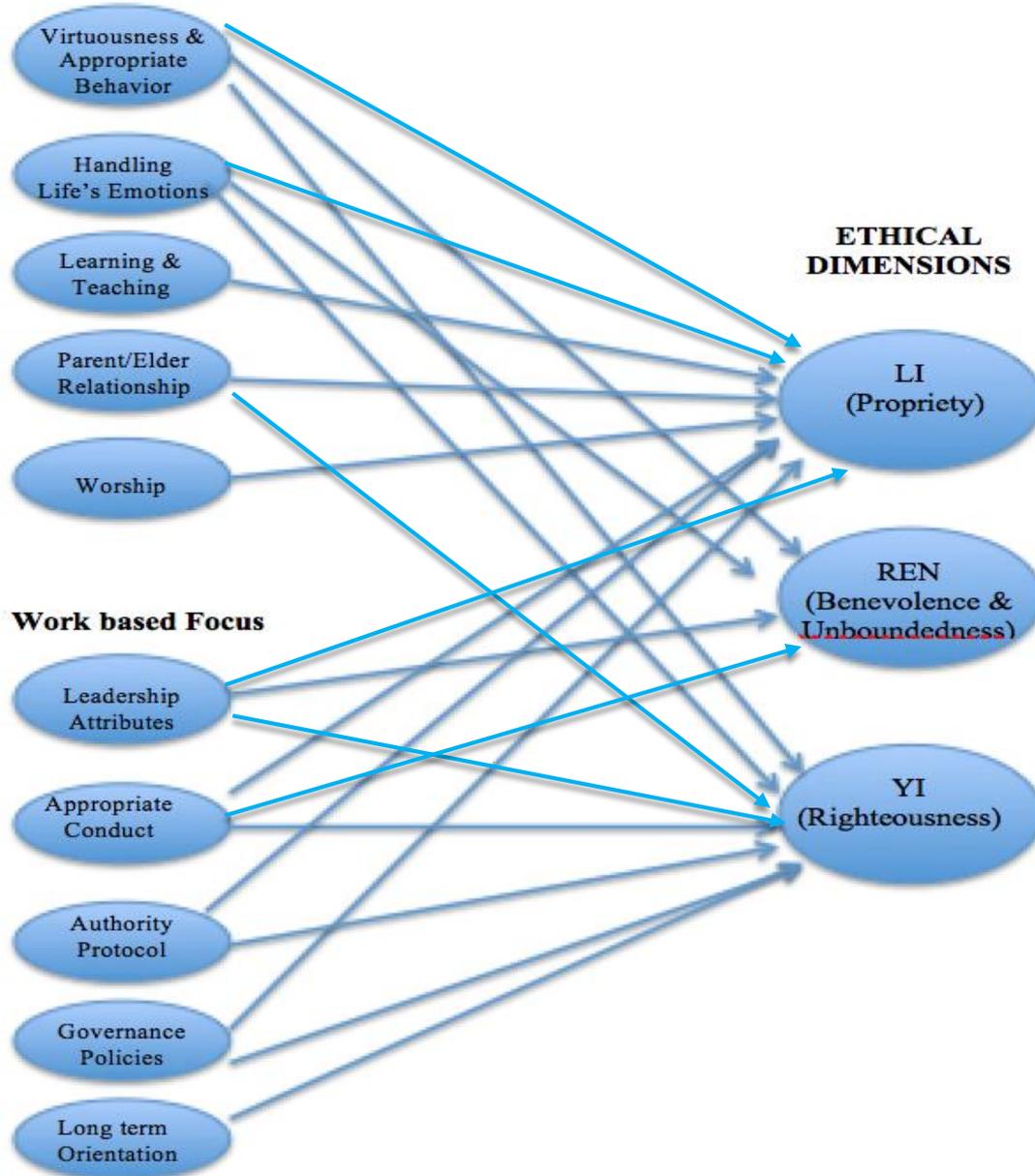
Long term Orientation

ETHICAL DIMENSIONS

LI
(Propriety)

REN
(Benevolence & Unboundedness)

YI
(Righteousness)



Future Research

- One potential area of future research is to empirically validate scales to measure the twelve dimensions proposed in this research.
- The typology proposed can further be cross classified into two dimensions - Focus (life vs. work) and Value Orientation (Cultural vs. Ethical) producing four possible combinations. The Analects can then be placed in the respective cells.
- Furthermore, one could also examine the differential impact of Confucius's teachings and philosophy has had a broader impact on thought and life in other parts of South-East Asia (most notably in Korea, Japan, Taiwan and Vietnam). How have they changed over time?
- Finally, it would also be interesting to see how the proposed Confucian dimensions map onto existing Western-based cultural dimensions such as those proposed by Hofstede (2001), the GLOBE study, House et al. (2004) and others.



Thank You!