

The Application of Chinese Traditional Culture in Modern Enterprise Management

Yaling Li

School of Business and Tourism Management
Yunnan University
Kunming, China

Abstract—Sustainable development requires enterprises to adopt innovative measures suitable for themselves and conforming to social development in internal and external management. Chinese traditional culture contains excellent concepts of the Chinese nation, so it can further promote the development and progress of modern enterprises to apply traditional culture in the development process of enterprises in an appropriate and innovative way. Chinese traditional culture is characterized by universality and deeply rooted in daily behaviors and ideas of Chinese people. Applying Chinese traditional culture in enterprise management can make employees cognitively recognize the enterprise management method and more easily accept the innovative management mode. For a Chinese enterprise, if it completely adopts western management mode, it needs to do a lot of preparatory work to adapt to western culture due to cultural adaptability, while the application of Chinese traditional culture can greatly shorten the adaptation period and thus improve work efficiency.

Keywords—Chinese traditional culture; modern enterprise development; enterprise culture; HR management

I. INTRODUCTION

Chinese enterprises started late in terms of enterprise management, some companies completely adopt the western management theory, entirely accept and use the foreign management experience and management mode, without considering whether it is suitable for their own enterprises. Under the eastern communication mode and the western management mode, employees feel inadaptable due to the differences between eastern and western ideas and values, so it fails to fully arouse employees' enthusiasm for work. As a result, western management ideas are partly "unacclimatized" in practice. Therefore, applying Chinese traditional culture in enterprise management and combining Chinese traditional culture with western management ideas are of wide and practical significance, which not only can use the general cognition and acceptability of Chinese traditional culture to make up for the limitations in application of western management ideas, but also can carry forward the essence of Chinese traditional culture.

II. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRADITIONAL CHINESE CULTURE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF MODERN ENTERPRISES

With the continuous development of the times, more and more enterprises realize the importance of culture for an enterprise. The long-standing Chinese traditional culture has not only penetrated into our daily communication and behaviors, also used by many enterprises for reference. On the basis of keeping the essence of traditional culture, we can combine Chinese traditional culture with western management theory systematically to improve enterprise management and promote enterprise development.

A. Connotation of Chinese Traditional Culture

Traditional Chinese culture, represented by Confucianism, Taoism, Legalism and Buddhism, has been deeply rooted in the hearts of Chinese people and manifested in their daily ideology and behaviors. Confucianism emphasizes humanism, safeguards the "rule of rite", advocates the "rule of virtue" and attaches importance to the "rule of benevolence"; Taoism advocates the view of humanity and view on interest and calls for "rule of law". It is mainly divided into the following four basic aspects.

1) *Nature and man, coexisting peacefully*: The idea "unity of man and nature" classifies human beings as one of the important elements of nature. Nature has its own universal law, and human beings, as a part of nature, should obey this universal law. In carrying out all kinds of activities, human beings should not violate nature's law, nor transform, conquer or even destroy nature with external forces. Instead, human beings should realize their subjective desires in a proper way and to the proper degree according to nature's law, without causing any adverse effects on the nature, and should live with nature in peace.

2) *Putting people first and paying attention to humanity*: "People first" is an important viewpoint of humanism. Ancient Chinese thinkers always stand their ground of "people first", typically represented by humanistic thought of Confucianism. The thought of "people first" emphasizes people as the center, realizes the dominant role and status of people in the development of society and history and

advocates to achieve the original purpose by adopting different methods according to the different individual characteristics.

3) *Being vigorous and promising, constantly striving for self-improvement*: The Book of Changes says, "As heaven keeps vigor through movement, a gentleman should unremittingly practice self-improvement" which is a concentrated generalization and vivid reflection of the spirit of "be vigorous and promising, constantly strive for self-improvement" of the ancient Chinese nation. Through a long history, Chinese people not only do not forget the positive ideas such as working hard and constantly realizing self-improvement contained in the traditional spirit, but also reflect these ideas in their daily communication and behavior norms.

4) *Upholding harmony and moderation, and pursuing harmonious unification*: "Value harmony and moderation" means adhering to the doctrine of "the moderation" to achieve the realm of "harmony". The key of the moderation lies in propriety, that is, to advocate proper statements and actions, without partiality, and opposing extremes, so as to achieve harmony among people. "Harmony" is the harmony in the whole and can be the "harmony in diversity", and this harmony in the whole contains the unity of the interaction of the inner opposites. "Uphold harmony and moderation" reflects the Chinese nation's persistent pursuit of harmony, including harmony within nature, harmony between man and nature, harmony between man and society, harmony among people, etc.

B. *Combination of Chinese Traditional Culture and the Development of Modern Enterprises*

We should understand the modern value of Chinese traditional culture correctly, apply the content of Chinese traditional culture suitable for the development of modern enterprises into enterprise management in a proper way, combine the western management ideas with the essence of Chinese traditional culture, and deepen the reform in an innovative way to make them adaptive to the development of modern enterprises. On this basis, the development of Chinese traditional culture and modern enterprises show the relationship of mutual dependence and mutual promotion.

1) *Effective use of Chinese traditional culture can promote the development of modern enterprises*: The effective use of Chinese traditional culture can sinicize the "unacclimatized" western management ideas and measures, rather than applying the advanced western management measures mechanically. First, applying Chinese traditional ideas and concepts into the enterprise management philosophy and management measures can improve the degree of acceptance of the management layer and it is the precondition for the implementation of management measures that employees recognize and understand managers' management ideas from the bottom of heart. Secondly, in terms of the implementation of management measures, considering the subtle influence of traditional

culture on Chinese people's life, applying it can better achieve the management objectives.

2) *The development of modern enterprises will further carry forward the essence of Chinese traditional culture*: Chinese traditional culture is spread more as a kind of spirit in the modern society, and the development of modern enterprises through systematical combination and use of the traditional culture can bring innovative transformation to the traditional culture and make the traditional culture be used in a way in line with the times. Therefore, we can realize that traditional culture is not only the ideology we need to inherit, but also can be further carried forward in an innovative way in modern society. Taking effective measures to use the excellent traditional culture has become a great drive power to promote better development and progress of modern society.

III. THE APPLICATION OF CHINESE TRADITIONAL CULTURE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF MODERN ENTERPRISES

The application of Chinese traditional culture in the development of modern enterprises reflects in two aspects: the positive aspect is the systematic combination of traditional culture with modern enterprises, together with its effective use and innovative transformation; the negative aspect is that modern enterprises fail to use the traditional culture in a proper way.

A. *The Positive Influence of Chinese Traditional Culture on the Development of Modern Enterprises*

More and more modern enterprises integrate traditional Chinese culture into their daily business management process, mainly applying it to human resource management, enterprise culture construction, enterprise team construction, etc. and having achieved certain results.

1) *Promoting the concept of "people first" in operation*: "People first" is manifested as the personalized management of the enterprise employees internally and as the satisfaction of individual demands of customers externally.

2) *Upholding the business principle of "integrity"*: Confucius, the representative of Confucianism, said, "They are determined to be sincere in what they say, and to carry out what they do". In addition, in traditional culture, there are some idioms and stories such as "a word which carries weight" and "promise is debt" which praise the good virtue—integrity.

3) *Adhering to the spirit "being vigorous and promising, constantly striving for self-improvement"*: Chinese people have the spirit of "constant self-improvement" in their hearts. For an enterprise, a positive and aggressive enterprise atmosphere is a powerful driving force for its development and progress.

4) *Promoting the good working atmosphere of "harmony and cooperation"*: Chinese traditional culture advocates the idea "harmony is the precious", and the combination of the traditional culture and the development

of modern enterprises will also promotes this idea, so that employees can think peacefully and calmly when they face ambiguity or contradiction at work, and accomplish the set goals through cooperation once the enterprise assign tasks.

B. *The Negative Influence of Traditional Chinese Culture on the Development of Modern Enterprises*

In the process of combining traditional Chinese culture with modern enterprise management, some enterprises have taken the wrong way and apply negative and conservative traditional culture in modern enterprise management, or fail to put the traditional culture in the right position in the development of modern enterprises, resulting in some negative effects.

1) *Inflexible understanding of "the doctrine of the moderation", hindering the innovation and improvement of the enterprise:* "The moderation" is an idea emphasizing impartiality, moderation and compliance with common practice. However, with the development and progress of modern society, objectively, modern enterprises cannot be always in a state of impartiality. The society requires enterprises to make progress, and if the enterprise thinks little of innovation and opposes reform, this will make the enterprise lag behind the trend of social development and progress, thus blocking the sustainable development path of the enterprise.

2) *Advocating the traditional unassuming style in management:* Chinese traditional culture stresses modesty and low profile, but this kind of unassuming style is obviously out of place in modern enterprises. How dynamic would an enterprise be if all its employees keep low profile and modest? For employees, keeping low profile and modest is a virtue needing to be promoted after they have made great progress or been promoted to higher position, but as employees, first, they need to fully show their ability and get recognized, and if they keep low profile and modest all the time, this will lead them to the bottleneck area of their career. For enterprises, the overly unassuming atmosphere may cause communication barriers within the enterprise. Moreover, for managers, praising or criticizing their subordinates is a necessary means, and the low profile and unassuming style may prevent managers from timely and effective communication with their subordinates, thus resulting in the lag of information dissemination and affecting the enterprise development.

3) *Inordinate interpretation of the idea "justice outweighing benefit" in traditional culture:* First of all, we should praise highly the idea "justice outweighing benefit" in traditional culture but in practice, inordinate interpretation of this idea may lead to the deviation from the primary goal of the enterprise. The ultimate goal of an enterprise is profit, and profit is the ultimate goal of all management and operation activities. Other measures taken by the enterprise in the process of operation and management, such as establishing corporate culture and actively fulfilling social

responsibilities are to obtain benefits and achieve the enterprise goal indirectly.

4) *Ignoring social progress and totally relying on traditional culture:* In the process of learning from traditional culture, enterprises tend to ignore the modern social environment and carry forward traditional culture mechanically, which will easily cause the "non-acclimatization" of enterprises. The traditional culture is passed on as a spirit, which is not only because of its original meaning endowed in the creation, but also because of the new meaning which is formed with time, in the inheritance, innovation and carrying forward and in line with the times.

IV. TAKING USE OF CHINESE TRADITIONAL CULTURE TO PROMOTE THE DEVELOPMENT OF MODERN ENTERPRISES

There are still some misunderstandings in the principles and specific measures that modern enterprises should abide by in the process of learning from Chinese traditional culture. Therefore, it is a problem worth discussion and research about how to better apply Chinese traditional culture in enterprise management to promote better development of enterprises.

A. *The Principles for Application of Chinese Traditional Culture in Modern Enterprises*

1) *Absorbing the essence, discarding the dross and correctly understanding traditional culture:* As traditional culture is very inclusive, there are some contents in traditional culture which do not conform to the development of modern society and of the socialism road, such as the unequal status of men and women cognitively. In addition, we should also realize that it is inadvisable to totally repudiate the traditional Chinese culture represented by Confucianism, such as the slogan "overthrow the Confucianism" advocated in the May Fourth Movement Period. Therefore, for Chinese traditional culture, we should not blindly worship and promote it overall, nor completely deny its value, but should use a rational attitude to analyze and consider the part of traditional culture that is suitable for the national condition of contemporary China and in line with the requirements of the new era, and eliminate the negative and conservative aspects to provide positive guidance for the society.

2) *Putting the traditional culture in the right position, putting first things first and using the traditional culture reasonably to promote the development of enterprises:* Chinese traditional culture is a means enterprises use to improve management and realize the development goal. Thus, for the use of Chinese traditional culture, we cannot stay on the surface but go deep into the practice and other each aspects of enterprise management, such as adding traditional Chinese traditional culture into the "unacclimatized" part of western management ideas to make "compromise" and realize the use in harmony, and then achieve the management efficiency and goal.

3) *Keeping pace with the times and making innovative use of traditional culture:* Only by taking the innovation-driven road can China become real strong. The development and progress of modern society provide development opportunities for enterprises, but there are also many challenges and difficulties. In this context, enterprises are required to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the current environment and take measures in line with social development and suitable for their own development needs at the same time. However, there are also stereotyped ideas in Chinese traditional culture, which should be eliminated. Based on the cognition of the current social situation, we should make innovative transformation of Chinese traditional culture to make it conform to the modern society and suitable for modern enterprises.

B. *The Specific Measures for Application of Chinese Traditional Culture in Modern Enterprises*

In full consideration of the current internal and external environment of the enterprise, starting from the details, we can achieve the purpose of integrating traditional culture into the development process of modern enterprises through the implementation of specific measures. We should consider from the following three perspectives:

1) *Enterprise culture:* Enterprise culture is gradually regarded as the soft power that can not be ignored in the competition of enterprises, and can even become the core competitiveness of an enterprise.

a) *Combining enterprise culture with traditional culture to cultivate interest in learning traditional culture:* Chinese traditional culture permeates Chinese people's every words, deeds and actions in daily life. The establishment of enterprise culture combines with Chinese traditional culture, which first of all resonate in the ideological recognition and fully carries forward the excellent concepts of "people-oriented" and "harmonious unity" in traditional culture. If it combines with the daily management of enterprises, and employees can accept the existence of enterprise culture as soon as possible.

b) *Managers play a leading role in promoting the implementation of enterprise culture:* For managers, the first thing is to "subdue people by virtue", and then to further take on the role of "moral leadership". Managers' behavior and work style reflect whether they really recognize the enterprise culture psychologically and the degree of execution in action, which also affects the degree of recognition and execution of enterprise culture by employees. The establishment of enterprise culture can not depend merely on a series of propaganda words or several rigid standards. The perfection of enterprise culture requires that every employee resonate with it and carry it forward in their daily life. Managers should first achieve consistency in their words and deeds, consciously practise enterprise culture, popularize enterprise culture in daily life. At the same time, managers need do a good job of demonstrating and set a good example for employees, so as to drive

enterprises' employees actively participate in the establishment of enterprise culture and practice activities. As a result, enterprises can really concentrate on the whole things with one heart, employees can make cooperation and progress, and enterprises can get good sustainable development.

c) *Implementing integrity management and enhancing integrity consciousness:* Since ancient times, China has been known as the "state of etiquette" in the world and has always upheld the traditional virtue of the Chinese nation, that is, attaching importance to righteousness while neglecting profit. In today's society, integrity has become an invisible capital in the operation and management of enterprises to promote the development and progress of modern enterprises. If enterprises want to operate for a long time, they must abide by laws and regulations and social moral constraints because enterprises without credibility will eventually come to an end in the trend of social progress.

Within the enterprises, enterprises need to build up a sense of integrity, firmly engrave integrity management in the corporate culture, and become the concept that employees truly recognize on the psychology and maintain in their daily work. Enterprises should establish corresponding self-control system to play the role of self-supervision. In enterprise's external, enterprises need the society to establish the supervision and guarantee system, and need to rely on the strength of the public to create a social environment for all enterprises that advocate integrity management, stopping forgetting honor at the sight of money and having an eye to the main chance. Under external constraints, enterprises should be made aware of the requirements of the society for integrity management, which encourages enterprises to actively establish the concept of integrity management, and actively practice integrity management in business activities. As a result, enterprises can further establish a good social image to attract more potential customers and improve the profits of enterprises.

2) *Human resources management:* In the implementation of human resources management, the Chinese people's sense of recognition of traditional Chinese culture has played a role in promoting the combination of traditional culture and human resources management of enterprises.

a) *Employee relations management:* Enterprises should pay attention to every employee in the enterprise, keep in mind that put "people first", respect for employee autonomy, and cultivate employee independence. Among which, autonomy refers to employees have their own ideas on the process of their own work and adopted methods in their own work responsibilities; independence refers to employees have independent thinking and judgment ability for the work they are responsible for, rather than blindly sticking to the superior leadership, at the same time, employees have their own decision-making power for the work, rather than blindly requesting the leadership to give judgment.

Participatory management of employees can carry out from such aspects as inviting employees to participate in the formulation of enterprise development goals, setting up employee opinion boxes, setting up employee clubs, and inviting family members to participate in activities. Enterprises can invite some typical employees to put forward their own suggestions on enterprise goals, and then senior leaders and employees together participate in the formulation and decision-making of enterprise goals after they listen carefully to the suggestions of employees based on their positions.

b) Salary management: Salary management should first achieve two points: maintain fairness at home and embrace competitiveness abroad. Chinese people value "filial piety" very much. Combining traditional Chinese culture with salary management, enterprises can consider paying "filial piety salary" for employees' parents every month, which not only enables employees to work at ease, but also enables employees' parents to appreciate employees' love and the importance they attach to employees' families. Enterprise should establish a good image of respecting traditional culture and advocating "filial piety", which can promote the public's overall impression on enterprises to provide a broader space for the future development of enterprises.

3) Enterprise social responsibility: "The Book of Changes" said: "As heaven keeps vigor through movement, a gentleman should constantly strive for self-improvement." "Mencius" said: "Poverty is good for itself, while attainment is good for the world at the same time." He has the thought of "enjoying the world, worrying about the world". Promoting individual responsibility in Chinese traditional culture and extending it to modern enterprises now is enterprise social responsibility that is vigorously promoted. Being brave in assuming their own social responsibility is an embodiment of a high sense of responsibility and a sense of dedication to society.

Enterprises and their members should correctly recognize the importance of fulfilling social responsibility for the smooth realization of their business activities and consciously combine the fulfillment of social responsibility with their business activities. In order to achieve long-term development and progress, enterprises should improve their core competitiveness and constantly obtain profits, properly deal with the relationship of contradiction and unity of corporate profit social responsibility. Only by accumulating reputation capital and producing brand effect can enterprises truly realize sustainable development. They should actively disclose their operating behaviors, such as authoritative certification for products, maintenance of relations with media and customers, so as to improve their credibility.

Although in the short term, enterprises fulfill social responsibility that will increase the cost of enterprises, and the role of the fulfillment of social responsibility by enterprises on corporate profits may not appear, thus affecting the short-term economic performance of enterprises. However, from the perspective of development, the

fulfillment of social responsibility by enterprises is a strategic investment for enterprises, which can create a broader living space for enterprises in the future.

V. CONCLUSION

Chinese traditional culture is the history treasure of the Chinese nation. In modern society, it has more and more effect of the spirit to lead and the behavior guidance. When the modern enterprises face their own prospects for development and the current enterprise management status, it is wise for them to be in the right way to a suitable combination of traditional culture and the enterprise management. To do so, you not only can get innovative inherit and carry forward Chinese traditional culture, but also be able to "cure" part of the status quo of western management thoughts.

At present, the application of Chinese traditional culture in the development of modern enterprises has both advantages and disadvantages. Through analysis, we can see the reasons for the positive and negative aspects. How to use Chinese traditional culture to promote the development of modern enterprises? This paper presented the principles of enterprise development for applying Chinese traditional culture to promote the development of modern enterprises, and put forward three specific measures for the enterprises to refer.

REFERENCES

- [1] Yang Jianhua. Application of Excellent Traditional Culture in Modern Enterprise Management[J]. Enterprise Reform and Management, 2014(23): 51-52. (in Chinese)
- [2] Sun Shiwei. Analysis of the Application of Traditional Culture in Modern Enterprise Management[J]. Chinese and Foreign Entrepreneurs, 2014(28):210-214. (in Chinese)
- [3] Zhao Lixiang. Application of Excellent Traditional Culture in Human Resource Management[J]. Business, 2016(44):123. (in Chinese)
- [4] Yang Shengsheng. Basic Characteristics and Values of Chinese Traditional Culture [J]. Expanding Horizons, 2016(5): 104-109. (in Chinese)
- [5] Zhang Wei, Sheng Haiying. Modernization Transformation of Chinese Traditional Culture [J]. People's Tribune, 2017(10):134-135. (in Chinese)