

Who Wants to Become an Entrepreneur in Brunei Darussalam?

Prof. Dr. Kim Cheng Patrick Low

Ph.D. and Chartered Marketer

Certified MBTI Administrator

Certified Behavioral Consultant

Visiting Professor (HRM)

Graduate School of Business

University of the South Pacific, Suva, Fiji

Associate, Singapore Human Resource Institute: SHRI

Mohan N. Sajjani

IPMA, UK

Small Business Consultant and Certified Professional Trainer

Abstract

Brunei, a Sultanate producing oil and gas for over 80 years, faces the need to boost entrepreneurship to diversify the country's economy and to increase its non-oil or gas dependent income/revenue. Such economic diversification can have key benefits for the country, both economically and socially when the finite fossil fuels run out. Young Bruneians will be the future business leaders and decision makers, and accordingly, the qualitative research is interested in investigating the attitudes/ opinions of the young Bruneians towards entrepreneurship and the factors influencing the development of entrepreneurial qualities. Thus, the research study is targeted at members of the younger generation (age from 18 to 23 years old) of Brunei from the secondary school students and the university undergraduates. The authors also interviewed several expatriates (employers and employees), seven of them, residing in the Sultanate to elicit their views. The authors analysed, interpreted and discussed on the findings, and subsequently highlight the key obstacles to entrepreneurial thinking in Brunei. The practitioner-authors also recommend ways that the government can view and implement to get their people to being more entrepreneurial. This incorporates promoting an entrepreneurial growth; they need to be open minded yet having PHDs, the latter are the ingredients and requirements. Indeed, they must seriously want to overcome Poverty (their being Poor) and Hunger (their being Hungry) and be Desperate or Daring to venture and do business. This research study demonstrates the importance of an individual's personal attributes and values such as psychological and demographic factors, which when combined with environmental factors would reassure and promote entrepreneurship.

Definitions

The Free Dictionary (2015) defines an entrepreneur as “a person who organizes, operates, and assumes the risk for a business venture”. Certainly, entrepreneurs or business leaders need to come up with big ideas, and “entrepreneurship involves a particular mixture of drive, pride and self-confidence – a combination that isn't often found in the typical environment” (Gold, 2008: 6). An entrepreneur is basically a service provider (e.g. Sam Walton cited in Fenster, 2000: 89) and a problem solver (e.g. Harvey Firestone cited in Fenster, 2000: 248). To get an income from their services, they have to officially register and to set up their business services or to sell their products. An entrepreneur refers to a person who set up business and has business deals. The entrepreneurial process has been described as a mixture between the individual's personal attributes, such as psychological and demographic factors, which combine with environmental factors and the individual's discovery of an opportunity and the successful exploitation of that opportunity (Shane, 2003). Risk-taking is one of the basics, part of the entrepreneurial process but the more successful entrepreneurs do what they can to learn how to reduce the downside risk of entrepreneurship while at the same time capitalizing on their business opportunities (Mohan, 2007).

An entrepreneur makes money either by being his or her own boss or by taking risks and investing money on some businesses. He or she, for example, might invent or design something and pay to have it made so people can buy it. He or she might buy stock in a company and make money from it. The entrepreneur might even set up a laundry outlet in a busy town to do business or planting vegetables at the back of the garden and selling them in the town's market. In another words, if a person can make money without working for an organization or someone else, then that person is an entrepreneur, running his or her own enterprise. An entrepreneur is the sole brains of the organisation, gathering resources and channelling ideas and capital for the business (Metussin, et al, 2011). Mentality is a mind growth, a frame of mind or an approach, a way of thinking and an attitude. A successful entrepreneur, with good managing skills, also has good financial controls and a focused logical mind; (s)he approaches or does what's needed to done, and has the integrity, and commitment to customer service excellence. These are the foundational requirements that they would help them to build up or grow their business.

Entrepreneurial people may also espouse and even uphold certain values that really make them entrepreneurs. To be more entrepreneurial is thus to be capitalising on key resource availability, idea/ opportunity-seeking, making one's "life more challenging or gratifying" (Gold, 2008: 1), making more money (e.g. John D. Rockefeller and Ted Turner cited in Fenster, 2000: 173; 365), "get(ting) the most satisfaction" (e.g. David Packard cited, in Fenster, 2000: 302) and being more business-minded while growing the business (e.g. Andrew Carnegie cited in Fenster, 2000: 69) and venturing into commercial activities both locally and overseas. When one subscribes to such a way of thinking, one would prepare to take risk and set up business(es) to gain or reap profits, invest or be an industrialist rather than just opting for regular or steady employment whether in governments or in multi-national corporations (MNCs). To be more entrepreneurial too is to be enterprisingly creative, adopting Gold's (2008, Chapter 1) "wonderful madness" or being innovative in running one's business (e.g. Thomas J. Watson Sr. cited in Fenster, 2000: 17); entrepreneurs may also be resourceful in cutting costs and flexibly finding avenues to boost profits.

Paper's Aims and Objectives

The objectives of this paper are firstly to highlight the key hindrances to entrepreneurial thinking and ways, and secondly, to critically examine how and in what strategies or ways governments can take on board or adopt to get their peoples to be more entrepreneurial or set up more enterprises. This research study shows the vital importance of individual's personal attributes, such as psychological and demographic factors, which when combined with environmental factors would encourage and promote entrepreneurship and startups. Agreeably, the individual's discovery of an opportunity and the successful exploitation of that opportunity are also keys in promoting entrepreneurship and businesses in the Brunei context. Often scanning the business setting, entrepreneurial people are always searching for opportunities. Take for example, in Brunei, the Ministry of Home Affairs has swiftly responded to the Titah of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam on the eve of Hari Raya Aidiladha when His Majesty called for all business premises to be closed during the Friday prayer in order to uphold the country's Islamic image and to prevent errant young Muslims from skipping the obligatory weekly prayer. The monarch pointed out that the closure of shops would be in line with Syariah or Islamic law, which requires Muslims to leave their worldly affairs, and only return to them after they have completed their prayers.

"From this command of Allah (SWT), no one will lose out but instead, the country will get a good name and image, as well as the blessings that we can anticipate from Allah (SWT)" he added (Masli, 2012). The ministry through the District Offices and Chairman of Municipal Board has ordered all business premises and offices, entertainment centres, sports and recreation facilities including Cineplex and playground, tamu (market) and food stalls as well as business premises under the jurisdiction of the District Offices and Chairman of Municipal Board closed every Friday starting from 12 noon to 2.00 p.m. The ministry said in a statement that the order would take effect starting on Friday November 2, 2012. Among others, the monarch stressed that all business premises to be closed temporarily until the Friday prayer is completed, which should be urgently implemented to improve the image of the city and the country as a whole (Othman, 2012). The closing of shops for 2 hours during Friday prayer 12 noon to 2 p.m. may be taken by some of them as a loss of business opportunities and gains; however, there are some who said that during the Friday prayers, customer flow and business activities were already quiet and that they would not mind shutting down for a few hours on Friday because they would not make any substantial losses since they receive much fewer customers during this (prayer) period, except the loss of some non-Muslim customers.

Some restaurant owners commented that they did not see any difference because they experienced more customers buying take-aways than usual before the closing shop period (Interviewees' inputs and data from Alwines and Salleh, 2012).

Background of Brunei

For centuries, Brunei Darussalam has been an Islamic Sultanate. The concept of Melayu Islam Beraja (MIB) or Malay Muslim Monarchy (MMM) is a national ideology for the citizens to embrace the long history of monarchy, Brunei Malay culture, and Islamic values. Brunei, similar to "several other countries in Asia such as India, Kazakhstan, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore, their leaders and governments practise a benevolent type of leadership, the father leadership style". The term 'father leadership' in this context refers to "both male and female leadership, and more so, it reflects paternal or maternal leadership". Most importantly, it raised an important belief or key value that people should be treated like the leader's family members (Low, 2008a; Low and Mohd Zain, 2008). This virtuous value of nurturing "all-in-the-family" feeling is significant in Asian Leadership and was also echoed in several literatures. (Low and An, 2011; Low and Mohd Zain, 2008, Low and Tabyldy, 2007; Low, 2012; 2007; Low, 2006b; Low, 2005). Brunei is a small country with a population of 401,890. (Brunei Population Statistics, July 2010 estimate). The ethnic groups consist of 66.3 percent Malay, 11.2 percent Chinese, 3.4 percent indigenous and 19.1 percent other ethnic groups. (Brunei Population Statistics, 2004 estimate). Brunei's economy has been dominated by the oil and gas industry for the past 80 years. Hydrocarbon resources account for over 90% of its export and more than 50% of its Gross Domestic Product. Brunei has benefited hugely from oil and gas reserves which have facilitated social and economic development and made possible a high standard of living for its population. However, there is a rising awareness in the country of depleting natural resources and the subsequent need to diversify the economy away from its over-reliance on oil and gas. Plans for the future include upgrading the labor force, reducing unemployment, strengthening the banking and tourist sectors, and further widening the economic base beyond oil and gas. Diversification is aimed at reducing the dominance of oil and gas in the national output while diversifying the foreign exchange earnings by the other non-oil sectors. (BEDB, 2011).

Up to now, Brunei's revenues are still dependent on the exports of crude oil and natural gas which make up more than ninety percent of all its exports. This means that most of things that Bruneians need and use are imported overseas. (Freeman and Low, 2011: 35). The population of the labour force is 188,800 and this figure is made up of those working in agriculture 4.2 percent; industry 62.8 percent (mostly working for oil and gas) and services 33 percent (mostly working for Brunei government) (Brunei Population Statistics, 2008 estimate). Bruneian businesses are mostly focus on wholesaling and retailing of imported goods. Here, it is natural that companies try to outperform their rivals to grab a greater share of the existing demand. As the market space in a small country like Brunei gets crowded, the profits and growth prospects are also lowered or lessened. Cutthroat competition turns the red ocean a market space difficult to compete and drives the incompetent companies out of businesses. Low and Ang (2011, pp.294) remarked, "Purchasing of goods in big quantities (in bulk) with lower prices would surely win the competition for more customers and drive the small market competitors out of the way." With regard to the Bruneian Entrepreneur, Metussin, et al. (2011) conducted extensive interviews with ten successful entrepreneurs in Brunei and they have uncovered five traits that are significant in these entrepreneurs namely discipline (including hardworking), perseverance, innovation, ambition and leadership.

Research Model

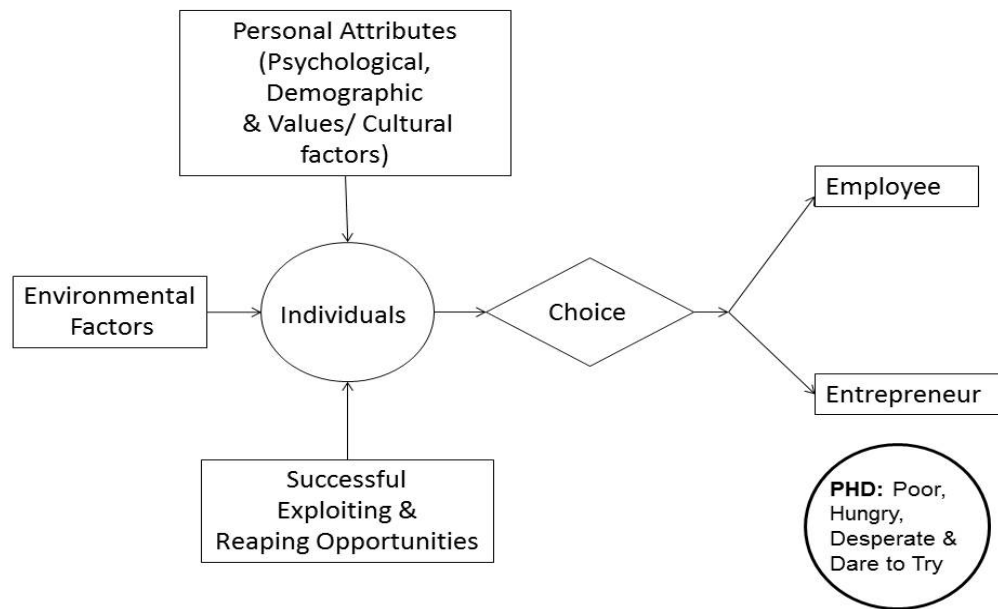


Figure 1: The Research Model

This research model shows that there is a choice for an individual to choose for him(herself) either to be an employee or to be an entrepreneur. However, there are several influencing factors that would encourage him or her to choose that career path. These key influencing factors are the:

- (1) Individual's personal attributes, resulting in his or her likings of the career.
- (2) Education and the environment (upbringing or socialisation) in which the individual has brought up with.
- (3) Successful exploitation of opportunities that were available for him or her in the market.

Research Methodology

The study was conducted with a total of two hundred and seventy-eight (278) employers and employees from Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Brunei. The period of study was made from 1 May 2012 to 16 January 2013. According to business researchers, sample sizes larger than 30 and smaller than 500 are applicable or suitable for most research. Qualitative studies classically use small sample sizes because of the intensive nature of such studies (Cavana et al, 2001: 279; Sekaran, 2000: 296 – 7 and Roscoe, 1975). The sample size of two hundred and seventy-eight was decided because of various aspects including costs, time accessibility and limited personal resources. The critical rationale behind choosing Bruneians as the key sample for this research is primarily and hence the respondents' insights can be tapped to cast useful light on Bruneian entrepreneurship.

The study uses the qualitative research method and is based on face-to-face interviews; each interview was in the order of 45 minutes though some interviews stretched to more than an hour but normally less than an hour and a half. It is worthy to note that similar to Low's (2006b, 2006ac) and Low and Ang's (2011) studies, being secured of confidentiality and anonymity, the interviewees expressed themselves freely. At the beginning of these interviews, the researchers started with some small talk to put the interviewees at ease. More often than not, a light conversation on their personal likes and dislikes, detected in previous interactions or previous telephone calls, would serve as a springboard for further discussions wrong purpose and query on the motivational sources of the interviewees. This interview method is helpful since it aids much qualitative data to be collected from the interviewees. To get more data from the various interviewees, open questions were deployed (Cavana, Delahaye and Sekaran, 2001); they were crafted as:

1. What are your opinions on being an employee working for the government or in the private sector?
2. What are your views on being an entrepreneur or self-employed?

3. Why would you prefer to be a businessman/woman or running your own enterprise rather than being an employee?
4. Are your parents working as employees or self-employed?
5. How many people in your family are self-employed?
6. Can you think of any of members of your family or your relatives are self-employed?
7. Do you like your children (family members) to be in business? If so, why? If not, why not?
8. Do you have any experience in doing business of your own?

A further research, done during the period from 7 Feb to 7 March 2013, was also included and integrated with the researchers having spoken to fourteen (14) various people across the society including long-time 7 expatriates and foreigners (employers and employees) residing in the Sultanate. The rationale being to get the views of the public so as to check or affirm the findings received and gather new insights during the period from 1 May 2012 to 1 March 2013.

Findings

As this is a qualitative research based on in-depth interviewing of the respondents about a single value of being entrepreneurial, only percentage analysis is applied. The authors consider this method as good enough for an exploratory research and hence no statistical tool is applied. This method is similar to three previous works several researchers have done (Low, Hussin and Ang, 2013; Ang and Low, 2012; Low and Ang, 2011b.)

Table 1 shows some key responses verbalized by the interviewees.

Responses	Number of Interviewees	Percentage (%) of Interviewees
(Parents , Family members, Relatives and Friends) Setting the Example or the Tone "My both parents work for the government"; "all members of my family work either for the government or for private companies"; "I don't have friends or relatives working as entrepreneur"; "my parents and family members urge or advise me... working for the government is good."	270	97.1
Working for the Government/ Choosing the easy way out "I prefer to work for the government because of security... it gives stable income and good benefits" ; "more benefits exists and these include such as housing loan, car loan." "This can be in the form of owning properties and collecting rents instead of being in business. Some even just farm out licences."	269	96.7
Looking for stable employment with fixed and steady income and job security "(I) prefer to work in a secured company because of steady income and better benefits" ;	266	95.7
Wanting to avoid risk and disappointments in doing business "It is risky to do business because sometimes you might fail in your business. I don't want to take risk"; "Doing business is always uncertain because you have ups and down; I dislike disappointment".	258	92.8
Not liking some of the business policies here, they are not conducive for doing business "The policies are not so good for doing business here though I must say the sole proprietor type enjoys a tax-free setting"... "Unlike Singapore, it is not good for a Chinese to do business here; there are value mismatch."	251	90.2
Wanting to remain in the country, not liking to work or do business abroad. "I prefer to stay in Brunei"; "I prefer working locally" and "I want to spend time with my family"	250	89.9
Doing business is hard work and patience to succeed is needed "Doing business is tough, I prefer an easy job"; "better to relax after work but successful business requires much hard work plus patience"	250	89.9

Analysis and Discussion

(Parents, Family members, Relatives and Friends) Setting the Example or the Tone

It can be analysed that the above point is a single important factor influencing Bruneians; more so, Islam, the Brunei culture and Bruneians often emphasize family values, closeness and togetherness. It is indeed worthy to note that to the children, their parents are the leaders and parents set the examples for their children to emulate. Sometimes, family members, relatives and friends can also influence them to choose their career. In this survey, as most parents, family, relatives and friends had no experience of doing business, it is difficult for their children to venture into business where they were not familiar with. To get the people to be more entrepreneurial, it is necessary that the government needs to change their mindset by creating more opportunities for them to understand or go into business. The following are the strategies and key ways of encouraging entrepreneurship:

Some Key Obstacles and the Strategies and Ways to Be More Entrepreneurial

In each of the sections that follow, the authors will indicate the key obstacle(s) followed by an examination of the strategy(ies) or the way(s) out and forward towards greater entrepreneurial approach and attitude.

Having PHDs: Poor, Hungry and Desperate

In rich or developed countries when the people are comfortable, having secured jobs or employment, this can really serve as obstacles to being entrepreneurial. They “choose the easy way out” instead of being entrepreneurial. “This can be in the form of owning properties and collecting rents instead of being in business. Some even just farm out licences.” (several interviewees’ inputs). It is worthy to note that the researchers had spoken to various people across the society including long-time 7 expatriates and foreigners (employers and employees) residing in the Sultanate and many opined that “most businesses such as operating mini-marts, convenience stores, tailoring or dress making and retail outlets and even including contract work and supplies, and other various small businesses are in fact straight forward business”. “... yet these businesses are at the moment mostly operated on the “Ali Baba” mode with the Bruneians lending their names to the business registration and become sleeping partners.” (Note Ali Baba is a business practice in Malaysia – and/or even in Indonesia and Brunei, where a Malay company obtains a contract from the government-sponsored affirmative action system for the Bumiputera (the Malaysian New Economic Policy under Ketuanan Melayu) and subcontracts it to an ethnically Chinese-owned company. (Pak, 2011). The “Ali” refers to the Malay while the term: “Baba” refers to the Chinese from the Baba-Nyonya of Straits Chinese people.) Several interviewees further highlighted or posed these questions, that is, “if they cannot handle such simple businesses to gain experiences, one would then wonder how can be able to handle bigger business management?” “Why can’t the Bruneians, ‘the qualified business degree holders’ or tradespeople managed these businesses by themselves; these business can indeed possibly or high likely to bring about an income that is better than being in employment.” A few expatriates also pointed out that, “it is not the question of eliminating the foreign business people in Brunei, but more towards, having Bruneians being able to “manage” and build up their business experiences from the ground level up.” At this point, please allow the researchers to interpose their views; here, they strongly believe in the need for actual experiences or experiential learning. All entrepreneurs must in fact have certain degree of real-life managing experiences of handling certain or in fact, any situation(s) which can essentially happen if they themselves were involved in the business itself. There is a true need to be daring, dare to try, feel or ‘test the waters’ and to know or at least intuit exactly what is truly needed in the reality of a business setting. The latter is vital; after all, theories are mere guidelines, and it is experience that counts.

To be entrepreneurial, the people must have **PHDs**. Allow the authors to explain. **PHD** means that the people are **Poor, Hungry** and in most ways, **Desperate** or often **Daring, Dare** to try and being as such would boost them to be entrepreneurial. The people, when they are poor – they would surely search for ways to get fed, or survive. They would certainly not want to remain or continue to be poor; they would want to improve and break away from the status quo. Being poor can thus lead them to search for ways to do business and be entrepreneurial. Based on the researchers’ observations and travel experiences, they noticed that in Vietnam and Kampuchea, the poor children were resilient; they creatively made model airplanes, cut from thrown-away Cola-Cola cans and toy dragon-flies carved from bamboos. The people really need to be hungry or at least feel a bit of hunger; if people are too secured and comfortable, they would not want to get out of their comfort zone. Conversely, it would be difficult for them to embrace change from safe and steady employment to business and entrepreneurship with uncertain incomes or profits.

Only when people are lacking, famished or even a little bit hungry, they've to survive, then, they just have to get up, and they got to, and surely be proactively entrepreneurial. Take the case of India, for example, the spirit of enterprise is much rife. Entrepreneurship helps to reduce poverty while growing the numbers of middle class people within the country; and occasional slum-dog millionaires emerged, being bred in poverty-stricken areas of increasingly prosperous Indian cities such as Mumbai. More and more, everyday individuals with a bit of money, hungry yet with a blob of resourcefulness and abundance of ambition, they feel emboldened to turn to businesses or be entrepreneurs (Gupte, 2004). When these successful businesspersons emerge, their examples and cases can be highlighted and publicized; etched in the minds of the young, these role models can be emulated by them. The people also needs to desperate, and that makes them to wanting to get out from the situation.

Having an Open Mind, Effecting Mind Growth

Having a closed mind can be an obstacle to entrepreneurial thinking; one can be rigid and inflexible and in fact, closed to going into business, let alone nurturing new business ideas, initiatives and/or seizing opportunities. Increasingly, the world is becoming one big market, with increasing diversity and a globalizing environment (Low, 2009; 2009a; Singh, 1998). It is worthy to note that even trade barriers are fast being dismantled, and the pace will step up with the World Trade Organization (WTO) taking an active role. We should no longer adopt an ostrich mindset, we cannot adopt a restrictive head-in-the-sand approach or living with a narrow, frog-in-a-well thinking. We really shouldn't imprison ourselves with a psychic prison frame of mind. It is worthy to note that even as individuals, we need to maintain an open mind. Having an open mind could enable an entrepreneur to see different perspectives or better still, hidden opportunities, and thereby see potentials in entering into new businesses or venturing into business expansion. The strategic leader or entrepreneur should indeed be global in outlook, applying broad strokes (Low, 2009), adopting a mind growth, rather than mindset approach or attitude. The term 'mind growth' rather than mindset is preferred as the former denotes mind expansion while the latter implies rigidity and/or a form of psychic prison (Low, 2009a; 2006; 2002; 2000). This aptly fits in with what Sarawak's Chief Minister Taib Mahmud (cited in *The Borneo Post*, 2007: 1) has pointed out, that is, a receptive mind is the key to growth; people have to dig deep into the fabric of their own cultures and learn past values that have survived the changes that they have undergone. It is the people's affinity or likeness to change, their acceptance and openness that has brought progress.

There would without a doubt be no progress when entrepreneurs stick to see beyond their noses. History has seen examples of it; a case in point is the 17th century Galileo's championing of Copernicans' view which was controversial within his lifetime. Though tried and regarded as a heretic during his lifetime, Galileo's presentation of heliocentrism as proven fact resulted in much progress and later in the 21st century mankind's landing on the moon and further exploration of space (Low, 2009a). And of course, indeed "a wonderful madness" would be equally vital and applicable in life, especially for an entrepreneur when starting or growing a new venture (Gold, 2008: 3). More specifically, at the societal level, there certainly exists a need to open up its management culture, and empowerment must also apply. There is perhaps a definite need to get its officials to be more receptive to new ideas so that they and the people can take a national rather than local or parochial view of issues. In the case of Singapore, Goh Chok Tong, Singapore's former Prime Minister once expressed that Singaporeans "cannot afford a mindset that instinctively shuts off challenges to the status quo" (cited in Gopinathan, 1998: 90). New ideas and initiatives should be welcomed by all those wishing for an increase in opportunities to question, to offer alternate solutions, indeed, propose an alternate formulation of problems to begin with and to contribute without having to be co-opted. This was in line with a loosening of the top-down command and control style of administration, to one that sees the need for flexibility and keeping options open, which in turn needs a large and creative flow of ideas. Governments also need to apply soft power, using attraction to coax and persuade their peoples rather than resorting to crude hard power; perhaps, a soft selling approach should be adopted.

Making People Think, Being More Independent Or Simply Toughening Them Up!

When the people are soft, they are dependent on others – or for that matter, anyone. In Singapore case, if one leaves a big company, people ask why; kiasu (afraid to lose) and kiasi (afraid to die), Singaporeans prefer security; many prefer steady employment in big companies with the safety net of their Central Provident Funds (CPF). The overall business culture is, in fact, loaded against risk-taking (Kawasaki, 2004; Low, 2006a). Moreover, potential loss of face or fear of failure motivates actions to avoid going into business (Begley and Tan, 2001; Hwang, 1987; Low, 2006a).

And connected to this, Low (2006a; 2006b) has highlighted the fatherly role of the Singapore government which is yet another cultural obstacle to growing entrepreneurship or entrepreneurial thinking. The Government, like a benevolent father, looks after the people's welfare. The preferred management style here is that of firm control and, at times, explicit direction, but like the father, effectively doing good for the society and the efficient political leadership together with the hardworking workforce has helped build Singapore. Yet a government seen as the sole source of all wisdom and resource can make the people be more dependent on it. There is, however, a need to grow and steady the independence and/or even the resilience of the people, and that makes sense. Low (2006a: 175) has pointed out "the need for an attitude of self-dependence". He added that a vital key in entrepreneurship is the attitude of self-dependence, and it is not about starting or even about owning, it is about who you are. "In business, being resilient is vital since it gives the people the necessary fighting power" (Low, 2007: 146). Kawasaki (2004) spoke of entrepreneurship, "a state of mind"; indeed, being resilient, entrepreneurs should believe that their future is within their charge and that other external forces will have little influence.

In the case of Brunei Darussalam, the Civil Service is the largest employer in the country employing some 12 percent of the total population (<http://www.bruneiresources.com/civilservicebackground.html>). Although things may be changing, for the past years, Brunei has based its educational system on the expectation that its graduates will work for the government, and this does not prepare one for entrepreneurship. One respondent intimated to the researchers that "the government can really make its citizens be more entrepreneurial by discouraging its citizens from joining or being too much dependent on the government for employment, and hence reducing the government's workforce. This can happen when all the government services are online, and instead use less human labour. Those citizens who cannot find jobs elsewhere will have to search for business opportunities and they would, in a way, be forced to go into business or be more entrepreneurial." Agreeing with this respondent, another interviewee added that, "This even applies to Malaysia, those Chinese Malaysians, who are not able to work in the government departments, have to search for business opportunities within the Chinese community, they have to try hard to earn or eke a living and with the help of the Confucian or clan associations, most Chinese become business people though some are involved in mere hawking or petty businesses."

Promoting Family Businesses, Clan Associations and Tapping the Diasporas' Effect

Yet another obstacle to the entrepreneurial approach is that of the lack of self-dependence. The feeling of self-dependence can be raised or boosted by promoting the value of family or a sense of unity. And family or pop's and mom's businesses can yet be another way to promote entrepreneurial thinking among people. The family factor can really be cleverly applied to promote businesses, particularly family businesses. The Chinese are good at this, and they run businesses along the line of families and clans where they build up much of their businesses, contacts, contracts and support. Here, the Bruneians too can tap and capitalize on family businesses as a way to promote or grow enterprises within the Sultanate. A recent Harvard Business Review featured that family businesses can focus on resilience, and besides, there are various lessons to gather from family businesses which include the fact that "carry(ing) little debt", they are "frugal" in both good and bad times, and they "retain talent better than their competitors do" (Kachaner, Stalk and Blach, 2012). Additionally, the researchers wish to highlight that clan associations in South-East Asia are also known to have played an important role in giving business contacts, building businesses as well as giving good support to its clan members. These clan associations also ensure that their members do their business well, and at the same time, they or their members organize the contributions or giving back to the community. And these contributions are done by building schools and hospitals as well as offering scholarships and paying school fees for the children of the poor.

Low (2008) has indicated that in Asia, previously, it was respectful and, in a way, fashionable to have a family of professional surgeons, teachers, or military. In Kazakhstan, clan-based forms of managing a household have been deeply rooted in the Kazakh society. A typical Kazakh family of the past could be seen as a self-sustaining enterprise that travelled with all its possessions and its key asset - its cattle. Low (2008: 18) further added that in Kazakhstan's first few years of independence during the 'distribution' of the public wealth; it became easier and made more economic and political sense to attract family members to run the newly created family wealth. The researchers reckon the need to incorporate the vital 'Asian' factor that has been at play to promote entrepreneurships in Asia. The family can, in fact, help one another while building its business contacts and network and support as well as resilience. The family can really give one the perception and feeling of self-dependence, and that is critical in trigger the entrepreneurial thinking.

Shafie Othman (2014) has also highlighted the need to tap on each cities in South-east Asia, “the possibilities that each city presents” and make Brunei the entrepreneurship hub while tapping particularly on the Sultanate’s talented, educated young people. To the reserachers’ mind, whatever tribe an individual belongs, the thinking is that to be successful a person needs his or her tribes and the Diasporas’ networking/ connections. Or (s)he can be lucky still to have belongings to more than one tribe should one have inter-racial marriage(s) or have inter-racial parents. The Chinese on the bamboo connections and the Muslim-Malay on the Islamic Diaspora while the Indians on the Indian connections (Nandan, 2009; Low, 2006a). Entrepreneurs have to rely on not only on clans, associations and Diaspora but the families as well. Not to be easily dismissed, this ‘Asian’ factor can be simply defined as the practice of local people being able to rise above others and to surround themselves with the most trusted followers, i.e. immediate and remote members of the family clan, and it is felt that this is widely practiced whether in Kazakhstan, in Malaysia, in Indonesia and/ or even in Singapore though such things may not be openly discussed since they are normally associated with favouritism, nepotism and collusion, and its ugly heads were exposed in Indonesia during the uprising and down-thrown of President Suharto of Indonesia in 1997/98. There’s an old Asian, namely, Kazakh saying, a good jiggit(young man) will never leave his relatives behind when he jumps in the saddle of the galloping horse. These days, the small family business in Kazakhstan is gradually developing into one of the most popular forms of self-realization and economic self-reliance. Family businesses in Asian countries should thus be promoted to boost both entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial thinking. Besides, the researchers would also agree with Low (2006a: 176) that embracing a paradigm shift, the people should not stay in their own cocoons or bubbles; they indeed need to adopt a “backpack mentality”; ready to move anywhere and be flexible; and more so, in a globalizing environment as pointed out earlier, they should internationalize; to internationalize is to be entrepreneurial, changing their frame of mind as well as expanding their business horizons and opportunities. And in the family business context, being generally equipped with good family support at home and their blessings, the business people and entrepreneurs can venture, do and grow business overseas. Overall, people can be more entrepreneurial, and this can be done by encouraging them to have an open mind. When they are open-minded, they can engage in entrepreneurial thinking; they become a little bit hungry; toughen up, they become more independent. They can also promote family businesses while capitalizing on their memberships, contacts and networking in clan associations and tapping the Diasporas’ effect. (Figure 2).

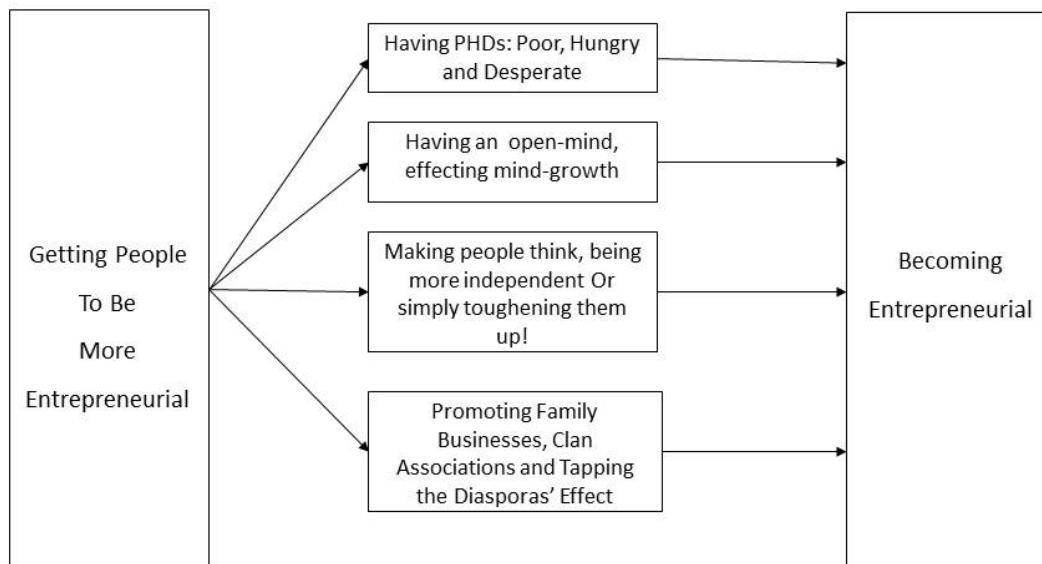


Figure 2: The Strategies and Key Ways to Get People More Entrepreneurial

Figure 2: The Strategies and Key Ways to Get People to Be More Entrepreneurial

Key Limitations and Benefits

True critics may highlight that the study is very dependent on Low's various works and/ or even without any blame or critique. To the latter's concerns, it is worthy to note that other works (such as Kachaner, Stalk and Blach, 2012; BEDB, 2011; Gold, 2008; Kawasaki, 2004; Fenster, 2000) have also been aptly cited. Besides, critics may also question or object that the analysis is indeed very basic; however, it is worthy to note that simplicity should not be needlessly faulted or criticized; if truth be told, simplicity should be better appreciated or preferred so long as the findings had been telling, helpful; and they confirmed the postulations made. Besides, what is interesting is that there are key benefits from the study which, among other things, reveal and bare the need to give an entrepreneurial boost in the Sultanate by promoting family businesses, clan associations and tapping the diasporas' effect.

Concluding Remarks

Businesses, together with new products and innovation, will be increasingly essential to a country's economy. If people change the way they think – getting out of their comfort zone, being proactive, being global or internationalized, having more role models and family businesses, with more private sector initiative while having more success stories and with the critical mass, surely, the entrepreneurial mind growth will take shape, be molded and will even steadily grow from strength to strength.

References

- Alwines, A. and Salleh, I. (2012), 'Shops should close during Friday Prayers' The Brunei Times, Accessed on 29 October 2012, <http://www.brudirect.com/index.php/Local-News/warning-against-misuse-of-licenses.html>
- Ang, S. L. and Low, K. C. P. (2012). 'The Value of Integrity, The Confucian Perspective', *i-manager's Journal on Management*, Volume 5, No.4, March-May 2012. pp. 1-10.
- Begley, T. M. and Tan, W. L. (2001). "The socio cultural environment for entrepreneurship: a comparison between East Asian and Anglo Saxon countries", *Journal of international business studies*, Vol. 32 No. 3, p. 537 - 53.
- Brunei Population Statistics (2011). <http://www.indexmundi.com/brunei/population.html>
- BEDB (2011). "9th National Development Plan (2007-2012)" and "Wawasan Brunei 2035", The Brunei Economic Development Board, The Prime Minister's Office, Brunei Darussalam. http://www.bedb.com.bn/why_ndp.html and http://www.bedb.com.bn/why_wawasan2035.html
- Cavana, R. Y., Delahaye B. L. and Sekaran U. (2001). *Applied business research, qualitative and quantitative methods*, John Wiley and Sons: Australia, pp. 142; 134-135.
- Fenster, J. M. (2000) *In the Words of Great Business Leaders*, John Wiley & Sons, Inc.: USA.
- Freeman, I. and Low, K. C. P. (2010). 'Chapter 2: Retailing in Brunei Darussalam', in Fam, K-S, Jozsa, L. and Richard, J.E. (eds.) (2010) *Sales Promotion Techniques: Best Practices from Asia and Europe*, Asia Business Research Corporation Limited: New Zealand, pp. 29 - 44.
- Gold, S. K. (2008). *Entrepreneur's Notebook*, Learning Ventures Press: USA.
- Gopinathan, S. (1998). 'Chapter Ten: Changing Mindsets: In Education', Mahizhnan, Arun (ed.) Singapore: The year in review 1997, The Institute of Policy Studies and Times Academic Press: Singapore, p. 90 - 95.
- Hwang, K.K. (1987). "Face and favor: the Chinese power game", *American journal of sociology*, Vol. 92 No. 4, p. 944 - 974.
- Kachaner, N.; Stalk, G. and Blach, A. (2012). 'What you can learn from family business', *Harvard Business Review*, November 2012, p. 102-107.
- Kawasaki, G. (2004). "Entrepreneurship special: made-in-Singapore entrepreneurs", *Innovation: The magazine of research and technology*, Vol. 25, available at: www.innovationmagazine.com/innovation/volumes/v3n2/free/entrepren2.shtml Accessed on 23 April 2015/ 25 August 2010.
- Low, K. C. P. (2012). 'Asian Styles of Leadership' RSOG Seminar, Razak School of Government, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Accessed on 26 October 2012. http://www.rsog.com.my/index.php?lang=en&_m=content&cid=702
- Low, K. C. P. (2009). 'The way of the Dragon: Some strategic leadership ways', *Leadership & organizational management journal* (since 2007 - articles peer reviewed & listed in Cabells), Volume 2009 Issue 2, p. 40 – 59.
- Low, K. C. P. (2009a). 'How to lead in today's context? What leadership skills set do we need?', *Leadership & organizational management journal*, Volume 2009 Issue 1 p. 48 – 56.
- Low, K. C. P. (2008). 'The problems & prospects of small family businesses – The Kazakhstan perspective', *GITAM journal of management*, Jul – Sep 2008, Vol. 6 No. 4, p. 18 - 29.
- Low, K. C. P. (2008a). 'Value-based Leadership: Leading the Confucian way' *Leadership & Organisation Management Journal*, Vol. 2008 Issue 3 pp. 32- 41.

- Low, K. C. P. (2007). 'The cultural value of resilience – The Singapore case study', *Cross-cultural management: An international journal*, Vol. 14 No. 2, 2007, p. 136 - 149
- Low, K. C. P. (2006). *Strategic customer management*, Caspian Publishing House: Almaty, Kazakhstan.
- Low, K. C. P. (2006a). 'Cultural obstacles in growing entrepreneurship – A study in Singapore', *Journal of management development*, Volume 25, Number 2, 2006, p. 169 - 182(14).
- Low, K. C. P. (2006b). 'Father leadership: the Singapore case study', *Management decision*, Vol. 44 No. 1, 2006, p. 89-104.
- Low, K. C. P. (2006c). 'Motivation, the Chinese Leadership Way In Singapore's Small and Medium Companies'. *The Icfaian journal of organizational behavior*, Vol. V No.1, January, 2006, The Institute of Chartered Financial Analyst India: ICFAI University Press, pp. 80 - 90.
- Low, K. C. P. (2005). 'Towards a framework and typologies of Singapore corporate cultures' *Management development journal of Singapore*, Vol. 13, No. 1, May 2005, pp. 46 - 75.
- Low, K. C. P. (2002, 2000). *Strategic customer management*, BusinesscrAFT™ Consultancy: Singapore.
- Low, K. C. P. and Ang, S. L. (2012). 'The Theory and Practice of Confucian Value of Integrity', *International Journal of Business and Management (IJBM)*, Canadian Centre of Science and Education Limited. Vol.7, No.14, July 2012. ISSN 1833-3850 E-ISSN 1833-8119. pp. 114- 124.
- Low, K. C. P. and Ang, S. L. (2011). 'Confucius, Confucian Values and their Applications onMarketing-The Brunei Perspective' *Journal of Research in International Business Management (ISSN: 2251-0028) Vol. 1(9) pp. 293-303* November, 2011
- Low, K. C. P. and Ang, S. L. (2011b). 'Confucius, Confucian Values and their Applications onMarketing-The Brunei Perspective' *Journal of Research in International Business Management (ISSN: 2251-0028) Vol. 1(9) pp. 293-303* November, 2011.
- Low K. C. P. and Mohd. Zain, Y. A. (2008). 'Creating the Competitive Edge, The Father Leadership Way', Paper presented in the International Conference on Business and Management, Universiti Brunei Darussalam, Brunei Darussalam, 8 – 9 January 2008.
- Low, K.C.P. and Tabyldy, I. (2007). 'Project Leadership In Kazakhstan: Creating the Competitive Edge' Perspective, Eighth International Conference on Operations and Quantitative Management (ICOQM-8), October 17-20, 2007 at Assumption University, Bangkok, Thailand. Proceedings published, pp. 325 - 328.
- Low, K.C.P., Hussin, H and SL Ang (2013)'Being Entrepreneurial, the Brunei Perspective', *International Journal of Economy, Management and Social Sciences*, 2(3) March 2013, pp. 44-55.
- Masli, M. (2012), 'Close Shops during Friday prayers: HM', *The Brunei Times*, Accessed on 26 October 2012, <http://www.bt/news-national/2012/10/26/close-shos-during-friday-prayers-hm>
- Mohan, N.S. (2007). *Declaration of War on Small Business Failures*, Mohan Publisher, Brunei, ISBN 978-981-05-8617-1
- Metussin, K.; Sabir, K. Anwar; Basir, S. and Sabir, K. Arifin. (2011) *Business Icons, The Success Stories of 10 accomplished Entrepreneurs in Brunei Darussalam*, PHMD Publishing Company, Brunei. pp. 34.
- Nandan, R. (2009). *Unleashing your entrepreneurial potential*, Response Business Books from Sage: New Delhi
- Othman, A. (2012). 'Business Premised Ordered Closed During Friday Prayer', *The Borneo Bulletin*, Accessed on 30 October 2012, <http://www.brudirect.com/index.php/Local-News/business-premises-ordered-closed-during-friday-prayer.html>
- Pak, J. (2011). '[Malaysia's 'Ali Baba' system causes ethnic tension](#)', *BBC News* (10 Jul 2011).
- Roscoe, J. R. (1975). *Fundamental Research Statistic for the Behavioural Sciences*, 2nd Edition, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Sekaran, U. (2000) *Research Methods for Business*, John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Shane, S. (2003). *A General Theory of Entrepreneurship: The Individual-Opportunity Nexus*, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham, U.K.
- Shafie Othman, M.H. (2014). 'Brunei as THE Entrepreneurship Hub for South East Asia', *LinkedIn*. Website: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/20141029093510-23647612-brunei-as-the-entrepreneurship-hub-for-south-east-asia> Accessed on 7 June 2015.
- Singh, I. (1998). 'Changing mindsets: At home and abroad', Mahizhnan, Arun (ed.) *Singapore: The year in review 1997*, The Institute of Policy Studies and Times Academic Press: Singapore, p. 85 - 89.
- The Borneo Post (2007). 'Receptive mind key to growth', *The Borneo post*, 2007, p. 1.
- The Free Dictionary (2015). 'Entrepreneur'. Website: <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/entrepreneur> Accessed on 4 January 2014/ 7 May 2015.

Websites

<http://www.bruneiresources.com/civilservicebackground.html> Accessed on 23 April 2015/ 7 Nov 2010.