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Article

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Amfiteatru Economic Journal

Provided in Cooperation with:

The Bucharest University of Economic Studies

Suggested Citation: Watahiki, Nobumichi; Matsui, Yoshikazu; Dinca, Mihaela; Waniek, Iulia (2020) : The application of the Bushido-Samurai code principles within Romanian companies, Amfiteatru Economic Journal, ISSN 2247-9104, The Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Bucharest, Vol. 22, Iss. 53, pp. 152-163,
<https://doi.org/10.24818/EA/2020/53/152>

This Version is available at:

<https://hdl.handle.net/10419/281490>

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THE APPLICATION OF THE BUSHIDO – SAMURAI CODE PRINCIPLES WITHIN ROMANIAN COMPANIES

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Please cite this article as:

Watahiki, N., Matsui, Y., Dincă, V.M. and Waniek, I., 2020. The Application of the Bushido – Samurai Code Principles within Romanian Companies. *Amfiteatru Economic*, 22(53), pp. 152-163.

DOI 10.24818/EA/2019/53/152

Article History

Received: 12 August 2019

Revised: 14 November 2019

Accepted: 10 December 2019

Abstract

Holding a managerial position within a company in 2019 is a challenging task and within this period the business climate is a dynamic one. When conceiving rightful strategies, managers should take into account every detail regarding the fast-changing Romanian business environment.

Bushido is one of the oldest moral systems in Japan and refers to a code of honour and standards that commanded the samurai way of life and these principles advanced by Bushido are still worthy in several corporate systems. Several studies showed how using the attributes of 'Bushido' can lead managers to become more effective and prosperous in their business and can help them establish and maintain a credible image within the industry.

For this study, interviews were taken in order to obtain the views of the representatives of 37 corporations in Romania and the objectives of the study were to: (1) To assess which canons of Bushido are being implemented by managers within the Romanian contemporary businesses and are applicable to business context analysis, strategic enforcement & control and development of business partnerships and collaborations, (2) To determine if and how the extent of incorporating Bushido's principles within the management strategies and operations of companies has an effect on the company's success' factors.

The achieved results of this study can be mentioned as follows. 1. The Bushido code is being integrated within the Romanian contemporary organizations' management and business relationships with other firms. The paper revealed that for almost all the managers included in the sample there were recorded notable interrelationships between the Bushido principles and the managers' goals in the sense that if they apply the Bushido principles on a higher and more developed level, it will be less difficult for them to attain their strategic objectives. 2. The most significant factors leading to business success achievement obtained due to the application the Bushido principles within the business processes of the companies were indicated as: the growth of the company's and manager's image and professional reputation; prestige and good attitude from the stakeholders; a boost within the research and development process and the raise of the quality of business relationships.

Keywords: Bushido, samurai code, strategic management, Romanian companies.

JEL Classification: M14; F23

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Introduction

The history and development of Bushido is long, taking centuries to form and did not come together in a collected printing until the end of the 19th century. The code of Bushido may seem simple, counting only eight virtues to its name. The main objective to consider within this paper is to examine whether or not Bushido is relevant to the modern age of business or as a model to embed moral ethics and social behaviour.

The research questions of this study are as follows:

- Which principles of the Bushido code of war are actually being implemented within real companies or organisations of the Romanian business environment when managers/directors conceive and carry activities regarding the business context analysis, strategic enforcement & control and development of business partnerships and collaborations?
- How does the process of incorporating Bushido principles affect the company's respective main success' factors?

1. Literature review

Even though there are many books written about Bushido, the one by Inazo Nitobe, *Bushido: The Soul of Japan*, published in English in 1900, is a classic that is highly referenced in the international community (Nishigori et al., 2014). Nitobe depicts Bushido as the code of moral principles that the Japanese knights-warriors called samurais were demanded and expected to respect. Similarly to the martial arts of judo or karate, Bushido finds its foundation in Zen Buddhism, Confucianism, and Shintoism, granting the intense and rough path of the samurai to be softened by perspicacity, prudence and imperturbability. Many cultural specialists and scholars claim that the impact of Bushido on the Japanese society has not lessened, with the spirit of Bushido even crossing the frontiers of Japan and influencing the minds and hearts of people from foreign societies and cultures (Davies and Ikeno, 2002).

1.1 The eight principles of Bushido

The "samurai way of life" has evolved from the samurai ethical virtues, most commonly stressing a mix of honesty, continence, allegiance, command of the martial arts, and honour until death (Tsunetomo and Bennett, 2014). (Figure no. 1)

1. Rectitude, righteousness or justice: Nitobe defines it as "a power of resolution – rectitude is the power of deciding upon a certain course of conduct in accordance with reason, without wavering; to die when it is right to die, to strike when to strike is right" (Nitobe, 2017). Scholars have interpreted it as the emphasis of acting accurately and justly at any given instant and of being sharply trustworthy in all respects with the people that one is dealing with. Weight is put upon righteousness begins not from the other people, but from oneself and the highlight of this virtue can be described as the fact that a true samurai makes a full responsibility and engagement to his decisions.

2. Courage or heroic courage: to Nitobe this attribute is the equivalent of determination, fearlessness and confidence. It represents the aptitude to carry oneself without hesitation when the context asks for it. Most of the times it takes a big risk to exert this virtue but this

is living life in its entirety, positively and with great demeanour because heroic courage is not irrational or impetuous, on the contrary it is based on intelligence and strength.

3. Benevolence or compassion: this attribute refers to everything that exudes tenderness. By profound and serious preparation and practice the true samurai evolves into being clever, prompt and tough. However the cultivated strength should be applied to accomplish noble goals and therefore compassion is necessary to support other fellow men when the opportunity arises.

4. Politeness or respect: in Nitobe's book it is described as the visible display of altruism and good will. Politeness does not resume to simple gestures, it refers to the entire attitude of the samurai in various situations. This virtue confirms the fact that for a true warrior it is not necessary to certify or validate his might or his force by being cruel. Real samurais receive respect for their toughness in combat, but in the same time also for their benevolence with other people in difficult real life situations.

5. Honesty: Nitobe defines this principle in the following manner: "to be dishonest is to exhibit weakness and consequently diminish the samurai's esteem and self-esteem". When samurais state that they will fulfil an action, nothing will cease them from executing the mentioned task. What it is particularly interesting is that according to Bushido warriors do not need to make a vow and do not have to 'promise' because speaking and doing are bound and mean the same thing.

6. Honour: Nitobe mentions that very much emphasis is put on this virtue for the samurais but also within the Japanese society as a whole and it represents the eternal piece of a warrior's path. Embarrassment and disgrace are depicted as the biggest stigma a samurai could suffer. Also, warriors rely on only one referee for assessing honour and a person's characteristics, which is represented by their own selves. The choices they make and their resolutions are the result of their own thinking process and they mirror who they actually are.

Figure no. 1: The eight virtues of Bushido



Source: Adaptation from Nitobe, 2017

7. Loyalty: refers in Bushido as allegiance to the one who finds himself above within the chain of command. This virtue also refers to enforcing full and absolute control over all the other virtues because warriors hold responsibility for all the things they have done or said and all of the consequences that follow from their actions. Immense devotion is put to those in the samurai's care and to all the people they are accountable for, they remain vehemently faithful (Mukaisho, 2016).

8. Self-control: Bushido assesses that men should act in relation with supreme ethical standards because “the difference between good and bad and between right and wrong are givens, not subject to conversation or justification, and a man should know the distinction”. A samurai should possess poise, elegance and refinement all coming from enlightenment which polished all their rough edges and added to their sense of power (Wilson, 2015).

These eight principles set the course for the societal system of Bushido, which according to Nitobe were the foundation of the ethical and social structure of Japan.

1.2 Modern day management of corporations and the Bushido samurai code

In 2019 we can state that the international business world is rapidly changing and steady evolving, consequently companies should focus on achieving comparative advantages. In these business contexts characterised by pressure, managers should assess the necessary resources and ensure that the personnel is “doing things right” (with efficiency) and that “doing the right things” (with effectiveness), therefore more attention should be paid to the art of conducting a business (Wilson, 2013). A parallel between the concepts of Bushido and the ones related to modern management will be further made throughout this section of the paper.

The first virtue mentioned within the Bushido (justice) is seen as business experts as the most solid attribute from the code and is meant to be an essential feature for any executive or entrepreneur. The concept should be taken from its traditional meaning from the code as “a person’s power to decide upon a course of conduct in accordance with reason, without wavering”. Given that the world of business is one which many times could be characterised by lack of justice, inequity and corruption, it is very important to distinguish what is ethical and to run business consequently because honouring moral canons can inflict a big positive influence in both business and life overall (Wilson, 2015).

Regarding the second virtue of the Bushido – courage, Confucius also commented about that: “Acknowledging what is right and not acting accordingly unfolds a lack of courage”. Within management courage is vital for the company’s progress as it gives the leaders of a company the stamina necessary to surpass the difficulties that they will certainly appear. When commenting on managers, owning managerial boldness means to be skilful to confront issues with full force, to take hard decisions and to seize sometimes serious risks within the business (Mukaisho, 2016).

The third virtue within the Bushido – benevolence manifests as affection, devotion and attachment for other people along with and compassion. It is viewed as the most valuable trait of humanity as stated by the Bushido and within the ruthless business world we need benevolence for a leader in order for him or her to be outstanding and to spark devotedness and loyalty.

Concerning the fourth Bushido virtue – politeness, it precisely lines up with benevolence. A company requires almost all the time team effort and work. Consequently in the absence of politeness and respect, it is questionable that a manager would succeed to prosper in his professional objectives. This principle could be implemented in relationships with business collaborators, co-workers, seniors, clients and other people not straight implicated in one’s professional life (Nishigori et al., 2014).

Honesty: Nitobe considers that, “politeness is a farce and a show” if it does not come accompanied by truthfulness and frankness. For managers who pursue rectitude and fairness it is more plausible to win the appreciation and esteem of their clients and to cultivate trust with business partners and colleagues.

Honour: in Bushido the samurai are portrayed as firmly and hardly asserting a sense of honour. Depicted as a “bright consciousness of personal worth and dignity”, samurai were brought up to appreciate not only the privileges of their position but also its ethical duties. Multiple managers embrace an analogous perspective in terms of if they are frank about their business plans and they accomplish what they consent, the relationship with the partners and counterparties can healthy grow and consolidate (Wilson, 2015).

Loyalty: tribute and allegiance to a superior were defining characteristics of samurai. In a corporate frame of reference, loyalty is directed from staff members towards company headmen, but also in the other way around. When reminding the business context we also have to mention loyalty towards one’s mission and vision or devotion face to their own professional ideals.

Character and self-control: distinct from the business realm, interpretations or compromise do not find their place in Bushido. The code expects samurai to conform to the settled moral reference points which are not matter of discussion, and right and wrong are decidedly asserted. It could appear severe, but undoubtedly it empowered the character and self-control of practitioners. Both these features are imperative for attaining favourable outcomes as a manager. Continually conforming to all of these values demands a big amount of balance and self-regulation and it has been researched that managers with high levels of self-control are more effective with their time, thoughtful in their decisions, and productive with their work (Nishigori et al., 2014).

2. Research design and methodology

Following the interpretations delivered from the literatures above, two research objectives were advocated for this research as follows: 1) to identify the real application of the samurai principles mentioned within the Bushido code in current activities regarding the business context analysis, strategic enforcement & control and development of business partnerships and collaborations and 2) to investigate the effects or the influence on the success’ factors caused by the application of the before mentioned Bushido principles.

These two objectives set forward for the study were achieved by developing a qualitative research, chosen because it focuses less on the metrics of the collected data and more on the complex content and the nuances of the gathered information (Merriam and Tisdell, 2015). Qualitative research also has the advantage that it can adapt to the quality of information that is being obtained from the interviewees and due to the open questions it can provide more chances to assemble notable details and marks about any topic as an alternative of remaining enclosed to a limited and usually self-fulfilling direction (specific for the quantitative research methods) (Lune and Berg, 2017).

When choosing the appropriate qualitative method for this study, the semi-structured interview was picked because it can offer the interviewer information based on complex experiences and observations. This personal perspective provided the authors the opportunity to enhance the interview with additional questions. Contrary to other types of

research that need a particular framework rather inflexible, for the semi-structured interview the research can enrich the total database of acquired facts that is being consolidated (King, Horrocks and Brooks, 2019).

Dealing with a subject from the Japanese culture (which puts significant emphasis on emotional knowledge, long term relations and partnerships and on indirect, harmoniously structured and understated communication), the unique experiences of the managers which were interviewed for this qualitative study generated more depth and accuracy due to the open-ended questions and the less rigid approach of the research method (compared to the quantitative techniques).

We succeeded to take face-to-face interviews with 37 representatives of corporations and multinationals from Bucharest, Romania, in order to capture their perceptions, experiences and knowledge of the Bushido principles and the way they exploit them nowadays within their own daily business activities – an analysis of the companies on the research radar is given in table no. 1.

Table no. 1: The main features of the companies within the sample

Items		Return Number	Response Rate (%)
Business Area	IT	11	29,73
	Retail	9	24,32
	Services	7	18,92
	Energy	5	13,51
	Chemical	3	8,11
	Automobile	2	5,41
	Total	37	100.0

Qualitative research embraces research questions and seldom hypotheses to configure the background and the outlook of the study. The qualitative research questions rely on the relationship between the inquired research variables, while the hypotheses represent predictions that the authors of the study are setting forward about the links which are foreseen between the variables (Merriam and Tisdell, 2015). The hypotheses orbit around the numerical estimations of the variables and must be examined leaning on the data collected by using statistical procedures. Taking into consideration the specifications of the chosen qualitative method, but also on account of our study involving conversations with spokespersons of 37 firms (therefore a rather narrow number of entries – 37), we settled upon drafting research questions instead of hypotheses. In correlation with the objectives that we had in mind, the research questions were built and organized around the experience of the interviewed managers with the use of the attributes of the Japanese Bushido code of samurai to become more effective and fortunate in their business.

Given the research questions and the targets of our qualitative research, we set up an interview schedule that concentrated on the way in which the principles and values which the samurai upheld remain suitable and essential for Romanian business managers of today.

For this study, four open questions were conceived (found within table no. 2) for the interviews in order to give shape to the problem investigated: the functionality of the bushido principles for contemporary business, management, and leadership challenges. These interviews with managers 37 corporations developing activities in Romania (from different business sectors) are appropriate because they can provide multidimensional

understanding perceptions on how the bushido principles are pertinent to be implemented to in far-ranging angles of modern-day business leadership, varying from business strategies to marketing and sales to keeping a balanced personal lifestyle.

Table no. 2: Interview guide applied within the study

No.	Question
1.	Which features of the Code of Samurai – Bushido have influenced you put to use with the goal to develop your skills in terms of business context analysis?
2.	Which principles from the Code of Samurai – Bushido have you used so that you could improve your aptitudes of strategy enforcement and control?
3.	Which values from the Code of Samurai – Bushido have you applied in order to strengthen your business partnerships and collaborations?
4.	Describe two success factors within the company that were the most visibly boosted by putting to use the rules inspired by the Code of Samurai Bushido?

There were selected the largest corporations in Romania taking in account the top of the most performant companies in Romania conceived and published by Coface Romania for 2018, the companies targeted being in most cases centers or branches from Romania of big foreign companies. 50 invitations were made for people with an execution position (high or middle managers, directors or supervisors – all of them of Romanian nationality) within the companies to become part of the study. Only 37 of the persons responded affirmatively and afterwards the face-to-face interviews were scheduled, with all the data being gathered between April and June 2019.

Therefore, the guide was outlined around several significant topics: the motivation on why the managers find Bushido to be distinctively inspiring and a worthwhile approach to both professional and personal lives; the wish of the authors of providing concrete examples on how the virtues underpinning Bushido are still applied by managers within different business and personal contexts, on one hand, and of giving real exemplifications on how these virtues helped them by attracting benefits and breakthrough, on the other hand.

The respondents for this research represent an important body of thirty-seven experts holding various management titles and responsibilities within the leadership and administration of the companies and concerning also the shaping and implementation of the strategies for that specific company, such as: administrative services manager, financial manager, branch manager, marketing manager or HR manager – a synthesis of the respondents' profiles is provided in table no. 3.

In spite of the fact that at first sight the sample size would seem small, there is reasoning to support its dimension. Particularly, for this research is the fact that it was directed to 37 big companies from different business areas and that all the experts-managers of whom we sought the opinion have a strong professional background in managing the activities of the company whether it is planning, monitoring, and appraising job results, or coaching, counseling, and disciplining employees or developing, coordinating, and enforcing systems, policies, procedures, and productivity standards.

Settling on the sample's dimension, it composed only from people with professional abilities to outstandingly lead, oversee multiple business operations, manage stress, and effectively communicate with coworkers, which makes it very solid for the goals of this article.

Table no. 3: The main features of the respondents

Items		Return Number	Response Rate (%)
Gender	Male	53	68,83
	Female	24	31,17
Education	Bachelor's Degree	28	36,36
	Master's Degree	44	57,14
	Doctoral Degree (PhD)	5	6,5
Position	High-level manager/supervisor	39	50,65
	Middle-level manager/ supervisor	31	40,26
	Others	7	9,09

3. Findings and discussions

The outcomes of the research acknowledge the way the virtues within the Code of Samurai (Bushido) can better the business' skills of Romanian managers. Parts of their answers at the four questions from the interview guide will be cited within this part of the paper.

With the support of the first question in the interview guide, we wanted to determine which particularities of the Code of Samurai – Bushido had an impact on managers in order for them to enhance their abilities with regard to business context analysis. The answers revolve around the fact that “reading and assimilating Bushido into a modern business context helped the managers to be more aware of the importance of gaining wisdom and ability as a manager/ leader to earn the moral support of the subordinates in a way that they are prepared to follow him through high points but also through low points”. This point was tackled or mentioned by 26 interviewed managers (which count more than 70% of the respondents) and it gravitates around the virtues of righteousness and loyalty from the Bushido. A second good input of adapting the Bushido code to business was specified as “building the discipline necessary to run a business translated into creating the right vision involving effective policies, programs, operating procedures, channels of communication and lines of authority and afterwards sticking to this vision”. The discipline cited by the Bushido transfers to the business context also by the situation when the company has a more effective disciplinary procedure with a reward and punishment system that stimulates the employees to become more competitive. These aspects regarding the discipline which emanate from the virtues of justice, courage and loyalty within the Bushido code were invoked by 21 from the 37 respondents. A third purpose for remodelling the Code of Samurai into a corporate frame of reference can be rendered as “the manager having the wisdom and the moral rectitude to realistically assess the relative strengths referring to resources (manpower, money, machines, materials, methods of production and markets covered)” and also “to pragmatically taking into consideration the different changes within the business and economic environments and as a result adjust the strategies”. A similar thing was mentioned by another respondent in terms of “the manager should hold the honour to properly appraise where the firm is settled and positioned in the marketplace when he is considering its competitive competence”. A fourth reason for reshaping the Bushido into a business setting, specified by 15 from the all 37 interviewees was represented by the fact that “as a manager one should surround himself with well-trained

staff, and in this way the company could engage in more activities with greater confidence, task which demands benevolence, politeness and honesty”.

Concerning the second question addressed in the interview, which highlighted which principles from the Code of Samurai – Bushido the managers have used so that they could upgrade their aptitudes of strategy enforcement and control, 31 of the people interviewed mentioned some resembling aspects pivoting around the virtues of courage, honesty and self-control. One of the managers specified that “just like the samurai who needs to have such a clear mind that he is able to compose a poem when faced with a dangerous situation, the manager needs to have the boldness and honesty face to oneself to own the risk to be versatile in his actions with respect to strategic and tactical changes so that he can attain maximum advantage of variable circumstances”. Another manager mentioned that: “the samurai must remain cold in the fire of the battle; he is calm in the middle of danger which stands as a good model for managers who need to be very responsive to changes in business situations, as well as able to take pre-emptive actions”. This sentence was very matching to one pointed out by another director: “Bushido states that – the fight for a samurai is not only a matter of brutal force but also an intellectual battle – in the same way managers should concentrate to anticipate the reaction of the business competitors so that the personnel and all the other resources can be carefully set up for the pivotal achievement or triumph”. Four managers actually cited Nietzsche, the German philosopher who researched the samurai values, stating that: “samurai should be proud of their enemy, because only then the enemy’s victory will be your own”. The respective managers were persuaded by these lines motivating in their own words that: “in business, acknowledging a competitor’s gain keeps the leader constantly wishing to search for new and innovative ways of undertaking the challenges provoked by ever-changing circumstances – inspiring themselves even from their own competitors”.

When strategic control was brought up into discussion (as part of the second question from the interview guide) almost all managers brought up loyalty as the most fitting principle from Bushido to be applied within this stage of a business. For example one of the managers stated that: “The holy grail of the strategic control phase of business should focus on loyalty in three directions. Just as samurai were incredibly loyal to everyone who relied on them, notably to their superiors, strategic control is based first of all on a steady and increasing group of steadfast customers who hold on to the products or services provided by the firm. Secondly all personnel’s loyalty also represents a meaningful asset to any venture, when employees will offer constant support to the leader not just because he solicits it, but because they actually wish to. Thirdly, loyalty to the suppliers is the last direction in which devotion taken from the samurai should be placed because a tremendous strategic advantage is given to the manager if he and the suppliers are committed and loyal to each other”. 25 of the respondents referred to the importance of loyalty when strategic control is concerned also from corporate secrets point of view. Some of their answers specifically point to that: “At strategic level, the strategic plan should be protected with ultimate safeguard” or “the manager should take active measures to keep corporate secrets safe by using firm and disciplinary actions for the staff members who divulge them.”

When respondents were asked about the values from the Code of Samurai – Bushido they have applied in order to strengthen their business partnerships and collaborations (aspects which stand for the third question of the interview guide), 29 of the respondents mentioned the same words when it comes of building long-term business cooperation: “politeness”

sometimes referred also as “civility”. This word was expressed by respondents when they disclosed different concerns: “Civility guides us to maintain the proper distance to all the people around us and is strengthened by mutual esteem, understanding and tact. The nucleus of our fortuitous and long-term collaborations with our stakeholders is grounded on professionalism and attention in all our doings which are supported heavily by manners and etiquette”. Another compelling answer stated that: “An extremely important aspect enforced to me by the Bushido acknowledges the fact that politeness should involve the respect for the social position, which in Japan is not a consequence of the financial status, but from distinctions based on personal merit. Having that as a core value we have developed very useful partnerships for the company with organisations from multiple areas: academic institutions, non-profit organisations, research institutes and advertising agencies”.

24 of the respondents spoke of the Bushido virtue of “loyalty” when dealing with consolidating lasting business collaborations: “our commitment to being loyal is echoed in the coherence and constancy of our dealings with the customers. Our business connections are not coincidental, but the outcome of responsive, ongoing, high-quality work and subsequent suggestions and guidance”. The Bushido principle of “self-control” was also called on by 19 of the managers as being a key for maintaining a credible image towards all the partners of the firm: “The description about the way the samurai and the Japanese as a whole develop this power to suppress the exterior manifestations of the internal troubles really impressed me and determined me to mend this skill when doing business with our partners. Restraining the impulses and resisting temptation are the bridge between wishing for long-term business relations and actually accomplishing them.”

When tackling the success’ factors within the company that were the most visibly boosted by applying rules inspired by the Code of Samurai (the focus of the fourth question in the interview guide), a vast amount of respondents (35 out of 37) outlined an overall growth of the company’s and manager’s image and professional reputation: “acquiring and keeping the Bushido principles within a business leader’s mentality is strongly related to the moral compass. In the end the good name of the company is extremely important to maintain and our reputation is solidly linked to running a good, strong business in an ethical manner that brought us prestige and good attitude from our stakeholders”. A comparable response was: “by reinforcing politeness and benevolence as core values for our sales personnel, our marketing ability kept its high level concerning the skills of persuading customers, knowledge of marketing and buyer behaviour, but also advertising and sales promotion”. The same virtues (benevolence and politeness) were brought into debate by another CEO – he explained how “these principles encouraged the company to perfect the process of customer financing, meaning that more and more financial arrangements were provided by the company to clients with the goal to upgrade their purchasing power or smooth the terms of sale”. Another analogous feedback was given by the manager of a big IT corporation: “The modern day business leader must embrace the approach of the samurai of feudal Japan – be proficient in martial arts of business attacks, but also capable to absorb the craft of understanding people and become a reputation-centric CEO. In a world where the public has immediate access to information, transparency and reputation are critical and therefore managers cannot hide behind the curtains in isolated corporate boardrooms, they must guide the firm with integrity.”

33 of the participants in our study (from 37) designated more developed process of research and development on one hand, with distribution and service on the other hand because of

the integration of the Bushido values within the company's strategic management: "raising awareness for the mix between the Bushido values of righteousness and courage gave us the opportunity to be very thorough when advancing the process of research and engineer tasks conducting toward efficiency in the pattern the products are manufactured and also when putting forward the process of development (including tasks centred on changing, improving, attaching new characteristics to, and expanding new products)". A marketing manager for one of the biggest retailers specified that: "Incorporating the self-control and the discipline of samurai within every-day business helped us be extremely organised for the multiple activities of distribution: transportation, warehousing, expediting, ability to maintain low distribution costs and ensuring that deliveries are done on the correct dates and in the right quantities". The manager of another retail multinational specialised in furniture confided that "politeness and benevolence are two core values of the Bushido which are extremely fitting for our employees working within the service process involving installation, coaching the customers in using the product and repairs".

28 of the partakers at our research acknowledge the relevance of the Bushido code for enriching not necessarily the number of business contacts but the quality of the business relationships. First of all labour relations were talked about and the virtues of self-control (discipline) and honour were pointed as "responsible" for sharpening them just as one of the managers of a company from the chemical industry specifically said: "continuous practice conducted to fewer stoppages and interruptions in plant production and a lower level of lateness and absenteeism". "Integrating honesty and honour also contributed at the durability of our business partnerships creating and maintaining a credible image for our company" another manager (of an energy business) affirmed.

Conclusions

The foundation of the term Samurai can be translated in English as "to serve". The Bushido code was the Samurai way of life and captured the primal rules of how they lived, which are just as pertinent in the 21st century in business as they were for more than seven centuries in feudal Japan. Nowadays, business holders and administrators would be productive if they posed themselves the question "how do I efficiently serve more people?". The more they centre on approaching things from "service" point of view and deepening the relationship with the clients, the more the public will keep returning to the products or services of the company.

In order to shed a light on how the Samurai principles of Bushido are just as applicable today as they were hundreds of years ago, a qualitative study has been carried out involving interviews on the basis of a questionnaire with managers from 37 big companies developing their activities in Bucharest Romania. The timeline of the interviews taken was stretched between April and June 2019 and the respondents were direct contacts that the authors of this paper have established during the time.

When it comes to the first research question of the study focusing on activities regarding the business context analysis, strategic enforcement & control and development of business partnerships and collaborations, we found that all the values covered by the Samurai Code found their place for implementation by the managers interviewed within the different stages of a business.

Regarding the second research question of the study, the most important success' points rooting in the application of the Bushido Code of Samurai within different phases of an organisation, in the view of representatives of the 37 corporations, are related to: growth of the company's and manager's image and professional reputation, development of the research and development process on one hand, and of distribution and service processes on the other hand and enrichment of the quality of business relationships.

These led us to the conclusion that there are three states of mind that are reinforced within the Bushido and these are vigilance, a sharp mind, and emotional stability. As it was unveiled, the code of the Samurai describes traits that are beneficial in all sides of life. The Samurai earned massive might and stamina, which were very helpful in combat and when coming to the aid of those around them. Businessmen and entrepreneurs can apply the similar guidelines to improve their general mental health and business fulfilment, which will show the way to more accomplishment, higher turnover and benefits, along with loyal customers and trustworthy business partners.

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