CONFUCIAN ANCESTRAL WORSHIP'S LEGACIES IN PENINSULAR MALAYSIA

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CONFUCIAN ANCESTRAL WORSHIP'S LEGACIES IN PENINSULAR MALAYSIA

by

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LEGASI PEMUJAAN LELUHUR KONFUSIAN DI SEMENANJUNG MALAYSIA

ABSTRAK

Pemujaan leluhur Konfusian merupakan amalan pemujaan yang berteraskan konsep ketakwaan kepada nenek moyang keluarga. Amalan pemujaan leluhur ini yang berasal dari negara China telah wujud melebihi 2,700 tahun and kini telah berkembang ke seluruh dunia. Di Semenanjung Malaysia, keluarga Cina menyifatkan pemujaan leluhur Konfusian sebagai suatu warisan kebudayaan. Namun, legasi pemujaan leluhur Konfusian di Semenanjung Malaysia tidak pernah dinamakan, dinyatakan dan dikategorikan dalam masyarakat yang sering berubah. Oleh itu, kajian ini bertujuan mengenalpastikan (i) legasi pemujaan leluhur Konfusian, (ii) keteguhan legasi, (iii) ekspresi kebudayaan dan saluran penghantaran legasi, dan (iv) pembentukan ingatan sosial. Kajian ini dijalankan berdasarkan suatu kerangka konseptual yang merangkumi antropologi simbolik yang dikemukakan oleh Geertz dan etnosains yang disarankan oleh Goodenough. Berdasarkan kerangka tersebut, kajian ini mengumpul data melalui kaedah temubual secara mendalam, kerja lapangan dan soal selidik yang berkaitan dengan pemujaan leluhur Konfusian. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa pemujaan leluhur Konfusian mempunyai tujuh legasi, iaitu tiga legasi ketara (termasuk kitaran masa, mnemonik dan peralatan ritual) dan empat legasi tidak ketara (seni persembahan kuno, disiplin artistik, harapan masyarakat dan ingatan antara generasi). Kajian ini turut menunjukkan bahawa kewujudan legasi adalah bergantung kepada empat tahap keteguhan, tujuh ekspresi kebudayaan, lima saluran penghantaran kebudayaan dan tiga jenis ingatan sosial.

CONFUCIAN ANCESTRAL WORSHIP'S LEGACIES IN PENINSULAR MALAYSIA

ABSTRACT

Confucian ancestral worship espouses the notion of filial piety to the family ancestors. Ancestral worship originated from Mainland China more than 2,700 years ago and this practice had since expanded worldwide. In Peninsular Malaysia, the Chinese families viewed Confucian ancestral worship as a matter of cultural inheritance. However, the legacies of Confucian ancestral worship in Peninsular Malaysia were unnamed, unspecified and uncategorised, especially amid rapid social change. This study is therefore aimed at identifying the (i) legacies of Confucian ancestral worship, (ii) tenacity of legacies, (iii) cultural expression and transmission of legacies, and (iv) social memory formation. This study is conducted under a conceptual framework that consists of Geertz's symbolic anthropology and Goodenough's ethnoscience. Using this framework, this study employs in-depth interviews, fieldworks and questionnaire survey to gather data on Confucian ancestral worship. The results and findings revealed that Confucian ancestral worship has seven legacies, where three are tangible (temporal cycle, mnemonics and ritual equipment) while four are intangible (performance art of the remote past, artistic disciplines, social expectation and intergenerational memory). The study revealed that the existence of legacies hinges on four extents of tenacity, seven cultural expressions, five cultural transmission channels and three types of social memory.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The Confucian ancestral worship is a highly institutionalised ideological ritual with a history stretching back to thousands of years in Mainland China (Wang & Tan 2012). It emerged in the Spring and Autumn period (771–476 BCE) which marked the beginning of the Eastern Zhou Dynasty (Xue 2014). Confucian ancestral worship was driven by Confucianism, the most prevalence Chinese philosophy of the imperial era, and hence it is counted as an ideological ritual. To date, the ideological ritual remains a highly structured family activity as it would always involve kinship, intergenerational memory, participants attitude, specific occasions, ritual equipment, artworks and literature. From the structuralist perspectives, an understanding of Confucian cultural tradition is equivalent to an understanding of Chinese social behaviour (Goldstone 1991; Hwang 2001).

Confucian ancestral worship is being regarded as a family activity due to a concept called filial piety. This concept was founded by Confucius (551–479 BCE), a prominent social thinker, who introduced filial piety as one of the supreme virtues among others (Xie & Ge 2015). Filial piety is an attitude of sincerity, obedience, caring and respect for the parents, elders and ancestors. In the context of being filial to the ancestors or the late parents, Confucius proposed to perform a worship ceremony regularly with standardised protocols (Fan 2006). This idea is recorded in the Analects of Confucius, “when the parents are alive, serve them according to etiquette; when they die, bury them according to etiquette; and make sacrifices to them according to etiquette” (Chen 2012). The passage indicated that Confucian ancestral worship is all

about strengthening the family ties through a prescribed worship protocol. The notion of filial piety to ancestral is thoroughly entrenched into the Chinese family value, proactively moulding the individual with a caring and thoughtful attitude towards the ancestors (Chen 2012).

Contemporary Chinese family puts great emphasis on etiquette and stresses strict discipline on ancestral worship. Worship ceremony is to be carried out as per schedule or in accordance with the 24 solar terms, which usually involves Lichun (the beginning of spring), Qingming (tomb sweeping) and Dongzhi (winter solstice) (Xue 2014). The worship ceremony is usually performed at formal occasions such as the ancestral hall, tombs and temple which are fit for the purpose (Cohen 1990). Another highlight of ancestral worship is the fine cast sacrificial objects that involved skilled craftsmanship. Based on the unearthed artefacts, the contemporary Chinese families even had fine ornaments and pieces of jewellery as the sacrificial objects to consecrate the ancestors (Chen 2014). During ancestral worship, the worshippers are expected to observe the ceremony with a standardised set of body language, outlining the worship gestures and postures intended to respect the ancestors. For instance, the worshippers are to put their palms together, kneel, bow and prostrate before the ancestors (Xue 2014). More importantly, this ideological ritual espouses the notion of filial piety to ancestral, promoting the idea of caring and to always keep the ancestors in remembrance (Wang 2011). The rigorous adherence to worship ritual can be viewed from three scholarly perspectives. Structuralists claimed that the natives would relate the cultural ritual to their everyday life and then deemed that the cultural ritual has a strong connection to their mundane routine (Nutini 1971; White 1974; Gonos 1977; Turner 2009). Meanwhile, cultural anthropologists suggested that cultural ritual serves the purpose to maintain and eternalise the social institution and beliefs (Stout 1975;

Asad 1983; Steklis & Walter 1991; Gontier 2006). To ethno-scientists, natives would embrace a particular cultural ritual insofar as the practice reflects their values of life (Evaneshko & Kay 1982; Harwood & Weissberg 1992; Lanzano 2013; Tella & MacCulloch 2014; Saefullah 2019).

In ancient times, Confucianism was the administrative foundation of the Chinese government, dominating its people thinking and way of life across the Eastern Zhou Empire (Yao 2000). Confucian ancestral worship subsequently became the predominant social practice, trending across the families from noble class to commoners (Yao 2000). During that era, Confucian ancestral worship was one of the public policies that foster the filial culture, stipulating the people to comply with the worship practice (Liu 2017). Today, the virtue of filial piety to ancestral continues to flourish across the world even after the imperial eras had long passed.

Although Confucian ancestral worship emerged in the 5th BCE in Mainland China (Coe & Begley 2016), it is still a prevalent folk practice to the Chinese families in Peninsular Malaysia today. The Chinese families inherited the legacies of Confucian ancestral worship, including family values, myth and legendary stories, the craftsmanship of sacrificial objects, literature and intergenerational memory. Legacies can be divided into tangible and intangible types, where tangible legacies can be observed in aspects like sacrificial objects and literature while intangible ones seen in memory. However, it could have been through a series of filtration and modification in the past thousands of years. Hence, what the Chinese families in Peninsular Malaysia inherited currently could be the remaining legacies of Confucian ancestral worship from ancient times.

1.2 Statement of problems

In Peninsular Malaysia, Confucian ancestral worship's legacies lived on among the Chinese families who embraced the old practice. The Chinese families believed they have an obligation to perform the filial duty to the deceased ancestors through ancestral worship. However, both tangible and intangible legacies that they have been inheriting were unnamed, unspecified and uncategorised. Hence, there is a need to identify the remaining legacies before all is lost to the next generation or completely revamped into a new appearance. This effort aimed to leave an updated archive to the subsequent generations for references in order to track the changes on Confucian ancestral worship's legacies. In view of the changes on legacies barely affect the worship paradigm, regardless of its nature or physical conditions, it is needed to explore the tenacity of Confucian ancestral worship's legacies from the spectrum of philosophy, literature and semiotic, material culture, craftsmanship, performative culture, social memory and collective emotions among the worshippers in Peninsular Malaysia.

When a worship ritual like Confucian ancestral worship is deeply rooted in the mundane life of a community, it alluded that everything relates to the ritual would incorporate into the living environment unconsciously. Consequently, this increases the difficulty level to justify the social presence of legacies that have been popularised. Some of it was too "ordinary" that no one ever notices the "ordinary" thing was a legacy. Thus, there is a need to identify the cultural expression of legacies of Confucian ancestral worship in Peninsular Malaysia. This is to clarify the way legacies show their existence in daily life. Confucian ancestral worship and its legacies are the cultural products from 2,700 years ago but remained an influential culture presently. Moreover, Confucian ancestral worship was originated from the

feudal nation of Mainland China but today widely practised by the Chinese families in Peninsular Malaysia. Hence, there is a need to identify cultural transmission channels in order to verify the way Confucian ancestral worship and its legacies to transcend space and time limit. Besides, cultural product like Confucian ancestral worship is able to maintain a sense of social presence throughout the centuries, which rely heavily on the social memory formation. Social memory has three temporal horizons and the length of memory is likely to determine the future of Confucian ancestral worship. In this case, there is a need to identify how social memory takes shape. This extent of clarification would enable us to foresee the development of Confucian ancestral worship, either it continues to flourish throughout the nation or soon to face a crisis of cultural collapse.

1.3 Objectives

The objectives of the present study on Confucian ancestral worship in Peninsular Malaysia are:

a. To identify the tangible and intangible legacies.

b. To identify the tenacity of the legacies.

c. To identify the cultural expression and cultural transmission channels.

d. To identify the social memory formation.

1.4 Research methodology

This section detailed the methodology used in this study which included two types of data collection. The research design of this study is presented in the form of a figure, followed by a brief discussion of the data analysis and interpretation. This

study uses both descriptive-based responses and statistics information to meet the research objectives. For this reason, an exploratory design was opted as the methodology with both qualitative and quantitative research as a package to answer the co-related research objectives. Both qualitative and quantitative research were initiated at different times. The quantitative research was launched after qualitative research was done. This research order enables the qualitative data or results to be clarified further in the quantitative research. For instance, if the informants claimed that Confucian ancestral worship is a tradition of the Chinese families, it would be included in the questionnaire survey as a subject of measurement to gather public views. This is done to gain insights into the disparity between the informants' perspectives and the respondents' opinions. From here, we can verify if the informant's perspectives reflected reality.

Figure 1.1 summarises the methodology of this study, which aims to identify the legacies of Confucian ancestral worship, tenacity, cultural expression and cultural transmission of the corresponding legacies, and social memory formation in Peninsular Malaysia. This study is based on a conceptual framework that consists of two theories, which are Geertz's symbolic anthropology and Goodenough's ethnoscience. Qualitative data intends to gain deeper and richer insight from the seasoned industry players who can define the status quo of worship practice in Peninsular Malaysia. In this study, Geertz's symbolic anthropology and Goodenough's ethnoscience are adopted as the control panel, navigating the research direction within a timeframe. Figure 1.1 presents the procedures of exploratory study, the details included data sources, sampling areas, research methods, time of data collection and data analysis. Although the contents were sorted out from interview transcripts in point forms and short phrases, the key points will be further explained in

the following sub-section, which covered the project plans, research scope, task duration and data analysis method.

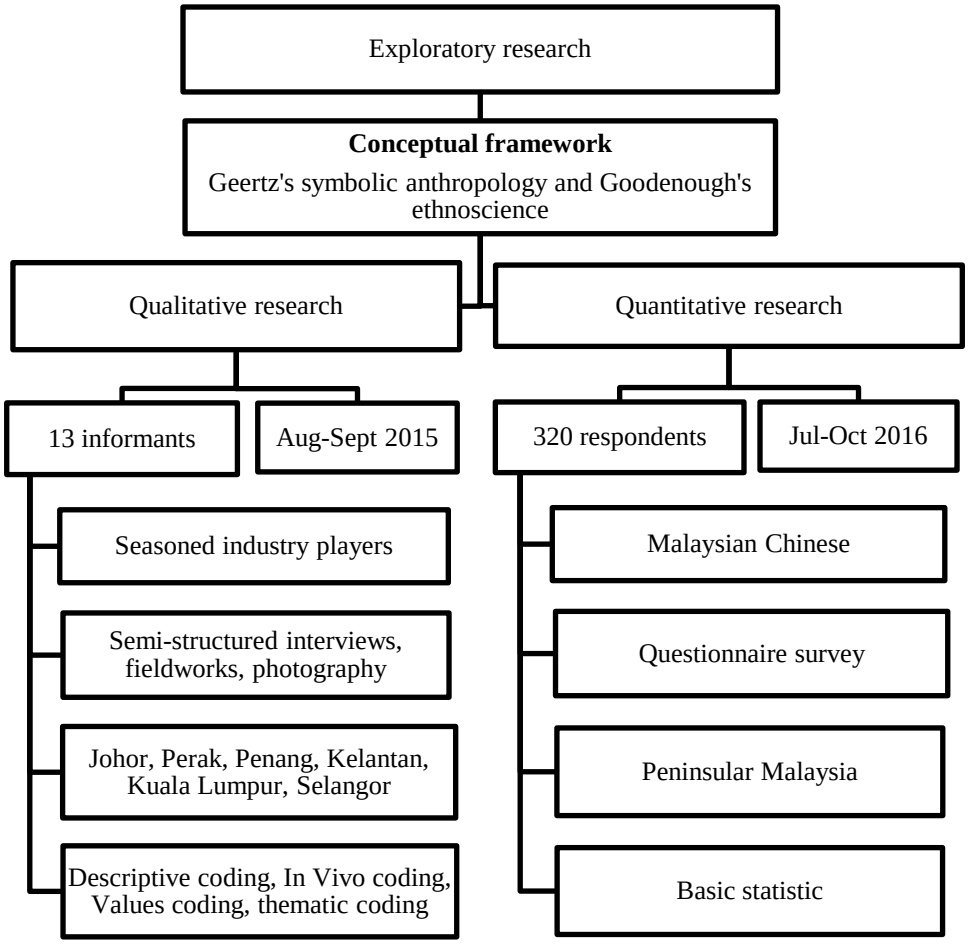

Figure 1.1 A summary of research approach for this study.

1.4.1 Qualitative research: Data collection

The informants were selected based on the criterion sampling basis as shown in Figure 1.1. First, the informants must be the stakeholders who have actively maintained the social memory of Confucian ancestral worship in Peninsular Malaysia. Second, they should be seasoned industry players who had more than twenty years'

experiences in crafts production, ritual preparation and trading activities that relates to sacrificial objects. Based on these criteria, two craftsmen, two ritual leaders, three merchants and six public ritual event organisers were interviewed. The informants' profession details are summarised in Table 1.1. Ten out of 13 informants had their career affiliated with worship culture for more than 20 years on the average. With more than 20 years of experiences, the informants could provide a more diverse and comprehensive insight about the worship practice. Although three informants are not seasoned stakeholders (experience below 20 years), their involvement in the preparation of public ritual event has added value to the interview. Furthermore, these informants had facilitated my access to the research site for fieldwork and provided detail explanation of every arrangement.

13 informants were recruited in the qualitative research. The number of informants was justified by a study by Hennink *et al.* (2017) that nine interviews are adequate in a qualitative research. They suggested that code saturation could be achieved by nine interviews while meaning saturation would require a sample size larger than nine, best around 16 to 24 interviews. Code saturation refers to the point where no more new code can be identified in "hearing all issues". Here, data begin to repeat, which means further data collection is redundant (Kerr *et al.* 2010). Meaning saturation is the point where no more new idea can be added in "understanding all issue". At this point, information begins to duplicate, which indicates it is purposeless to continue collecting new data (Hennink *et al.* 2017). Some scholars suggested that saturation occurred between seven to 12 interviews (Guest *et al.* 2006); some proposed eight to 16 interviews (Namey *et al.* 2016). Francis *et al.* (2010) recommended 13 interviews as the minimum sample size because this number is adequate to study issues relating to civil beliefs and norms. Apart from the scholar's

justification, the sampling criterions are very strict in this study. There are not many that could fulfil the conditions like having more than 20 years of experience in worship culture and actively maintaining the social memory of worship culture in Peninsular Malaysia. This consequently narrowed down the sample size. Hence, within the capacity of this study, the sample size for qualitative research was 13 informants.

Table 1.1 List of 13 informants involved in this study.

Area	Profession/Role	Years of experience
Johor Bahru, Johor	Craftsman	> 25
Endau, Johor	Committee member of public ritual event	<5
Endau, Johor	Volunteer of public ritual event	<5
Kuala Krai, Kelantan	Organising chairman of public ritual event	> 20
Gua Musang, Kelantan	President of Yit Lan Association Gua Musang	>20
Ipoh, Perak	Craftsman	> 50
Ipoh, Perak	President of prayer goods trader association of Perak/ Merchant	> 30
Kampar, Perak	Taoist priest	> 30
Kampar, Perak	Organising chairman of public ritual event	<5
Georgetown, Penang	Geomancer	>40
Georgetown, Penang	Merchant	>20
Bukit Mertajam, Penang	Organising chairman of public ritual event	> 20
Kuala Lumpur	Prayer goods traders' association of Malaysia/ Merchant	>30

All 13 informants were divided into four groups according to their professional and role in the worship culture. They are craftsmen (two), ritual leaders (two), merchants (three) and public ritual event organisers (six). They were divided into four groups so that (i), it was for the convenience of interview and data management. And (ii), to get some person who stands at the right position to answer specific technical issues, ensuring the replies are reliable, valid and genuine. Hence, there were four sets of question scope and every group responded to a different one, which comes in a semi-structured interview format. All questions were asked in an open-ended form and there was no need to strictly follow the formalised list of questions. The question lists (See Appendix A) are merely a guideline or direction of the interview scope. The informants were encouraged to freely share their views related to cultural inheritance, civil beliefs, public involvement in the ritual, market demand on sacrificial objects and craftsmanship.

All the in-depth interviews were conducted from August 2015 to September 2015 and each interview lasted 30-60 minutes. The interview appointments were purposely scheduled during the Hungry Ghost Festival, which is one of the festivals that has linkage with Confucian ancestral worship. The reason is to carry out an observational study at several locations using video recording and photography, capturing the moments of the live events. In the field, the event details, floor setting, decorations, the ambience, costume and makeup, event rundown, food arrangement down to the worshippers' interaction were recorded using field notes. During the worship ceremony, moments were captured using photography.

1.4.2 Qualitative research: Data sampling

The sampling areas for qualitative research covered five states and one federal territory in Peninsular Malaysia, including Johor, Kelantan, Perak, Penang, Selangor and Kuala Lumpur. These were the areas to conduct in-depth interviews and to carry out the observational study in conjunction with the Hungry Ghost Festival. Peninsular Malaysia has 11 states and two federal territories, only the mentioned five states and one federal territory were chosen as the sampling areas for four reasons:

1. These areas have the well-established civic organisation that organised the public ritual event annually. Hence, I can contact the event organisers for interview purpose.

2. Announcement of the pre-scheduled event (celebration of Hungry Ghost Festival) went live one month earlier via news reports, flyers, advertisements, social media and non-governmental organisations (NGO). Based on the advance notifications, I can arrange for the field trips for guaranteed informative interviews.

3. The pre-scheduled events are reportedly large-scale and unique, which offers a good opportunity to observe public involvement in cultural activities.

4. The Hungry Ghost Festival is a public ritual event that would only last 14 days a year. The non-stop interviews and fieldwork missions mean I could only cover up to six areas maximum within these 14 days. Travelling from one state to another is time-consuming too. The journey starts from Kuala Lumpur, first head south towards Johor. The

route then heads north to Perak and Penang, crossing the East-West Highway to Kelantan and lastly back to Selangor within these 14 days.

1.4.3 Qualitative research: Data analysis and data interpretation

At the analysis stage, four coding techniques were employed to interpret the outcome of in-depth interviews and images captured during fieldwork. The techniques are descriptive coding, In Vivo coding, values coding and thematic coding. Descriptive coding refers to using a word or noun for summarising passage of qualitative data (Saldana 2003). Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) proposed that this type of coding is useful for ethnographic studies. In Vivo coding refers to the actual language or exact words found in the qualitative data, and hence it is also known as "verbatim coding" (Strauss 1987). Charmaz (2006) claimed that this coding technique is suitable for almost all qualitative studies, particularly studies that prioritise the voice of informants. Values coding is picking any data that reflects the informant's beliefs, attitudes, cultural values and opinions (Gable & Wolf 1993). LeCompte and Preissle (1993) asserted that this technique applies to both interview transcripts and field notes. Lastly, thematic coding is using phrases to quickly generalise what the whole data is all about (Rubin & Rubin 2012). The final themes must be interpretative and insightful (Manen 1990).

Many previous studies applied the code and coding techniques for data analysis and interpretation purposes. Although these studies were not directly related to Confucian ancestral worship, their research objectives were relevant in explaining social phenomena, such as culture, civil beliefs and ritual. For instance, Pietkiewicz (2012) utilised the code and coding techniques to study burial rituals and cultural changes in the Polish community. Liu *et al.* (2015) used a similar approach to explore

the beliefs of college students toward posthumous organ donation. Dacin *et al.* (2010) used Nvivo 2.0, a relatively user-friendly software, to facilitate study about rituals contribute to the maintenance of the British class system. Abernethy *et al.* (2015) employed a qualitative analysis software NVivo 9 to study the corporate worship and spiritual formation based on the insight of worship leaders. Siwela and Jansen (2016) reviewed the school culture versus South African traditional healers using ancestral worship by operating code and coding techniques. To a certain extent, Confucian ancestral worship is a topic encompassing the issue of culture, family values, arts and history, civil beliefs and ritual. Similarly, it is justifiable to replicate the code and coding techniques in this study.

Coding is very subjective and hence, the codes always open to debate (Campbell *et al.* 2013). Still, there is one rule and three principles to consolidate the reliability of the codes. The rule is that be very clear about the research objectives and purpose of the interviews as this helps to clarify the code definition (Krippendorff 2004; Stuckey 2015). The three principles to generate codes are inductive, deductive and unitization (Campbell *et al.* 2013). Inductive approach is to quote what the informant said (content-driven) while deductive approach denotes to code according to a set of pre-given codes (researcher-driven) (Hennink *et al.* 2017). Unitization approach is rather complex because the researchers need to establish an intercoder agreement so that a group of researchers would code the same data in the same way (Campbell *et al.* 2013). This study opted the inductive approach for two reasons. One, the analysis and interpretation did not involve a group of researchers and thus, unitization approach is dropped from consideration. Two, coding according to a set of pre-determined codes might leads to bias, skewed data and hence, the deductive approach is not under consideration either. Inductive approach allows this study to

explore a diverse range of codes and this is in line with the nature of exploratory research framework. The raw data goes through four stages of coding to reach the overarching themes (Dacin *et al.* 2010).

Figure 1.2 outlines the coding stages to reach the overarching themes in this study. Firstly, all voice recordings are transcribed verbatim as Word documents. The entire coding is done by hand and did not employ any software to perform queries because no numerical information needed here. According to Saldana (2015), the coding method is a cyclical process, where coding action needs to repeat four times in order to finalise the insightful code. In stage one, primary codes are created by labelling the relevant key phrases from the interview passage and cropping images captured at fieldwork. In this study, more than 100 passages have been coded. On average, every interview transcript was read at least several times to generate the primary codes. This step is meant to reduce coding error so that no phrases were mistakenly coded. Primary codes refer to the unrefined codes and all need to go through an "information extraction process" (Saldana 2015). Stage two, primary codes that share a similar nature or genre were collapsed into higher-level nodes or secondary codes. Now, secondary codes are slightly polished codes (Xu & Storr 2012). Stage three, secondary codes that are interrelated, share the same characteristics, "look-alike" or "feel alike" collapsed into categories (Lincoln & Guba 1985). The codes that come under the same category are the filtered one and carry substantial information. Stage four, when all categories evolved into an overarching theme, it was not because of "look-alike", but all are tied together to consolidate the family tree. The overarching theme is the ultimate code which captured the highlights or the essence of the whole interviews (Saldana 2015). For visualisation purposes, Table 1.2 presents the actual coding procedures as outlined in Figure 1.2. In Table 1.2, the representative

data refers to the verbatim transcripts while phrases in bold are used to generate primary codes. The complete representative data that underpins the primary and secondary codes are shown in Appendix B.

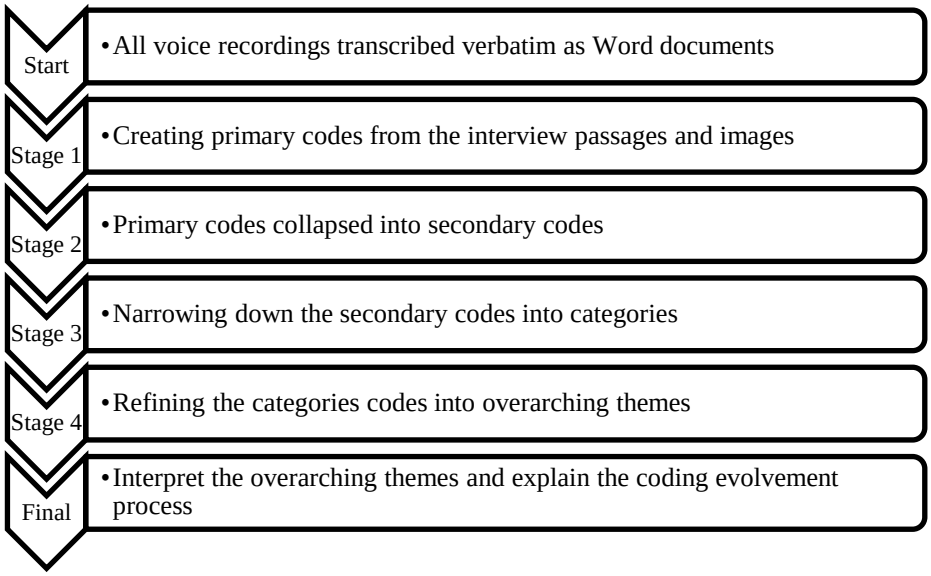

Figure 1.2 The coding stages of developing overarching themes in this study (Source: Adapted from Dacin *et al*. 2010).

Figure 1.3 shows an example of a "horizontal labelled hierarchy" format by using four stages of coding to identify a legacy (i.e. theme). The primary codes were collapsed into secondary codes by grouping primary codes that shared a similar nature or genre (See Figure 1.3). For example, the codes "Stage opera" and "Youth singing contest", which linked to the same genre of amusement and leisure, were grouped into a node (secondary code) marked "Entertainment". Stage three, the secondary codes "Entertainment", "Genre" and "Visual and audio effects", altogether merged under a category marked "Nostalgic art exhibition" as they jointly reassembled the past moments and old setting. In stage four, categories "Nostalgic art exhibition" and "Temporal setting" have collectively demonstrated the performing art of the long-past days and so, both finally fell into an overarching theme labelled "performance art of

the remote past". This theme would then be signified as one of the legacies of Confucian ancestral worship, where its existence today was supported by the details as shown in primary codes, secondary codes and categories.

Table 1.2 A demonstration of representative data used to generate primary codes.

Representative data	Primary codes
A1. "Chinese opera is one of the highlights in Hungry Ghost Festival, the artists are dressed **fully in theatrical attire and makeup**," said the organising chairman of Hungry Ghost Festival at Bukit Mertajam.	Ancient grooming fashion
A2. The image of Chinese opera performance was taken during the fieldwork at Bukit Mertajam (highlighted in boxes).	Ancient grooming fashion (*Hanfu*, Chinese opera makeup and hairpins)
A3. The image of ritual performance was taken during the fieldwork at Endau, Johor (highlighted in boxes).	Ancient grooming fashion (Taoist robes)
B. "The primary target audience of **stage opera** is deceased ancestor," says the organising chairman of Hungry Ghost Festival at Bukit Mertajam.	Stage opera

Table 1.2 Continued

Representative data	Primary codes
C. "Other than stage opera, we also scheduled the **youth singing contest** in our program as it could increase the public involvement," says the organising chairman of Hungry Ghost Festival 2015 at Kampar.	Youth singing contest
D. "The storyline of the play revolves around **myth, historical and classical incidents**," says the organising chairman of Hungry Ghost Festival at Bukit Mertajam.	Historical, classical, myth
E. "**Chinese musical group** is the essential component of the stage opera," says the organising chairman of Hungry Ghost Festival at Bukit Mertajam.	Chinese musical group
F. "It is very costly to recruit the artist of stage opera. That's the reason we set up a **mini theatre**, showing the latest Chinese costume drama series through screen projector," says the volunteer of Hungry Ghost Festival at Endau, Johor.	Mini theatre

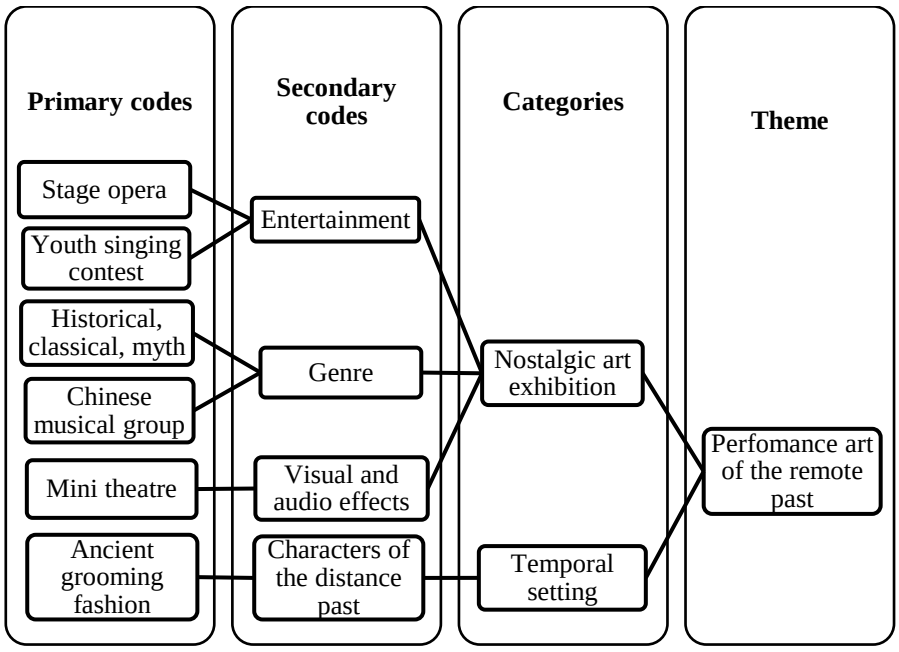

Figure 1.3 An example of a horizontal labelled hierarchy using 4 stages of coding to identify a legacy (theme) from primary codes.

1.4.4 Quantitative research: Data collection

As mentioned above, quantitative research intends to study social memory formation of the identified legacies of Confucian ancestral worship. Both soft and printed copies of the questionnaire survey were prepared (See Appendix C). The printed copies were sent to the civic organisations after obtaining agreements for their assistance in data collection. These civic organisations are Kedah Chinese Assembly Hall, Penang Chinese Town Hall, Perak Chinese Assembly Hall, the Chinese Assembly Hall Terengganu, the Federation of Chinese Associations Malaysia, Persatuan Hakka Kulai and Persatuan Hakka Daerah Termerloh. The soft copy was despatched through a website link and responses collected via social media like Facebook and WhatsApp. Both soft and printed copies of the questionnaire survey were released simultaneously.

1.4.5 Quantitative research: Data sampling

In this section, the respondents were chosen based on the sampling criterion. Firstly, they must be Malaysian Chinese aged 18-year-old and above. Secondly, they must have participated in ancestral worship at any occasions, either Qingming Festival, Hungry Ghost Festival or Chongyang Festival. Thirdly, they must reside in Peninsular Malaysia. A sampled 320 respondents took part in a questionnaire survey. The survey was conducted from July 2016 to October 2016. Criterion sampling is the basis to select the respondents across the states in Peninsular Malaysia (See Plate 1.1), controlled by quota for age. The respondents came from four age groups, which starts from 18 to 28-year-old, 29 to 39-year-old, 40 to 50-year-old, 50 and above. Each

group is represented by 80 (25%) people. This is to make sure that every group of population is well-represented in the quantitative data sampling.

Plate 1.1 Map of Peninsular Malaysia. (Source: Adapted from Alias *et al*. 2014).

1.4.6 Quantitative research: Survey and data analysis

The questionnaire survey was developed based on psychological and behavioural indicators of social memory gathered from the in-depth interviews and fieldwork. These included public perception, social sentiments, exposure level and inheritance matter of Confucian ancestral worship. Any information that was in-line with the research agenda was translated into response options in the questionnaire survey. The questionnaire survey was divided into four sections, aiming to acquire the demographic profile, respondent's views on Confucian ancestral worship, respondent's exposure to Confucian ancestral worship and their learning preferences. The multiple-choice questions with the Likert scale were used to measure social beliefs and attitudes. In the Likert scale, options provided were five-point agreement scale, ranging from strongly agree (1), agree (2), neutral (3), disagree (4) to strongly

disagree (5). The result of agree-point would be picked for analysis and comparison between the given options. Three out of 11 questions in the questionnaire survey that concerned with the objectives of this study were analysed. The rest can be saved for future studies if they were still relevant. The questions were:

1. Where did you get to know about Confucian ancestral worship and its legacies?

2. How long do you think Confucian ancestral worship and its legacies have changed?

3. Which communication channels you would prefer if you wanted to learn more about Confucian ancestral worship and its legacies?

320 people have responded to these three questions. Among the 320 respondents, 168 (53%) are male and 152 (47%) are female respondents. 48 (15%) of them are from Perak, 47 (15%) from Selangor, Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya (42 people or 13%), Negeri Sembilan (41 people or 13%), Kedah (38 people or 12%), Johor (32 people or 10%), Penang (23 people or 7%), Pahang (17 people or 5%), Melaka (9 people or 3%), Kelantan (8 people or 3%), Perlis (7 people or 2%) and Terengganu (6 people or 1%). Two respondents did not reveal the state they resided in. As many as 211 (66%) respondents have received higher education, 95 people (30%) completed secondary school education and 14 people (4%) had had a primary school education. The data from the quantitative survey will be analysed using basic statistics and presented in the clustered column charts and percentage format in Chapter Six.

1.5 Study limitations

There are three main limitations in this study, which include the coverage of Confucian ancestral worship in literature, formulation of objectives and the timeframe for fieldwork. Firstly, although there were many studies about ancestral worship in Confucian style, these academic papers did not delve into the status quo of the worship culture in Peninsular Malaysia. Most, if not all, of the previous research concerning Confucian ancestral worship, was conducted outside Malaysia, including Singapore, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Indonesia and Vietnam. In Malaysia, despite studies on similar theme were conducted in Sarawak on ancestral worship during marriage rituals of a Hakka community (Fern 2013), Penang (on the nature and role of Chinese religion and the misconception about Confucian ancestral worship (Tan 1983; Goh 2009)) and Johor on paper offerings (Sakurada 2014), they looked into different themes in the Chinese population from three states only. This has conceded two situations, (i) the literature on the study of Confucian ancestral worship in Peninsular Malaysia as a whole presents a lacunae, hence, (ii) it alluded that the worship culture legacies in Peninsular Malaysia have yet to be explored. Therefore, this study attempts to look into the status quo of Confucian ancestral worship by concentrating solely in Peninsular Malaysia. Also, due to the lack of previous research concerning Confucian ancestral worship's legacies in Malaysia, no comparison between the states in Malaysia can be made at this point.

Secondly, the list of objectives in this study may appear vast, so the formulation of objectives could have been narrowed down to focus only on one specific legacy of Confucian ancestral worship. The latter approach helps to increase the focus level on the principal substance and so the points of view can be explicitly elucidated. However, prior to that, all types of legacies must first be identified as the

previous studies have not laid the foundation information about these legacies. Therefore, this study aimed to identify both tangible and intangible legacies of Confucian ancestral worship in Peninsular Malaysia.

Thirdly, fieldworks were conducted in six key locations, i.e. Johor, Perak, Penang, Kelantan, Selangor and Kuala Lumpur during the Hungry Ghost Festival. Hungry Ghost Festival was chosen as a research setting because it is a pre-scheduled event that attracts greater public involvement (more than two family groups or clans at one go). Therefore, (i) all fieldworks can be planned ahead, (ii) it is a public ritual and thus, field observations can be conducted with absolute freedom, and (iii) it is a good opportunity to generalise the worship culture in Peninsular Malaysia because the cultural event involved many Chinese families from different background in different states. Although other occasions such as Chinese funerals, home worship, Qingming Festival and Chongyang Festival have linkage with Confucian ancestral worship, they are not a good option to consider as part of the research setting due to privacy concern. The nature of these festivals is the same as Hungry Ghost Festival, but the Chinese families on these occasions prefer more private space and become more reserved to be with their close family and friends. A direct field observation would likely chance upon privacy infringement. Moreover, door-to-door field observation (one family after another) is time-consuming and likely to produce data that is not symbolistic to Peninsular Malaysia. Hence, these occasions are dropped from consideration and subsequently, this study only focuses on the Hungry Ghost Festival. It is possible to conduct fieldwork in all states of Peninsular Malaysia within the limited timeframe (14 days) if the mission was solely to take pictures. Photos are good supporting materials, but the important details could only be gained via in-depth interviews during the fieldwork. In-depth interviews correspondingly require longer

hour and as a result, only six key states (out of 11) with large scale Hungry Ghost Festival events were identified for photography and in-depth interviews within a timeframe of 14 days.

1.6 Outline of thesis

This thesis comprises of seven chapters and outlines as followed.

1. Chapter One provides an introduction to this study that includes background, statement of problems, objectives, research methodology, study limitations and outline of thesis

2. Chapter Two introduces the literature review concerning Confucian ancestral worship, including an overview of the worship culture in Peninsular Malaysia and the cultural products with history. This chapter also highlights the conceptual framework that fit the study purpose.

3. Chapter Three presents the results and findings of the identification of tangible and intangible legacies. Seven types of legacies were identified and discussed in this chapter.

4. Chapter Four provides the results on tenacity and changes that happened to all the seven types of legacies. Some legacies appeared to be remained unchanged while some legacies have changed with time and are perfectly adapted to the contemporary social culture.

5. Chapter Five discussed the matter of cultural expressions and transmission, concerning the social exposure of the legacies. This

chapter also identifies how legacies express themselves and transcend space and time limits.

6. Chapter Six presents the social memory formation. Three kinds of collective memories have been identified and each collective memory has a temporal horizon, subsequently affecting the complete memory formation.

7. Chapter Seven concludes the findings of this study. It provides an overview, discussion and conclusion on the inheritance matter with regard to the legacies of Confucian ancestral worship in Peninsular Malaysia. This chapter ends with some suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview

The literature review of this study begins with an overview of Confucian ancestral worship in Peninsular Malaysia, aiming to recount the secular views towards this ancient practice that has a history of more than 2,700 years. The secular views allow us to comprehend the significance of worship culture and the derivatives of Confucian ancestral worship. These derivatives encompassed the Confucian philosophy, literature and semiotics, material culture, craftsmanship, performative culture, social memory and collective emotions. Noting these derivatives can stand trial by time and hence this literature review includes an explanation on their cultural expression, cultural transmission and social memory formation. This information serves as the concrete foundation to clarify the subject matter pertaining to the objectives of this study.

2.1.1 Confucian ancestral worship in Peninsular Malaysia

In Peninsular Malaysia, Confucian ancestral worship is publicly known as a folk custom of Chinese families. This folk custom stresses on regularity and therefore, it is performed on a repetitive basis, either daily, monthly, quarterly or annually. It has incorporated into several important occasions such as Chinese New Year, Qingming Festival, Hungry Ghost Festival and Chongyang Festival, marriage ritual and Chinese funeral (Cohen 1990; Sakurada 2014). On these special occasions, the worshippers are seen to put offerings on the sacrificial altars or before the ancestral tablets. These common offerings were the red candles, incense sticks, joss paper (hell banknotes),