
Editorial

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Since we were tasked to edit this special issue on China's management theory and practice for the *International Journal of Business and Emerging Markets*, we have been confronted with manuscript submissions that cover a wide range of topics. The successful ones, vetted after a lengthy reviewing process, are those that focus on Chinese culture as it affects applications of management theories and management practices.

The first paper, 'Job resources and employee engagement in a Chinese context: the mediating role of job meaningfulness, felt obligation and positive mood', typically reflects the present paradigm of management studies with respect to Chinese organisations. Albrecht and Su deftly apply Western organisational theory, the job demands-resources (JD-R) model in this case, to individuals from a Chinese organisation to test the model's applicability to the Chinese context. The test results show that most of the predications by the JD-R model are supported except for that "no significant relationship was found between colleague support and engagement, not indeed with the mediators." The lack of these presupposed relationships is believed to be related to the collectivist Chinese culture where respect for age and hierarchy is one of the main cultural features [Lockett, (1988), p.475]. Culture as an important dimension in management studies is discussed in *International Dimensions of Organizational Behaviour* (Adler, 1991).

The next two papers are fruitful explorations into the role of Chinese culture in two interesting settings. Loo's 'Negotiating with the Malaysian Chinese: versatile partners for business expansion in Asia' deconstructs Hofstede's [see Adler, (1991), pp.46–57] five cultural dimensions into eight hypotheses and then tests them on Malaysian-Chinese business persons. The test results show that Malaysian-Chinese business people, despite

being well immersed in Western culture, still demonstrate special Chinese cultural features such as collectivistic decision making and conducting business in a manner respecting hierarchy.

If Loo's paper is written for Western business people to heed the negotiation style of Malaysian Chinese, then Zhang and Wei's 'Cosmopolitan cultural identities and management practice: challenges of Chinese returnees' poses a timely question to Chinese managers in China on how to manage Chinese returnees who have studied in Western countries and may have adopted a cosmopolitan culture, or elements of it. And the flip side of the management coin is how those Chinese returnees adapt to the indigenous Chinese culture, particularly the Chinese management culture, in their home country. The main contribution of Zhang and Wei is to echo the question of "returning home" [Adler, (1991), pp.273–275], and to document substantial evidence of returning difficulties that thousands of Chinese returnees are experiencing.

'Changing consumer markets and marketing in China' by Zhang, van Doorn and Leeftang is meant to help multinational corporations understand Chinese consumer behaviour, particularly how Chinese consumers differ from Western consumers vis-à-vis typical marketing strategies. Here, too, Chinese culture plays a role: the key element is face consideration, which has long been identified in the literature (e.g., Adler, 1991; Lockett, 1988).

The above four papers are all empirical, and have tested management theories; the fifth is about management practice and shows how an established management practice has been applied in China. 'Constructing evaluation criteria for China's integrated public finance performance auditing' written by Wang, complements nicely with the others as it shows that successful Western management practices – the economy, efficiency and effectiveness (3E) criteria for public auditing – need to be modified to be successfully applied in the Chinese context. Wang pinpoints the importance of culture, particularly integration of quantitative and qualitative evaluation indicators, which bear an uncanny resemblance to the ideal of harmonious balance, known in China since ancient times as yin and yang.

In a word, our authors confirm the necessity of incorporating the Chinese cultural dimension into any study of China's management theory and practice. As Foo (2011) has indicated, a paradigm shift in China's management studies is happening whereby theory originating from China, or from Chinese contexts, will be tested in the modern management arena. We believe that the papers selected here provide evidence of this emerging paradigm. For discussion around this intriguing proposal, we are grateful to all the contributors to this special issue of *the International Journal of Business and Emerging Markets*.

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