

Call for Papers

Management and Organization Review Special Issue on 'Indigenous Management Research in China'

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It has been long recognized that indigenous research should be helpful, if not essential, for an adequate understanding of any local phenomenon. The indigenous approach is consistent with the repeated calls for contextualizing organization research. Paradoxically, globalization gives rise to a greater need for indigenous research so as to adequately analyze each unique local context in which multinational firms operate. In particular, given the fact that most of the extant theories of management and organization are built upon the cultural values and empirical evidence in the West, it is imperative to conduct indigenous research to likely revise and modify, potentially supplement and enrich, or even supersede and replace the Western theories.

In the context of China, with its long and complex history as well as its rich and influential culture, there are many interesting phenomena that are potentially indigenous to China, such as the *yin-yang* duality, *guanxi*, paternalistic leadership, emotional bonds, informal norms, and the pursuit of capitalism or market economy within a socialistic political regime. Understanding these phenomena and their influence on firm, manager and employee behavior will benefit from, if not require, the input of the indigenous approach.

However, the challenges of indigenous research are enormous. First, there is little consensus regarding what indigenous research is. Some argue that it qualifies as indigenous research if one studies an indigenous topic, even if Western theories are adopted; others maintain that indigenous research requires certain contextual factors that are indigenous but that the dominant theoretical framework can be borrowed from the West; still others posit that only when an indigenously developed theory is adopted or developed can the research be qualified as indigenous. Second, the above controversy is related to the vision and goal of indigenous research. Is it intended to verify the extant Western theories? Is it designed to modify the extant Western theories? Is it sought to develop new theories with broad geocentric implications to supplement or even supersede the extant Western theories? Third, the above controversies extend to methodological considerations. Do we simply adopt the prevailing methods in the West? Should we develop indigenous methods for indigenous research? The articles in Volume 5, Issue 1 of *MOR* lay out some of the

challenges confronting the development of Chinese management research. We need to address these questions and challenges.

The purpose of this special issue of *MOR* is to shed light on the above challenges and questions. In this special issue, we seek to explore various approaches and diverse topics concerning indigenous research. We define indigenous research in a broad sense to encompass any context-sensitive approaches to a uniquely local phenomenon, which may or may not have global implications. We seek manuscripts that report empirical research addressing phenomena unique to China and particularly phenomena that defy predictions or explanations by current theories derived in the Western contexts. We also welcome theory building studies that introduce novel theoretical insight on local phenomena that may or may not be unique to China. Both qualitative and quantitative research methods are welcome. Conceptual papers that provide deep insight into the Chinese context to explain contemporary management practices and organizational actions are also welcome. In essence, we encourage creative research designs solidly grounded in the context of Chinese cultural traditions.

We invite submissions that incorporate or address, but are not limited to, the following approaches:

- (1) *Indigenization-from-within approach*: Contextualizing research and developing indigenous constructs and models distinctive from the prevailing Western ones.
- (2) *Cross-indigenization geocentric approach*: Supplementing and enriching the Western constructs and models with indigenous constructs and models, with the aim to develop geocentric (i.e., universal) theories.
- (3) *Unique methodological issues confronting indigenous research*: Developing and illustrating uniquely indigenous research methods for conducting indigenous research.

Possible topics for empirical analysis could include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The role of informal institutions and their interaction with formal institutions
- The application of Chinese traditional cultural values, such as Confucian *Ren*, *Yi*, *Li*, *Zhi* and *Xin* as well as the Taoist *wu-wei* and *yin-yang*, to the contemporary issues of strategic management, organizational structure, strategic alliance, and leadership
- The balance of harmony and conflict among Chinese organizations
- The regional differences within Mainland China that affect Chinese organizations
- The unique features of dual-boss structure (political and administrative bosses) in many Chinese organizations
- Personalized trust in terms of relationship-specific shared interest, shared value and shared affect rather than the universalistic elements of relationship-free ability, integrity and benevolence
- Paternalistic leadership in a context of generational cultural value differences
- The changing role of *guanxi* in the evolving Chinese economic, social, and cultural context

Questions about the special issue should be directed to Peter Ping Li at pli@csustan.edu. Papers for the special issue should be submitted electronically to *MOR*'s ScholarOne Manuscripts site at <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/mor> and identified as submissions to the **Indigenous Management Research in China** special issue. Authors of papers receiving a revise and resubmit decision after the first round of review will be invited to a special session on this topic to share their work at the IACMR 2010 biennial conference in Shanghai.