

Industrial, Work and Organizational Psychology in Asia

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Abstract:

Asia houses the largest population (International Energy Agency, 2012) and enjoys the highest nominal gross domestic product (GDP) of all continents (International Monetary Fund [IMF], 2013). Asian countries represent some of the world's largest economies: for example, China (2), Japan (3), India (10), South Korea (15), and Indonesia (16) (IMF, 2013). In terms of business interactions, four Asian cities top the list of global office destinations: Hong Kong, Singapore, Tokyo, and Shanghai (CB Richard Ellis, 2011). Indicative of the progressive dependence of the world's business and economy on Asia, the Academy of Management, a leading management academic association, set 'West Meets East: Enlightening, Balancing, Transcending' as its 2011 program theme. The same motivation prompted the *Academy of Management Journal* (AMJ) to call for a special research forum in 2012 featuring 'West Meets East: New Concepts and Theories' in an effort to draw the field's attention to emerging issues in the East.

Keywords: Asia | authoritarianism | China | guanxi | organizational psychology | power distance | psychology

Article:

Introduction

Asia houses the largest population (International Energy Agency, 2012) and enjoys the highest nominal gross domestic product (GDP) of all continents (International Monetary Fund [IMF], 2013). Asian countries represent some of the world's largest economies: for example, China (2), Japan (3), India (10), South Korea (15), and Indonesia (16) (IMF, 2013). In terms of business interactions, four Asian cities top the list of global office destinations: Hong Kong, Singapore, Tokyo, and Shanghai (CB Richard Ellis, 2011). Indicative of the progressive dependence of the world's business and economy on Asia, the Academy of Management, a leading management academic association, set 'West Meets East: Enlightening, Balancing, Transcending' as its 2011 program theme. The same motivation prompted the *Academy of Management Journal* (AMJ) to call for a special research forum in 2012 featuring 'West Meets East: New Concepts and Theories' in an effort to draw the field's attention to emerging issues in the East.

In recent decades, the burgeoning attention given to Asian studies by academic institutions has been accompanied by an increase in the publication of studies done by individual industrial and organizational researchers who are also using Asian samples. For example, in 2005, Brad Kirkman and Kenny Law, the Associate Editors of the *AMJ* at the time, published an editorial article entitled 'International management research in *AMJ*: Our past, present, and future' (Kirkman & Law, 2005). They reported that the number of *AMJ* articles using samples from Asia-Pacific countries had increased from 23 in the journal's first 32 years of publication, to 23 in the 1990s, to 46 between 2000 and 2005. Many review articles regarding organization and management research in Asia have also been published (Bruton & Lau, 2008; Jia, You, & Du, 2012; Li & Tsui, 2002; Peng, Lu, Shenkar, & Wang, 2001; Quer, Claver, & Rienda, 2007; Shenkar, 1994; Tsui, Schoonhoven, Meyer, Lau, & Milkovich, 2004; White, 2002; Yang, Tipton, & Li, 2011). However, some of them only review studies pertaining to a single Asian country (Jia et al., 2012; Li & Tsui, 2002; Peng et al., 2001; Sahu, Vaswani, & Chakraborty, 2014; Shenkar, 1994; Smith, 1984; Tsui et al., 2004), with China being the most frequently referenced, and/or are not exclusively related to industrial, work, and organizational (IWO) psychology but also to business and strategy (Bruton & Lau, 2008; Jia et al., 2012; White, 2002). Those that review studies from multiple Asian countries focus either on a specific Asian region, such as South East Asia (Rowley & Warner, 2006; 2010), or a specific topic such as human resource management change (Poon & Rowley, 2010), rewards (Wei & Rowley, 2009), or executive communication (Sun, Zhao, & Yang, 2010). The field of IWO psychology needs an inspection of extant research capturing a broader scope of both cultural settings and research topics in Asia. To this end, the current chapter reviews articles using Asian samples in 11 top-tier IWO journals, and contributes to this line of investigation in two ways.

First, we report the most common topics and the most frequently used methodologies. Second, and more importantly, we delineate the extent to which the articles contextualize Asian phenomena. Contextualization can make great scholarly contributions by re-examining the assumptions embedded in existing theories and theorizing about the underlying contextual influences (e.g. Whetten, 2009), or by exploring new phenomena in an underappreciated context and developing novel theories about it (Barney & Zhang, 2009). Studying contextualization is increasingly important because the internationalization of scholarship challenges the transportability of existing social science models from one context to another (Rousseau & Fried, 2001).

Thus, we focused our attention on IWO psychology articles that used Asian samples and were published in top journals within the past 10 years. The rationale for focusing on works from the past decade is that the review will identify the most recent advances in IWO psychology in Asia in relation to topics, methods, contributions, and contextualization, and it will offer the most relevant directions for future studies aiming at contextualizing Asian phenomena. As we intend to cover a broad range of IWO psychology research topics and to analyze the level of contextualization of each article, we do not attempt to consolidate findings on particular research topics. Likewise, it is not our goal to evaluate individual or institutional contributors, or to assess the impact of particular articles.

Methods

Literature Search

In order to determine the array of leading IWO journals, we identified the top 15% of journals publishing in the categories of applied psychology, management, and business, according to the impact factor provided in the Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) database. We excluded journals geared toward practitioners (e.g. *Harvard Business Review*), and those that publish only theoretical articles (e.g. *Academy of Management Review*). This resulted in a list of seven journals: *Academy of Management Journal*, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *Journal of Management*, *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *Organization Science*, and *Personnel Psychology*. To avoid omitting reputable journals that are highly valued in the field and/or have an international focus, we added the following four journals to the list: *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*, *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *Management and Organization Review*, and *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*.

These 11 journals have published a total of 5484 articles from 2005 to 2014 (including in press articles in 2014). To select articles that addressed IWO psychology in Asia, we set the following criteria. First, the article must adopt at least one sample from a country in Asia. Middle Eastern countries were excluded to reserve them for a corresponding chapter in this volume. Second, the article must include primary data (e.g. qualitative or quantitative data). Thus, theoretical, review, and meta-analytical articles were excluded. Third, the article must reference at least one variable related to IWO psychology.

Table 4.1. Number of articles published, related to IWO psychology, in each of the three contextualization categories^a

| Journal | Articles Published ^b | Articles on IWO psychology in Asia | Percentage ^c | Context-insensitive | Context-sensitive | Context-specific |
|---|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| <i>Academy of Management Journal</i> | 644 | 25 | 4% | 19 | 4 | 2 |
| <i>Administrative Science Quarterly</i> | 175 | 3 | 2% | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| <i>Asia Pacific Journal of Management</i> | 305 | 58 | 19% | 23 | 27 | 8 |
| <i>Journal of Applied Psychology</i> | 963 | 75 | 8% | 65 | 10 | 0 |
| <i>Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology</i> | 580 | 6 | 1% | 0 | 5 | 1 |
| <i>Journal of Management</i> | 610 | 27 | 4% | 22 | 4 | 1 |
| <i>Journal of Organizational Behavior</i> | 579 | 52 | 9% | 35 | 15 | 2 |
| <i>Management and Organization Review</i> | 135 | 29 | 21% | 9 | 10 | 10 |
| <i>Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes</i> | 509 | 24 | 5% | 16 | 7 | 1 |
| <i>Organization Science</i> | 717 | 4 | 1% | 3 | 1 | 0 |
| <i>Personnel Psychology</i> | 267 | 18 | 7% | 13 | 5 | 0 |
| Total | 5484 | 321 | | 206 | 90 | 25 |

^a For each journal, the search covered articles published between the years 2005 and 2014, except for the *Asia Pacific Journal of Management* and *Management and Organization Review*. Those journal outlets have both been indexed in SSCI since 2010, taking into consideration publications from 2008. Therefore, we searched articles published between 2008 and 2014. For all journals, in press articles were also included whenever available.

^b Total number of articles published in the search period.

^c IWO psychology articles over total number of articles published.

Instead of searching for keywords in an electronic database, we manually reviewed each of the 5484 articles to select the final set of articles that met the preceding criteria. Our review

identified a total of 321 articles. Table 4.1 shows, for each journal, the total number of articles published and the number of IWO psychology articles we finally selected for analysis.

Analysis Strategy

We borrowed Jia et al.'s (2012) taxonomy regarding Chinese-context research, and sorted our selected IWO psychology articles into one of three categories (context-insensitive, context-sensitive, and context-specific), based on the extent to which the article contextualized the research topic. The ‘context-insensitive’ category contains articles that, while using Asian samples, simply adopt Western literature and do not intend to make culturally relevant theoretical contributions. The ‘context-sensitive’ category contains articles that intend to adapt or modify theories developed elsewhere to fit an Asian context, and contextualize existing concepts in new contexts. The ‘context-specific’ category contains articles that focus on creating new concepts in the novel context and seeking explications for management phenomena that are unique to Asia.

Table 4.2. Article counts and percentage by country

| Country | Number of articles | Percentage |
|-------------|--------------------|------------|
| China | 159 | 45% |
| Taiwan | 37 | 11% |
| Korea | 35 | 10% |
| Hong Kong | 27 | 8% |
| Singapore | 22 | 6% |
| India | 19 | 5% |
| Japan | 19 | 5% |
| Philippines | 8 | 2% |
| Others | 5 | 1% |
| Malaysia | 4 | 1% |
| Thailand | 4 | 1% |
| Macau | 3 | 1% |
| Pakistan | 3 | 1% |
| Israel | 2 | 1% |
| Russia | 2 | 1% |
| Indonesia | 1 | 0% |
| Vietnam | 1 | 0% |
| Total | 351 | 100% |

Note: In the case when an article had multiple samples from different countries, the article was counted multiple times. Articles in the Others category did not indicate the specific Asian country/countries studied. Percentages noted as 0 percent are the result of rounding errors.

Results

Table 4.2 shows that, of the 321 articles we located pertaining to IWO Psychology in Asia, most of the study samples came from China (159), followed by those from Taiwan (37), Korea (35), Hong Kong (27), Singapore (22), India (19), and Japan (19), among others. Table 4.3 shows the total number of IWO psychology articles published by each of the 11 journals in the years covered by this review. As a general trend, the number of articles increases across those years. Table 4.1 shows that the ‘context-insensitive’ category has 206 articles, the ‘context-

sensitive’ category has 90 articles, and the ‘context-specific’ category has 25 articles. As this chapter focuses on Asian issues, the following sections elaborate more on articles in the ‘context-sensitive’ and ‘context-specific’ categories, and only report general trends regarding the research questions asked and methods used in articles in the ‘context-insensitive’ category.

Table 4.3. IWO psychology articles by year across the 11 journal outlets selected

| Year | Total number of IWO psychology articles |
|-------|---|
| 2005 | 12 |
| 2006 | 11 |
| 2007 | 24 |
| 2008 | 29 |
| 2009 | 29 |
| 2010 | 38 |
| 2011 | 34 |
| 2012 | 40 |
| 2013 | 51 |
| 2014 | 51 |
| 2015 | 2 |
| Total | 321 |

Note: The data were collected from 2005 to 2014 including in press articles in 2014. The two articles published in 2015 were from two of the in press articles.

‘Context-Insensitive’ Studies

Based on the primary contribution of each study, the context-insensitive articles can be categorized into 16 common topic areas. Table 4.4 shows the 16 topic areas and the number and percentage of articles for each.¹ The most studied topic is leadership and exchange quality. In general, articles in this area followed the broader literature on leadership in that they studied topics such as leader–member exchange (LMX), transformational leadership (TFL), abusive supervision, and other leadership types, such as authentic leadership, participative leadership, and charismatic leadership. The outcome variables of these studies were also typical of the leadership literature: for example, job satisfaction, intention to quit, performance, creativity, organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). We found that LMX stands out as the most referenced topic, outpacing TFL. This may be because all LMX-related articles adopted Chinese samples (except for one using an Indian sample), and as the Chinese consider supervisors to be surrogates for the organization, the supervisor is the most influential person in a Chinese employee's work life (Cheng, Jiang, & Riley, 2003). Generally, Chinese people practice relationalism and emphasize interacting with others in a harmonious way. Chuang, Hsu, Wang, and Judge (2015) found that Chinese working adults consider harmonious interdependence with others to be a key theme regarding how they fit with the environment. This may explain why LMX, which emphasizes on the exchange relationships between an employee and his or her supervisor, is the most studied. Despite the popularity of TFL in Western literature, it is less popular in our findings. This may be because Asian managers practice more paternalistic

¹ It is fairly frequent for an article to make multiple contributions. We categorized the articles based on the articles’ primary or most significant contribution only. Therefore, the number of articles in Table 4.4 refers only to the number of articles that focus mainly on those specific topics; it does not necessarily indicate the general popularity of the topics themselves.

leadership than TFL. We will further elaborate on paternalistic leadership in the section regarding ‘context-specific’ studies.

Table 4.4. Sixteen most common topic areas for IWO psychology articles in Asia, 2005 to 2014

| Topics | Number of articles | Percentage |
|---|--------------------|------------|
| Leadership and exchange quality | 37 | 18% |
| Organizational and human resource practices | 34 | 17% |
| Creativity/innovation | 22 | 10% |
| Other work-related behaviors | 17 | 8% |
| Work-related attitudes | 15 | 7% |
| Cognition/perception | 14 | 7% |
| Personality and values | 12 | 6% |
| Organizational citizenship behavior | 12 | 6% |
| Groups/teams | 10 | 5% |
| Emotions/moods | 9 | 4% |
| Diversity/composition | 5 | 2% |
| Organizational culture/climate | 4 | 2% |
| Workplace deviance | 4 | 2% |
| Workplace exclusion | 4 | 2% |
| Person–environment congruence | 4 | 2% |
| Motivation | 3 | 1% |
| Total | 206 | 100% |

The second most-studied topic area of IWO psychology in Asia is organizational and human resource practices. A typical topic is human resource (HR) systems attributes (e.g. high-performance, family-friendly). Other topics address specific HR functions such as performance evaluations, staffing (e.g. personality tests, interviews), employee training, newcomer adaptation, and knowledge management. Most of the outcome variables echo those in the general HR literature: firm/employee performance/productivity, innovation, turnover, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment.

The third most-referenced topic area is creativity/innovation. As with the general literature, most of the creativity articles investigated the antecedents of individual or team creativity. Those antecedents include individual- or team-level variables such as high-commitment work systems, climate (supportive, innovative, reflective, modern), team composition (educational specification, human capital), group affect, goal orientation, leadership (self, transformational, empowering), personality (proactive, resistant to change), social network, fairness, trust, support (coworker, organization), and exchange (informational, social). Only a few articles investigated the outcomes of creativity, such as individual job performance (supervisor-rated and objective), firm performance, implementation effectiveness, and innovation effectiveness.

A range of research designs and empirical methods were used in the 206 context-insensitive articles: 116 employed a cross-sectional design and 63 had a longitudinal design, 54 investigated multilevel models, and 41 used structural equation modeling (of which nine used Mplus). All articles in this category adopted a quantitative approach.

‘Context-Sensitive’ Studies

In this section, we review articles published within the last decade that show moderate contextualization of IWO phenomena in Asia. A total of 90 articles were deemed to be context-sensitive because they contextualized existing constructs or theories (Whetten, 2009; Whetten, Felin, & King, 2009) to a greater or lesser extent using ‘Asian ingredients’. We were able to classify a majority of these 90 articles into four subcategories: (i) cross-national investigation of existing theories; (ii) contextualization with an omnibus approach; (iii) contextualization using Hofstede’s cultural dimensions; and (iv) contextualization using cultural traditions. We briefly describe each of them in the following sections. In terms of the empirical methods used, among the 90 articles, 76 adopted a cross-sectional design and 14 had a longitudinal design, 19 investigated multilevel models, and 16 used structural equation modeling (of which one used Mplus). Only one of these studies adopted a qualitative approach.

Cross-national investigation of existing theories

Articles in this subcategory adopted one or more samples from Asian countries to either assess the construct of interest and discuss certain cross-national similarities or differences, and/or evaluate the functional equivalence of existing constructs or theories. A total of 25 articles belong to this subcategory. Most of these studies (22 out of 25) incorporated samples from a single Asian country, so the authors could only compare the constructs and relationships they found to those reported in existing literature. Unfortunately, those articles did not measure national differences in contexts such as political contexts (e.g. legal systems, business laws) and cultural contexts (e.g. beliefs, values), as suggested by Tsui, Nifadkar, and Ou (2007), when making arguments regarding similarities and differences. Among the countries studied, China drew the most attention (12 out of 22 single-nation studies), followed by Japan (3) and South Korea (2).

This subcategory covers many traditional and contemporary topics in IWO psychology that are also covered in Western literature: work–family balance (Aryee, Srinivas, & Tan, 2005), dispositional resistance to change (Oreg et al., 2008), job stress (Liu, Spector, & Shi, 2007), organizational identification (Ngo, Loi, Foley, Zheng, & Zhang, 2013), organizational commitment (Gill, Meyer, Lee, Shin, & Yoon, 2011), core self-evaluation (Piccolo, Judge, Takahashi, Watanabe, & Locke, 2005), person–environment fit (Oh, Guay, Kim, Harold, Lee, Heo, & Shin, 2014), workplace victimization (Kim & Glomb, 2014), job satisfaction (Rothausen, Gonzalez, & Griffin, 2009), psychological safety (Chen & Tjosvold, 2012), transformational leadership (Bai, Li, & Xi, 2012; Chen, Lin, Lin, & McDonough, 2012), counterproductive work behaviors (Wei & Si, 2013a), innovation (Wongtada & Rice, 2008), emotional intelligence (Law, Wong, Haung, & Li, 2008), team motivation (Chen, Sharma, Edinger, Shapiro, & Farh, 2011), empowerment (Hempel, Zhang, & Han, 2012), and conflict management (Hempel, Zhang, & Tjosvold, 2009).

In general, this subcategory discusses cross-national empirical evidence of a wide range of constructs and theories. However, it fails to adequately address why cross-national similarities or differences occur, given how the cultural, religious, political, and economic factors are

interwoven with the issues of interest (see Liu et al., 2007; Robert, Lee, & Chan, 2006). The following categories complement this weakness in their own ways.

Contextualization with an omnibus approach

In contrast to the articles in the preceding subcategory, which failed to explain national similarities and differences using theoretical accounts, articles in this subcategory adopt an omnibus approach, using multiple theories (e.g. 'face', *guanxi*) to contextualize the issue of interest. These studies tended to offer a more contextualized understanding of issues pertaining to IWO psychology, often with more local flavor and insights than the articles addressing literal national differences. Fifteen articles belong to this subcategory. While China continues to take the spotlight, more Asian countries (i.e. India, Japan, South Korea, Pakistan, Russia, and Turkey) are covered in this subcategory.

This subcategory covers a diverse range of topics including coworker social networks in China and in Russia (Ho, 2014; Liang & Gong, 2013; Morris, Podolny, & Sullivan, 2009; O'Brien, Zong, & Dickinson, 2011), causal attribution in China (Friedman, Liu, Chen, & Chi, 2007), interpersonal trust in Turkey and China (Wasti, Tan, & Erdil, 2011), justice and abusive supervision in China (Loi & Ngo, 2010; Wei & Si, 2013b), managerial social undermining in China (Kim, Rosen, & Lee, 2009), strategic HRM practices in South Korea (Kim & Sung-Choon, 2013; Kim, Sutton, & Gong, 2013), the role of political skills in Pakistan (Yousaf, Sanders, & Shipton, 2013), gatekeeping leadership in Japan (Ishikawa, 2012), and leadership imagery in Singapore (Menon, Sim, Fu, Chiu, & Hong, 2010). Note that not all studies have found cultural specificities. For instance, Taylor, Li, Shi, and Borman (2008) found that job applicants rank different types of job information similarly across cultures. Along the same lines, Li and Tang (2010) found that the link between CEO hubris and firm risk-taking can be generalized using a Chinese sample. However, the absence of a specific framework to capture cultural differences has meant that the mechanisms causing variations across cultures are often assumed instead of systematically investigated. One commonly adopted cultural framework is Hofstede's cultural dimensions, which is discussed in the following section.

Contextualization with Hofstede's cultural dimensions

We observed that of the 90 context-sensitive articles, 29 adopted Hofstede's cultural dimensions to study cultural differences and specificities in Asia. Among these cultural dimensions, collectivism has received the most attention: 20 articles referred to collectivism as a cultural variable in their study. Power distance is the second most frequently studied dimension, appearing in 10 articles. The only other cultural dimension being studied is masculinity-femininity, which was present in only one article. Most of the studies treated the cultural dimensions as moderators and used them to test the boundary conditions of well-established models developed in the West. While some studies employed country-level scores, others measured individual-level cultural orientation. The majority of these articles (19 out of 29) involved cross-cultural comparisons, often contrasting East and West (usually the USA). Chinese contexts are the most studied (25 out of 29 studies, including samples from China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore), followed by South Korean (4), Japanese (3), and Indian contexts (2).

In terms of topics, the articles in this subcategory investigated how collectivistic values in Asia (i.e. interdependent self-construal, the importance of relationships, being in-group, and *guanxi*) may influence such variables as dynamics of trust (Reiche et al., 2014), fairness judgment (Kim, Weber, Leung, & Muramoto, 2010), work–family interference (Spector et al., 2007), response to workplace offenses and mistreatment (Kim, Shapiro, Aquino, Lim, & Bennett, 2008; Shao & Skarlicki, 2014), rating behavior and biases (Ng, Koh, Ang, Kennedy, & Chan, 2011; Xie, Roy, & Chen, 2006), negotiation (Gelfand, Brett, Gunia, Imai, Huang, & Hsu, 2013; Gunia, Brett, Nandkeolyar, & Kamdar, 2011), embeddedness (Ng & Feldman, 2012), citizenship behavior (Chan & Snape, 2013; Wang, Hinrichs, Prieto, & Howell, 2013), and psychological safety and cooperation (Chen & Tjosvold, 2008).

Studies on the effects of power distance generally investigated how the acceptance of power inequality may nuance an individual's sense of fair treatment, justice, and satisfaction. For example, these articles covered topics such as justice and fairness perceptions (Kim & Leung, 2007; Kirkman, Chen, Farh, Chen, & Lowe, 2009; Schilpzand, Martins, Kirkman, Lowe, & Chen, 2013; Wu & Chaturvedi, 2009), person–environment fit and job satisfaction (Lee & Antonakis, 2014), empowerment (Chen, Zhang, & Wang, 2014; Fock, Hui, Au, & Bond, 2013), workplace bullying (Loh, Restubog, & Zagenczyk, 2010), and burnout (Jiang, Law, & Sun, 2014).

With few exceptions (e.g. Schilpzand et al., 2013; Wu & Chaturvedi, 2009), most studies supported the moderating role of the cultural dimensions. These results generally laid a solid foundation for scholars to further pursue a deeper understanding of cultural differences about IWO psychology.

Contextualization with cultural traditions

As with the articles adopting Hofstede's dimensions, articles classified into this subcategory utilized culture-specific traditions, frameworks, or concepts to contextualize and explain the issues of interest. A total of 18 articles were identified, all of which focused on Chinese traditions. Kuo-Shu Yang's (Yang, Yu, & Yeh, 1989) traditionality was applied in nearly half of the articles (eight out of 18), and traditionality was treated as a moderator across the board. For instance, Xie, Schaubroeck, and Lam (2008) argued that traditionality moderates the relationship between job stressors and health. Wang and Kim (2013) attended particularly to the moderating effect of traditionality on the relationship between proactive socialization behavior and perceived insider status. Li, Yu, Yang, Qi, and Fu (2014) noted that traditionality serves as a moderator between authentic leadership and interactive justice.

Traditionality captures the concept of respect for authority, and therefore shares a certain similarity with power distance. Farh, Hackett, and Liang (2007) compared the moderating effects of power distance and traditionality and found that power distance is more powerful in explaining the relationship between perceived organizational support and work outcomes. They reasoned that power distance accounted for more effects in their study because their research was conducted in an organization – the setting in which the concept of power distance was originally developed. Traditionality, on the other hand, originated from a broader societal and familial frame of reference.

In addition to studying traditionality, researchers have focused on other specific cultural practices and values such as *guanxi*² (Hom & Xiao, 2011; Law, Wang, & Hui, 2010; Shih & Lin, 2014; van Vianen, Shen, & Chuang, 2011), relation-focused culture (Liu, Friedman, & Hong, 2012), benevolence (Chen, Tsui, & Zhong, 2008), traditional values (Fu, Tsui, Liu, & Li, 2010; Lai, Lam, & Liu, 2010), harmony (Chan, Huang, & Ng, 2008), and ‘face’ (Huang, Davison, & Gu, 2008; Peng & Peterson, 2008). Taken together, these articles are a testament to the contemporary relevance of Chinese cultural traditions.

‘Context-Specific’ Studies

Among the 321 IWO psychology articles using Asian samples, 25 (8%) were classified as context-specific, for instance, they seek new Asian concepts, find context-unique boundaries or mediations pertaining to the relationships in Asian settings, and/or introduce Asia-specific arguments to substantiate the relationships. Almost three-fourths (18) of the articles in this category were published in *Management and Organization Review*, the official journal of the International Association for Chinese Management Research, and the *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*, the official journal of the Asia Academy of Management. This large ratio speaks to the central mission of these two journals. However, the fact that only 8% of the total sample has been identified as context-specific suggests that either very few scholars devote themselves to highly contextualized research, or context-specific studies are far less likely to be published.

A majority of the 25 articles (22 [92%]) in this category report findings from China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan; the remaining three articles probe IWO issues in Japan. This finding is especially astonishing given how the field has been calling for more context-specific research to create unique explanations for existing phenomena embedded in corresponding ecological, economic, social, cultural, and historical contexts. The relative abundance of context-specific research in greater Chinese regions may be attributed to the development of research regarding Chinese indigenous psychology. In Taiwan, the unquestioning adoption of Western psychological theories, concepts, methods, and tools was first challenged in the early 1990s (e.g. Yang, 1993). Since then, Taiwanese psychologists have begun to generate a knowledge system that is capable of adequately reflecting and understanding the culture-bound characteristics of the Chinese and Taiwanese people (Hwang, 2010). This emphasis on indigenous psychology quickly affected research on IWO psychology (Cheng, Jiang, & Wu, 2014). As a result, unique managerial and organizational issues in China and Taiwan have received greater research attention than those existing in other Asian countries.

Research designs and empirical methods used in the 25 articles are distributed as follows: 19 studies were quantitative and six were qualitative. Cross-sectional designs were utilized by 19, while only two applied a longitudinal design. Multilevel models were investigated by four studies, and seven used structural equation modeling (of which one used Mplus).

² Note that in this category, the concept of *guanxi* is merely used as an explanatory factor of cultural differences, whereas in the next section, where context-specific articles are discussed, the concept of *guanxi* is treated as one that is newly created for – and is, thus, deeply contextualized in – the building of the theory.

Based on research topic commonalities, we classified the context-specific articles into four subcategories: (i) *guanxi* and interpersonal relationships in China; (ii) paternalistic leadership in China and Taiwan; (iii) Chinese cultural orientations and their implications; and (iv) business success in China and Japan (see Table 4.5 for more details). In the following, we briefly describe the historic origin of each topic and the current status of each topic as related to the articles in this review. When relevant, we offer directions for future research.

Table 4.5. Important topics of the context-specific articles

| Research topics | Number of articles | Journals that published the articles |
|--|--------------------|---|
| <i>Guanxi</i> and interpersonal relationships in China | 8 | MOR (5 articles), APJM (3 articles) |
| Paternalistic leadership in China and Taiwan | 7 | JOB (2 articles), APJM (1 article), JOM (1 article), JCCP (1 article), MOR (1 article), OBHDP (1 article) |
| Chinese cultural orientations and their implications | 4 | MOR (3 articles), AMJ (1 article) |
| Business success in China and Japan | 6 | APJM (4 articles), AMJ (1 article), MOR (1 article) |

MOR = *Management and Organization Review*; APJM = *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*; JOB = *Journal of Organizational Behavior*; JOM = *Journal of Management*; JCCP = *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*; OBHDP = *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*; AMJ = *Academy of Management Journal*

Guanxi and interpersonal relationships in China

Of the 25 articles, eight investigated *guanxi* in Chinese settings. The Chinese term *guanxi* literally means ‘relations, relationships or connections’. In Chinese settings, *guanxi* often refers to informal, personal relationships rather than formal, official relationships. It tends to be built on the basis of shared institutions such as kinships, birthplaces, former work units, and alma maters. The sociologist, H. T. Fei, first termed this phenomenon a ‘differential mode of association’ and used a model of concentric circles to depict it (Fei, 1992). Hwang (1987) further extended this model and highlighted the importance of relational orientation in Chinese societies. Familial ties guided by mutual responsibility and reciprocity lie in the center of this model, whereas ties to strangers, ruled by self-interest concerns, are the most peripheral ring. In the middle is the mixture of both ties called familiar ties, where trust develops based on *guanxi* and the exchange of favors with the calculation of long-term reciprocity guiding interpersonal interactions.

Farh, Tsui, Xin, and Cheng (1998) were the first to apply the concept of *guanxi* in organizational settings. Their results suggest that the similarity-attraction paradigm contributes little to the development of trust in the vertical dyad of Chinese business executives, whereas *guanxi* is extremely important for those executives’ trust in their connections. Farh et al. (1998) measured *guanxi* by asking respondents to indicate, on a checklist with a yes/no format, whether certain familiar ties (e.g. former classmate, relative, former colleague, former supervisor/subordinate) apply in a given dyadic relationship at work. They found that although *guanxi* is a powerful determinant of interpersonal trust in organizational settings, the presence of familiar ties is not frequently observed. In one of their samples, for example, less than 5 % of the respondents checked ‘yes’ on any of the *guanxi* dummies. Thus, the measurement of *guanxi* as the presence of familiar ties is likely to result in a lack of variance, thereby generating very conservative tests of hypotheses relating to *guanxi*.

Because of this problem, follow-up studies rarely measured actual familiar ties directly, but developed new scales to capture favor exchanges and expectations of long-term reciprocity based on *guanxi*. Of the studies classified in this subcategory, for example, Chen and Peng (2008) defined *guanxi* as relationship closeness at work, which can be either instrumental or expressive. Chen, Friedman, Yu, Fang, and Lu (2009) proposed a three-dimensional model of *guanxi* for the dyadic relationship between supervisors and subordinates, encompassing affective attachment, person-life inclusion, and deference to a supervisor. Luo (2011) defined *guanxi* as personal friendship at work. Chen, Friedman, Yu, and Sun (2011) studied *guanxi* practice, or the extent to which *guanxi* is an essential element of human resources practices. Jiang, Chen, and Shi (2013) illustrated *guanxi* as the exchange of favors and the attribution of favor between supervisors and subordinates. Leung, Chen, Zhou, and Lim (2014) treated *guanxi* as the exchange of 'face' and *renqing* (resources offered as favors under a set of social norms).

In summary, these studies confirmed that *guanxi*, either as personal/affective attachment or as favor exchange with an expectation of reciprocity in the future, does play an important role in building interpersonal trust in the Chinese context. However, the coexistence of multiple scales pertaining to different aspects of *guanxi* makes the advancement of research on *guanxi* more challenging. Thus, *guanxi* researchers need to explain better how actual familiar ties are related to other similar concepts. In addition, non-correlational approaches, such as experimental or qualitative designs, may be applied. For example, Song, Cadsby, and Bi (2012) conducted an experimental study and manipulated *guanxi* using student samples (i.e. classmates or strangers). Concerns about the external validity of student samples notwithstanding, this approach nicely demonstrates the effect of *guanxi* while avoiding the constraint that actual familiar ties may not be easily observed under a correlational design.

Paternalistic leadership in China and Taiwan

Seven of the context-specific articles examined the phenomenon of paternalistic leadership in China and Taiwan. Farh and Cheng (2000) proposed a model of paternalistic leadership based on interviews conducted in Taiwan (e.g. Cheng, 1995) and early observations of overseas Chinese and Taiwanese family businesses (e.g. Redding, 1990; Silin, 1976). The model has three components: authoritarianism (assertion of absolute authority and control over subordinates), benevolence (individualized, holistic concern for subordinates' personal and familial well-being), and morality (superior moral character and integrity). Farh and Cheng (2000) treated paternalistic leadership as an indigenous Chinese leadership style that is rooted in the Chinese patriarchal tradition. Accordingly, it is expected to evoke son-like responses on the part of subordinates, for example, compliance, indebtedness, and identification.

Cheng, Chou, Wu, Huang, and Farh (2004) were the first to test Farh and Cheng's (2000) model, but their findings provided only partial support: unlike benevolence and morality, authoritarianism failed to elicit expected responses from subordinates. Subsequent studies have consistently discovered that whereas benevolence and morality are positively related to a variety of favorable subordinate outcomes, authoritarianism has a negative effect in general. These findings suggest that although Farh and Cheng's model identifies unique aspects of leadership in China and Taiwan, further revision of the model is necessary to appropriately explain how the three components affect subordinates.

Four of the seven paternalistic leadership articles attempted to revise Farh and Cheng's (2000) model by introducing a mediating mechanism. Chan and Mak (2012) used leader–member exchange processes to interpret the effects of benevolence on subordinates. Wu, Huang, Li, and Liu (2012), as well as Chen, Eberly, Chiang, Farh, and Cheng (2014), proposed that affective trust in the leader mediates the effects of authoritarianism, benevolence, and morality on multiple subordinate behaviors. Both studies acknowledged that authoritarianism tends to trigger subordinates' negative emotions and, thereby, decreases subordinates' affective trust in the leader. In contrast, a benevolent and moral leader engenders positive emotions, which develop subordinates' affective trust in the leader. Alternatively, Chan, Huang, Snape, and Lam (2013) used a self-concept-based perspective to test whether organization-based self-esteem mediates the relationships among authoritarianism, task performance, and organizational citizenship behavior. They found that authoritarianism has a negative relationship to subordinates' organization-based self-esteem, but benevolence tempers subordinates' negative attributions regarding authoritarianism.

The introduction of new mediating mechanisms led to some encouraging findings; however, critical limitations remain. First, the three studies that examined authoritarianism (Chan et al., 2013; Chen et al., 2014; Wu et al., 2012) found that it had negative effects on subordinate outcomes. Thus, all three studies recommended a decrease in the use of authoritarianism in contemporary Chinese organizations. However, among the three paternalistic leadership components, authoritarianism is the most prevalent in practice. Then why do Chinese/Taiwanese leaders insist on a 'harmful' leadership style? This question does not appear to be answerable using the trust-related or self-concept-based perspectives on paternalistic leadership which were applied in the preceding studies. Second, although adding new mediators to Farh and Cheng's (2000) model further explains how paternalistic leaders influence their subordinates, these mediators themselves do not have any 'paternalistic' flavor. If affective trust in leaders or organization-based self-esteem – both of which are concepts that originated in Western literature – can properly explain the effects of the three paternalistic leadership components, are these components still culture-specific? These limitations and corresponding research questions appear to need more attention in future research.

In contrast to the four articles reviewed previously, the other three articles retained Farh and Cheng's (2000) model and further tested its boundary conditions. Although benevolence is positively related to various favorable outcomes, it is rooted in Chinese patriarchal tradition and intended to elicit subordinates' compliance and loyalty. But does it have a positive effect on subordinate creativity as well? Wang and Cheng (2010) identified subordinates' creative self-identity and job autonomy as two critical moderators that transform traditional benevolence into fuel for creative endeavors. In addition, Wang, Chiang, Tsai, Lin, and Cheng (2013) found that leader gender moderates the effects of authoritarianism and benevolence in such a way that for female leaders, the negative effects of authoritarianism are strengthened and the positive effects of benevolence are weakened. Accordingly, the paternalistic style may be useful for male leaders, but not for female leaders. These two articles remind readers that the effectiveness of paternalistic leadership is context-dependent and that future research should continue to clarify the boundary conditions. Finally, Cheng et al. (2014) tested the comparability and applicability of the three-dimensional construct of paternalistic leadership across samples from China, Japan,

South Korea, and Taiwan. Their findings suggest that the meaning attributed to paternalistic leadership via the three components can be generalized across these four Asian contexts.

Chinese cultural orientations and their implications

These articles assume that all organizational and managerial phenomena are inevitably culture-embedded; failure to consider culture in the theorization of observed phenomena generates a culture-biased theory. Similar to the articles categorized in the ‘contextualization with cultural traditions’ subcategory in the context-sensitive section, these articles also adopt traditional cultural concepts in contextualizing the issues of interest. However, in contrast to the context-sensitive articles, these context-specific articles involve a deeper contextualization because they introduce new concepts or re-conceptualize existing ones. Four articles are classified into this subcategory, all of which tapped Chinese cultural traditions.

Pan, Rowney, and Peterson (2012) consulted a group of Chinese culture scholars and asked them to list five basic schools of traditional Chinese thought, developing what the authors called the Structure of Chinese Cultural Traditions (SCCT) as held in the minds of contemporary Chinese people. The authors then used a large sample in China to verify the structure of the most frequently indicated thoughts. Their stable model suggests that four cultural traditions are prevalent in contemporary Chinese settings: Confucianism, Legalism, Buddhism/Taoism, and the Art of War. Supporting Pan et al.'s hypothesis that these cultural traditions still guide Chinese people's daily life, Chuang et al. (2015) found that Confucian concepts of relationalism, selfhood, and appropriateness are particularly helpful in explaining the person–environment fit experiences of Chinese employees. Based on interviews with Chinese working adults, their findings suggest that when Chinese individuals say they ‘fit’, they are not experiencing the feelings of congruence suggested by Western literature. Instead, fit is achieved when individuals interact with others in a manner that is perceived as appropriate in a given situation. The authors developed a context-specific model of Chinese person–environment fit consisting of five themes: competence, harmonious connections at work, balance among life domains, cultivation, and realization.

The other two articles emphasize the importance of the Taoist tradition and apply the *Yin Yang* philosophy to understand Chinese phenomena. Chen, Xie, and Chang (2011) argued that because of the influence of the *Yin Yang* philosophy rooted in Taoism, Chinese people tend to have a strong cognitive tendency toward the acceptance of contradiction. Conceptualizing cooperative and competitive orientation as ‘two distinct constructs that represent individual beliefs about and attitudes toward the nature of their relationship with others’ (p. 353), these authors found that these two orientations have profound effects on many work outcomes. Jing and Van de Ven (2014) adopted a case study approach to investigate organizational changes in the Chengdu Bus Group in China. Western literature on organizational change primarily distinguishes between planned change (change actively initiated by change agents) and regulated change (change forced by external environments). However, Jing and Van de Ven found that change agents in Chinese settings tend to integrate both forms of change; that is, they secretly orchestrate external constraints to legitimize the need for a change, and then assert that they have to accommodate external environments by initiating a necessary change.

Business success in China and Japan

Six articles are about achieving business success in China (3) and Japan (3). Regarding business success in China, Zhang, Dolan, Lingham, and Altman (2009) conducted a comparative case study and attempted to find useful strategic international human resource management practices that facilitate the survival of Spanish firms in China. Gu and Tse (2010) focused on how to build innovative organizations in China. Redfern and Crawford (2010) investigated the influence of aspects of societal and economic modernization on the moral judgments of Chinese managers. Their findings suggest that the effects of modernization should be carefully considered in order to achieve business effectiveness.

Regarding studies on achieving organizational effectiveness in Japan, Keizer (2011) highlighted the role of performance-related pay in facilitating the flexibility of Japan's internal labor market. Ando, Rhee, and Park (2008) examined how the host country experience of Japanese multinational corporations affected their policies for staffing executive positions in foreign affiliates. Finally, Cole (2015) attempted to understand how to communicate effectively in Japan, where the content of interpersonal communication must be interpreted in light of the context. Based on a five-year ethnographic study of Japanese martial arts dojo, the author proposed a prolonged process model of high context communication.

Discussion

Major Findings

This chapter reviewed the topics and the level of contextualization of IWO psychology articles that used Asian samples and were published in the past decade. Of the 5484 articles in the top 11 IWO psychology journals, 321 articles fit the purposes of this chapter. Following Jia et al.'s (2012) definition of contextualization, we sorted those articles into three categories: context-insensitive (206), context-sensitive (90), and context-specific (25). Research topics such as leadership and exchange quality, organizational and human resource practices, and creativity/innovation are among the most commonly studied in the context-insensitive articles. Some of the context-sensitive articles have only a limited amount of contextualization as they simply investigate cross-national differences and/or explain those differences with an omnibus approach. Others contextualize the Asian issues using either Hofstede's cultural dimensions or specific cultural traditions. Our review also suggests that *guanxi* and paternalistic leadership are the most discussed culture-specific topics in context-specific IWO psychology studies in Asia. Some studies also adopt the *Yin Yang* philosophy or the Confucian traditions to probe the unique and meaningful Chinese phenomena that previously received less research attention. Finally, several studies concentrate on the key determinants of business success in China and Japan. In the following, we propose several directions for future research regarding IWO psychology in Asia.

The Road Forward

Based on our findings, we make five suggestions for future research. First, more endogenous studies (especially those contextualizing non-Chinese Asian cultural phenomena) are required.

To conduct a contextualized study, researchers can choose between an exogenous and an endogenous topic. Exogenous, context-specific research topics can be found in previous studies that applied Western theories to an Asian setting but obtained surprising findings. Such findings suggest that the Western theories may have a cultural boundary, and that a new, context-specific theory is needed in order to appropriately interpret the observed phenomenon. For example, *guanxi* becomes a culture-driven research topic because Western theorizations fail to fully explain Chinese interpersonal interactions. In contrast, a context-specific research topic can be endogenous. Some phenomena are so unique that people living around such phenomena are in the best position to explore them. For instance, the *Yin Yang* philosophy rooted in Taoism may influence many Chinese people's daily lives, including their work life; thus, studying the effects of *Yin Yang* philosophy becomes an interesting context-specific topic for organizational research in Chinese contexts.

While we understand how endogenous research can further our understanding of novel concepts, the number of such studies remains relatively scant. It is exciting to see that studies on Chinese issues have attracted wider attention, but more effort must be devoted to understanding how cultural traditions represent themselves in societies outside the Chinese context. More research must be done to capture IWO phenomena in other Asian countries as they attract more global attention. For instance, the economies of India and Korea have grown rapidly in recent decades. The average annual GDP growth rate of India in the 1980s and 1990s was 6.90%, and that of Korea in the first 10 years of the twenty-first century was 7.66% (The World Bank Group, 2014). Indian and Korean issues are ripe for study. For example, the trend of outsourcing services to India (e.g. software development, call centers) has begun to draw researchers' attention (e.g. Metiu, 2006). This emerging phenomenon impacts not only the global economy but also the psychological inner workings of workers in the outsourcing countries (e.g. How does outsourcing the service change the domestic occupational structure?) and the host countries (e.g. How do the Indian teams coordinate and cooperate with teams in the outsourcing countries?). Topics such as status, power, justice, cross-cultural communication, and leadership may provide fruitful research paths. As another example, K-pop (i.e. Korean pop music) is a new market category that has recently begun to develop a global impact (e.g. increasing international publicity). K-pop produces a globally accessible entertainment service (e.g. through its choreography and rhythm) that is distributed rapidly through the internet and yet is partially supported by the Korean government. K-pop performers are considered to be a new type of professional for which there is no current theory in IWO psychology. Research can be conducted on such topics as professional identity (e.g. How do professionals in this emerging entertainment industry identify themselves? Does nationality [the 'K' in K-pop] matter?) and professional creativity (e.g. Does the Korean entertainment business evaluate creativity differently, compared with Hollywood? Is the conceptualization of creativity universal or culture-specific?).

Second, on a related issue, we call for more phenomenon-based research (Cheng, 2007). Many endogenous studies are phenomenon-based. Such studies focus on portraying and reporting novel phenomena of interest in organizational and behavioral science. They follow the scientific logic of discovery (Popper, 1959) to employ research designs that can offer a deep and insightful understanding from observed phenomena. Therefore, they usually enable theory-building and allow scientific knowledge to progress. Recognizing the importance of phenomenon-based research, a recent special issue in *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* has

called for phenomenon-based papers to advance Chinese management and organization theories. This reinforces the imperativeness of phenomenon-based Asian studies.

Third, Asian researchers should be cautious about simply adopting existing Western theories to explain observed context-specific phenomena. Instead, they should carefully select a context-specific underlying theoretical mechanism to interpret the phenomena in question. For example, Chinese benevolent leadership would be less Chinese if researchers attempted to use Western theories such as leader–member exchange to interpret it. Researchers lacking relevant knowledge of the specific cultural traditions will find it difficult to contextualize a culture-specific mechanism. Therefore, Asian researchers who devote themselves to developing a contextualized theory should at least be familiar with the local language, philosophy, and history, and – more importantly – Asian scholars ought to be more self-confident in their ability to explore locally relevant research topics (Meyer, 2006).

Fourth, most articles contextualizing Asian theories adopted only one kind of cultural interpretation (e.g. collectivism) leading to an incomplete picture of the phenomena. Some articles did incorporate multiple perspectives (e.g. cultural traditions and Hofstede's cultural dimensions). However, those articles often referred to these cultural perspectives as part of the theoretical justifications only, and rarely incorporated them as part of the research design or measurements for empirical testing. For example, many studies used collectivism to explain why their study results held, but failed to assess collectivism as a variable. Only a few exceptions performed systematic comparisons across cultural dimensions. For instance, Farh et al. (2007) investigated the different moderating effects of traditionality and power distance. We believe it is particularly important to test the independent effects of conceptually similar cultural constructs, such as *guanxi* and informal connections, as well as ‘face’ and shame. Such research will help to either identify a parsimonious theory or differentiate related-but-distinct constructs.

Finally, quantitative methodologies dominate current conversations regarding IWO psychology in Asia. While a quantitative methodology is useful in testing and extending the validity of existing theories, with their implicit or explicit (post)-positivist assumptions, it may preclude the development of more pluralistic and fundamental theories in the field. For instance, cultural sensemaking (Osland & Bird, 2000) or semiotic theory (Brannen, 2004) do not necessarily lend themselves to quantification, but they can be useful theories to understand novel issues such as those occurring in Asia. We recommend that scholars who are interested in conducting Asian research utilize non-correlational designs such as qualitative approaches. Qualitative approaches are more suitable for the identification of novel phenomena and the creation of new theories. Because Asian issues are under-researched, and because discovering what is happening in Asia is of substantial interest to people in the theoretical and practical worlds, merely borrowing Western perspectives is less preferable. Deeply contextualizing the phenomena to provide new insights is considered to be a more effective means by which to fill the current gaps in global IWO psychology research.

Conclusion

This chapter reviews the status quo of IWO psychology research in Asia published during the past decade. While it is exciting that the number of studies using Asian samples has been

increasing over the past decade, only a small portion of these studies deeply contextualize the phenomena of interest. In addition, although the studies examine topics in a wide range of Asian countries, a majority of them focus on Chinese issues. We urge future researchers to conduct Asian studies that discover new concepts and theories based on emerging Asian phenomena using tools that can contextualize topics that pertain not only to China but also to the rest of Asia.

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