An emerging community of Chinese management scholars

By any standards, the 1st Global Chinese Management Studies Conference 2011 organized by the Sun Tzu Art of War Institute was a resounding success. In total, 250 submissions were received. Out of this, 100 academics were invited to submit full manuscripts, and less than 50 papers made it to the final list for presentation (below 20 percent). More importantly than these statistics, however, is the representation of the Chinese universities (Figure 1). In other words, the conference was a truly representative sample of the population of professors in China undertaking research on management.

Other than the Western regions, namely Tibet, Qinghai, Xinjiang and the Island of Hainan, professors from all other provinces (22), municipalities four, autonomous regions five and special administrative regions two submitted their abstracts for this conference.

We even say that it may constitute an all-China conference. Interestingly, we have overwhelming participation from China's top university, namely the Beijing-based Tsinghua University (清华大学). The conference was supported by Emerald Group Publishing and the Aventis School of Management, where I am the Consulting Dean.

The main goal of the conference was to foster the growth of a community of scholars. From such meetings, we hope will grow naturally a core group of academics who are devoted to developing Chinese management into a global discipline. The time is ripe for the journal to begin the transition from publishing of replicated works (Figure 2) to feature authors who originate theory from within modern Chinese contexts. Also the journal will welcome multi-disciplinary, holistic works that embed 5,000 years of Chinese culture in their discussion.

Now anchored in the Sun Tzu Art of War Institute, Singapore this conference has humble roots in a Research Discussion Group (CEIBS, Shanghai) and later an Author Workshop (Lingnan College, Sun Yat Sen or Zhong Shan University, Guangzhou). There is a call by many participants for continuing on with this conference in 2012 and Singapore as the venue. For this conference, we were most delighted to have an outstanding scholar, Professor Xi Youmin, as our first keynote speaker. Everybody at the conference was especially enchanted by his presentation on “Management Trends in a Complex World” (Plate 1).

Peter McKiernan, for a long time the Head of the School of Management at University of St Andrews and now of the University of Strathclyde, delivered the other keynote lecture on foresight. In Plate 2 he drew the phases of ignore, blame, lie, leave and external (intervention) that occur when an organization is the process of a sharp decline. He was in the 1980s my early co-supervisor [in particular on design of survey instrument, see Foo and Grinyer (1994a, b, p. 564)] for my doctoral thesis at University of St Andrews, Scotland.

The thesis that formed the basis of the globally successful Organizing Strategy: Sun Tzu Business Warcraft, twice chosen by UK Blackwell in Oxford, first as Book-of-Month (hardback) and later, Spring's Choice (paperback). This empirical work with a survey of more than 442 publicly listed corporations across ASEAN region provides a strong statistically validated Sun Tzu in ASEAN corporate business world. The book may spark a movement towards a Sun Tzu school of management. Indeed, at least three research papers on Sun Tzu were submitted for this conference.

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Figure 1. Adaptation of the map of China


Figure 2. Paradigm shift
Beginning with the fourth issue of Vol. 5 of *Chinese Management Studies (CMS)*, we shall present a selection of revised papers. For this issue the theme is on Chinese philosophy, values and beliefs. The first paper by Ken Baskin is intriguing as it deals with “How Chinese thought can lead the transformation in management practice”. If this happens in the near future, we are very likely to see it in terms of managing of human resources. That is exactly what is followed on in the second paper jointly by Dong Kong and Junjie Zhang, “The research on Chinese ancient management philosophies’ similarities with contemporary human resources management thoughts”. Both these papers suggest a future of integration of Chinese and Western theories of management. This was one of the central themes in the presentation by Professor Xi Youmin.
Then we have in the collection, a paper illustrating through a case study the very ancient Chinese concept of Yin-Yang in the context of corporate growth: “Yin Yang and company growth: a case study of a coal company of Shanxi in China”. The work is by a team of authors, Jingfeng Li, Jiguang Wang and Wenbin Fan. Concepts like Yin-Yang and I Ching are fundamental theories underlying Taoism. In the West, Taoism is often portrayed as a religion yet in the China, it is for scholars very much a philosophy. Personally, I regard Taoism as an experiential science. Our next paper is again research undertaken by a team of authors namely Lu Yuduo, Qian Yi, Wang Donghua, Lu Yao that highlights on the “Implications of I Ching on innovation management”.

The next five papers are:


Plate 3.
Evening of August 10, 2011: participants wearing the Sun Tzu Art of War Institute polo shirts who signed up for the Imperial Dinner Cruise

Note: Zheng Ho vessel behind
(3) "The effect of traditional Chinese fuzzy thinking on human resource practices in Mainland China" by Li Yuan and Robert Chia.

(4) "The Art of War in manufacturing consumer consent: strategy, business culture and ethics in marketing management" by Y.T. McIntyre-Bhatti and D. Parker.

(5) "A passion for learning Chinese? Investigating a community-based Chinese cultural education school in New Zealand" by Michele E.M. Akoorie, Qiang Ding and Yafei Li.

In upcoming issues of CMS, we shall be featuring thematically some of the high-quality research papers. Our goal is for these papers to take CMS to greater heights.

Finally, to commemorate the early entry of CMS into the SSCI index, a Zheng Ho Imperial Dinner Cruise was organized. This was well attended and thoroughly enjoyed by the participants who signed up (Plate 3). In the closing discussion on the future of CMS, I drew the analogy of Zheng Ho's series of imperial vessels to the issues of our journal. Both series have the critical role of bringing the depth of Chinese civilization, culture and management to the world. For Zheng Ho it was during the fifteenth century and for CMS, it is the twenty-first century. Indeed even the geographical extent of then Ming China is closely represented in the respondent sample of professors who presented at the conference.

Check Teck Foo
Editor-in-Chief

References
