Call for Papers: China Management Research Frontiers Colloquium

Co-organised by Lancaster University Management School/Lancaster China Management Centre, and the International Association for Chinese Management Research (IACMR)

Lancaster University Management School, 27-28 July, 2017

Abstracts are due 31 May, 2017. Invitations will be issued by 16 June, 2017

The core theme of the conference explores some key questions on China management broadly around the internet and innovation, which are yet answered.

Attendance
Participation in the China Management Research Frontiers Conference is by invitation only on the basis of the quality, originality, and fit of the abstract/proposal with the conference theme (see below). The program committee will make every effort to ensure that the assembled participants represent a cross section of senior and junior scholars, including advanced PhD students, and that participants come from diverse geographies.

Abstracts must be received by 31 May, 2017 to Shuangfa Huang,
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Program Committee:
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Professor Yadong Luo, University of Miami (tbc)
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China is already the second largest economy and has contributed greatly to the growth of world economy. The Chinese government has the ambition to modernize the structure of the economy by transforming it from a global center of low-tech manufacturing and low labour cost to a major center of innovation (by the year 2020) and a global innovation leader by 2050.

The key strategic plans of the Chinese government are looking to change this at the national level. China has built considerable strengths in the IT industry with unique Chinese characteristics in terms of customer-focused and efficiency-driven (McKinsey Global Institute, 2015). China has the world's largest base of internet users, and is already an internet leader in many ways. China is also able to take advantage of having a minimal technology legacy and leap frog into new technologies, mobile payments, on demand transportation, and social networks (China Daily, 2016). The internet and digital resources are articulated to be a key driver in these plans, particularly the overarching "Internet plus" approach, which sees the internet and digital networks as central to the modernisation of industry, including Internet of Things (IoT) (Foster and Azmeh, 2016). In fact, China's tech industry, particularly its mobile businesses has in some ways pulled ahead of the United States (New York Times, 2016). For example, China is the world's leader in "financial technology"(fintech, internet-based banking and investment), helping build a more efficient banking system, especially for consumers and small businesses (Economist, 2017).

However, China's desire to play a greater global role (Reuter, 2017), in particular the shift in the basis of world's economic competition from efficiency to innovation will be a big challenge to China and China business (Cheng and Yiu, 2016). China institutional framework for innovation is not good (Abrami, et al., 2014). Chinese socio-cultural context such as the legacy of rote learning and respect for hierarchy, together with some of the government's policies and practices are major impediments (Gupta and Wang, 2016). Similarly, the rise of internet poses not only opportunities and but also challenges to Chinese organizations. The development of the internet including IoT creates game-changing opportunities: production efficiency, distribution, and innovation all stand to benefit immensely (Foster and Azmeh, 2016), on the one hand. On the other hand, Internet activism can effectively focus public attention and potentially undermine a company's public image (Luo et al., 2016). In the meantime, China's internet continues to have distinctively Chinese characteristics, e.g., regulation (Economist, 2011).

Against this background, Chinese firms have yet pioneering radical new management approaches, as Toyota and other Japanese companies did 50 years ago (Hout and David, 2014). Indigenous Chinese management is still at its initial stage of trial and formation (Zhang, 2015). Technologies such as the internet and social media provide organizations and managers with a wealth of possibilities for increasing organizational effectiveness and probably innovation (Colbert, Yee and George, 2016). Therefore, technologies (Colbert et al., 2016) together with the global context and China's distinctive political, social, and cultural environments (Tsui et al., 2004), and their interactions shape management practices of Chinese firms, including innovation. Great uncertainty and volatility favor loosely structured management systems, which Chinese firms tend to have, where managers can process new information quickly, and act independently (Hout and David, 2014). Research is needed not only to examine the effects of the growing use of digital technologies, but also to provide guidance about how best to utilize technology and manage people more effectively in the service of organizational goals (Colbert et al., 2016) and innovation (Gupta and Wang, 2016).

China offers more diverse management practices and lessons today than do most other countries.

Accordingly, this conference aims to explore some key questions on China management broadly around the internet and innovation, which are yet answered. For instance, are there Chinese approaches of management in the new era (Hout and David, 2014)? Has more recent outbound FDI gone in substantial sums to the rich economies as a strategy for innovation, including in acquisitions of high tech (Lehmann, 2015)? What are the unique characteristics of Chinese management compared to that in the Western countries, with the development of internet and digital technology? How the combination of some Chinese tradition and technology lead to unique Chinese management practices? What is the mechanism for the configuration between environment, strategy, structure and management practices in China's context, and How (Zhang, 2015)? Similarly, how foreign multinational companies operating in China respond to the internet with unique Chinese characteristics? Also does information technology such as the internet and internet enabled instant messaging influence management of overseas subsidiaries of Chinese multinational companies?

At the individual level, both managers and their employees will face challenges as they deal with changing digital technologies. For example, they will need to learn new skills (Tarafdar, 2016). What new skills are needed for managers and employees respectively? Raised as 'digital natives', the Chinese young generation born after 1990 are constantly connected, and know information and technology much more than their leaders who are usually less 'digitally literate' (Zhang, Chen, Chen, & Ang, 2014). Such knowledge and competence gap may overshadow the authority of the leaders. Can this be beneficial to employee initiative and creativity, which in turn facilitate innovation? Social media, computer-mediated tools of the web 2.0 generation that make it possible for anyone to create, circulate, share and exchange information in a variety of formats and with multiple communities, have become increasingly widespread in today's organizations and started to affect multiple organizational facets and processes (Leonardi and Vaast, 2016). How have these shaped managers and employees behaviour and outcomes? It is important to also recognize the downsides of such burgeoning technology usage (Colbert et al., 2016). For example, how does mobile instant messaging use impact employee outcomes (Sheer & Rice, 2017), well-being (Tarafdar, 2016) and resilience (Huang, Xing and Gamble, 2016)?

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