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PERSPECTIVES

Toward an integrative framework of indigenous research: The geocentric implications of Yin-Yang Balance

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Abstract It has long been recognized that indigenous research should be helpful, if not essential, for an adequate understanding of local phenomena. The indigenous approach is consistent with, but extends beyond, the repeated calls for contextualizing management and organization research. However, the challenges of indigenous research are enormous. The purpose of this article is to shed light on these challenges by providing an integrative framework of indigenous research. In particular, I seek to explicate the existing conceptual confusions and flesh out the appropriate methodological procedures for indigenous research on Chinese management. To illustrate the framework, I show the value of yin-yang thinking by developing a cognitive frame, *Yin-Yang Balance*, to illustrate the unique and novel features of local perspective, including its application to case study method.

Keywords Indigenous research · Chinese management · Integrative framework · Yin-Yang Balance · Emic-etic integration · Yin-Yang Method

It has long been recognized that indigenous research should be helpful, if not essential, for an adequate understanding of local phenomena. The indigenous approach is consistent with the repeated calls for contextualizing management and organization research (Tsui, 2004, 2007). Paradoxically, globalization gives rise to a

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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 data in the *West* (those cultures rooted in the ancient Greek civilization), it is imperative to conduct indigenous research to revise or modify, supplement or enrich, and even in some cases supersede or substitute Western concepts or theories (Li, 1998, 2008; Lin, 2002; March, 2005; Morris, Leung, Ames, & Lickel, 1999; Yang, 2000). Given the special context of China, with its long and distinctive history as well as its rich and influential culture (I refer to *East* narrowly as those cultures rooted in the ancient Chinese civilization), there are many indigenous phenomena to be studied, such as yin-yang thinking, *guanxi* networks, paternalistic leadership, the role of emotional bonds, the relationship between formal laws and informal rules, and the interplay between the state and market. Understanding these will benefit from, if not require, a unique local (native) perspective (Chen, 2002, 2008; Hwang, 2006; Leung, Li, Chen, & Luo, 2009; Li, 1998; Meyer, 2006; Tsui, 2004, 2006; Yang, 2000).

However, the challenges of indigenous research are enormous. First, there is little consensus on what indigenous research is. Some argue that any research will automatically qualify as indigenous research if it covers an indigenous phenomenon or topic, even when Western theories or concepts are adopted (e.g., Whetten, 2009). Others maintain that indigenous research requires location-specific contextual factors that must be indigenous, but the dominant theoretical framework can be borrowed from the West (e.g., Tsui, 2004). Still others posit that only when an indigenously derived notion or theory is adopted or developed can the research be qualified as indigenous (e.g., Li, 1998). Second, the above controversies are rooted in the vision and agenda of indigenous research in China (see the papers published in the Editor's Forum on the Future of Chinese Management Research in *Management and Organization Review*, 2009). Is it intended to simply verify the extant Western theories? To modify them? Or is it sought to develop new theories to explain unique local phenomena, to possibly supplant Western ones? Is contextualized research the same as indigenous research? Third, the above conceptual controversies also extend to methodological issues. What is the appropriate sequence for indigenous research as well as the overall trajectory of indigenous research? What are the methodological links between indigenous approaches at various stages? Are there any special methods proper for indigenous research? Should researchers develop some, if any, indigenous methods for indigenous research?

Building upon the ongoing stream of indigenous research in Asia (e.g., Au, 2007; Meyer, 2006; Tsui, 2004; White, 2002), I intend to shed light on both conceptual and methodological debates over the indigenous research on Chinese management by proposing an integrative framework. In particular, I explicate the existing conceptual confusions and flesh out the appropriate methodological procedures for indigenous research on Chinese management. To illustrate the framework, I will apply a unique Chinese cognitive frame, *Yin-Yang Balance*, to case study method. The rest of the paper is structured into four sections. First, I focus on the conceptual controversies. Second, I discuss methodological challenges. Third, I discuss the Yin-Yang Balance as a concrete illustration. Finally, I conclude with a broad outline of the future research agenda for indigenous research.

Conceptualization of indigenous research

Definition and typology

I define *indigenous research* as any study on a unique local phenomenon or a unique element of any local phenomenon from a local (native as emic) perspective to explore its local implications, and, if possible, its global implications as well. To be indigenous, a study must contain at least one concept or variable *unique* to a local phenomenon. Further, the quality of indigenous research can be assessed by the explicit criterion if the unique concept or variable makes a *novel* contribution to building a new theory or revising an extant one. In this sense, those studies on a local phenomenon that apply Western theories or constructs cannot qualify as indigenous research, even if a location-specific context is taken into consideration. Even though I consider contextualization as relevant to indigenous research, I do distinguish the two notions because indigenous research requires not only the recognition of a location-specific context but also the recognition of a local perspective to reflect the location-specific context (cf. Tsui, 2004; Whetten, 2009). Hence, not all contextualized studies are indigenous in nature.

There can be two definitions of indigenous research. One is a looser, broader, and multi-emic definition, tied to, but beyond, context-sensitive theory-testing (often in the form of multi-cultural comparative study, Whetten, 2009). The other is a tighter, narrower, and single-emic definition, tied to, but beyond, context-specific theory-building (often in the form of single-culture study, Tsui, 2004). To balance the multi-cultural research with the single-culture one, we can embrace both definitions for different purposes in different studies. In sum, indigenous research must reflect the uniqueness of local characters, which, by default, requires the novelty of local perspectives in contrast to foreign as well as universal characters and perspectives. With a focus on the local perspective, I develop a typology next.

Indigenous research contains four dimensions as the core criteria to delineate indigenous research:

1. *"What"* (research target), i.e., a unique local phenomenon in contrast to a generic global one;
2. *"Why"* (research rationale), i.e., highlighting the endogenous and divergent natures of a local phenomenon in contrast to its exogenous and convergent natures;
3. *"How"* (research approach), i.e., adopting a context-specific (or context-sensitive to a lesser extent) approach to create locally-relevant constructs, methods, and theories in contrast to a globally-applicable approach with context-generic components; and
4. *"For Whom"* (research result), i.e., a contribution in terms of substituting or superseding the "imported" components and/or as an "export" toward a culture-integrative framework from a *geocentric* (both local and global as integrative) perspective in contrast to a contribution based on utilizing or modifying those "imported" components for local applications or adaptations.

The key lies in the adoption of either a local (native as emic or culture-specific) or a global (commonly shared as etic or culture-generic) perspective, with the former as indigenous in contrast to the latter as non-indigenous (Morris et al., 1999). However, it is possible and desirable to integrate these two basic perspectives into a geocentric one as culture-integrative (Li, 2008). I posit that any research that meets any two criteria (beyond the first criterion) will qualify as indigenous research.

I regard the above as four core dimensions or criteria to delineate four distinctive approaches with different contents at different stages in an overall process of indigenous research (cf. Morris et al., 1999; Yang, 2000; see Table 1). First, at Stage 1, the most basic approach involves the uncritical local application of extant theories from the West as *basic exploitation*. This is an emic-as-etic (imposed etic) approach with mostly Western content, thus neither unique nor novel. Second, at Stage 2, a more advanced approach involves multi-context comparative research with the potential to discover one or more novel local constructs unique to a local phenomenon, thus possible to modify or revise the extant theories from the West as *advanced exploitation*. This is an etic-to-emic approach by comparing both Western and Eastern perspectives, thus both unique and novel to a limited extent. Third, at Stage 3, an even more advanced stream or approach involves the development of a local theory to explain a unique local phenomenon as *basic exploration*. This can complement or supersede extant theory from the West as an emic-as-emic approach with mostly Eastern content, thus both unique and novel narrowly at the local level. Fourth, at Stage 4, the most advanced approach involves an integration of the above three approaches toward a geocentric synthesis as *advanced exploration*. This is an emic-and-etic approach with both Western and

Table 1 A typology of indigenous research (Local Perspective).

Arrows for the Positive Trends	**Exploitation [Basic]** [Approach & Outcome]	**Exploration [Advanced]** [Approach & Outcome]
Unilateral/ Separate Impact [Basic] [Target & Goal]	***Western emic-as-etic***: *[Non-Indigenous: Stage 1]* Adopt extant Western theories (naïve etic as "import") to apply/verify/confirm Western theories	***Eastern emic-as-emic***: *[Strong Indigenous: Stage 3]* Build novel Eastern theories (isolated emic as "no trade") to complement/supplement or supersede/substitute Western theories
Bilateral/ Joint Impact [Advanced] [Target & Goal]	***Western-Eastern etic-to-emic***: *[Weak Indigenous: Stage 2]* Find Eastern uniqueness (emic as moderate "export") to compare/modify/revise Western theories	***Western-Eastern emic-and-etic***: *[Geocentric: Stage 4]* Integrate Western-Eastern theories (balanced emic-emic "trade") to transform emic theories into a mosaic-style etic core & emic detail

From the local perspective of indigenous research in a single country, this framework integrates the duality views of inside vs. outside; endogenous vs. exogenous; divergent vs. convergent; context-specific vs. context-generic; emic vs. etic approaches as well as of export vs. import; creation vs. imitation; and exploration vs. exploitation as the targeted results.

Integration at Stage 4 is a balance between local (emic, home-grown, unilateral, and separate) and global elements (etic, borrowed, bilateral, and joint) under the auspices of the *Yin-Yang Balance* and *Golden Rule of Balanced Harmony*.

Eastern contents being integrated, thus both unique and novel broadly at the global level.

While Stage 1 is a necessary initial step, it is not indigenous even in terms of a loose and broad definition. However, Stage 1 has some indigenous implications because it may be able to inform the later stages of indigenous research by exposing local uniqueness or novelty. In other words, while it emphasizes the goal of finding common and shared (etic) content across contexts, it may unexpectedly discover some unique and novel (emic) contents in the process, thus providing the initial evidence for the later stages. Stages 2 and 3 can be seen as the dual foci of current indigenous research, while Stage 4 can be regarded as the most advanced form toward the ultimate goal of developing geocentric knowledge. *Geocentric* refers to a mosaic-style integration of an etic theme (globally shared common core) with diverse emic versions (locally unique details) of the etic theme, thus culture-integrative (Li, 2008). Stages 1 and 2 emphasize the exploitation of extant theories or constructs, while Stages 3 and 4 seek the exploration of new theories or constructs. Further, Stages 1 and 3 contrast each other in terms of a distinctive focus on the unilateral impact of either a Western or Eastern perspective on the research content, while Stages 2 and 4 resemble each other in terms of their shared focus on the mutual impact (balanced and potentially integrative) of both Western and Eastern perspectives on research content. Finally, while Stage 2 focuses on the aspect of uniqueness through comparison, Stage 3 highlights the aspect of novelty in perspective (cf. Meyer, 2006; Tsui, 2004).

To illustrate the typology in Table 1, I explore the distinctions and links between social capital and *guanxi*. *Social capital* refers to a group-based social tie, either weakly instrumental or weakly sentimental, but largely depersonalized and primarily non-kinship-based. This is the typical social tie in the West. As the typical social tie in the East, *guanxi* is a dyadic social tie, both sentimental and instrumental, strongly personalized, kinship- or non-kinship-based (Li, 2007). If we apply the concept of social capital to *guanxi* (the Western emic imposed as the global etic), the research will be non-indigenous (Stage 1). If we compare social capital with *guanxi* as two distinctive concepts to find their common core and also distinction (the Western-Eastern emic-to-etic), the research is weakly indigenous (Stage 2). If we adopt the concept of *guanxi* as a unique Chinese social tie (the Eastern emic-as-emic), the research is strongly indigenous (Stage 3). Finally, if we integrate social capital with *guanxi* (the Western-Eastern emic-and-etic), the research is geocentric (Stage 4). In sum, when *guanxi* is studied as a unique local phenomenon from a novel local perspective in terms of being a concept distinctive from social capital and then move on from there, we regard all these types of research as indigenous.

Most research concerning China remains at Stage 1 with little theoretical contribution to better explain a local phenomenon or element. This research does not contribute to indigenous research. A popular research stream concerning China is consistent with Whetten's notion of *context-sensitive* research (2009), at Stage 2, which makes potential theoretical contributions because it is more likely to find or develop some novel constructs or variables to better explain a local phenomenon or element, compared with Stage 1. Such research is rooted in the multi-cultural comparative tradition with a renewed focus on unique local phenomena. Another growing research stream concerning China expands into Stage 3. This has greater potential for theoretical contributions because it focuses exclusively on the development of locally-derived theories, due to the disillusion with the universalistic claims of Western theories. This approach is consistent with Tsui's notion of *context-specific* research (2004). Research at Stage 4 attempts to integrate the research streams at Stages 2 and 3 by building intercultural constructs and theories. This is consistent with the notions of *emic-etic synergy* by Morris et al. (1999), *cross-cultural leverage* by Chen, Leung, and Chen (2009), *balanced global view* by Yang (2000), and *geocentric mosaic* by Li (2008). In other words, there is a clear logical sequence among the three approaches to indigenous research within the confinement of a local perspective, which goes beyond a generalized notion of contextualization.

All the research approaches at Stages 2, 3, and 4 have their own unique challenges, but all later stages must proceed effectively upon proper progress at the earlier stages as necessary input. For instance, the integrative approach at Stage 4 relies upon the key contributions of both context-sensitive and context-specific studies at Stages 2 and 3, both of which can offer distinctive constructs or theories as their unique and novel contributions for Stage 4. In other words, the cultural diversity discovered at Stages 2 and 3 can serve as the necessary input for the geocentric mosaic as the ultimate output of indigenous research.

It is worth noting that the emic-etic link can be conceptualized as a *duality*, which refers to a pair of contrary (largely conflicting and mutually negating) yet complementary (largely compatible and mutually affirming) elements as opposites-in-unity (Li, 2008, 2011). As a duality, rather than a dualism, the distinction and link between the emic and etic approaches can be *holistically* (interdependent and overlapped) and *dynamically* (interactive and interchangeable) balanced as "*either/both*." The "either" side refers to the contrary or conflicting tendency for the two opposites in a paired unity to mutually conflict to different degrees in different aspects and/or at different times, while the "both" side refers to the complementary or compatible tendency for the opposite elements to mutually embrace to different degrees in different aspects and/or at different times. The notion of *degree* reflects the relative, rather than the absolute (polarized extremes), nature of contradiction in duality. The notion of duality derives from the Yin-Yang Balance, which is a unique frame of thinking in East Asia that originated in China but is shared by most Asian countries (Chen, 2002, 2008; Li, 1998, 2008), different from Aristotle's formal logic of "*either/or*" as well as Hegel's dialectical logic of "*both/or*" (I will elaborate later).

Consistent with the Yin-Yang Balance, I can reasonably assume that a phenomenon, no matter how unique or generic, will always have two integral components. One is the common component shared by similar phenomena across all or many contexts, referred to as the etic component (e.g., the core characteristic of interpersonal ties in social capital), the other is the unique component specific to a particular local phenomenon, referred to as the emic component (e.g., the concrete characteristic of strong bonds in *guanxi*). In other words, any phenomenon contains both etic and emic components in a holistic and dynamic balance. The above discussion describes and explains the content and process of indigenous research from a local perspective rather than from an integrative perspective. I will return to this in the section on methodology.

Major debates concerning conceptualization

To further clarify the conceptual confusions regarding indigenous research, I now turn to the major debates concerning the definition of indigenous research (see the Editor's Forum on the Future of Chinese Management Research in *Management and Organization Review*, 2009, including Barney & Zhang, 2009; Whetten, 2009). These ongoing debates are largely responsible for the conceptual confusions about the definition of indigenous research in general and Chinese research in particular. I focus on the three most controversial issues, all of which are concerned with the critical implications of contextualization for organization study in general and indigenous research in particular. I use a table to illustrate the links between the dimensions of *context-sensitivity* (the attitude of researchers in terms of the degree of their focus on the unique or common characters of a phenomenon) and *context-specificity* (the uniqueness of phenomenal characters in terms of the degree of their local distinctiveness relative to other characters). I posit that the two dimensions constitute a duality, related to the emic-etic duality to different degrees in different aspects and/or at different times as a 2 × 2 matrix (Table 2).

1. Is contextualized research the same as indigenous research?

   I agree that contextualization is related to indigenous research, but the two constructs are not the same. The former is much broader than the latter, especially in three major areas. First, not all contexts are necessarily location-specific with unique characters and novel implications, but indigenous research must be location-specific with a local perspective. A context can be either omnibus in terms of "who," "where," "when," and "why," or discrete in terms of specific task, social and physical situations (Johns, 2006). In other words, a context could be industry-specific, region-specific, institution-specific, technology-specific, or organization-specific. If we refer to context only as explicitly location-specific, we can regard contextualization as indigenous with the explicit implications of a local perspective, especially its *cultural* perspective in terms of unique cultural assumptions as well as values distinctive from other cultures. However, most scholars do not specifically confine the notion of contextualization to the cultural

Table 2 A typology of context-specificity and context-sensitivity (local perspective).

Horizontal: Emic attribute Vertical: Etic attitude	Low context-specificity [Phenomenon attribute as highly similar] Weak etic	High context-specificity [Phenomenon attribute as highly unique] Strong emic
Low context-sensitivity [Researcher attitude sensitive to similar attribute] Strong emic	Stage 1: Uncritical import Strong etic/weak emic	Stage 4: Integration Strong etic/strong emic
High context-sensitivity [Researcher attitude sensitive to unique attribute] Weak emic	Stage 2: Comparative Weak etic/weak emic	Stage 3: Local Weak etic/strong emic

dimension only. In this sense, contextualized research, even context-specific research, is not necessarily the same as indigenous research because the latter requires a unique and novel local perspective beyond the contextualization of extant views (cf. Meyer, 2006; Tsui, 2004).

Second, not all contextual elements are necessarily path-dependent with unique characters and novel implications, but indigenous contextual elements must be highly path-dependent with a *historical perspective*. A context can be either history-dependent or emerging. However, the notion of indigenous implies a path-dependent context with *historical imprints* (e.g., cultural assumptions and values), rather than the much less path-dependent technological and economic conditions. If we refer to any context as explicitly history-dependent, especially cultural context, we can regard contextualization as indigenous with the explicit implications of historical perspective. In other words, if we regard "context" narrowly and explicitly with its local (spatial) and historical (temporal) connotations, we take contextualization as indigenous; if we view contextualization broadly, it is not the same as indigenous research. Because most scholars do not confine their notion of contextualization to the historical and cultural dimension, most contextualized studies are not indigenous. Hence, contextualized research is not necessarily the same as indigenous research. In sum, despite their overlap, contextualized research and indigenous research are two different constructs that should not be mixed up, explicitly or implicitly.

2. Can context-sensitive research substitute for context-specific research?

   I take issue with the broad claim (e.g., Whetten, 2009) that there is little need for taking a local perspective as long as we are highly sensitive to the context of a local phenomenon. I understand that contextual sensitivity is critical, but we should never mix the sensitivity of an outsider with that of an insider because they are never the same. The local perspective (deep contextualization and context-specific theory-building) is definitely required to explain the truly unique and novel part of any local phenomenon. An adapted foreign perspective, no matter how sensitive it is, cannot be the same as a local perspective. This is similar to the doomed claim of "if I were you," which will not work simply because "you can never be me." For instance, indigenous research often requires not only the addition of unique contextual moderators (Z), but also the redefinitions of both independent (X) and dependent variables (Y) as locally relevant, due to the local perspectives above and beyond the effect of Z. In this sense, it is the novel local perspective that defines the nature of indigenous research given the unique nature of local phenomenon. If a local phenomenon is not unique, there is no need for local perspective, thus no novel value of indigenous research above and beyond universal research. In this sense, context-sensitive research is insufficient for indigenous research, so both context-sensitive research (typically in the form of testing the extant theories from the West) and context-specific research (typically in the form of building novel theories deriving from local perspectives) are necessary as a duality.

   Whetten (2009) also argued that indigenous research is useful if, and only if, the Western ideas and theories fail to explain the unique and novel local phenomenon. I strongly disagree. I argue that we can legitimately start building indigenous theories regardless of whether Western theories apply to the local phenomenon. My view is based on the assumption that any local phenomenon must have some unique and novel aspects by default. If not, this is not a local phenomenon but a global one. The real issue is whether we want to focus on the unique and novel aspects. If we do, it is indigenous (emic); if we do not, it is universal (etic). Despite the etic (to find or explain the similarity across cultures) or emic (to find or explain the distinction across cultures) purpose and focus, similarity and distinction can be treated as a duality in any phenomenon, like the duality of local and global requirements, thus the necessary values of both etic and emic research. Further, in addition to the emic approach, the etic approach also has to be contextualized. For the etic, we must specify the boundaries of its applications in terms of aspects, time, and degree. For the emic, we have to highlight the uniqueness and novelty of its local context so as to explain the part that cannot be explained by the etic approach. In other words, the emic and etic approaches constitute a duality toward a geocentric framework.

As shown in Table 2, the dimension of context-sensitivity is not always important since it is not absolutely required for indigenous research. In contrast, the dimension of context-specificity is more important because it is necessary for the exploratory indigenous research at Stages 3 and 4 (Table 1). For instance, geocentric research is associated with low context-sensitivity in contrast to comparative research at Stage 2 with high context-sensitivity. However, neither dimension alone is sufficient since they are by default interrelated. To put it differently, context-sensitive research should be required for all studies across the world, including both universal (etic/global) and indigenous (emic/local) approaches. Nobody can argue against being context-sensitive, as it has the absolute truism. However, context-sensitive research is insufficient for indigenous research due to its failure to highlight the required move toward the exploration of locally-derived unique and novel constructs and theories, which is highlighted by the dimension of context-specificity (Stages 3 and 4).

Further, the narrow focus on the context-sensitive application of Western theories is based on an implicit, but questionable, assumption. This assumption implies that the Western theories, although also indigenous from the West (Yang, 2000), are necessarily superior to the potential theories from the indigenous perspective in the East. The advocates of this view seem to assert that the Western theories are early-movers and solidly established, so there is little need to reinvent the wheel in the East unless and until one has the sufficient evidence about the serious failures of the Western theories. They also seem to claim the unconditional validity of Western theories. If the assumption and implications of Western superiority are valid, we will have to accept the argument to call off most indigenous research. Unfortunately, the assumption and implications are ill-founded. Many Western scholars recognize that the Western theories are fragmented like a "weed-patch, rather than a well tended garden" (Pfeffer, 1993: 616). Also, many Western scholars admit that most Western theories are not contextualized (e.g., Johns, 2006; Whetten, 2009). Hence, how can the Western theories serve as the exemplary role models for the rest of the world to emulate? There are no perfect theories in the West to even explain local phenomenon in the West per se (Meyer, 2007). Consequently, how should we be expected to borrow such theories and apply them to phenomena in the East? To put it bluntly, should every country in the world adopt the American capitalist system as the presumed best before proven otherwise? Don't we assume that the Japanese scholars have the right to build their own unique theories before they have exhausted the options from the West? If they had no theories of their own, there would have been no success story of Japan. The conclusion is that there are no perfect theories to borrow. We must go back to the premise that the context-sensitive theory-testing and context-specific theory-building are equally valid and they should be given equal chances without presuming the superiority or priority of one over the other. In sum, the two should be regarded as a duality.

3. Should context-specific research substitute for context-sensitive research?

   There seems to be a consensus that contextualization contains two typical approaches: a context-sensitive one for comparative research and a context-specific one for local research (e.g., Tsui, 2004; Whetten, 2009). Similar to the relationship between emic (local) and etic (global) approaches, the two approaches differ fundamentally in purpose and assumption (Morris et al., 1999). Related to the first debate, I agree that both approaches could be indigenous research if, and only if, they adopt the local perspective. In other words, we confront the question if we need to engage in emic (context-specific) research in terms of developing Chinese theories of management or etic (context-sensitive) research in terms of applying the theories to Chinese management (Barney & Zhang, 2009; Whetten, 2009). I posit that the notion of emic-etic duality is equally applicable to contextualization, with both common and unique contents in a local context as compared to other contexts. Consistent with the notion of duality, both context-sensitive research and context-specific research can be indigenous research because both can adopt local perspectives, and each can engage in indigenous research via a unique approach, with the context-sensitive research focusing on the etic content in contrast to the context-specific research focusing on the emic content. Hence, it is unnecessary to substitute the formal with the latter, or vice versa. In fact, the two research elements are mixed differently at different stages (Table 2). For instance, both high context-sensitivity and high context-specificity are required at Stage 3, but only high context-specificity is required at Stage 4, and only high context-sensitivity is required at Stage 2; finally, Stage 1 requires neither. These mixes of the two elements are consistent with the Yin-Yang Balance.

Methodology for indigenous research

Method and trajectory

Built upon the above discussion to explicate the typology of indigenous research, I turn to the methodological issues of indigenous research, including the integrative trajectory and specific methods to address both the content and process of a multi-emic research agenda. The trajectory of indigenous research across multiple countries is summarized in Figure 1. Figure 1 is an integration of the models of

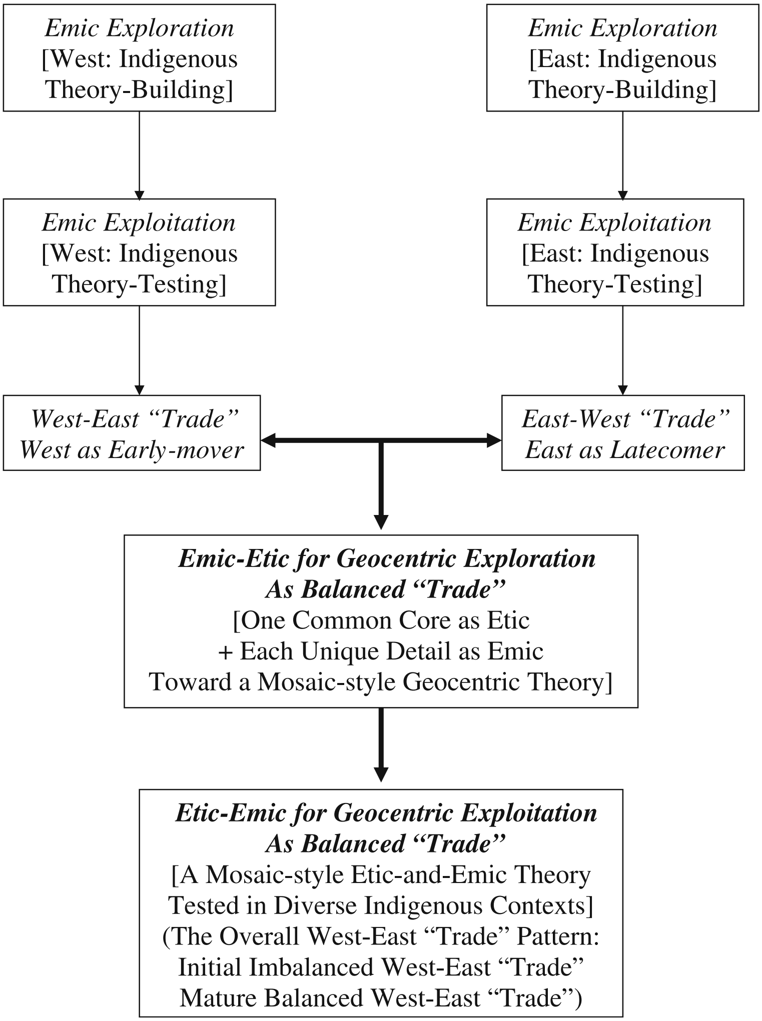


Figure 1 The emic-etic balance (integrative perspective)

Enriquez (1990) and Morris et al. (1999). This integration lies in the holistic, dynamic, and duality balances between local-global (emic-etic) dimension and exploration-exploitation dimension as *two paired multi-cultural meta-approaches* to mutually affirm and mutually negate to different degrees in different aspects at different times, in line with the Yin-Yang Balance and Golden Rule of Balanced Harmony (Chen, 2002; Li, 2011). From the outset, I clarify that Figure 1 represents an integrative trajectory of two paired meta-approaches (integrative) in contrast to Table 1 with a typology of four separate approaches (local).

The primary rationale for Figure 1 is that the geocentric approach is not a form of homogenous universalism but an emic-etic integration in terms of a mosaic-style unity-in-diversity toward an overall framework. Indigenous or emic research is not confined to the goal of explaining unique phenomena at the local level for their own sake; they often bear some global implications. For instance, *guanxi* is the Chinese version of social capital that exists everywhere in the world with a shared core of informal relationship that appears in specific forms distinctive only to different degrees in different aspects and/or at different times. Another case is *paternalistic leadership*, a phenomenon not confined to the Chinese context; even though it is perhaps more pronounced in China, it can be found everywhere in the world (Pellegrini & Scandura, 2008) as an integral part of a mosaic-style geocentric theory. Hence, emic constructs and theories as diverse perspectives from different cultures can be integrated so as to enrich all toward a more complete, mosaic-style picture with an overlapped core and diverse unique details (e.g., the primary link between micro and macro, with the macro as a mosaic pattern of diverse micro components). In other words, the mosaic metaphor reflects the duality of etic-emic integration as a unity-in-diversity.

We should take the concepts, methods and theories in the West as emic or indigenous research in its own special context, no more or no less imperative than the emic research in the East (Yang, 2000; cf. Morris et al., 1999). However, we have to acknowledge that the West has been the early-mover in modern times, so the East, as the latecomer, tends to start by "importing" from the West. Nonetheless, there is no reason why the East cannot catch up innovatively via either basic or advanced exploration. Further, as the latecomer, the East may even have some latecomer advantages. Finally, if we develop geocentric constructs and theories, the cultural perspectives of both West and East will be integrated, regardless of the status of early-mover or latecomer. Built upon the above discussion I will sketch an integrative framework of indigenous research with both the typology of four local approaches and the trajectory of two integrative meta-approaches.

The East has unique advantages in being a latecomer. It can avoid the mistakes made in the West, such as the premature dominance of a few paradigms at the expense of diverse views, the premature emphasis on quantitative methods at the expense of rich qualitative methods, and also the premature fragmentation into various narrow disciplinary domains at the expense of interdisciplinary integration. Further, the East has the advantage of its rich historical wisdom to tap into, similar to the case of the West rediscovering the Greek classics during the Renaissance and Enlightenment (Lloyd, 1996, 2007). For instance, the Yin-Yang Balance and the Golden Rule of Balanced Harmony, widely regarded as the dual cores of Chinese traditional wisdom (Graham, 1986), are critical for reversing the fragmented, static and unbalanced trends driven primarily by Aristotle's formal logic of "either/or" and secondarily by Hegel's dialectical logic of "both/or" (Li, 1998, 2008, 2011). We should promote the holistic, dynamic, and duality perspectives from the East to remedy the prevailing problems in Western research (Chen, 2002, 2008; Li, 1998, 2008, 2011).

Concerning the specific methods for indigenous research in general and those for Chinese management research in particular, we should adopt an open mind, especially toward qualitative methods. It is appropriate to adopt more inductive and synthesis-based qualitative methods to build novel constructs and theories at the early stages of indigenous research. In this sense, such qualitative methods as grounded theory method and case study method are the most appropriate for indigenous research at the current stage. Only at the later stages, when indigenous constructs and theories are well developed, will the quantitative methods for theory-testing become necessary. Only then should we adopt more deductive and analytical quantitative methods, such as large-sample statistical analysis and structural modeling. The most urgent need at the present time is to develop more indigenous constructs and theories (unique and novel) via qualitative methods, which are the dual goals of indigenous research at Stages 2 and 3.

It is worth noting that social study (I deliberately avoid the term "social science" due to the key differentiation between social study and natural science, see Li, 2011 for the recent review), including indigenous research, which is rooted in the cultural and historical contexts of each locality, cannot and also should not imitate the so-called "scientific" methods commonly adopted in natural sciences (see Bandura, 1999; Kim & Park, 2005; Li, 2011, for reviews). However, the methods prevailing in social study in the West are those used in natural sciences. I take issue with this tendency by questioning and challenging the "naïve" positivism in the social study in the West. What is needed in social study is an integration of positivism and constructivism because social study involves inter-subjectivity when both object and subject of study are human agents (Bandura, 1999; Kim & Park, 2005). I support the view of inseparability between objective and subjective elements in social study (Polanyi, 1968). Based on this core premise, I posit that qualitative methods (suitable for studying inter-subjective social phenomena) are more valuable to social study than quantitative ones (appropriate for studying primarily objective natural phenomena). In this sense, qualitative methods are more valuable to indigenous research (as social study by default), especially for its theory-building at the exploratory stages (Stages 2 and 3 in Tables 1 and 2). A process model for indigenous research has been proposed by Cheng, Wang, and Huang (2009). A related model for developing a measurement scale has also been recommended by Farh, Cannella, and Lee (2006). Integrating my typology and trajectory with the above two models, I can build an integrative framework of indigenous research. Applying it to the specific methodological procedures of indigenous research, I propose three major procedures for indigenous research (cf. Hwang, 2006; Tsui, 2006): the micro-emic, macro-emic, and macro-geocentric procedures.

First, the research at Stage 2 can gain inspiration from a comparative study of Western and Eastern distinctions of a similar phenomenon (e.g., *guanxi* vs. non-*guanxi* ties; paternalistic vs. non-paternalistic leadership) as well as paired cultural values (e.g., long-term vs. short-term; collectivism vs. individualism). In this regard, the focus here is to specify multi-cultural diversity so as to develop some unique and novel *micro perspectives* (related to unique and novel characters of a similar phenomenon across different local contexts at the individual level) as well as from the micro perspective to the *meso perspective* (related to unique and novel features at the collective level). I term this the "*micro-emic*" procedure.

Second, the research at Stage 3 can gain inspiration from Chinese classical thought (e.g., Confucianism and Taoism) as well as Chinese values (e.g., context and harmony). In this regard, the focus here is to develop some unique and novel *macro perspectives* of Chinese assumptions or beliefs that are deeply held and taken for granted (i.e., the Yin-Yang Balance as a unique and novel frame of thinking as well as the Golden Rule of Balanced Harmony as the central application of the Yin-Yang

Balance) as well as from the macro perspectives to the *meso perspectives* (related to the unique and novel values of Chinese culture, such as context and harmony, which are derived from the assumptions or beliefs of Confucianism and Taoism). I term this the "*macro-emic*" procedure.

Third, the research at Stage 4 can integrate the above two approaches at Stages 2 and 3, ranging from the micro-level perspectives to the macro perspectives and vice versa. In practice, however, the above two approaches are often intertwined with much overlap. One particular blend is to *reconstruct* the extant Western theories from the macro Eastern perspectives (i.e., the assumptions of Yin-Yang Balance and Golden Rule of Balanced Harmony). For instance, the controversial debates over many paradoxical pairs can be readily reconciled via the Yin-Yang Balance, including the unity-diversity balance for team design; the flexibility-stability balance for alliance network; the transaction value-and-cost balance for the theory of the firm; the know-how and know-who balance for knowledge typology; the control-trust balance for governance mode; the teacher-student balance for effective learning; the determinism-choice balance for strategy formulation; the agency-structure balance for institutional change and stability; the formal-informal balance for institutional context; and the global-local balance for multinational strategy. This unique and novel approach can be applied to many controversial issues of indigenous research in particular and even non-indigenous research in general (e.g., Li, 1998, 2007, 2008). Because it is geocentric in its end and macro in its means, I term this the "*macro-geocentric*" procedure. I will revisit this issue later in the Conclusion. In sum, I identify the "micro-emic," "macro-emic," and "macro-geocentric" procedures for indigenous research.

Major debates concerning the methodology

I now turn to the major debates over the methodology of indigenous research (see the Editor's Forum on the Future of Chinese Management Research in *Management and Organization Review*, 2009). The ongoing debates are largely responsible for the methodological controversies regarding the overall pattern of indigenous research on Chinese management.

1. What is the ideal logical sequence of context-sensitive research and context-specific research?

   It is clear from my earlier discussion about the definition of indigenous research, that multi-cultural research (i.e., context-sensitive research) is an integral part of indigenous research, given the fact that leveraging multi-cultural perspectives is effective for generating unique and novel insights (Chen et al., 2009), which can be accomplished by adopting a local perspective. However, it is also clear from my earlier discussion that context-sensitive or multi-cultural comparative research is insufficient for indigenous research. There is a debate over which of the two should come first in the overall pattern of indigenous research. Some argue for context-sensitive research to be first (e.g., Whetten, 2009), while others recommend that context-specific research should be first (e.g., Yang, 2000). Even though I recognize that both approaches could come first in practice (the context-sensitive research at Stage 2 often proceeds before the context-sensitive one at Stage 3), I tend to concur with the view that it is more reasonable to start with context-specific research because it should be the necessary input for more effective context-sensitive research at the later stage. In this sense, when we conceptualize indigenous research as an integrative trajectory (see Figure 1) rather than a local-oriented typology (see Table 1), we will have a different conclusion in terms of a logical sequence of indigenous research. In this sense, integrative and local-oriented perspectives constitute another duality.

I would argue that it is desirable to conduct context-specific local-oriented research first before multi-cultural research. In fact, Western theories have been developed from the unique perspective of the West (Yang, 2000), so they are indigenous to the West despite their universal claims. Without local-oriented research first, integrative research tends to be dominated by the potential biases of Western perspectives to straitjacket Eastern perspectives, so the latter will have a harder time emerging. In practice, there has been another way around. Most scholars have engaged in integrative research before context-specific research. In fact, there have been very few involved in the strong indigenous research (context-specific research), which, as I have argued earlier, is urgently needed despite the institutional barriers to its emergence (Leung, 2007; Tsui, 2007). Hence, we should particularly encourage strong indigenous research.

As I have discussed earlier, cultural diversity is critical as input for cultural integration as the ultimate output of indigenous research. In particular, we have to understand that rich cultural diversity (in contrast to cultural similarity) is the sole source of unique and novel insights, and is thus a necessary input for cultural integration later. In this aspect, context-specific research is more powerful than context-sensitive research since the former is more effective in identifying the unique and novel characters of a particular local context, while the latter is often tinted by its focus on using a universal measurement to compare diverse cultures. In other words, the latter has more difficulty in specifying the subtle and unique diversity revealed more sharply from a local perspective. My argument is that novel insight can hardly be inspired by multi-cultural similarity because one is already too familiar with and blindfolded by one's own perspective, so all "other" perspectives seem almost the same as one's own (thus no clear multi-cultural diversity). To me, similarity can hardly inspire novel insight. Without cultural diversity, there will be little novel frame-breaking insight. In particular, we can connect diversity with novelty (uniqueness → diversity → interaction → novelty). In this sense, those organizations devoted to the research on local management can pursue two core goals: (1) to introduce the local scholars to the best research in the West (outside-in with the import of Western insights), and (2) to introduce the Western scholars to the best local research (inside-out with the export of Eastern insights). The latter is especially critical given the fact that virtually no scholars in the West engage in any strong indigenous research beyond the West, while most in the East are simply interested in extending the Western ideas and theories (White, 2002). We have to reverse such biased trends.

2. What are the links between context-sensitive, context-specific, and geocentric approaches?

   As I argued earlier, all three approaches are necessary for indigenous research as three stages in a local-oriented typology (Table 1), with the first two as critical for the generation and development of unique local perspectives so as to compare with other cultural perspectives for novel insights. Together, all local perspectives identify the common elements and also specify the unique and novel elements to be integrated into geocentric constructs and theories. I have also argued that no two phenomena are 100% different or similar in all aspects and at all times due to the fact that each phenomenon must have its unique and novel elements as well as its common and shared elements, so the existing theories from the West can surely explain certain parts of Chinese phenomena, especially with required adaptation. Hence, we must not waste our time reinventing the wheel on the part that can be properly explained by the Western theories (exploitation). Our main contributions should come from our attempts to build new constructs and theories so as to explain the part that cannot be explained by the Western theories no matter how much we try to adapt or modify such theories (exploration). The distinction between exploitation and exploration is critical in the overall trajectory of multi-cultural indigenous research in Figure 1 relative to the local-oriented typology in Table 1. In particular, exploitation is central to Stage 1 and Stage 2 (to a lesser extent for Stage 2), while exploration is central to Stage 3 and Stage 4 (to a lesser extent for Stage 4). In other words, the distinction and link between the three approaches as three stages in Table 1 and the two approaches (exploration and exploitation as a duality) across multiple stages in Figure 1 lie at the holistic, dynamic, and balanced link between emic and etic perspectives.

Further, we must evoke the exploration-exploitation duality again to explain the methodological link between the local-oriented typology (Table 1) and integrative trajectory (Figure 1). With context-sensitive and context-specific research being complementary and reciprocal (consistent with the Yin-Yang Balance), the former is more related to the exploitation of extant foreign constructs and theories, while the latter is more related to the exploration of unique and novel local constructs and theories. In general, exploitation is related to the deduction-oriented quantitative methods for theory-testing, while exploration tends to associate with the induction-oriented qualitative methods for theory-building. What we have to stress is that there is no inherent superiority of quantitative or qualitative methods; the only issue is if they are utilized adequately for the right research purposes. Both methods can be rigorous if they are applied properly, and both can be relevant if they are properly selected. For instance, the qualitative methods, including case study and grounded theory, are more appropriate than all quantitative methods for the purpose of theory-building in indigenous research (Tsui, 2006).

3. Who are the best positioned to engage in indigenous research?

Tsui (2004) identified two primary causes for the lack of indigenous research effort among Chinese scholars: the lack of solid training (increasingly irrelevant given the rapidly improving training of Chinese scholars both at home and abroad), and the lack of incentive because publishing such papers in the Western journals is tough (still relevant given the strong bias against any indigenous research other than that from the West, also see Meyer, 2006). Other explanations are the lack of self-confidence (e.g., Meyer, 2006), the lack of research infrastructure (Au, 2007), and the lack of knowledge about Chinese traditions (Cheng et al., 2009). I argue that the above reasons are necessary but insufficient. An ignored reason is what I call "insider's blind spot." If the Chinese scholars know how to delineate the comparative boundaries of Western and Eastern contexts and phenomena, they can easily contribute to the extant literature. In this sense, they can turn their Chinese uniqueness into an asset, rather than a liability, to publish in the top English journals. Hence, the lack of training, incentive, confidence, infrastructure, and knowledge are secondary compared to the lack of cross-cultural sensitivity to avoid the insider's blind spot. The best approach (and the most urgent) is to sharpen such sensitivity so as to gain access to unique and novel insights.

A good approach to sharpening intercultural sensitivity is to be equally knowledgeable about the distinct perspectives from the West and East, which is difficult to accomplish by a single scholar, but much easier by a team of scholars (Van Glinow & Teagarden, 2009). Within the intercultural team, a critical member is the one who is a bi-cultural and bi-contextual in-outsider. Such a bi-cultural and bi-contextual broker can be readily found among those Chinese who have studied and worked both inside and outside China (the very idea was suggested by Whetten in a private talk with the author at the 2009 Academy of Management conference). It is worth noting that the active scholars in indigenous research in various countries are those who were trained in the West but returned to their home countries (Kim & Park, 2005). In this sense, the overseas and returned Chinese can play a big role in team-oriented indigenous research. However, non-Chinese scholars can also play a key role if they are knowledgeable about the Chinese culture and history (Meyer, 2007), but such scholars are rare (Cheng et al., 2009).

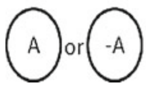
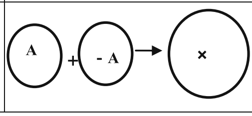
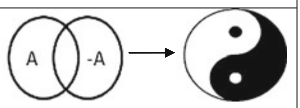
The Yin-Yang Balance as an illustration

In this section, I illustrate my integrated framework in general and macro-geocentric procedure in particular by evoking the Yin-Yang Balance as a unique and novel cognitive frame. Specifically, the Yin-Yang Balance is a frame of thinking with scientific implications, especially potent for scientifically exploring highly complex phenomena, as evidenced by the advances in science and technology in the history of China before the late Western modernization (Needham, 1956), and it is further evidenced by the stories of some of the most prominent figures in the history of modern science in the West (e.g., Leibniz, Jung, and Bohr). In particular, the Yin-Yang Balance is an open system (Gu, 2005) to accommodate a balance between "either/or" and "both/and." It is highly distinctive from Aristotle's formal logic, which is mechanistic and reductionist due to its absolute denial of potential contradictions with a permanent "either/or" (but never "both/and"). It is also different from Hegel's dialectical logic, which is ultimately mechanistic and reductionist due to its absolute need for the resolution of transitory contradictions with a temporary "both/and" but ultimate "either/or," so I term it "*both/or*" (Li, 1998; Peng & Nisbett, 1999). In contrast, the Yin-Yang Balance integrates "either/or" with "both/and" for permanent "*either/and*" in relative terms. In this sense, I take the Yin-Yang Balance as a *duality* in contrast to Aristotle's logic as an *explicit dualism*, and Hegel's logic as an *implicit dualism* (with its temporary tolerance, but ultimate denial, of contradiction with its ultimate goal to resolve all contradictions, Nisbett, 2003).

It is important to note that Hegel's dialectical logic is apparently inconsistent with Aristotle's formal logic, but the two are fundamentally consistent due to their shared ultimate goal of resolving contradictions as compatible (Peng & Nisbett, 1999). Hegel simply allows for *temporary yet absolute* contradictions as the means in the recursive process of negation for the final solution of contradictions at the higher level. In contrast, the Yin-Yang Balance never regards contradictions as problems, but as the natural and organic core of both existence (ontology) and knowledge (epistemology); it treats all contradictions as *permanent yet relative* (contrary yet complementary), like the two sides of the same coin at the same level, thus non-resolvable and desirable at all levels. Further, the Yin-Yang Balance is apparently consistent with Aristotle's formal logic, but the two are fundamentally inconsistent due to the conflict of ends regarding contradictions. However, the Yin-Yang Balance can be integrated with Aristotle's formal logic by revising the latter to accommodate the *relatively weak* form of contradiction (thus permanent yet relative) given the ontological nature of mutual interdependence and interpenetration (e.g., the two sides of the same coin) in contrast to the *absolutely strong* form of contradiction for mutual negation (thus temporary yet absolute). Finally, the Yin-Yang Balance can be integrated with Hegel's dialectical logic by revising the latter to accommodate the *relatively weak* form of contradiction given the ontological nature of mutual interdependence and interpenetration in contrast to the *absolutely strong* form of contradiction. In sum, the Yin-Yang Balance can be expected to have the potential to integrate all extant logical systems into a meta-logical or meta-frame of thinking by accommodating both mutual negation and mutual affirmation between two opposites as a duality (see Table 3).

To further illustrate why and how to apply the Yin-Yang Balance, let's refer to the debate over global-local dual requirements. There are two basic perspectives about the global-local link (Prahalad & Doz, 1987). One view asserts that the two are only contrary so that we can be either global or local in perspective and strategy, but the other view claims that the two are absolutely complementary rather than contrary. The above two views delineate the prevailing typology with four categories: global, local, neither, and both, all assumed to be the case in all aspects at all times (Bartlett & Ghoshal, 1998). This approach represents the typical "either/or" logic by either denying the contrary tendencies of global and local forces (in the category of "both") or denying their complementary tendencies (in the categories of "global," "local," and "neither") (Bartlett & Ghoshal, 1998). In contrast, the Yin-Yang Balance can help remedy such biases by treating global and local forces as a duality so that they negate and affirm each other in different aspects (e.g., more global in basic R&D and market brand, but more local in applied R&D and market channel), at different times (e.g., initially more local but more global later), but they negate and affirm each other only to different degrees (always relatively more or less without going to the polarized extremes, see Table 4). In this sense, the Yin-Yang Balance can apply to all controversies and debates in the domain of organization and management research (e.g., *competition-cooperation duality*, Chen, 2008; *exploitation-exploration duality*, Li, 2010, and *stability-change duality*, Farjoun, 2010) as well as the methods of induction and deduction into *abduction* (Charmaz, 2006).

Table 3 The similarities and distinctions between three basic cognitive frames.

Three Logical Systems & Rules	**Aristotle's Formal Logic**	**Hegel's Dialectical Logic (Contradiction Solvable)**	**Yin-Yang Balance (Holistic-Dynamic-Duality)**
Law of Identity (For Subject at the Concept Level)	$A = A$ (Absolutely identical)	$A = A'$ (Absolutely different)	$A \approx A$ (Relatively identical & relatively different)
Law of Non-Contradiction (For Subject at the Concept Level)	$A \neq -A$ (Absolute dualism; explicit dualism; consistent but incomplete)	$A \rightarrow -A$ (Absolute dualism; absolute but temporary contradiction as implicit dualism; only as the means for the end or goal of non-contradiction)	$A \approx A + -A$ *(minor)* (Relative duality; relative but permanent contradiction as duality; both means & end; complete & consistent as contrary and complementary)
Law of the Excluded Middle (For Predicate at the Statement Level)	$X = A$ *or* $-A$ (Absolute "either/or"; consistent but incomplete)	$A + -A \rightarrow A'$ *as* X (Absolute "both/or"; contradiction must be resolved at the higher level as sublation or transcendence)	$X \approx A \leftrightarrow -A$ (Relative "either/and" contradiction cannot be resolved and no need to be resolved as contrary and complementary at the same level)
Illustrations			

The notions of "absolute" and "relative" refer to the degree or extent of separation or integration of two contrary elements, with full or 100% as "absolute", and partial or less than 100% as "relative";

The notion of "dualism" refers to an absolute separation of contradictory opposites, while the notion of "duality" refers to a relative separation as well as a relative integration of two contrary yet compatible elements;

The notion of "both/or" refers to an absolute yet temporary integration of contrary opposites so as to resolve the contradiction, while the notion of "either/and" refers to the duality of relative "either/or" and relative "both/and".

However, despite the potential of the Yin-Yang Balance and macro-geocentric approach, we must reconstruct the Yin-Yang Balance from an indigenous frame to a geocentric one. In this sense, the new challenge to the macro-geocentric approach is to keep an open mind for the integration of Yin-Yang Balance with the emerging logic systems (Kelso & Engstrom, 2006), including fuzzy logic (Zhang & Zhang, 2004) and para-consistant logic (da Costa & Krause, 2006). In this sense, the macro perspectives will have to undergo their "Renaissance" and "Enlightenment" by integrating traditional wisdom with modern notions, just as the West did in its historical past. Further, the integration of Yin-Yang Balance with Western logical systems is expected to have the greatest potential to transform the prevailing frames of thinking (e.g., Aristotle's formal logic and Hegel's dialectical logic) beyond their limitations of de-contextualization and dualism toward a geocentric meta-frame of thinking as the most appropriate in the trans-modern era (Kelso & Engstrom, 2006; Li, 1998, 2008; Nisbett, 2003). In this sense, the Eastern frame of duality can

Table 4 The Yin-Yang Balance of globalization and localization.

To different degrees without polarized extremes	Low-Globalization	High-Globalization
High-localization	1. High-localization & low-globalization Typical either/or dualism: high-localization in all aspects and/or at all times	2. High-localization & high-globalization Difficult for either/or dualism; difficult for both/or dualism; easy for Yin-Yang Duality: high-localization in some aspects and/or at some times; high-globalization in other aspects and/or at other times
Low-localization	3. Low-localization & low-globalization Difficult for either/or dualism; Easy for both/or dualism; Easy for Yin-Yang Duality: low-localization in some aspects and/or at some times; low-globalization in other aspects and/or at other times)	4. Low-localization & high-globalization Typical either/or dualism: high-globalization in all aspects and/or at all times

This is a typical one-dimensional dichotomy split into two low-high sub-dimensions;

Cells 1 and 4 are the typical cases of either/or logic as mutually negating dualism; Cell 3 is the typical case of both/or logic as mutually affirming dualism, and Cell 2 is the typical case of Yin-Yang Balance as contradictory yet complementary duality.

transform the Western logic of dualism as the biggest potential contribution of indigenous research to the geocentric mosaic.

To further elaborate the above argument, I briefly introduce a new qualitative method, the *Yin-Yang Method*, which integrates case study method (CSM, Yin, 2009) with grounded theory method (GTM, Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This integrative method offers an alternative to the extant methods of case study (e.g., Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 2009) in the sense that the Yin-Yang Method seeks to build an integrative theory upon an ongoing debate between various opposing theories, while the extant CSMs either explore a novel theory based on GTM (Eisenhardt, 1989) or exploit an established theory (Yin, 2009). This distinction can be clearly demonstrated by the following procedures of Yin-Yang Method, with the *open-mind integration of opposites into a unity* as its core premise and central theme.

First, the Yin-Yang Method recommends a focus on a major issue under an ongoing debate (e.g., the debate over globalization and localization or over competition and cooperation). The reason for this selection is that Yin-Yang Method is best at reconciling and integrating opposing views. In general, the Yin-Yang Method treats all debates or controversies as Yin-Yang dualities so as to avoid any possible one-sided biases. The primary goal of Yin-Yang Method is to integrate opposite views into a unified meta-view.

Next, the Yin-Yang Method advocates an in-depth review of the literature related to the debate. This prior literature review is required simply because we must fully understand the perspectives of the opposing sides so as to avoid the problem of an "empty head" caused by no prior literature review as prescribed by GTM (Glaser &

Strauss, 1967). Further, the literature review will not lead to the problem of a "closed mind" because it pays equal attention to both sides of the debate (cf. Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Beyond the steps of defining research questions, *a priori* specification of constructs, and later literature review (Eisenhardt, 1989), the prior literature review is consistent with the basic requirement of CSM for theoretical guidance (Yin, 2009). The purpose of this literature review is to learn about the complexity of the debated issue, including its context (Yin, 2009). Hence, this literature review can integrate open mind with "full" head for the benefit of an open-ended guidance from multiple theories without the cost of theoretical rigidity, thus no premature jump to conclusions.

Third, based on the literature review, a theoretical sampling will be conducted to select cases to pair up, with one best representing one side of the debate and the other best representing the other side, thus one "Yin" case and one "Yang" case. The procedure of theoretical sampling extends the procedure recommended by CSM and GTM (cf. Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Yin, 2009). This procedure is consistent with multi-case comparative design (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Yin, 2009). The paired cases will have the best potential to highlight not only the distinctions between those polarized extreme cases but also their interplays (Pettigrew, 1990), with their maximum forced comparisons (Eisenhardt, 1989). In this sense, the paired "Yin" and "Yang" cases offer the best opportunity for comparative case studies beyond the typical design of replication logic because the paired cases can most "transparently" reveal the holistic, dynamic and duality features (Pettigrew, 1990; cf. Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 2009).

Fourth, the data collection and analysis in the Yin-Yang Method will follow the recommended procedures by GTM and CSM, including that of triangulation (Yin, 2009). The Yin-Yang Method is the most conducive to triangulation in both data collection and data analysis because it constantly sharpens the cross-case comparisons, as compared to the traditional case study for replication. Besides, the Yin-Yang Method maximizes the overlap and integration between data collection and data analysis, especially between within-case and cross-case comparisons rather than the separate steps in a sequence (cf. Eisenhardt, 1989). Hence, the Yin-Yang Method often applies to a cross-level design by selecting multiple pairs of cases at different levels (e.g., person, team, firm, industry, and country) as different units of analysis. Further, with the polarized cases, the Yin-Yang Method provides the best opportunity for maximum *falsifications* due to the nature of "Yin" and "Yang" cases as polarized ones in pairs (cf. Eisenhardt, 1989).

Finally, due to the above benefits, the Yin-Yang Method has the best potential to generate the maximum forced comparisons and falsifications regarding constructs, theories, and hypotheses, and thus is highly conducive to theoretical saturation with multiple pairs of "Yin" and "Yang" cases in a recursive process and *abductive* reasoning (cf. Eisenhardt, 1989; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). In general terms, we can regard Eisenhardt's CSM as more effective for discovering little-known issues with new theories, Yin's CSM as more effective for extending well-known topics with extant theories, and the Yin-Yang Method as more effective for resolving debated perspectives with integrative theories. Hence, for the purpose of building theories through case studies, Eisenhardt's CSM and the Yin-Yang Method are more valuable than Yin's CSM.

Conclusion

With a growing recognition that all research is indigenous in nature, I have highlighted the unique and novel value of indigenous research as an emic approach toward the ultimate vision of emic-etic integration as a geocentric mosaic of knowledge. Hence, there are two equally valid and equally critical paired approaches to each phenomenon and its elements, with one focusing on the common core from the etic perspective, and the other focusing on the distinctive versions of the core from the emic perspective. Further, the other paired approaches are exploration for theory-building as well as exploitation for theory-testing. A holistic, dynamic, and duality link of any paired opposites as a duality creates the synergy toward a body of geocentric knowledge as a unity-in-diversity. In particular, the value of Yin-Yang Balance demonstrates the benefit of indigenous research reflected in the typology and trajectory of indigenous research. In fact, I have applied the Yin-Yang Balance to the major issues related to indigenous research, especially the macro-geocentric procedure and Yin-Yang Method.

For future indigenous research, the macro-geocentric procedure (e.g., the application of Yin-Yang Balance to the debates and paradoxes in the Western theories) has unique and novel advantages. For the ultimate goal of advancing the geocentric knowledge, this procedure should be pursued as the top priority in indigenous research. For instance, Chen (2002, 2008), Fang (2010), and Li (1998, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2011) are good examples of indigenous research with strong global implications. For that purpose, the Yin-Yang Method is valuable. Finally, indigenous research is central to the organizations devoted to the research on local issues (e.g., Asia Academy of Management or AAM and International Association of Chinese Management Research or IACMR). Such organizations should adopt dual goals: (1) to bring local scholars up to international standards of quality research (thus an import to inform the local scholars), and (2) to turn the local uniqueness into an international advantage (thus an export to inform foreign scholars). In other words, they are in the business of fostering a balanced trade of multi-emic knowledge as a unity-in-diversity, with the ultimate goal of establishing the indigenous schools of management, such as the Asian and Chinese schools of management.

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