



## **A Citation Analysis of Management and Organization Research in the Chinese Context: 1984-1999**

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**Abstract.** Since modern China was closed to the outside world until 1979, research on management issues within organizations operating in the Chinese context is a relatively recent phenomenon. In this study, we analyzed this body of research by performing a citation analysis on 226 research articles on this topic published in 20 leading English language academic journals over the past 16 years (1984-1999). The citation impact analysis identified the 52 most cited articles and the academic journals as well as the most influential authors on this research. We examined the issues or topics in these 52 influential articles and suggest some directions for future research.

**Keywords:** management and organization research, Chinese context, research agenda

### **1. Introduction**

China is the largest emerging economy in the world. The emergence of new forms of organizations (Boisot and Child, 1996) and the rise of a private sector (Gregory and Tenev, 2001) make China a fascinating context for studying organizational growth (e.g., private firms), development (all kinds of firms), and decline (e.g., state-owned firms). After 20 years of economic reform, China is at the brink of accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO). It is an appropriate time to examine the state of organization and management research in the Chinese context. We use the term "Chinese context" deliberately so that our review will include studies on local and foreign firms operating in Mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan as well as international operations of companies from these three locations. Authors (e.g., Harding, 1993; Peng et al., 2001) have used the term Greater China to refer to this region. Therefore, we also adopt this term to be consistent with past practices.

The purpose of this review is to analyze the research published in 20 leading academic journals since China's economic reform. We are particularly interested in the Greater China-related articles that have had the most influence on management research by examining citations. The review is intended primarily to provide scholars with knowledge about the general issues or topics that have been studied, the authors who have made contributions to

the body of knowledge, the journals that have published important work in this area, and suggest some important areas for future research. A more substantive analysis of the theory and methods of China-related research, however, is a large and important undertaking that is beyond the scope of this review.

Given the importance of China to the world economy in future years, we expect that there will be increased interest among management scholars to study organization and management issues in this context. Knowledge generated from these studies, in turn, will be valuable to improve the effectiveness, efficiency and competitiveness of firms (domestic and foreign) operating in this context.

The paper is organized as follows. First, we identified a set of leading English language academic journals that publish organization and management research. Second, we developed a comprehensive database of articles related to management and organization issues in the Chinese context over the 1984–1999 period. Third, we conducted a citation analysis of all the articles to identify the most important contributions and the academic journals that published the most influential articles. Fourth, focusing on the top high-impact research articles identified in the citation analysis, we examined the research issues studied over this period. Finally, based on this overview, we clarified and suggested some directions for future research.

## 2. Journals and articles on management and organization research in Greater China

We first started with the selection of academic journals to be included in the literature survey. We considered four key factors in selecting the source journals. First, we want to include only those top tier management and organization journals as shown in several previous studies of influential journals (e.g., Johnson and Podsakoff, 1994; Park and Gordon, 1996; Tahai and Meyer, 1999; Peng et al., 2001). Second, we want to include discipline journals from sociology, applied psychology, as well as international and cross-cultural research that have made contributions to our understanding of both macro organizational level and micro individual level management issues (e.g., Johnson and Podsakoff, 1994). However, to limit the scope of the study, we decided not to include economics, legal studies, and political science journals.<sup>1</sup> Third, given that research interests on Greater China appeared initially in area studies journals (e.g., Peng et al., 2001), we included *China Quarterly* to provide us with exposure to research by China scholars on issues related to management and organizations. Finally, the survey focused primarily on academic journals that publish writings based on rigorous scientific methods. Therefore, we exclude journals devoted primarily to practicing managers or professionals, such as *Harvard Business Review*. We identified 20 journals that met the above criteria.

The 20 journals selected (Table 1) include 18 leading discipline-based academic journals in management, applied psychology, and sociology (for instance, the *Academy of Management Journal*, the *Journal of Applied Psychology*, and the *American Journal of Sociology*), one Asia-based management journal (*Asia Pacific Journal of Management*), and one area-study journal focusing on China (*China Quarterly*). These journals are published in Asia, Europe and North America and represent primary outlets for high quality local and global

Table 1. The distribution of management and organization research articles related to Greater China in 20 leading academic journals, 1984–1999.

Journal name	Number of articles		
	Subtotal	1984–1991	1992–1999
<i>Asia Pacific Journal of Management (APJM)</i>	43	22	21
<i>Journal of International Business Studies (JIBS)</i>	27	6	21
<i>Organization Studies (OrgStu)</i>	22	10	12
<i>China Quarterly (CQ)</i>	19	3	16
<i>Management International Review (MIR)</i>	18	6	12
<i>American Journal of Sociology (AJS)</i>	12	4	8
<i>American Sociological Review (ASR)</i>	10	2	8
<i>Academy of Management Journal (AMJ)</i>	8	1	7
<i>Human Relations (HR)</i>	8	1	7
<i>Journal of Business Venturing (JBV)</i>	8	2	6
<i>Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology (JCCP)</i>	8	3	5
<i>Administrative Science Quarterly (ASQ)</i>	7	3	4
<i>Journal of Management Studies (JMS)</i>	7	2	5
<i>Journal of Applied Psychology (JAP)</i>	6	2	4
<i>Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes (OBHDP)</i>	5	0	5
<i>Organization Science (OrgSci)</i>	5	0	5
<i>Strategic Management Journal (SMJ)</i>	5	0	5
<i>Management Science (MS)</i>	4	0	4
<i>Industrial and Labor Relations Review (ILRR)</i>	3	1	2
<i>Academy of Management Review (AMR)</i>	1	0	1
Total:	226	68	158

organization and management research (Johnson and Podsakoff, 1994; Lohrke and Bruton, 1997; Shane, 1997; Tahai and Meyer, 1999; Peng et al., 2001).

We used key words such as “China, Chinese, Taiwan, Hong Kong, or People’s Republic of China” and relied on *ABI/Inform* within the *ProQuest* database service for this literature search. We studied the articles published in these 20 journals over the 1984–1999 period. We selected 1984 as the starting year because China opened to the external world in 1979 and it normally takes several years between the initiation of a project to publication and citation. We ended in 1999 because one year is the minimum for an article to begin in the citation index. To be included in the review, an article must address a theoretical or empirical issue related to Greater China, either at the institutional/context, firm/strategy, or micro/psychological level. The empirical studies must include data based on companies or employees in Greater China or international operations of companies from Greater China.

This review identified a total of 226 articles in the 20 journals that met the criteria for inclusion, with 68 articles published in the first eight-year period (1984 to 1991) and 158

articles in the second eight-year period (1992 to 1999), twice as many as the first period. Table 1 lists the number of articles in each of the 20 journals over the two time periods.<sup>2</sup>

Two observations can be made from Table 1. The first concerns the publication outlets. Not surprisingly, the main outlets for management and organization research in the Chinese context have been journals with an international orientation (e.g., the *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*, *Journal of International Business Studies*, *Organization Studies*, and *Management International Review*) and area-study journals (*China Quarterly*). However, Table 1 also shows that the two leading discipline-based sociology journals (the *American Journal of Sociology* and the *American Sociological Review*) have been popular outlets for this research, as well as the *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*. Overall, Greater China-related management and organization research has appeared in every one of these 20 journals—suggesting that the research area has become a legitimate field of inquiry among management and organization scholars.

A second and related observation from Table 1 is that more recently, an increasing number of these articles have appeared in mainstream, first tier management journals such as the *Academy of Management Journal*, *Organization Science* and *Strategic Management Journal*. This again indicates an increased interest in and receptivity to management issues in the Chinese context among scholars and journal editors. With globalization and the continuing market transition in the Chinese economy, we believe this trend is likely to continue and that more high-quality research related to Greater China will appear in leading management journals in the future.

### 3. Assessing the impact of Greater China-related research articles, authors and source journals

To assess the impact of the 226 articles from the 20 academic journals, we conducted a citation analysis from the beginning of our survey period (1984) to December 31, 2000, with Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) Database. We employ a citation-based analysis (in contrast to other methods, such as expert opinion) because citations provide a relatively objective measure of the direct influence of published research. The citation analysis has been used widely in assessing journal and research impact in management and social sciences (e.g., Johnson and Podsakoff, 1994; Phene and Guisinger, 1998; Tahai and Meyer, 1999). Two primary questions guided our citation analysis: (1) what were the most important management and organization research related to Greater China as published in these 20 academic journals over the past 16 years; (2), which were the most important or influential academic journals and authors for this research? All citation numbers are adjusted for self-citation (i.e., self-citations excluded).

The 226 research articles generated a total of 1763 citations (excluding self-citations), an average of close to 8 citations per article. Table 2 presents the 52 articles with at least 10 citations (a full list of these 52 articles is in the Appendix). Citation analysis does not do justice to newer articles published in recent years as it normally takes several years for an article to be cited. Therefore, we presented the citation results in two eight-year periods: 1984–1991 and 1992–1999. The results provide us with insights about some of the most cited research related to management and organizations in the Chinese context since 1984

Table 2. 52 most cited articles related to management and organizations in Greater China: Ranked by total number of citations adjusted for self-citation.

Rank	1984-1991				1992-1999				Overall rank
	Author	Journal	No. of citation <sup>a</sup>	Overall rank <sup>b</sup>	Author	Journal	No. of citation	Overall rank	
1	Nee (1989)	ASR	95	1	Nee (1992)	ASQ	78	2	
2	Leung and Bond (1989)	JCCP	71	4	Earley (1993)	AMJ	75	3	
3	Nee (1991)	ASR	65	5	Walder (1995)	AJS	48	7	
4	Hamilton and Biggart (1988)	AJS	61	6	Yan and Gray (1994)	AMJ	45	9	
5	Hwang (1987)	AJS	47	8	Walder (1992)	ASR	44	10	
6	Boisot and Child (1988)	ASQ	43	11	Earley (1994)	ASQ	33	13	
7	Lin and Bian (1991)	AJS	39	12	Nee (1996)	AJS	32	15	
8	Bond and Forgas (1984)	JCCP	33	13	Peng and Health (1996)	AMR	29	16	
9	Lin and Xie (1988)	AJS	28	17	Child and Markoczy (1993)	JMS	27	18	
10	Whitley (1990)	OrgStu	27	18	Walder (1995)	ASR	27	18	
11	Whitley (1991)	OrgStu	24	21	Shenkar and von Glinow (1994)	MS	24	21	
12	Shenkar and Ronen (1987)	AMJ	23	24	Walder (1996)	AJS	24	21	
13	Lockett (1988)	OrgStu	22	25	Ralston et al. (1993)	JIBS	22	25	
14	Black and Gregersen (1991)	HR	20	28	Tan and Litschert (1994)	SMJ	22	25	
15	Bond (1987)	JCCP	20	28	Ralston et al. (1992)	JAP	20	28	

(Continued on next page.)

Table 2. (Continued).

Rank	1984-1991				1992-1999			
	Author	Journal	No. of citation <sup>a</sup>	Overall rank <sup>b</sup>	Author	Journal	No. of citation	Overall rank
16	Black and Porter (1991)	<i>JIBS</i>	18	32	Chen (1995)	<i>AMJ</i>	19	31
17	Kirkbride, Tang and Westwood (1991)	<i>OrgStu</i>	17	33	Boisot and Child (1996)	<i>ASQ</i>	17	33
18	Birnbaum and Wong (1985)	<i>ASQ</i>	16	35	Graham, Mintu and Rodgers (1994)	<i>MS</i>	16	35
19	Kelley, Whatley and Worthley (1987)	<i>JIBS</i>	16	35	Farh, Earley and Lin (1997)	<i>ASQ</i>	15	38
20	Laaksonen (1984)	<i>OrgStu</i>	14	39	Parish and Michelson (1996)	<i>AJS</i>	14	39
21	Beamish and Wang (1989)	<i>MIR</i>	10	47	Adler, Brahm and Graham (1992)	<i>SMJ</i>	13	41
22	Hall and Xu (1990)	<i>OrgStu</i>	10	47	Xin and Pearce (1996)	<i>AMJ</i>	13	41
23	Walder (1989)	<i>CQ</i>	10	47	Entwisle et al. (1995)	<i>ASR</i>	12	43
24					Liu (1992)	<i>CQ</i>	12	43
25					Guthrie (1997)	<i>AJS</i>	11	45
26					Ralston et al. (1997)	<i>JIBS</i>	11	45
27					Luo (1995)	<i>MIR</i>	10	47
28					Zhou, Tuma and Moen (1997)	<i>ASR</i>	10	47
29					Oberschall (1996)	<i>AJS</i>	10	47

<sup>a</sup>Citation counts up to December 31, 2000.

<sup>b</sup>Rank is based on all 52 articles.

Source: Social Science Citation Index, 1984-2000.

and any changes in research activities and foci over time. Consistent with the pattern of number of publications, there were more articles with high citations in the recent eight-year period (a total of 29) than in the earlier eight-year period (a total of 23). This further confirms the increase in research activities and interest on this general topic. The “overall rank” column in Table 2 ranks the article by the number of citations. It shows that the ranking is similar in the two time periods. In other words, articles published in the earlier period did not seem to have an advantage because of the increased time to earn citations. Recent publications were cited as often as, if not more than, the earlier publications.

Table 3 summarizes the fifteen journals that have published the 52 most cited research articles. Among the top in the list are three management journals (*ASQ*, *OrgStu* and *AMJ*), two sociology journals (*AJS* and *ASR*), and two international journals (*JIBS* and *JCCP*). The most influential journals also include *China Quarterly*, *Management International Review*, *Management Science* and *Strategic Management Journal*.

A total of 98 authors are involved in the 52 most cited articles. From this list, we further identified those that have garnered at least 30 citations (self-citations excluded) based on these 52 articles. This is a conservative estimate of the impact of their work on the field since we did not include other articles they published that did not survive the citation analysis (i.e., receiving less than 10 citations). This analysis resulted in 22 authors and they are listed in Table 4. The authors with over 100 citations of their work (in one or more articles) are Victor Nee, Andrew Walder, Michael Bond, and Christopher Earley. The entire list of

Table 3. Academic journals for the 52 most cited articles on Greater China-related management and organizational research.

Name of journal	Number of top 52 articles		Total
	1984–1991	1992–1999	
1. <i>American Journal of Sociology (AJS)</i>	4	6	10
2. <i>Administrative Science Quarterly (ASQ)</i>	2	4	6
3. <i>American Sociological Review (ASR)</i>	2	4	6
4. <i>Organization Studies (OrgStu)</i>	6	0	6
5. <i>Academy of Management Journal (AMJ)</i>	1	4	5
6. <i>Journal of International Business Studies (JIBS)</i>	2	2	4
7. <i>Journal of Cross-cultural Psychology (JCCP)</i>	3	0	3
8. <i>China Quarterly (CQ)</i>	1	1	2
9. <i>Management International Review (MIR)</i>	1	1	2
10. <i>Management Science (MS)</i>	0	2	2
11. <i>Strategic Management Journal (SMJ)</i>	0	2	2
12. <i>Academy of Management Review (AMR)</i>	0	1	1
13. <i>Human Relations (HR)</i>	1	0	1
14. <i>Journal of Applied Psychology (JAP)</i>	0	1	1
15. <i>Journal of Management Studies (JMS)</i>	0	1	1
Total	23	29	52

Table 4. Authors of the 52 most cited articles, ranked by the total number of citations.

Rank by total citations	Author	Research areas	Total number of citations <sup>a</sup>	Number of articles	
				Total	Adjusted <sup>b</sup>
1	Nee	Market transition, income mobility	267	4	4
2	Walder	Culture and behavior, firm growth, mobility	153	5	5
3	Bond	Cross cultural analysis	124	3	2
4	Earley	Cross cultural analysis	123	3	2.3
5	Child	Organizational structure/change, joint venture	87	3	1.5
6	Leung	Cross cultural analysis	71	1	0.5
7	Lin	Occupation and mobility	67	2	1
8	Biggart	Organizational structure/change	61	1	0.5
8	Hamilton	Organizational structure/change	61	1	0.5
10	Boisot	Organizational structure/change	60	2	1
11	Ralston	Cross cultural analysis	53	3	0.7
11	Terpstra	Cross cultural analysis	53	3	0.7
13	Whitley	Organizational structure/change	51	2	2
14	Hwang	Culture, behavior and values	47	1	1
14	Shenkar	Culture, behavior and values	47	2	1
16	Gray	Joint venture control and performance	45	1	0.5
16	Yan	Joint venture control and performance	45	1	0.5
18	Cheung	Cross cultural analysis	42	2	0.45
18	Gustafson	Cross cultural analysis	42	2	0.45
20	Bian	Occupational mobility	39	1	0.5
21	Black	Cross culture adjustment	38	2	1
22	Forgas	Cross cultural analysis	33	1	0.5

<sup>a</sup>Citation counts up to December 31, 2000.

<sup>b</sup>Following Morrison and Inkpen (1991), adjustment is made for more than one author. An author receives 0.5 credit for an article with two authors, 0.33 for an article with three authors, etc.

Source: Social Science Citation Index, 1984–2000.

22 includes sociologists (e.g., Nee, Walder, Lin, Hamilton, Biggart, Bian), psychologists (e.g., Bond, Leung, Hwang), and management scholars (e.g., Earley, Child, Boisot, Ralston, Shenkar, Gray, Yan). Table 4 also includes the major research topics of the scholars based on the focus of the most cited articles they have published. The topics range from macro analysis of the impact of market transition on Chinese firms to the influence of Chinese culture on employee behavior and values.

In Table 5, we provide information on the universities (and the country of these universities) where the authors worked when they published the most cited articles. A total of 50 universities located in ten different countries were represented. Table 5 presents the top 20 universities in terms of the adjusted number of papers in the top 52 articles. Of the eight universities that published two or more articles (adjusted for the number of authors),



Table 5. 52 most cited articles on Greater-China related organization and management research: Ranking by source university and country.<sup>a</sup>

Authors' university affiliation		Authors' geographic location	
University	Adjusted no. of papers <sup>b</sup>	Country/region	Adjusted no. of papers <sup>b</sup>
1. Harvard University	5.0	1. USA	34.07
2. Cornell University	4.33	2. UK	6.17
3. University of California, Irvine	4.0	3. Hong Kong	5.67
4. Chinese University of Hong Kong	3.73	4. Canada	1.33
5. University of Hawaii	2.41	4. Taiwan	1.33
6. University of Cambridge	2.0	6. Finland	1.0
7. University of Chicago	2.0	7. China	0.95
8. University of Manchester	2.0	8. Israel	0.75
9. University of North Carolina	1.8	9. Australia	0.5
10. State University of New York-Albany	1.5	10. Macau	0.25
11. Dartmouth College	1.0		
12. Helsinki School of Economics	1.0		
13. National Taiwan University	1.0		
14. Oxford University	1.0		
15. Penn State University	1.0		
16. Rutgers University	1.0		
17. University of California, Berkeley	1.0		
18. University of California, Davis	1.0		
19. University of Hong Kong	1.0		
20. Virginia Polytechnic	1.0		

<sup>a</sup>As listed in the published article.

<sup>b</sup>Following Morrison and Inkpen (1991), adjustment is made for more than one author. A university receives 0.5 credit for an article with two authors, 0.33 for an article with three authors, etc.

three were outside of the United States (Chinese University of Hong Kong, University of Cambridge, and University of Manchester). Authors in the US, UK and Hong Kong published the highest number of articles with US leading by a majority (34 out of the 52 articles). This number could be biased by the base line, in that US has by far the greatest number of management and organization researchers in the world.

Another way to assess impact of journals is by analyzing the number of other journals that have cited articles in the source journals. We performed this analysis by examining the citations of all 226 articles published in the 20 journals included in the review. The results are summarized in Table 6. It includes the total number of articles published in

Table 6. The influence of the 20 journals on management and organization research related to Greater China: Ranked by the number of different journals citing the source journal.

Source journal name	No. of China articles	Number of citations <sup>a</sup>		Citations excluding source journal		Number of different journals citing research	
		Total	Per article	Total	Per article	Total	Per article
1. <i>American Journal of Sociology (AJS)</i>	12	333	27.8	295	24.6	122	10.2
2. <i>Administrative Science Quarterly (ASQ)</i>	7	203	29.0	199	28.4	86	12.3
3. <i>Journal of Cross-cultural Psychology (JCCP)</i>	8	138	17.3	114	14.3	70	8.8
4. <i>American Sociology Review (ASR)</i>	10	260	26.0	237	23.7	68	6.8
5. <i>Academy of Management Journal (AMJ)</i>	8	181	22.6	170	21.3	67	8.4
6. <i>Journal of International Business Studies (JIBS)</i>	27	134	5.0	105	3.9	60	2.2
7. <i>Organization Studies (OrgStu)</i>	22	141	6.4	101	4.6	59	2.7
8. <i>Asia Pacific Journal of Management (APJM)</i>	43	50	1.2	48	1.1	33	0.8
9. <i>Management Science (MS)</i>	4	41	10.3	41	10.3	30	7.5
10. <i>Journal of Applied Psychology (JAP)</i>	6	35	5.8	35	5.8	26	4.3
11. <i>Strategic Management Journal (SMJ)</i>	5	35	7.0	32	6.4	23	4.6
12. <i>Management International Review (MIR)</i>	18	40	2.2	40	2.2	22	1.2
13. <i>Human Relations (HR)</i>	8	24	3.0	23	2.9	19	2.4
14. <i>Journal of Management Studies (JMS)</i>	7	38	5.4	36	5.1	19	2.7
15. <i>China Quarterly (CQ)</i>	19	39	2.1	26	1.4	17	0.9
16. <i>Academy of Management Review (AMR)</i>	1	29	29.0	25	25.0	12	12.0
17. <i>Journal of Business Venturing (JBV)</i>	8	23	2.9	14	1.8	9	1.1
18. <i>Industrial and Labor Relations Review (ILRR)</i>	3	9	3.0	8	2.7	8	2.7
19. <i>Organization Science (OrgSci)</i>	5	5	1.0	5	1.0	5	1.0
20. <i>Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes (OBHDP)</i>	5	5	1.0	4	0.8	4	0.8
Sum	226	1763		1558		759	
Average		88.2	7.8	77.9	6.9	38.0	3.4

<sup>a</sup>All citations excluding self-citation; Citation counts up to December 31, 2000.

the source journals, the total number of citations (excluding self-citations), the citations excluding the source journal, and lastly, the number of different journals that have cited articles in the source journal. The number of different journals citing the source journal (i.e., last column) was used to rank the source journals.<sup>3</sup> According to this analysis, the most influential journals are *AJS*, followed by *ASQ*, *JCCP*, *ASR*, *AMJ*, *JIBS*, and *OrgStu*. The Greater China-related articles in these few journals were cited by more than 50 other journals, with *AJS* being cited by over 120 other journals. The most cited journals represent sociology, management, and international management disciplines.

#### **4. Research topics of high-impact articles on organization and management in the Chinese context**

What are the issues that have received research attention? Have there been any changes in the research topics over the 16 years of the review period? To answer these two questions, we analyzed the topics studied in the 52 most cited articles. Each of the two authors first independently developed a list of topics that are represented in the 52 articles. Subsequent comparison and discussions resulted in twelve general topics. Each author then coded the 52 articles separately. The agreement on this first round of coding was 90 percent. After discussion, full agreement was reached. Table 7 summarized the results of the topic coding for articles in the two time periods. The information was further divided based on the sample of the study, whether it was a sample from the People's Republic of China (or mainland China) or whether it was from a location outside of the PRC (i.e., Taiwan, Hong Kong, or elsewhere). If a sample includes firms in both mainland China and outside, we considered that as a Greater China study.

In the first eight-year period, there were about equal number of studies on firm issues in mainland China and outside mainland China among the most cited articles. In the second eight-year period, there was much great interest on mainland China. Almost five times as many studies focused on mainland China firms as studies that focused on firms in Greater China. This could reflect the interest on mainland China as well as the continuing opening of China to outsiders, for business as well as academic activities. Not surprisingly, most of the topics in the PRC studies are unique to the context. These topics include the influence of market transition and reform on the firm, the issue of organization structure and change, cross-cultural analysis and adjustment, influence of culture on behavior and values as well as occupational mobility. These topics are of interest during the entire 16-year review period. Recently emerged topics among the most cited articles include ownership and property rights, private sector firms, and social network or *guanxi* relationships. At the same time, interest in Greater China studies has decreased in the recent eight-year period with most of the five studies conducted in the early 1990s and only one study appeared after 1995. Clearly, mainland China has dominated the attention and captured the interest of management and organizational scholars in recent years.

In summary, the 226 Greater China-related articles published in the 20 leading English-language academic journals over the past 16 years provided us with a snapshot of past and current research interests in management and organization issues in the Chinese context. This literature has burgeoned from a virtually nonexistent body of work to a significant one,

Table 7. Issues studied in the 52 most cited management and organization research articles related to Greater China: 1984–1999.

	1984–1991	1992–1999
People's Republic of China	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Market transition/reform (Nee, 89<i>ASR</i>; Nee, 91<i>ASR</i>)</li> <li>• Organization structure &amp; change (Boisot and Child, 88<i>ASQ</i>; Hall and Xu, 90<i>OrgStu</i>; Laaksonen, 84<i>OrgStu</i>)</li> <li>• Joint venture investment/learning (Beamish and Wang, 89<i>MIR</i>)</li> <li>• Culture, behavior and values (Lockett, 88<i>OrgStu</i>; Shenkar and Ronen, 87<i>AMJ</i>; Walder, 89<i>CQ</i>)</li> <li>• Mobility/occupation/income (Lin and Bian, 91<i>AJS</i>; Lin and Xie, 88<i>AJS</i>)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Market transition/reform (Nee, 92 <i>ASQ</i>; Oberschall, 96<i>AJS</i>; Parish and Michelson, 96<i>AJS</i>; Walder, 96<i>AJS</i>)</li> <li>• Firm growth/strategy (Guthrie, 97<i>AJS</i>; Peng and Health, 96<i>AMR</i>; Tan and Litschert, 94<i>SMJ</i>; Walder, 95<i>AJS</i>)</li> <li>• Organization structure &amp; change (Boisot and Child, 96<i>ASQ</i>)</li> <li>• Ownership/ property rights (Walder, 92<i>ASR</i>)</li> <li>• Private sector firms (Entwisle et al. 95<i>ASR</i>; Liu, 92<i>CQ</i>)</li> <li>• Joint venture control/performance (Yan and Gray, 94<i>AMJ</i>; Luo, 95<i>MIR</i>)</li> <li>• Joint venture investment/learning (Child and Markoczy, 93<i>JMS</i>)</li> <li>• Cross cultural analysis/adjustment (Chen, 95<i>AMJ</i>; Earley, 93<i>AMJ</i>; Ralston et al., 97<i>JIBS</i>)</li> <li>• Cross cultural negotiations (Adler, Brahm and Graham, 92<i>SMJ</i>)</li> <li>• Culture, behavior and values (Shenkar and von Glinow, 94<i>MS</i>)</li> <li>• Social networks/guanxi (Xin and Pearce, 96<i>AMJ</i>)</li> <li>• Mobility/occupation/income (Nee, 96<i>AJS</i>; Walder, 95<i>ASR</i>; Zhou, Tuma and Moen, 97<i>ASR</i>)</li> </ul>
Greater China	<p>35</p> <p>11</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organization structure &amp; change (Birbaum and Wong, 85<i>ASQ</i>; Hamilton and Biggart, 88<i>AJS</i>; Whitley, 90<i>OrgStu</i>; Whitley, 91<i>OrgStu</i>.)</li> <li>• Cross cultural analysis/adjustment (Black and Gregersen, 91<i>HR</i>; Black and Porter, 91<i>JIBS</i>; Bond, 87<i>JCCP</i>; Bond and Forgas, 84<i>JCCP</i>; Kelley, Whatley and Worthley, 87<i>JIBS</i>; Leung and Bond, 89<i>JCCP</i>)</li> <li>• Cross cultural negotiation (Kirkbride, Tang and Westwood, 91<i>OrgStu</i>)</li> <li>• Culture, behavior and values (Hwang, 87<i>AJS</i>)</li> </ul>	<p>24</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cross cultural analysis/adjustment (Earley, 94<i>ASQ</i>; Ralston et al., 92<i>JAP</i>; Ralston et al., 93<i>JIBS</i>;) )</li> <li>• Corss cultural negotiations (Graham, Mintu and Rodgers, 94<i>MS</i>)</li> <li>• Culture, behavior and values (Farh, Earley and Lin, 97<i>ASQ</i>)</li> </ul>
Total:	17	29
	52	23

with contributions from a wide variety of disciplines and authors. The increasing appearance of such studies in prestigious journals also suggests their value to global scholarship in management and organizations.

While our review has focused on only the top 52 high-impact research articles based on the citation analysis and has excluded many important contributions published in books (e.g., Redding, 1990; Child, 1994; Bond, 1996; Hamilton, 1996; Walder, 1996), a main conclusion from our review is that research on management in China and in the Chinese context is clearly at an early stage but is gaining momentum, especially on topics that relate to firms in the People's Republic of China. Given the continuing development of PRC as an emerging economic power in the new millennium, we expect that there will be even greater interest in research on management and organization issues by both local Chinese and global scholars.

### 5. Some suggestions for future research

The economic reform in China over the past two decades has been phenomenal by most accounts, and its implications for enterprise reform and development are tremendous. Therefore, the key challenge for management and organization researchers is to understand the complexities and continuing changes in the institutional environment and the implications for organizing patterns of different types of business enterprises embedded in this environment. At the firm level, what factors will affect the success of some business enterprises (e.g., private or foreign-invested) and the survival of others (e.g., state-owned firms)? With the continuing economic reform and restructuring in China, indigenous enterprises of all ownership types, perhaps with the exception of those in a few "strategic" industries, will compete with each other, and with Western multinationals, for both resources and customers. Therefore, although they are in a unique and complex social and cultural environment, Chinese firms are increasingly facing the same global competitive forces as Western companies. Below, we suggest several key research issues that might be particularly important to firms in the People's Republic of China, drawing on our review of the extant literature and our understanding of the critical issues confronting these firms.

We organize our discussion of future research directions along four types of firms: (a) state-owned enterprises, (b) collectives and private businesses, (c) foreign-invested firms (wholly-owned or joint ventures), and (d) family businesses in Greater China. These firms may face distinct challenges in management and governance. For example, privatization is relevant to state-owned firms in China, and localization is a major concern to multinationals and joint ventures operating in the region. Private firms (most formed since 1979) suffer from the liability of newness and have many survival and growth issues (e.g., Gregory and Tenev, 2001; Peng, 2001). Collective enterprises are neither private nor public and the uncertain ownership status suggests governance, control and motivation problems. These newer forms of organization as well as the foreign enterprises must compete with state-owned firms in the same industries yet they operate under different rules of resource allocation and distribution systems. Therefore, they face different institutional environments. The macro contexts create an extremely challenging task for researchers in comparing organizations across domains and sectors. Yet, the great variety of firms and contexts also suggest the

possibility of large variances in both the independent and dependent variables, providing an ideal situation for both theory development and theory testing. We argue that the People's Republic of China is a fertile ground for developing new theories of organizations and for examining the validity of existing theories developed in the Western economies.

### 5.1. *State-owned enterprises in the People's Republic of China*

The most critical issue here is the enterprise restructuring and privatization in the State sector. The efforts are massive, affecting many state-owned firms. The restructuring of poor performing state-owned enterprises has led to large-scale downsizing and unemployment. This is a potential source of social unrest in China given the role these organizations have played in the past in employees' social and material well-being (e.g., Shenkar and von Glinow, 1994). Some state-owned firms have listed part of their businesses and thus the same enterprise involves groups under different ownership structure. Other state firms have divested some of their non-core businesses. Some of these divested businesses found partners or buyers in the foreign firms (some are overseas Chinese firms). These mergers and acquisitions have a different character from those found in Western countries. Understanding the processes and outcomes of these divestitures, acquisitions, and mergers could add to knowledge of management in the global context. At the same time, many state-owned firms attempt to improve its management but face a critical shortage of skilled knowledge workers, especially managerial talents and professionals in functions such as marketing, finance, and accounting (Xin, Zhao and Tsui, 1998). The variety of approaches suggests the question of which approach, e.g., management, ownership, or restructuring, would be more instrumental for firm performance. Also, research is needed on identifying incentive systems conducive to skill development, employee commitment, and managerial behavior oriented towards the firm rather than personal interests. Some SOEs have succeeded in their restructuring and a few have even gained a global recognition (e.g., Haier, Legend). These firms now need to face the executive succession challenge. Many of the leaders who have transformed the firm have done so with personal wisdom and charisma. Will the next generation of leaders be able to sustain the initial success and bring these firms to their next stage of development, when competition will even be more fierce as other firms gain expertise and China's entry into the WTO? Research on the characteristics of effective local leaders and the succession process would be highly valuable knowledge for both scholarship and business practices.

### 5.2. *Collectives and private firms in the PRC*

The rapid emergence of private enterprises in China is another fruitful area for systematic research (Gregory and Tenev, 2001; Peng, 2001). In addition, over a third of industrial outputs are now attributed to production by township and village enterprises, most of which are collectives (*China Statistical Yearbook*, 2000). What factors will contribute to their success, and what is the likelihood of their future survival, given increased competition from foreign-invested firms and the successfully restructured state-owned enterprises? Most private firms are new since 1979 with a majority of them emerged within the last ten years.

Those that have survived the founding stage now have to face the question of how to make the transition from a family or friendship managed small firm to a professionally managed medium sized firm. This transition process is also an important topic for research. The new firms also offer an attractive setting for studying the development and formation of organizational culture and work norms. Longitudinal observation and tracking of changes in the private entrepreneurial firms could offer valuable insight that was scarce in the Western literature.

### 5.3. *Multinationals and joint ventures in the Chinese context*

For multinational companies doing businesses in Greater China (including the Chinese mainland), either through wholly-owned subsidiaries or joint ventures with local partners, there are a variety of critical management issues and hence research topics. For example, the issue of the control and governance of joint ventures remains unresolved (e.g., Wang, Zhi and Tan, 2000). Some researchers advocate wholly-owned operations as the only sensible solution to the issue of control and governance (e.g., Vanhonacker, 1997). Others (e.g., Li and Tsui, 1999) have observed that joint ventures tend to perform better when local partners have meaningful equity stakes and are actively involved in the ventures. Sole foreign ownership may resolve the control issue, but foreign partners may not benefit from the complementary assets local partners could bring to the ventures, such as local market knowledge and relationships (that is, *guanxi*) with local governments. This tension between control and access to local networks is a significant issue for multinational firms.

For many joint ventures, building an effective multicultural leadership team is critical for success (Li et al., 1999). However, there are many human resources challenges. China has a severe shortage of local management talent, and this limits the speed with which an MNC can localize its management personnel for its China operations. Many multinationals still deploy a large number of expatriate managers for senior positions in their China operations, and inevitably there is a large disparity between expatriate and local managers in compensation and benefits. How should the incentive system be structured to provide sufficient attraction to expatriate managers while at the same time retaining high-quality local managers? Given the demographic and cultural diversity within joint venture management teams, what structures or processes are critical for turning this diversity into a productive resource for the team, avoiding emotional conflicts and political infighting? Although recent research has begun to address some of these critical issues (e.g., Li et al., 1999), much remains to be explored. The stage of development of foreign-invested firms is similar to that of privately owned firms in China. Many have progressed beyond the initial founding stage. What expansion strategies should these second- or third- generation MNCs use to penetrate the Chinese market? How do foreign-invested firms in China integrate into the local environment as well as the global MNC network? These are some of the potentially interesting and important research questions.

Managing the cultural difference between expatriate and local managers is another challenge for foreign-invested firms in China. How much should expatriate managers adapt to the expectations and work style preferences of local employees? Should MNCs try to promote a worldwide corporate culture, or should they adopt an approach that has been



referred to as “think globally and act locally”? Can leading multinationals be successful in developing a “third culture” that integrates the best features of the home country and the host country for their local operations (e.g., Hui and Graen, 1997)? What might be the defining characteristics of this third culture in the Chinese context? A wealth of research questions need to be examined to provide a better understanding of the challenges for MNCs operating in the Chinese context.

#### 5.4. *Chinese firms in the Greater China region*

In areas of Greater China such as Hong Kong and Taiwan, family-owned businesses present important research issues (Redding, 1990; Chan, 2000). These include executive succession, professional management development, leadership style, and growth strategy. While overseas Chinese firms are known for their entrepreneurial drive, operational flexibility, and networking/alliance competence the recent Asian financial crisis forced many to reevaluate the sustainability of their past strategies and management styles and suggested the need for strategic management thinking and management development (e.g., Chan, 2000). Many Chinese family businesses are now being managed by second- or third-generation descendants, many of whom are MBA graduates of leading Western business schools. The inevitable tension and potential conflicts between Western management thinking and traditional Chinese culture will likely create significant management challenges. How will these firms evolve? How should they ensure survival, if not prosperity, in the long term? Chan (2000) lamented that most Chinese family businesses have not invested in their future growth and that few have achieved recognition as visible forces in the world market. What factors limit their growth? Clearly, much remains to be learned about these overseas Chinese-owned firms (Redding, 1990).

## 6. Conclusion

This paper provides a partial review of the current status of management and organization research in the Chinese context. It is partial because it does not analyze the specific theoretical issues being studied but only broad topics. The main purpose is to examine the articles, authors, and journals that have had the most impact on the development of this new field of research. As we have shown, this literature is growing, and there are many interesting issues that are important to managers and management scholars. As Li and Tsui (2000) proposed, the term “Chinese context” has a dual meaning. It is a location implying a unique institutional, legal, and economic environment that directly affects firms and their operations. It is also a cultural variable that transcends geographical boundaries. It means a pattern of behavior, beliefs, assumptions, and values that affect understanding, acceptance, and interaction between employees of different cultural backgrounds. Therefore, researchers examining management issues in the Chinese context must strive both to be clear about which meaning they are assuming and to incorporate this meaning into the theory development and empirical research.

China’s path to modernization is quite distinctive, and an understanding of how China manages its economic activities is crucial to conducting business successfully in this



context. This is a potentially exciting venue for conducting academic research with significant impact on both knowledge development and business practices. As our analysis of citation impacts reveals, some of the most cited China-related articles have already begun to impact management and organization theory in general, as cited by many general management research articles not directly related to the Chinese context. China's particular characteristics point out certain limitations in currently influential Western theories of management and organization. Management research in the Chinese context therefore has the potential to refine these existing theories but, more importantly, has the potential to develop new theories that may contribute to global management and organization knowledge.

### Appendix

52 most cited research articles on management and organization issues related to Greater China as published in 20 leading academic journals during 1984–1999 are

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### Notes

1. Future studies should also survey contributions from other social science disciplines, e.g., economics, to our understanding of management and organization issues in the Chinese context.
2. A full list of the 226 articles is available upon request from the first author.
3. We have also provided data on a per-article basis for different measures of journal influence in Table 6, where *AMR* and *Management Science* are also ranked among the most influential journals.

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