

Treasures in the China house

A review of management and organizational research on Greater China

Mike W. Peng^{a,*}, Yuan Lu^b, Oded Shenkar^{a,c}, Denis Y.L. Wang^b

^a*The Ohio State University, Fisher College of Business, Columbus, OH 43210, USA*

^b*The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong*

^c*Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv, Israel*

Abstract

Management and organizational research on Greater China, which not only includes mainland China but also Hong Kong, Taiwan, and overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia, has experienced rapid growth in the past 2 decades. Yet there is no comprehensive review of this literature mapping out the contributions and guiding future research. Intending to fill this gap, this article first examines publications in top-tier, academic journals during the period of 1978–1997 to identify leading individual and institutional contributors to this literature. Then we briefly review substantive research in organizational behavior, strategic management, and international management, highlighting key findings and pointing out future directions. The article concludes with a call for more sustained research in this area attempting to make larger contributions to the mainstream literature. © 2001 Elsevier Science Inc. All rights reserved.

Keywords: Greater China; Organizational behavior; Strategic management; International management

As a new term largely coined in the past decade, “Greater China” has emerged to account for a dynamic area in Asia encompassing mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Macao (Stewart et al., 1992; Harding, 1993). Some writers also include Singapore, a predominately Chinese society, in this group, and still others include the overseas Chinese living in Southeast Asia and elsewhere (Brick, 1992; Kao, 1993; Seagrave, 1995; Weidenbaum and Hughes, 1996). Despite its loosely defined nature, “Greater China” as a term has become increasingly accepted by scholars and practitioners worldwide.

In the past, social science inquiry on these countries was largely relegated to the domain of area studies and set apart from mainstream, discipline-based research. Recently, mostly as a result of the dramatic rise of the mainland Chinese economy, the strong economic performance of Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, and Southeast Asia (until the financial crisis of 1997), and their increased integration with the global economy, many researchers have found that they cannot afford to ignore the dynamics of Greater China,

whose combined GDP may be at par with that of the US and Western Europe in the early 21st century (Lardy, 1994; Overholt, 1993). As a result, the new scholarship on Greater China has often appeared in mainstream, disciplinary journals rather than area studies outlets.

Management and organizational research in the past 2 decades has followed this general trend in social science research. An increasing number of articles on Greater China has appeared in mainstream journals. As a body of literature develops, it is useful to take inventory of what has been done, and identify new directions and challenges for the future. This reflective process is essential in order to derive the maximum benefits from existing research, and to propel current work into a new stage. However, there is no comprehensive review of this literature. Previous reviews tend to deal with mainland China (Child, 1994; Shenkar, 1994; Shenkar and von Glinow, 1994) or focus on overseas Chinese areas (Redding, 1990) separately. Given the increased integration among these economies and the wide acceptance of the term “Greater China,” we believe that time is ripe to review this literature as a whole. Therefore, in this article, we aim to both map out the key contributions to this literature, and to link them with the broader literature on global management and organization. Specifically, we first

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +1-614-292-0311; fax: +1-614-292-7062
E-mail address: peng.51@osu.edu (M.W. Peng)

Table 4
Individual and institutional contributions to nine leading journals (1978–1997)^a

<i>Individuals</i>		Total	Adjusted	<i>Institutions</i>		Total	Adjusted
(1)	Oded Shenkar ^b	4	3	(1)	Chinese University of Hong Kong	8	4.16
(2)	Yigang Pan	4	2.83	(2)	University of Cambridge	6	4
(3)	John Child ^b	5	2.5	(3)	University of Hong Kong	4	3
	Max Boisot ^b	4	2.5		University of Manchester	4	3
(5)	P. Christopher Earley	3	2.33		University of Pennsylvania	3	3
(6)	Rosalie Tung	2	2	(6)	University of Hawaii	5	2.75
	Richard Whitley	2	2	(7)	Tel Aviv University	4	2.25
(8)	Yuan Lu ^b	3	1.5	(8)	University of California Irvine	3	2.17
	Mike W. Peng ^b	2	1.5	(9)	Rutgers University	2	1.67
	S. Gordon Redding	2	1.5	(10)	University of Oregon	4	1.58
(11)	Chao C. Chen	2	1.33	(11)	City University of Hong Kong	4	1.5
	Robert Westwood	2	1.33		University of Southern California	3	1.5
(13)	David K. Tse	3	1.17		CEMI, Beijing	2	1.5
(14)	P. Birnbaum-More ^b	2	1		State University of New York	2	1.5
	Richard Hall	2	1	(15)	DePaul University	3	1.25
	Gilbert Wong ^b	2	1	(16)	ESADE, Barcelona	3	1
	M. Lockett	1	1		Cornell University	1	1
	Yadong Luo	1	1		University of Bath	1	1
	Victor Nee	1	1		University of Houston	1	1
	Weijian Shan	1	1		University of Minnesota	1	1
	Barry Wilkinson	1	1		University of Oxford	1	1
	Jia Lin Xie	1	1		University of Toronto	1	1
					Virginia Polytechnic Institute	1	1

N = 22 individuals and 23 institutions with at least one adjusted appearance

^a See notes for Tables 1 and 2 for a list of the seven North American and two European journals. “Total” is the total number of articles carrying a particular author and institution’s name. “Adjusted” is the result of giving partial credit to an individual and institution for all co-authored papers. For individual rankings, an example of computing “total” and “adjusted” appearances for Oded Shenkar is as follows:

“Total” = 4	“Adjusted” = 3
Shenkar (1984, <i>OST</i>)	1
Shenkar and Ronen (1987, <i>AMJ</i>)	0.5
Shenkar and von Glinow (1994, <i>MS</i>)	0.5
Shenkar (1996, <i>OST</i>)	1

For institutional rankings, only authors’ affiliation at the time of publication would count as credit for a given institution. An example for The Chinese University of Hong Kong is as follows.

“Total” = 8	“Adjusted” = 4.16
Henley and Nyaw (1986, <i>JMS</i>)	0.5 (Nyaw)
Kirkbride et al. (1991, <i>OST</i>)	0.33 (Westwood)
Ralston et al. (1993, <i>JIBS</i>)	0.5 (Cheung and Terpstra)
Yeh and Lawrence (1995, <i>JIBS</i>)	0.5 (Yeh)
Leung et al. (1996, <i>JIBS</i>)	0.5 (Leung and Sun)
Peng (1997a, <i>OST</i>)	0.5 (Peng had a joint appointment elsewhere)
Tse et al. (1997, <i>JIBS</i>)	0.33 (Au)
Westwood (1997, <i>OST</i>)	1

^b These authors have published in at least one American journal and one European journal.

China is still limited. This may be explained in part by the well-documented bias against international research at most leading Western journals (Boyacigiller and Adler, 1991). For example, Mowday (1997, 1404) reported that between 1978 and 1994, *AMJ* only published 3% to 4% international articles. Pierce and Garven (1995) found that *AMJ* and *AMR* had only 7% and 5% international content, respectively. During the 20-year period that we examine, *AMJ*, *ASQ*, and *AMR* only published 6, 5, and 4 Greater China-related articles, respectively (Table 1). Given the global scope of international research, authors of Greater China-related articles may have an even smaller chance of publishing

their work in these leading outlets. On the other hand, *JIBS* and *OST* have been more receptive to this research, and attracted and published a relatively large number of articles.

In sum, the 83 articles published in 10 leading journals, including 59 published in the 1990s, give us a “snapshot” of global management and organizational research on Greater China published in English during the past 2 decades. This literature has grown from virtually non-existent to a burgeoning one, with contributions from a wide variety of authors and institutions. However, there is still substantial room for expansion, given the overall small amount of publications in leading journals. With this overall review