# Theory-driven Management Research

Jun Xia

(University of Texas at Dallas)

**Abstract**: Theory building has been the central interest of management scholars and students. Good theories allow us to better understand organizational phenomena as well as explain and predict outcomes. Theories that consist of guess and falsification inspire subsequent empirical studies to test casual conjunctions. However, from a philosophical point of view, truth is difficult to know, and scientific research is to identify the approximations of truth. A theory is considered a good theory because it questions some existing assumptions in previous studies. Moreover, good theories must be generalizable, enlightening, and narrative. On the one hand, good theory is disciplined imagination, in which scientific problems and phenomena can be deeply explained through thought experiment and selected based on certain criteria. On the other hand, theory construction is also social construction and subject to social section. Finally, clear writing based on rhetoric is important to demonstrate idea flows.

**Key Words**: theory construction; theory-driven research; organization theory

# Phenomenon-driven Management Research

Yuntao Dong

(Department of Organization and Strategy, Guanghua School of Management, Peking University)

**Abstract:**

**Purpose:** Management phenomena are both the origin and the driving force behind the progress of management research. Using specific research experiences as examples, this article discusses the meaning and key points of phenomenon-driven management research. It clarifies how phenomenon-driven research focuses on and deepens the understanding of emerging phenomena, strengthens the connection between theory and practice, and promotes the innovation and development of theories, thus emphasizing the significant value and potential of the phenomenon-driven research paradigm in management studies, especially in the context of management research in China.

**Design/Methodology/Approach:** By reviewing relevant papers on phenomenon-driven research and introducing two examples of conducting phenomenon-driven research in the Chinese context, this article develops and discusses the practical key points and significant importance of phenomenon-driven research.

**Findings:** This article emphasizes the importance of phenomenon-driven management research. This approach focuses not only on the construction of theories but also prioritizes the phenomena themselves, ensuring research outcomes are closely aligned with the actual operations of organizations and management. To do so, this article draws from two examples to summarize the key points of conducting phenomenon-driven management research. First, defining the core phenomenon is a critical initial step, because it determines the research direction and focus while bridging theory and practice. Scholars can identify research phenomena of interest, especially those that are recurrent, universal, or newly emerging, through systematic observation and documentation. Second, employing appropriate methods allows researchers to directly engage with real-world issues, capturing the complexity and diversity of organizational behavior. Creative use of methods like big data, experiments, interviews, and participant observation can offer rich quantitative and qualitative insights, enhancing the understanding of management phenomena. Third, refining research questions after thorough observation and understanding of the phenomenon involves identifying and defining core issues and key variables with research value. This process requires a deep understanding of the phenomenon and a thorough grasp of related theoretical frameworks. Lastly, theoretical iteration and optimization involve a continuous dialogue with existing theories, selecting or modifying them to better explain observed phenomena. This iterative process assesses and refines research findings and theoretical frameworks, integrating discoveries back into theory and practice as part of a continuous cycle of creation and improvement.

**Originality/Value:** This article contributes to the advancement of management scholarship by shedding light on the unique challenges in management research as well as in China particularly. It encourages scholars to identify and understand real management practices, advancing the development and innovation of management studies through deep engagement with managerial phenomena.

**Implications/Research Limitations/Suggestions for Future Research:** By highlighting the value of phenomenon-driven research specific to China and exploring its methodological key points, this article can guide scholars in conducting management theory research that truly focuses on phenomena. However, this article, being based on the author's own experiences, is limited in its ability to provide a comprehensive discussion of the different research domains, phenomena, and methods where phenomenon-driven research can be applied. Chinese scholars can leverage our own resources and contextual advantages to continually attempt phenomenon-driven research that transcends traditional theories, and in this process, develop research paradigms and theories that are suitable for management studies in our country.

**Key Words**: phenomenon-driven research; Chinese management practices; management theory

# Endogeneity in Management Research

Juncong Guo Weiwei Zheng Xi Qu

(Antai College of Economics and Management, Shanghai Jiao Tong University)

**Abstract**: The key from statistical inference to causal inference is to effectively solve the endogenous problem. Limited by the availability of data, the endogeneity problem is particularly obvious in the field of management where need to be carried out with non-experimental data. On the basis of sorting out the origin and definition of endogeneity, this paper first intuitively shows the econometric theories of endogeneity problems in empirical research. The essential cause of endogeneity is that the independent variable is correlated with the error term. In empirical studies, several sources can contribute to this correlation, namely, omitted variables, two-way causality or simultaneous equations, measurement errors, and selection biases caused by non-random experiments.

Secondly, based on these different sources, we provide potential coping strategies of endogeneity in combination with the classic research cases of management. For the endogeneity caused by omitted variables, researchers can try to control these omitted variables by adding fixed effects or using proxy variables. Random assignment experiments and instrumental variable approaches can also be used, which are also commonly used to address endogeneity caused by simultaneous equations. For the endogeneity caused by measurement errors, a direct method is to find systematic bias-free measurements or try to interpret these measurement errors. For the endogeneity caused by selection biases, an additional method is to use Heckman's two-stage selection model. And for self-selection biases, common methods to estimate average treatment effects can be used, such as, differences-in differences and regression discontinuity design.

Then, we further discuss the effective solutions in dealing with more complex dynamic panel data modelsand spatial econometric models. The endogeneity of dynamic panel data models arises when controlling for individual fixed effects. Difference GMM and system GMM are commonly used methods. The endogeneity of spatial econometric models is from the simultaneity of the dependent variable and the key independent variable—the spatial autoregressive term, where spatial weighted exogenous variables are usually used as instrumental variable. If the spatial weighting matrix also endogenous, figuring out the sources of its' endogeneity and then applying the control function approach is a suggested method.

Finally, this paper puts forward relevant research prospects and feasible suggestions on how to deal with endogeneity problems in subsequent management research. First, it is necessary for researchers to understand the importance of the issue of endogeneity, the key to which lies in identifying and recognizing the reasons for the existence of endogeneity. Secondly, researchers need to target and deal with the most obvious and serious type of endogeneity problem in the study, as endogeneity is very common. Third, researchers need to realize that the current academic approaches to endogeneity have their own conditions of applicability and need to be continuously improved.

**Key Words**: management research; causal inference; endogenous

# Research on New Generation of Information Technology Industry Alliance Portfolio and Innovation Capability

Yunfei Shao[1] Luyao Liu[1] Junjie Yin[2]

(1. School of Management and Economics, University of Electronic Science and Technology of China;

2. School of Management and Economics, Civil Aviation Flight University of China)

**Abstract**: As one of the seven emerging industries of strategic importance, the new generation of information technology industry has become a new economic growth point in the Internet era. However, faced with the strong resource demand for innovation, it is difficult for a single enterprise to rely on its own resource reserves. Therefore, enterprises in the new generation of information technology industry choose to establish alliances with external organizations, and use the network effect between alliance portfolios to achieve resource complementarity, so as to cut costs, reduce risk, and increase innovation capabilities, and then gain competitive advantages. However, about half of the alliances in corporate alliance practice end in failure. How to properly utilize the alliance portfolios? How to get the most out of alliance portfolios? These are questions that need to be explored urgently. Therefore, we need to deconstruct the internal elements of the complex system of alliance portfolio, so that enterprises can profit from alliance portfolios, obtain external resources, and improve innovation capabilities.

Firstly, previous studies have shown path dependence in the explanation of the causes of alliance portfolios, and no consensus has been reached. And, the research on alliance portfolio configuration has not been expanded from the perspective of innovation capabilities, and the influence mechanism of alliance portfolio configuration on the innovation capabilities of enterprises needs to be explored in depth. Then, previous studies failed to fully explain the impact of alliance portfolio governance capability on enterprise innovation capability. In response to the above research deficiencies, this paper closely following the development strategy of "cultivating emerging industries" proposed in the 12th Five-Year Plan, designs a research framework with "emergence-configuration-governance" as the dominant logic for the alliance portfolios in the new generation of information technology industry, based on the relevant theories in the fields of emerging technology management and innovation management. It is found that the alliance portfolio is essentially a self-centered alliance network of core enterprises with multiple alliance functions, which is driven by internal and external factors and formed by the dynamic selection of enterprises. Based on the perspective of resources, social networks, social capital, and ambidextrous capabilities, there are different mechanisms between each dimension of alliance portfolio configuration and enterprise innovation capabilities. Furthermore, alliance portfolio governance is a dynamic process of strategy, organization and network fit, and it is necessary to build a multi-governance system of transactions, relationships and networks; The policy governance ability of government plays a pivotal role in the healthy development of the industrial alliance; The alliance portfolio management capability can play the role of the resource pool of the alliance portfolio and provide enterprises with the necessary quantity and quality of innovation resources.

The innovations of this paper include the following dimensions: Firstly, it places the research topic of alliance portfolio in the context of the new generation of information technology industry, and combine the characteristics of the new generation of informa-

tion technology industry to deconstruct the alliance portfolio, showing a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the alliance portfolio; Secondly, it constructs a matching model between alliance portfolio configuration and innovation capabilities, focuses on the influence mechanism of alliance portfolios on enterprise innovation capabilities, and constructs the selection model of alliance partners; Finally, it theoretically explains the dynamic framework of the new generation of information technology industry alliance portfolio governance and the alliance portfolio governance ability, and expands the theoretical research on the innovation capabilities improvement mechanism. In addition, this paper has important implications for the new generation of information technology enterprises to understand the nature of alliance portfolios, understand the positive significance that alliance portfolios may bring, find alliance partners based on different strategies, and improve the flexibility and response speed of alliance portfolios through alliance governance.

Future research has the following directions: Firstly, relying on the development of the digital economy, we could further analyze the opportunities and challenges of the development of alliance portfolios under the digital economy, and explore important topics such as how to coordinate the common strategic goals of alliance partners, how to activate the relative advantages of alliance partners, how to tap alliance portfolio network resources, how to resist uncertain risks, and how to obtain complementary resources; Secondly, further attention should be paid to the competition and cooperation interaction in the alliance portfolio, and how to achieve the strategic goals in the tension between competition and cooperation; Finally, we could further leverage the role of the alliance portfolio as a driving force for innovation and explore whether the alliance portfolios can help to overcome the technical difficulties of "stuck neck" and the specific implementation path.

**Key Words**: alliance portfolio; innovation capability; new generation of information technology industry

# All Past Is Prelude: Entrepreneurs' Rural Experience and Family Control Preference

(Weibin Xu[1] Ye Chen[1] Qiujie Dou[2] Huan Li[1]
(1. School of Management, Guizhou University;
2. School of Business, Guizhou University of Finance and Economics)

**Abstract**: In family businesses, entrepreneurs exhibit an innate preference for control rights as they are essential tools for creating value and generating profits. Various factors, such as regional legal efficiency, financial depth, institutional context, and equity balance, influence family control rights preferences. However, limited research has explored entrepreneurs' control rights preferences based on their past experiences, particularly their rural upbringing. This study focuses on entrepreneurs with rural upbringing experiences and applies imprinting theory to investigate the influence of rural upbringing on family control rights preferences.

Entrepreneurs play a pivotal role as the main shapers and navigators of family businesses, with their actions reflecting their individual will. Understanding entrepreneurs' individual will is crucial for uncovering the underlying factors driving family control rights preferences, and their individual will is closely intertwined with their upbringing experiences. Early experiences have been found to have a profound and lasting impact on individual preferences. While the term "entrepreneur" often evokes thoughts of a privileged group with abundant resources, the elevation of entrepreneurs' socioeconomic status might obscure the fact that not all entrepreneurs share the same early-life resources and cultural environments.

To address these gaps and theoretical deficiencies, this study focuses on entrepreneurs' rural upbringing experiences within the context of China's dual urban-rural system. The dual urban-rural system, unique to China, is a far-reaching social governance structure that reflects differences in resource allocation, interest distribution, and individual cultural contexts between urban and rural areas.

Using data from a national survey of private enterprises conducted between 2002 and 2014, this study makes the following findings: Firstly, entrepreneurs with rural upbringing experiences exhibit stronger preferences for family control rights, particularly among those lacking higher education or formal institutional work experience. Secondly, the positive impact of entrepreneurs' rural upbringing experiences on family control rights preferences is more pronounced for businesses established before the market economic system's establishment and in regions with weaker property rights protection. Thirdly, entrepreneurs' rural upbringing experiences have a greater influence on ownership preferences within the family, while their influence on management rights preferences is relatively smaller.

This study contributes in several aspects: Firstly, it expands the understanding of factors influencing family control rights preferences. Drawing on imprinting theory, this study investigates the impact of entrepreneurs' rural upbringing experiences on family control rights preferences, providing a new theoretical perspective on the logic underlying the transition from "entrepreneurs' individual will" to "enterprise power configuration behavior". Unlike short-term experiences that may quickly be replaced by new

ones, rural upbringing experiences are enduring and can shape entrepreneurs' cognitive processes and decision-making over time. By delving into the impact of these long-term experiences on entrepreneurs' control rights preferences, this study offers a novel deconstructive logic for understanding the motivations behind family business control rights preferences.

Secondly, this study offers fresh insights into the reasons for the familial nature of Chinese family businesses. By focusing on entrepreneurs' rural upbringing experiences, this study explains the reasons behind family-oriented tendencies in family businesses, considering factors such as early-life socioeconomic resources, traditional cultural contexts, and social capital. This research holds significance for understanding the motivations behind the familial nature of Chinese family businesses, promoting their sustainable development, and contributing to rural revitalization efforts.

Thirdly, the study contributes to the understanding of heterogeneity within family businesses. While existing research mainly examines differences in control rights allocation between family and non-family enterprises, this study delves into the heterogeneity arising from entrepreneurs' diverse upbringing experiences. By focusing on family businesses as a group, this study reveals differences in family control rights preferences due to variations in entrepreneurs' rural upbringing experiences, enhancing the comprehension of differentiated control rights allocation behaviors among family businesses.

The study acknowledges certain limitations: Firstly, an individual's family economic status can influence their psychological security and decision-making behavior. Due to research constraints, this study does not differentiate the influence of entrepreneurs' early family economic conditions. Future research could conduct empirical studies to address this gap. Secondly, the analysis of the relationship between entrepreneurs' rural upbringing experiences and family control rights preferences implies a risk-averse mentality induced by these experiences. While this study partially verifies this using moderating variables such as property rights protection levels, further research could explore more suitable indicators for measuring risk aversion and study the direct impact pathway of rural upbringing experiences on entrepreneurs' control rights preferences. Lastly, the study's sample primarily comprises non-listed companies from a national survey of private enterprises, limiting the generalizability of the conclusions. Future research could employ web scraping and questionnaire surveys to gather information on the backgrounds of actual controlling shareholders in listed family businesses, using listed company samples for further validation and to ensure the robustness of the study's findings.

**Key Words**: urban and rural dual system; imprinting theory; rural growth experience; family control preference

# Morality and Etiquette Complementarity: A Study on the New Ethical Mechanism of Local Enterprises Based on Transfamiliness

Xinran Gu[1] Chen Qian[2] Gang Chao[3]

(1. Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Management and Economics, Kunming University of Science and Technology;

2. Department of Leadership and Organizational Management, School of Economics and Management, Tsinghua University;

3. Department of Management Studies, South China University of Technology, School of Business Administration)

**Abstract**: Past research has shown that morality leadership is the core concept of paternalistic leadership, and that morality is considered a necessary trait for Chinese leaders. In reality, there is a general tendency of "rule of man" in the Chinese society, and leaders are accustomed to using the mixture of benevolence and authority in their management. This phenomenon leads to the fact that the characteristic of benevolence may vary from person to person, and the final result is that morality leadership does poorly match with the modern enterprise system, and therefore, there is a practical difficulty in "influence others through virtue". However, this paper observes a group of Transfamiliness firms and finds that their leaders are often able to influence people with virtue and enhance the moral level of the organization as a whole, thus promoting employees' work initiative and moral performance. Thus, the purpose of this paper is to explore the mechanism of this phenomenon and to understand how morality is transformed from an individual trait to the moral performance of the organization.

In answering this question, this paper adopts a grounded theory approach by selecting the sample of six transfamiliness firms with outstandingly effective virtues practices. And conducting a qualitative study of them over a period of eight years in order to reveal the "black box" of the mechanisms of virtues externalization in such firms. By comparing the literature with the conceptualizations of virtuous leadership and leadership virtues, we explore the reasons why virtues play a managerial role in firms. In this process, we found that the studies on morality leadership are based on the perspective of leadership behavior theory, and they focus on the moral behavior of leaders, and from the perspective of trait theory, although morality is regarded as a core trait necessary for Chinese leaders, few studies have focused on how the individual leader's morality acts on the organization and externalizes into the organizational morality of the enterprise as a whole. Therefore, research on leader morality from the perspective of trait theory is an urgent task to be carried out.

The main innovative aspects of this paper is that based on the recent practices of six Transfamiliness firms from China, we find that: ①these entrepreneurs cultivate themselves over a long period of time, and inspire their employees through their personal virtues, thus smoothly externalizing the morality from the leader's personal attributes to the organizational morality, and thus constructing a mechanism of Morality and Etiquette Complementarity. ②The study expands the understanding of the conditions for the formation of organizational virtuousness from the perspectives of leadership style, organizational culture, and organizational ethics.

③The dual roles of morality and etiquette succeed the ethical strengths of the Chinese tradition in the organization, and help to eliminate the lack of initiative and motivation of employees caused by a single institutional ethic. It is also conducive to eliminating the dilemma of employees' lack of initiative and moral self-awareness caused by a single institutional ethic, and thus can be regarded as an innovation in the ethical mechanism of local enterprises.

From the perspective of practical significance, the mechanism of Morality and Etiquette Complementarity in transfamiliness enterprises is an effective measure to continuously stimulate employees' moral self-awareness and management self-awareness. Furthermore, the ethic of Morality and Etiquette Complementarity is conducive to the formation of a harmonious atmosphere in the enterprise. People show positive working attitude and goodwill through moral consciousness, rather than based on the exchange of benefits. In this way, it is possible to transcend the assumption of "economic man" in practice, and form a kind of corporate ethics that is more in line with the expectations of Chinese management and the general public. Lastly, the limitation of this paper is that the theoretical clues to the successful externalization of morality from personal traits to organizational morality are only found in a few samples of a single type of enterprises, but the key to the externalization of morality lies in the ability of corporate leaders to maintain moral traits in the long run. Thus, research on this topic still needs to be explored in more types of firms and in different contextual cultures. Future research could also develop testable constructs through scales and collect more quantitative data through empirical research methods to discuss the correlation between management ethics and business performance.

**Key Words**: morality leadership; organizational virtuousness; transfamiliness; virtue ethics; institutional ethics

# Current Status and Future Prospects of Corporate Social Responsibility in Family Firms

Ying Fu[1] Jinzhan Li[1] Huawei Su[1] Hao Gao[2]

(1. School of Economic and Management, Nanchang University;

2. PBC School of Finance, Tsinghua University)

**Abstract**: Family firms are a unique and globally significant form of organization, playing a central role in corporate social responsibility (CSR) through various activities, including charitable giving and rural revitalization in China. Despite the recent surge in research on CSR within family businesses, there remains a significant gap in the organization and summarization of these findings. This deficiency not only hampers the recognition of past achievements in family business-related research but also fails to provide the necessary inspiration and ideas for the next phase of theoretical research on family business CSR that aligns with China's economic and social needs.

This paper employs bibliometric methods to first analyze the publication trends of research papers on family business CSR. It does so by examining high-quality Chinese and English publications from Financial Times 50 journals (FT50) and key journals funded by the National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC). Through this analysis, the paper seeks to identify the growth patterns and evolving focus areas in the field.

Secondly, the paper delves into a comprehensive review of the primary research themes within family business CSR. It goes on to summarize the key measurements and characterizations of dependent variables frequently employed in family business CSR research. Furthermore, the paper categorizes relevant content, primary research variables, and the common theoretical foundations that underpin family business CSR research. We analyze the contents of CSR research on family businesses from the family system and enterprise system. Relevant research from the family system can be subdivided into two aspects: family member characteristics and family involvement. The former CSR research mainly involves the theoretical foundations of imprinting theory, identity theory, and planned behavior theory, while the latter mainly involves the theoretical foundations of socio-emotional wealth theory and agency theory. Additionally, stakeholder theory and institutional theory are the main theoretical foundations for the study of family business CSR in the enterprise system.

Next, the paper proceeds to offer a detailed summary of the reasons behind the disparities observed between CSR researches in family and non-family businesses. It also explores the impact of family involvement on CSR within family business research. These reasons include discrepancies in how family businesses are measured, variations in assessing family involvement, and a failure to consider the family's ability and willingness to engage in CSR in an integrated manner.

Finally, the paper turns its attention to the future, identifying and discussing potential research areas in the domain of family business CSR. It contemplates two distinct approaches: a "tracking and indigenous" approach, which involves closely monitoring the evolving landscape of CSR practices within Chinese family businesses, and a "prospective based on theoretical development" perspective, which involves proactively shaping the future of family business CSR research within this unique organizational context. The article suggests that future research can continue to dig deeper into the relevant theoretical results of Western management, as well as identify unique Chinese research variables and consider the influence of Chinese culture.

In conclusion, this paper not only highlights the critical role of family firms in CSR but also endeavors to fill the existing gaps in the literature, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of family business CSR research. By analyzing publication trends, summarizing research themes and measurements, elucidating disparities, and outlining future research directions, this paper aims to foster continued growth and development in this vital research area.

**Key Words**: family business; corporate social responsibility; family involvement; family and business systems

**图书在版编目（CIP）数据**

管理学季刊.2024.01/蔡莉等主编.--北京：经济管理出版社，2024.3.
ISBN 978-7-5096-9753-5
Ⅰ.C93-53
中国国家版本馆 CIP 数据核字第 2024Q84R67 号

责任编辑：梁植睿
责任印制：黄章平
责任校对：陈　颖

出版发行：经济管理出版社
（北京市海淀区北蜂窝 8 号中雅大厦 A 座 11 层　100038）
网　　址：www. E-mp. com. cn
电　　话：（010）51915602
印　　刷：唐山玺诚印务有限公司
经　　销：新华书店
开　　本：880mm×1230mm/16
印　　张：9.5
字　　数：207 千字
版　　次：2024 年 3 月第 1 版　　2024 年 3 月第 1 次印刷
书　　号：ISBN 978-7-5096-9753-5
定　　价：30.00 元