Equality and Harmony: Diversity Management in China

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INTRODUCTION

Research into diversity and diversity management has a history going back some forty years or more. As a concept, diversity management developed within the management literature, focusing initially on equal opportunity issues and then going on to embrace, successively, affirmative action policies, diversity management methodologies, and finally diversity management theories and models. The great many articles and books written on the subject reflect its increasing scope, complexity, and nuances of diversity. One limitation of the literature is that it is based almost entirely on American research, which is hardly surprising given that the concept originated in the United States (US) (Agócs and Burr, 1996; Teicher and Spearitt, 1996; Zhang and Tsui, 2013). How best to manage diverse workforces is now, however, a global concern. In the literature there are very few studies on diversity management from developing countries. In particular, there exist very few articles that delve into issues of diversity management in China. This seems to be at odds with that country's status as a powerhouse driving the global economy.

According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), China is the third largest recipient of foreign direct investment (FDI), trailing only Hong Kong and the US. With regard to FDI outflows China ranks third behind Japan and the US; however, if outward FDI (OFDI) from Hong Kong is factored in, its total OFDI is exceeded only by that of the US (UNCTAD, 2016). The influence of FDI on the Chinese economy extends to how businesses operate (Cooke, 2012; Nankervis et al., 2013), including, for example, human resource management policies and procedures. In the last decade research on human resource management has grown rapidly in China. A 2008 overview of human resource management in China by Zhu, Thomson and DeCieri found 460 articles covering a 26 year period of 1979 –2005. When that online search was repeated for the eleven year period of 2006 – 2016, the number increased to 870. Along with the increased interest the depth and breadth of such research efforts also

increased. No longer do articles focus exclusively on the development of human resource management; they now delve into areas such as strategic human resource management and the devolvement of human resource management throughout the firm. Still, there are areas that remain under-researched. This has inspired a spate of articles calling for further research into the specific elements of human resource management. One of those areas is diversity management.

In her book, *Human Resource Management in China: New Trends and Practices*, Fang Lee Cooke devotes an entire chapter to examining equal opportunity and diversity management. The chapter concludes with a call for further research into key components of diversity management in China. Leading academics in the field of human resource management in China, including Fang Lee Cooke (Cooke, 2012; Cooke and Xiao, 2014), Rosalie Tung (2008), and Malcom Warner (2008), have called for further research into diversity management within the Chinese business environment. This paper examines the state of research relating to diversity management in China, drawing on both the English and Chinese literature.

METHODOLOGY

With the increased interest in human resource management in China and greater participation of Chinese scholars in the field, it would only be appropriate to include in this review relevant research conducted by Chinese scholars. Therefore, as mentioned above both English language and Chinese language databases have been used. The criteria for including an article were as follows:

1) an emphasis on diversity management within the business environment;
2) a focus on applications of diversity management within the People's Republic of China, thus excluding Taiwan; and
3) a research-based or conceptual orientation.

EBSCOhost, Proquest, and Sage comprised the English databases, and the Chinese Social Sciences Citation Index (CSSCI), the lone Chinese database. Database searches were conducted using the keyword

search phrase of 'diversity management and China'. The search was further limited by using the 'abstract' as a limiter under the assumption that if the concepts were important, the author(s) would have used that terminology in the abstract.

The initial search of the English databases yielded over 175 hits; however, after all the articles that had failed to meet the inclusion criteria (e.g., those related to bio-diversity management) were eliminated, there remained a total of 40 articles on diversity management in a business environment. Each article was reviewed to determine its relevancy to the research. Articles were eliminated for various reasons: some were book reviews, others focused on expatriates or on diversity within top management teams or on the management of Chinese workers outside China. This final screening left a total of 17 articles from the English language databases that featured as a primary theme some aspect of diversity management (e.g., race or gender). In the case of the Chinese database, the same initial screening methods yielded eight articles of which six featured as a primary theme some aspect or other of diversity management. Thus, the search of both the English and Chinese databases yielded 23 articles in all. In light of the importance that has been placed on the role of human resources in a knowledge-based economy and on the need for greater diversity, a mere 23 articles on so significant an HR concept as diversity management would appear incongruous.

Drawing on the above databases, this paper presents a synopsis of some of what has been written about diversity management in China. First, a general overview outlining the focus of each article is provided. This will identify what specific type of research was conducted, the location, size of the organization**,** and date of publication. In the following section the various types of diversity identified in the articles will be discussed in a series of subsections (e.g., on gender, race, age, etc.). The concluding section will examine government policies for implementing diversity management at the level of the firm.

BACKGROUND

History, Harmony and Diversity

A major preoccupation of Chinese culture is with the maintenance of harmony (Cao. 2016; Chen and Tjosvold, 2002; Li, 2009). It represents a strong undercurrent in the writings of early Chinese philosophers such as Confucius and Yen Tzu and is embedded in Taoist philosophy (Li, 2009; Wang and Juslin, 2009). The desire for harmony continues to permeate almost every aspect of life in the Middle Kingdom. It is evinced in the imperative to save face, which requires that one take great care not to jeopardize the credibility, dignity or prestige of another (Shi, 2001) and in the concept of 'quanxi' — the informal network of relationships that inform reciprocal behaviours (Cai, Jun, and Yang, 2017). It is also reflected in the Chinese 'lóng' totem (see Figure 1). The latter is an amalgam of totems, each representing a different a major clan in Chinese history (Cao, 2016). For this reason, the 'lóng' totem features fragmented representations of snakes, deer, dragons, tigers and fish, emblematic, respectively, of each clan (Cao, 2016). In Chinese culture the 'lóng' totem dragon symbolizes harmony. Harmony arises through the blending of the disparate cultures that have emerged over the long course of Chinese history. It is a concept that speaks to the need to embrace diversity as a strategy for ensuring communal peace if not national survival. This explains, as the past 40 years so clearly illustrate, why the Chinese have proven so successful at adapting to change. It is this adaptability, or flexibility, rooted deeply in the culture and society, that has sustained the country's economic success. But in what ways can China be said to be diverse?

INSERT FIGURE 1 HERE

Diversity

China's population stands at 1.378 billion (World Bank, 2017). There are 1.06 males for every female (CIA, 2017). The majority of the population is under 54 years of age (78.8%) with the largest group between the ages of 25 and 54 (48.4%) (CIA, 2017). Urban residents represent 55.6% of the total populace. Life expectancy is 77 years for women and 74 years for men (UN Statistics, 2017). The obesity rate is 7.3% (CIA, 2017). Twelve percent of the population has diabetes (Chan, 2016). There exist at least

eight major linguistic groups, in addition to hundreds of regional dialects (CIA, 2017). While the government recognizes fifty ethnic groups, a single group, the Han, accounts for 91.6% of the population (CIA, 2017). There are five major religious groups—Buddhist (18.2%), Christian (5.1%), Muslim (1.8%), folk religion (21.9%), Hindu (0.1%)—while 52.2% of the populace have no religious affiliation (Pew-Templeton, 2015). All this speaks to a high degree of diversity at the level of the nation, which has its counterpart in the workplace. As hallmarks of Chinese culture, harmony and diversity provide the impetus to pursue an investigation of diversity management in Chinese firms.

FINDINGS

Defining Diversity Management

Prior to examining the literature on diversity management in the Chinese workplace, it is essential to define the term 'diversity' with some precision. Failure to do is a recurrent feature of the literature (Williams and O'Reilly, 1998). Of course, this may be a gambit on the part of some authors intended to leave the reader free to fix his/her own meaning, which may, or may not, make the work in question more intelligible. The general assumption that the term diversity requires no definition likely explains why so many authors neglect to define it. We reject this view, believing that defining key terminology contributes in no small measure to clarity of thought. Therefore, this discussion will follow a road not often travelled in the academic management literature by offering up a definition sourced from the Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary –

> diverse: 1) differing from one another; 2) composed of distinctive unlike elements or qualities;
>
> diversity: 1) the condition of being diverse; 2) an instance of being diverse (Mish, 2001).

This elementary yet broad definition allows for a wide interpretation that acknowledges a multitude of differences that reflects the true complexity of human interaction. It also allows the researcher to capture a wide sweep of characteristics that can be subsumed into the analysis of diversity management in China.

General Overview

Date Range of Publication

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Although the date range for the search was set for 1979 to date the first article appeared in the English databases in 2003 (i.e. Wong and Chung, 2003), thus the combined results (English and Chinese databases) cover a thirteen (14) year period. Twenty (20) of the twenty-three (23) articles were published after 2008. Over half (12) were published between 2012 and 2016 (see Figure 1). The six (6) articles found in the Chinese database appear in 2005 (i.e. Wu and Tan, 2005), 2007 (i.e. Zheng, 2007); 2008 (i.e. Peng, Han and Zhao, 2008; Zhao, 2008), 2009 (i.e. Hu and Hu, 2009), and 2015 (i.e. Zheng and Cun, 2015).

INSERT FIGURE 3 HERE

Research method

Of the papers focusing on research methods, three (3) were conceptual papers, eleven (11) used qualitative methods, and nine (9) quantitative methods (see Figure 3). The qualitative research methodologies employed included two (2) case studies as in Wu and Tan, (2005) and Zhang, Nyland and Zhu, (2010), one ethnographic study (i.e., Swider, 2015), two that used data gathered from extensive field studies (observational), one argumentative method (i.e. Sadiq and Abbasi, 2016), one grounded theory (i.e. Peng, Han and Zhao, 2008) and two using content analysis methods based on the methodology espoused by Miles and Huberman (1994) (i.e., Cooke and Saini, 2012; Cooke and Xiao, 2014). Three (3) of the qualitative articles used interviews as a primary data collection technique (i.e., Cooke and Saini, 2012; Cooke and Xiao, 2014; Zhang, Nyland and Zhu, 2010). One used content analysis of government policies pertaining to diversity (i.e. Sadiq and Abbasi, 2016) while the ethnographic study (i.e. Swider, 2015) used participant observations, interviews, attending meetings, and document analysis. The ethnographic piece (Swider, 2015) was conducted over a fourteen- (14) month period during which the researcher was immersed in the local culture and environment. The other two research articles based on field work extended over 10 year (Laliberté, 2016) and 15 year (Marshall, 2016) periods.

Sample populations

The sample populations for all the qualitative studies varied in size and representation. For their case study Zhang, Nyland and Zhu (2010) interviewed 33 executives and 37 migrant workers, of whom 50 were employed by the twelve (12) firms that formed the basis of the case studies. Neither the age nor the gender of the participants was given. In a study comparing diversity management in Indian and Chinese organizations, Cooke and Saini (2012) interviewed seven Chinese managers. Three (3) of the participants making up their sample were women ranging in age from late 20s to late 40s. In an article focusing on gender roles in accountancy and consulting firms in China Cooke and Xiao (2014) interviewed 45 women and 24 men. Of this sample 29 of the women and eight (8) of the men were in their 20s; fifteen (15) of the women and fourteen (14) of the men in their 30s; one woman and one man in their 40s; and one man in his 50s. Swider's (2015) ethnographic study used data from interviews with 83 participants. Neither age nor gender was given. The Marshall (2016) and Laliberté (2016) studies primarily used participant observation during the course of numerous field trips to China. Wu and Tan (2005) provided no demographics of a sample population drawn from an annual IBM Women's Conference. Peng, Han and Zhao (2008) used existing databases in their grounded theory article on residential status, education (i.e., overseas or local) and job tenure.

In the case of the quantitative studies sample sizes ranged from 76 to 2,114. Tung's (2008) article on the influence of race and gender on Chinese and Korean executives had the smallest Chinese sample size, i.e., 76 executives, all of whom were enrolled in an Executive MBA (EMBA) program. Neither the age nor gender of the respondents was given. Wong and Chung's (2003) sample consisted of 152 Chinese restaurant managers employed in 56 Hong Kong hotels. Of these, 87% were males with the majority aged 30 to 49 years; 70% were line managers. For their study of the efficacy of diversity management with respect to informing organizational citizenship behaviours Shen, Tang and D'Netto (2010) recruited 530 participants, of whom 62.1% were male and 37.9% female, with the majority between 18 and 49 years of age (32.8% - 18 to 24; 33.4% - 25-49). Moreover, 78.9% of the sample consisted of workers, 20.1 %

supervisors or more senior employees. Zhang and Hou (2012) conducted a two-part study of the benefits of gender diversity within the context of group situations. In the first part an American sample (n - 697) from eight (8) companies in three different industries was compared to a Chinese sample (n – 973) from twelve (12) companies in the same industry. In the latter 48.9% were males with an average age of 30 (age-range: 20 to 40). The second part of the study used a sample consisting of 293 social psychology students enrolled at a Chinese university. Of these, 41% were male with an average age of 18.92 (age range: 17 to 20). Wang et al.'s (2013) sample (n - 172) was taken from 31 teams drawn from nine (9) Chinese organizations. The average age was 27.3, and women accounted for 68% of the participants. Shen, Tang and D'Netto (2014) recruited a sample of 716 respondents from 37 Chinese firms. 58.9% were men and 41.1% women within an age range of 18 to 50+ (18-29: 19.3%; 30-39: 37.1%; 40-49: 23.1%; and 50+: 20.5%). Xiang, Qin and Peterson (2015) used data from the China Security Market Accounting Research database, in addition to data they themselves collected by means of undisclosed methods, to study the gender diversity of audit committees within Chinese firms over the period 2004 – 2007. The sample for the study of gender diversity of audit committees was 2114 audit committees of Chinese firms between 2004 and 2007. It was found that women made up 13.1% of the personnel assigned to the committees. Zhang and Huai's (2016) research encompassed two studies, one of which involved six (6) high-tech companies, the other 104 groups of part-time students who were completing training programs. The sample for the former consisted of 327 respondents from 127 work groups. Of these, 44.6% were women with an average age of 28.02. The student sample consisted of 397 participants, of whom 77% were women with an average age of 26.84. No information on sample size or sample demographics was included in the Hu and Hu (2009) article.

Firm Size, Ownership, Industry Type and Location

Various types of industries were used as research sites. Wong and Chung (2003) focused on the restaurant industry in Hong Kong. The authors did not specify the number of employees in each business or whether it was privately or foreign owned. Zhang, Nyland and Zhu (2010) was among three articles to draw part of their sample from Shanghai; the bulk of the samples, however, was drawn from firms in Jiangsu

province. The respective workforces varied in size from 78 to 3,500+ employees, with the majority consisting of fewer than 400 employees. The industry type also varied between service, electronics, real estate, and manufacturing industries. Varying ownership structures were also very much in evidence: state owned enterprises (SOEs) (2), privately owned enterprises (POEs) (2), wholly foreign owned enterprises (WFOEs) (5) and joint ventures (JVs) (2). Zhang and Hou (2012) numbered among three studies comparing China and the US. For the American sample, data was gathered from eight firms in three different industries, information technology, pharmaceuticals, and manufacturing. For the Chinese sample, twelve (12) firms from the same industry which was not specified. The type of industry, size of the firms and ownership structures were not specified. Their second study, as mentioned above, drew on a population of social psychology students attending a Chinese university. Tung's (2008) sample was drawn from two student populations, one enrolled in an EMBA program offered at a Beijing university, the other in an identical program offered by a Korean university located in Seoul. Her study was the second to compare China to another country, in this case Korea. The type of firm and industry represented by the respondents was not specified. Cooke and Saini (2012) was the third study to compare firms in two countries. The authors drew a sample from twenty (20) firms varying in size from medium to large; the precise sizes were not specified. Ownership structures were given as POEs, SOEs and WFOEs. What was not given was a breakdown of ownership structures for Indian and Chinese firms.

Wang et al. (2013) used data gathered from nine firms, whose locations were undisclosed, in four industries: electronics, information technology, the automotive industry and health care. Firm size and ownership type were not given. Shanghai, Hangzhou and Hefei were the research sites for Cooke and Xiao's (2014) study of gender roles in the accounting and consultancy industry. All the five firms were listed as privately owned; one, however, was listed as a subsidiary of a WFOE employing 5,000 globally. Of the four remaining POEs, one employed 2000+ employees, the other three fewer than 100. Both studies by Shen, D'Netto and Tang (2010, 2014) drew samples from Fujian province. The first, which focused on Fuzhou, the provincial capital, examined the service (hotel), retail, and manufacturing (shoes,

toys and electronics) industries. Regarding ownership structure, the ten (10) firms comprising the sample were SOEs, POEs or JVs. The second study (2014) looked at 37 firms, seven (7) JVs and thirty (30) POEs, located in either Fujian of Guangdong province. The size of the firms was not given.

Swider's (2015) ethnographic study focused on the construction industry in three major cities: Shanghai, Beijing, and Guangzhou. Ownership structure and firm size were not discussed. Xiang, Qin and Peterson (2015) report using data from 1,446 SOEs and 668 non-state-owned organizations spread across China. The authors did not report the type of non-state ownership or the size of the firms. Zhang and Huai (2016) collected data from six Beijing high-tech firms. Firm size and ownership type were not provided. Marshall's (2016) fieldwork was conducted in Quanxhou, Fujian province and Hangzhou, Zhejiang province. No demographic data was provided. No location other than China or demographic information apart from the extent of religious affiliations was provided in Laliberté's (2016) fieldwork.

INSERT FIGURE 4 HERE

Forms of Diversity

Various types of diversity characteristics were explored with multiple diversity characteristics as the unit of measurement being the most common (see Figure 4). Gender diversity was the second most researched characteristic. Wong and Chung (2003) highlight the importance of promoting gender equality in the workplace through increased awareness, more positive female role models and sensitivity training. Four articles have gender diversity as a primary focus. Wu and Tan (2005) suggest that in the Chinese workplace the advancement of women is still obstructed by the 'glass-ceiling'. Cooke and Xiao (2014) concur with Wu and Tan's findings, including those regarding the influence of cultural norms. They argue, however, that such norms obscure women's perception of gender bias while warning of change afoot in the workplace, as evinced by the increasing emphasis on work/life balance, especially on the part of women. Xiang, Qin and Peterson (2015) found that the presence of women on audit committees in

firms where management control was weak resulted in lower audit fees. They reasoned that the lower fees were due to improvements in communication and diligence, which work to enhance the quality of financial reporting; no effort was made, however, to link the latter to cultural or gender-based norms.

The influence of gender diversity within group situations is the focus of a study by Zhang and Hou (2012). Their research shows that gender diversity within groups facilitates group performance, thus boosting organizational performance. For this reason, they recommend firms promote gender diversity in their recruitment and hiring practices. Wang et al. (2013) used gender and age as measures of both diversity and its efficacy in fostering innovation within a team environment. Initially, they found the relationship between demographic diversity, and innovation not to be significant. Upon introducing transformational leadership as a moderator, however, they found that when it was high, the relationship between these two variables was significant. Following Wang et al. (2013), Zhang and Huai (2016) used gender and age to measure 'social category' diversity, in addition to how it affected communication ties, creativity and individual performance. The authors also measured the effect of 'informational' diversity by measuring level of education, educational specialization and job function. It was found that social diversity had no effect on communication ties or individual performance; however, informational diversity was positively related to creative performance. What is particularly important about the Wang et al. (2013) and Zhang and Huai (2016) studies is that both recognize that cultural factors may have influenced their results.

Wan Tung (2008) found that for Chinese executives neither race nor gender was a consideration when making hiring decisions. The author attributes this lack of bias to the respondents' high level of education. The only other article to touch upon race as an issue was Cooke and Saini's (2012). The authors suspected regional bias given that their Chinese respondents perceived job candidates from northern China to be harder workers than their southern counterparts.

Laliberté (2016) and Marshall (2016) highlight religion as a key component of diversity though neither focuses on diversity management within organizations. Both authors assert that religion has played a significant role in shaping Chinese culture and that the same holds for politics prior the advent of the People's Republic of China. Laliberté (2016) cites political obstacles impeding secularization of the Chinese state. Marshall reports a "resurgence of Chinese temple life and select religious cults" (2016, p476) following the conclusion of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) and that the constitution now protects five religions (Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, Protestantism, and Catholicism) (Laliberté, 2016; Marshall, 2016). Thus, given its traditional role in Chinese culture, along with its protected status, religion, and hence religious diversity, has major implications for organizational studies, and for this reason needs to be addressed.

One of the most pressing issues facing the country is the continuing tension between urban residents and migrant workers from rural areas. Only two studies have examined this issue, and both were qualitative. According to a case study by Zhang and co-authors (2010), it constitutes so serious a concern in the workplace that human resource managers have developed different systems for managing rural and urban employees. Swider (2015) views the use of migrant rural workers as nothing short of exploitation, at least in many cases, likening it to indentured servitude on account of the restrictions placed upon such workers in the workplace. Along with Zhang and co-authors, she calls for government intervention in the form of new policies governing labour practices.

Along with several other authors, Peng and co-authors (2008) include in their analysis residential status, i.e., with or without Hukou; they also factor in other forms of diversity, e.g., regarding educational institutions, local and overseas, and length of employment. Both Wang et al. (2013) and Zhang and Huai (2016) use gender and age as measures of diversity within work teams. In their two studies Shen and colleagues (2010, 2014) use five (5) categories to measure the extent of an organization's diversity management practices: age, gender, residential status, education and marital status. This approach

corresponds closely to that of virtually all the conceptual papers focusing on diversity management by approaching diversity management form a holistic viewpoint rather than a specific area. To take but one more example, in their analysis of government policy towards diversity, Sadiq and Abbasi stipulate more than seven (7) categories, including religious belief, gender, age, education, ethnicity, language and dress. Two conceptual articles from the Chinese database also follow this wide definition approach but focus on the benefits for firms of diversity management. Zhao (2008) and Zheng and Cun (2015) provide an overview of how diversity management and human resource management are linked to firm performance. The influence of employee diversity on information sharing is the focus of Hu and Hu (2009), who suggest that managing diversity increases information sharing, which in turn raises the level of organizational performance.

DISCUSSION AND RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

As the above findings show, research on diversity management in China remains in its infancy. From a research methods viewpoint both qualitative and quantitative methods were employed. Despite being in an exploratory stage, the only article utilizing grounded theory to be found was in the Chinese database, which was authored by Peng, Han and Zhao (2008), focused on how diversity management might be used as a psychological tool to gain a competitive advantage in the area of innovation in high tech firms. However, given how little Western scholars understand diversity management practice in China, it would only seem logical that grounded theory might provide the kind of solid research foundation required to uncover the cultural and/or other influences responsible for shaping a distinctly Chinese approach to diversity management. Warner asserts that the Chinese do not practice Western human resource management per se: rather, they have shaped it according to their own eastern philosophies (Nankervis et al., 2013; Warner, 2008). Thus, it would be logical to assume that the same were **is** true of diversity management practices. But determining what the latter are would require research for which ground theory might prepare the way. Furthermore, while we understand diversity management from a western philosophical perspective, what does the term ‘diversity’ mean from an eastern perspective and how does

that meaning influence the implementation of diversity management? Have Western diversity management principles and techniques been informed by eastern philosophies or, as Warner puts it, have they merely gone the same way as human resource management and taken on Chinese characteristics?

While the various types of industry covered in the research provide a broad overview of China's industrial sector, more needs to be done within the context of specific industries à la Swider's (2015) work on the construction industry or Wong and Chung's (2003) on the restaurant industry. A key question here has to do with whether different industries have different issues regarding diversity? For example, research indicates that diversity helps to enhance an organization's ability to innovate, in which case the Chinese high-tech sector would do well to promote it, but would they? How, moreover, does diversity management improve firm performance? And does industry type influence that relationship?

In the seventeen articles reviewed here most of the research sites were located on the coast. Those in central and western China were largely ignored. As Western China is home to a large Muslim population, studies focusing on how religious beliefs influence the workplace would be of interest, especially given Beijing's negative stance on certain religious groups and practices.

The research examined here delves into diversity management as practiced in various types of firms located on or near the Chinese coast. However, more needs to be done to elucidate the differences in this regard among POEs, SOEs, JVs and WFOEs. In particular, future research needs to look at the influence of WFOEs on diversity management practices. Do foreign firms bring these practices with them, and, if so, how effective are they in so different a context? How do foreign partners influence the diversity policies of JVs? Do POEs adopt and adapt diversity management policies and practices or adhere to traditional ways? For what purpose(s) do firms use diversity management? What influence does diversity management have on firm performance, and does the firm type inform that relationship?

As for the disparate forms of diversity that can be managed, gender and residential status appear to be of greatest concern, yet receive little in the way of official recognition. China is a vast country with hundreds of different dialects and numerous race or ethnic differences, yet there is only scattered mention of those issues. As for disabilities such as hearing defects or blindness or illness such as hepatitis B or AIDS, virtually nothing is heard. Yet, anecdotal evidence, e.g., conversations with Chinese colleagues, points to sexually transmitted diseases as a primary source of discrimination. No one we encountered had delved into either issue. Age is also an issue in the Chinese workforce a well as for Chinese business. Does the traditional belief in the wisdom of elders and the respect due them inform diversity management policies? And what of the role or place of religion in the workplace? How do firms manage religious diversity? More generally, do firms understand the benefits to be derived from employing a diverse workforce, and if so, how does that understanding inform recruiting policies and practices? Has knowledge or use of diversity management practices in any way shaped human resource management?

It is interesting to note that all the articles from the Chinese database emphasize the benefits to be derived from diversity management. For example, Peng and co-authors (2008) argue that diversity management promotes equality and harmony within the workplace. Zhoa (2008) suggests that a culture of diversity within a team context may facilitate cooperation among the members, thus fostering integrated and harmonious relationships. Thus, can diversity management promote harmony—in this case in a business environment—a core principle of so many Eastern philosophical systems. Indeed, it is this consideration that commends diversity management to so many Chinese firms. In a study of the functional diversity of teams made up of personnel from various functional areas within organizations, Zhang and Tsui (2013) found significant differences between US and Chinese teams after accounting for the moderating effects of country of origin and collectivistic versus individualistic orientations. Their findings show that cohesion within US teams peaked early (inverted J), whereas the opposite was true for the Chinese team teams (J shape). The authors emphasize that research needs to take into account cultural norms that affect how people are managed (Zhang and Tsui, 2013).

The articles discussed here provide an excellent jumping off point for future research on diversity management in China.

CONCLUSION

This literature review offers an overview of the research that has been conducted in China in the area of diversity management. It clearly illustrates that the research in this area remains in its infancy. Shen, Tang and D'Netto (2014, p. 1733) note, "HR diversity management is a relatively new concept, which has so far received inadequate research attention." As pointed out by John Dunning (2006), one of the most underrated areas of economic development is the human element. It follows that China would do well to consider how best to utilize its entire workforce with a view to discovering hidden skills and talent among its marginalized populations. This would require embracing state-of-the-art diversity management practices—the kind of practices that promote equality and harmony, thus fostering competitive advantage. Diversity management can promote harmony, a core principle of so many Eastern philosophical systems. For this reason, it ought to appeal to Chinese firms as well as to Beijing.

Given China's progression, within the space of forty years, from an underdeveloped country to an economic superpower, it is imperative that its human resource management practices keep pace with the burgeoning size and complexity of its economy (Zhu, Thomson, Hutchings and DeCieri, 2011). This is especially critical given that modernization/globalization fosters the single-minded pursuit of economic power, thus trumping equality and minority rights (Li, 2009).

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Figure 1. Lóng Totem

From *Institutional diversity: Why Chinese civilization survives* by S. Cao (2016).

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Figure 2. Diversity Management Articles from Chinese and English Databases 2003-2016

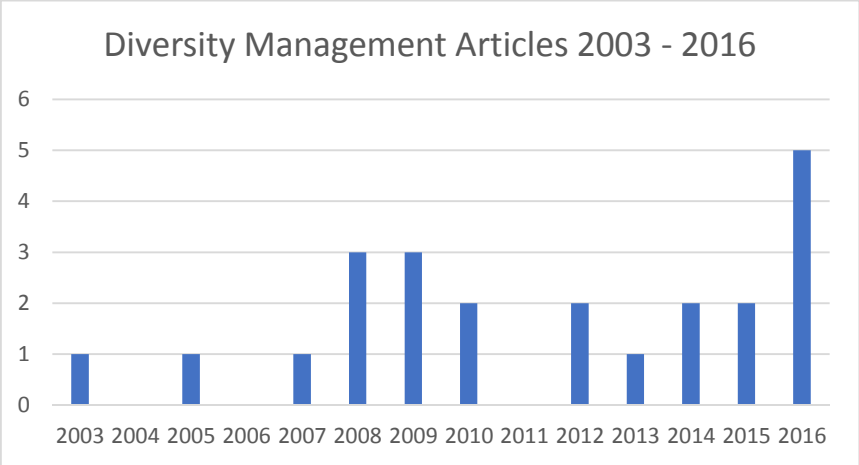

Figure 3. Research Methods Employed

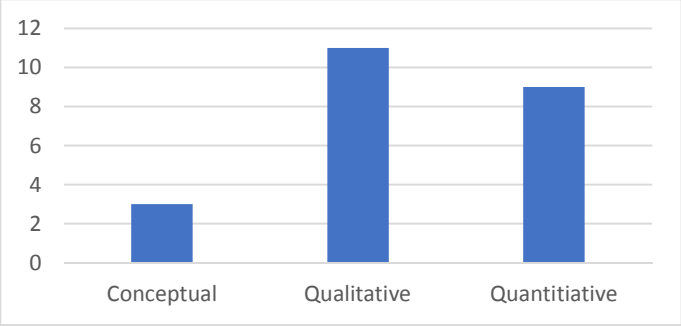

Figure 4. Diversity Characteristics