Effective Chinese Leaders' ESI Competencies

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ABSCTRACT

Beyond empirical testing of which ESI competencies are significantly predictive of leadership effectiveness, it is necessary to validate them in different social cultural or industrial contexts. This includes the possibility that culture may affect the relationship between competencies and effectiveness. In this paper, I will provide an overview of definitions of EI theories and their different underlying assumptions. I propose that ESI competencies can be used to explain effectiveness of Chinese leaders. But first, we must examine their meaning and relevance in Chinese culture. I will examine how Chinese culture and philosophy may require a change in competency definitions.

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1. Introduction

In the past half century, China achieved rapid economic development. With the burgeoning of economy markets, many small to middle sized enterprises were formed. This created millions of leaders in various organizations. Which of them are really effective? This challenge could limit further development of Chinese economy. Therefore, an appropriate theory is needed to direct leadership development in China.

Research on "great leaders", "successful leaders", and "effective leaders" has been published for several decades. People's curiosity about excellent leaders' skills, competency and personality never has decreased. With the publication of book, *Working with Emotional Intelligence* (Goleman, 1998), attention on leadership practice or research goes far beyond that of cognitive level and taps deeper into emotional areas. George (2000) stated that a leader's ability to recognize his own or his followers' emotions plays an essential role in the leadership process. Many studies on leaders' emotional intelligence have been published in recent years (Humphrey, 2002; Wong & Law, 2002; Ashkanasy & Marie, 2003; Mayer, Salovey and Caruso, 2004; Boyatzis, 2006).

The competency approach to EI is meaningful for effective leadership research and practice as a result of its development method. Competency refers to "an underlying characteristic that leads to or cause effective performance" (Boyatzis, 1982, p. 21) and is used to differentiate the excellent and the average performance (Spencer & Spencer, 1993); it is identified in terms of a person's actions and intent (Boyatzis, 2009).

Within the first 20 years of research on competencies (1970-1990), it is estimated that these inductive, performance based studies were conducted in 94 countries (Boyatzis, 2009). Parts of the research teams typically included local country natives and the major method used for data collection was behavioral event interviews (which are not language dependent). Competencies were inductively generated based on the thematic analysis of the interview data, so that competencies are generally cultural sensitive (Boyatzis, 2009).

Today, competency lists include cognitive, emotional, and social competencies (Boyatzis, 2009). With cluster analyses, Boyatzis, Goleman and Rhee (2000) offered an ESI framework. They used McClelland (1985) personality theory to further explain the internal structure of ESI competency. For instance, the need for power drives teamwork, collaboration, and influence; the need for affiliation drives empathy; the need for achievement drives achievement orientation. A sense of self-efficacy and self-definition drives initiative.

Even though some competencies are demonstrated by outstanding leaders across cultures, for instance, achievement orientation and team leadership (Ryan, Emmerling & Spencer, 2009), the relative importance of specific competencies in explaining effectiveness may vary across cultures. A number of empirical studies have been published on the influence of competencies for leadership effectiveness in many countries of the world (see special issues of JMD, 2009 and JCCM, 2012 and Vision, 2012). The results show that competencies are consistent predictors of leadership effectiveness across cultures. For instance, in the study of Spanish executives' effectiveness, the result shows that achievement orientation, organizational awareness, developing others, influence and inspirational leadership have significant correlation with performance ($p < .01$); adaptability, initiative, service orientation and conflict management have significant correlation with performance ($p < .05$) (Ramo, Saris & Boyatzis, 2009).

Even though ESI competency has been developed based on research in 94 countries, its validity has not been confirmed in China. The use of dispositional concepts or theories needs to consider contextual applicability beyond western cultures and organizations (Casimir, Waldman, Bartram, & Yang, 2006). Thus, the further development of ESI competencies must consider its generalizability or variability in different cultural context, especially in a country like China with quite different cultural tradition as western culture.

Therefore, in this paper, I will compare different EI theories. Then, by referring to traditional Chinese culture and philosophical thoughts, I will examine the meanings and relevance of ESI competencies for effective Chinese leaders. The contributions of this paper are: (1) it can promote the generalization of ESI competencies; and (2) sets the basis for further research about effective Chinese leaders.

2. The EI of effective Chinese leaders from a competency perspective

Emotional intelligence research has become a focus of attention in recent years especially considering its relevance to leadership and organizational effectiveness (Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Bar-On, 1992, 1997; Goleman, 1998; Goleman, Boyaztis, & McKee, 2002; Boyatzis, 2009). One reason might be its challenge to our stereotyped belief about the relationship between emotions and rationality. The emotion is usually seen as in conflict with rationality (Woodsorth, 1940). However, emotion could coexist with rationality (Leeper, 1948), which means that people can be emotionally intelligent in their actions.

The other reason relates to the definition and underlying assumptions of emotional intelligence. There are three popular approaches to emotional intelligence: the trait model, the behavioral model and the self-perception model. In the following, I will compare different EI

theories, and explain why the behavioral model is more appropriate to study effective Chinese leaders.

2.1 A combination of inductive and deductive approach to explore ESI competencies

Given that all well-known EI theories were initially developed in western culture, they might not be sensitive to cultural changes; but ESI competencies are possibly an exception. These competencies were identified by inductive research into effective managers, leaders and professionals in many countries. Since parts of the research team typically included local country natives and the major method used for data collection was behavioral event interviews (which are not language dependent), it is believed that less cultural bias entered into the stream of competency development than other approaches to EI (which are based on tests and questionnaires). So, ESI competencies are quite robust and stable in different cultural contexts, and they are very consistent predictors of effective performance regardless of the cultural backgrounds (Spencer & Spencer, 1993; Goleman, Boyatzis & Mckee, 2002, p37).

Besides, as a behavioral demonstration, ESI competencies are much closer to performance than other EI approaches (Cherniss, 2010; Riggio, 2010). Based on trying to find the best fit between individual characteristics, job demands, and organizational environment (Boyatzis, 1982), Boyatzis (2009) considered ESI as a set of competencies, including four domains: emotional self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management. Boyatzis and colleagues clearly defined the meaning of the four domains. Self-awareness represents having a deep understanding of one's emotions and their effects. Self-management concerns managing one's emotions and internal impulses; it sets the base for leaders to effectively manage emotions in others. Social awareness refers to the recognizing of others' feelings and concerns. Relationship management concerns the skills for handling other's

relationships by making use of one's intelligence emotionally (Goleman, Boyatzis & Mckee, 2002; Boyatzis, 2009).

Different with ESI competencies, Salovey and Mayer (1990) defined emotional intelligence from the trait approach. They see EI as "the ability to monitor one's own and other's feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions". Perhaps the most important issue for Salovey and Mayer (1990) definition is that they claim that to be considered an EI, a thing should relate to intelligence and not to job or life outcomes (Mayer, Salovey & Caruso, 1999). That means that the job performance focus of a competency is not in their realm of definition. In fact, according to Mayer, DiPaolo and Salovey (1990: p. 775), the ability to process emotional information was associated with dispositional variables and several personality characteristics.

From the self-perception approach, Bar-On (1997) characterizes EI as "an array of non-cognitive capabilities, competencies, and skills that influence one's ability to succeed in coping with environmental demands and pressures" (Bar-On, 1997). His EI construct contains five dimensions: intrapersonal intelligence, interpersonal intelligence, adaptability, stress management, and general mood. He develops EQ-i to measure EI. There may be partially overlapping parts between the content of ESI and EQ-i in terms of the behavior being observed by informants. However, eight subscales in the EQ-i are not expected to relate with ESI competencies, and six ESI competencies are not expected to relate with EQ-i subscales (Boyatzis, 2009).

Effective leaders typically demonstrate strengths in different competencies of the four fundamental domains of emotional intelligence (Goleman, Boyatzis & Mckee, 2002, p. 40). Thus, in one aspect, we can discover what specific competencies effective and emotionally intelligent

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Chinese leaders could demonstrate; on the other hand, we might be curious about special competencies of effective Chinese leaders. But since much of the current research into ESI competencies uses 360 or other questionnaire based measures, it is necessary to re-examine the potential cross-cultural bias.

2. 2 ESI competencies are consistence with Chinese culture and philosophy

ESI competencies are very consistent with Chinese Confucian traditions. There are two reasons. Firstly, the behavioral approach to emotional intelligence seems consistent with the traditional Chinese thoughts on the relationship between *xin* (mind-heart) – *xing* (nature) – *qing* (emotion). In the *xin-xing-qing* system, *qing* (emotions) is usually seen as a behavioral manifestation of one's *xing* (nature) through heart and mind (Wei & Li, 2010). Thus, one's emotions are integrated with one's reflection and thoughts. In this case, emotions demonstrated in the behavioral form have the cognitive color. However, the self-perception approach to EI seems to contradict traditional Chinese thoughts of *xin-xing-qing* system. Bar-On's EI theory tries to separate EI clearly from cognitive abilities, but scholars doubt how a skill could be non-cognitive (Matthew, Zeidner, & Roberts, 2008).

The second reason is that Confucian thoughts insist on the importance of harmony- the harmonious relationship between individuals, internal and external surroundings. This thought is prevalent in China even nowadays. ESI competencies are based on the fit between individual, job demands, and external context, which reflects the harmony thoughts. A comparison between ESI competency and the ability EI would help us to better understand the consistence between ESI competency and Chinese Confucian traditions.

Compared with ESI competency, Salovey and Mayer's EI theory is less consistent with Chinese harmonious thoughts. Even though this model of EI is the most popular concept in

academic emotional intelligence research, it suffers from other scholars' question on several aspects. At first, this model does not clearly distinguish emotion regulation in self and others, but some scholars feel it is necessary to explain specifically how many separate domains EI should have (Zeidner, Roberts & Matthews, 2008).

Besides, Salovey and Mayer's model lacks the connecting dimension between individual abilities and external surroundings. Without considering person-situation interaction, the expression and understanding of EI may vary distinctly in different surrounding environment (Magnusson, 1976; Zeidner, Roberts & Matthews, 2008). Also, the on-going controversy between scoring their measure - MSCEIT with "expert scoring" and "consensus scoring" raises confusion as to consensual face validity.

Therefore, it seems necessary to 1) study ESI competencies considering the fit between individual and work surroundings, and to 2) explore the underlying theoretical support of ESI from the external cultural or philosophical context.

2.3 Construct validity and predictive validity of ESI scale

The type of measurement determines the nature of the EI model, instead of the theory per se (Petrides & Furnham, 2000). Compared with other EI concepts, personality traits, and cognitive ability, ESI scale has better construct validity and predictive validity in organizational contexts.

Mayer and colleagues proposed the MSCEIT scale to measure EI. If MSCEIT has good discriminant validity, its correlation coefficients with personality and g measures should be low ($r < .30$). However, MSCEIT shows moderate correlation with Big Five personality ($r =. 38$) (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2004) and other intelligences (Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 2000). Also, the discriminant validity of the emotional perception dimension measured by the MSCEIT was doubted, because highly similar emotion measures (JACBART, Vocal-I) with emotion

perception could not be subsumed under the same common underlying factor (Roberts et al.,

2006).

Besides, considering the robust and theoretically-defensible factor structure, the structural

validity of MSCEIT was in question (Zeidner et al., 2008). According to Mayer et al. (2000), the

four branches of ability EI model are hierarchical and obviously distinct, but the empirical

studies, measured with the MSCEIT, fail to distinct the two experiential EI branches (Day &

Carroll, 2004; Roberts, Schulze, O'Brien, MacCann, Reid, Maul, 2006).

Bar-On (1997) used self-reported emotional quotient inventory (EQ-i) to assess EI. He

takes efforts to test the discriminant and predictive validity of this scale, but EQ-i still faces

challenges because of its excessively overlap with existing personality measures. For instance,

EQ-i has a multiple correlation of .75 with Big Five; it "correlates about 0.80 with low trait

anxiety and general psychopathology" (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2000). Thus, scholars doubt

the discriminant validity of EQ-i for its "functioning as a proxy measure of personality"

(Matthew, Zeidner, Roberts, 2004).

Also, EQ-i's structural validity faces challenges. Scholars criticize it as a mixed model, for

the combination of intellect and various personality traits (Petrides & Furnham, 2001), and for its

deficiency of empirical bases and excessively broad conceptualization (Murphy, 2006).

ESI competencies are assessed with ESI scale, a 360 degree feedback. ESI scale has good

discriminant validity with personality and g measures. Also, the four categories of ESI

competencies are generated based on cluster analysis, so, ESI scale has a clear underlying

structure of four factors.

Besides, among emotional intelligence, g and personality, there have been intense

discussion as for which one can better predict leadership effectiveness and success (Boyatzis,

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Stubbs, & Taylor, 2002; Cote & Miners, 2006). Does EI have incremental validity or higher predictive validity to practical outcomes, compared with g and personality? Cote and Miners (2006) find that employees with low cognitive intelligence also perform effectively if they have high emotional intelligence, which further confirms EI as an important predictor of job performance.

Compared with the above two EI measures, personality, and g measures, ESI scale has stronger and consistent validity in predicting life and job outcomes (Boyatzis & Sala, 2004; Wolff, 2005; Boyatzis & Gaskin, 2010). Based on a sample from three medium-sized Spanish organizations, Ramo, Saris and Boyatzis (2009) found that the behavioral ESI competencies have powerful prediction of performance than personality traits. In the context of sales leadership, Boyatzis, Good and Massa (2012) empirically confirmed the predictability of ESI competencies on leadership performance beyond generalized intelligence and personality. Therefore, the psychometric properties of ESI test strengthen the generalizability and impact of emotional intelligence competencies.

Notwithstanding the pros of the definition and measurement scale, the content of EI measure may vary, depending on the surrounding environment (Zeidner et al., 2008). We wonder if ESI competencies can be generalized in China. By further exploring the meanings of ESI competencies in the Chinese context, we may further testify the psychometric property of ESI scale.

2.4 The combination of etic and emit approaches for ESI competencies

The combination of etic and emic approaches is a trend in cross-cultural theory and measurement development (i.e., personality traits), especially considering how cultural values impact human behavior. An emic approach focuses on learning about perceptions and

understandings of people in a specific culture; an etic approach uses more abstract terms and applies the measurement across cultures (Jaccard & Jacoby, 2010; Cheung, Vijver & Leong, 2011). The study of effective Chinese leaders' EI from competency perspective caters to the trend of etic-emic combination. The reason lies in that ESI competencies were developed based on behavioral event interview data in 94 countries, these competencies have already taken into account both specific cultural elements in a certain country and across cultural elements. In this sense, the behavioral approach to EI has the etic-emic combination properties. As a result, ESI competencies for effective leaders seem quite robust across cultures (Spencer & Spencer, 1993). However, considering the impact of cultural values on behaviors, a study to look at if effective Chinese leaders have the same competencies would substantiate the etic-emic properties of ESI competency per se.

From the discussion above, we can see that the behavioral approach to EI has several advantages compared with other approaches to EI. Firstly, it is based on the fit between individual, job demands and the context; secondly, it is behavioral observable and thus it is closer to performance; thirdly, ESI has better predictive validity and construct validity than the generalized intelligence, personality and other EI measures.

3. Examine the meaning and relevance of ESI competencies in China

Even though ESI competencies appear culturally sensitive, there is still the possibility that culture may affect the relationship between competencies and effectiveness. For instance, Leung (2005) found that the concept of emotional intelligence developed in western culture is not effective in Chinese leadership. But Leung's research is based on 4 year observation of just one company and 8 in-depth interviews of only managing directors and managers. Before conducting

research on the relevance of ESI competencies to effective leadership in Chinese culture, we should examine how Chinese culture and philosophy may require a change in some competency definitions.

3.1 The current condition of effective Chinese leaders' ESI competency research

Some dissertations in China have focused on the relationship between leaders' EI and leadership effectiveness (Wu, 2006; Zhang, 2006; Hu, 2007). But they mostly used Wong and Law (2002), which was a self-perception model. They usually analyze the relationship between the overall EI or the four sub-dimensions and leadership effectiveness, thus, they ignore to explore what specific EI competencies can predict effectiveness. Moreover, there is a bias in terms of the sample. As we know, for leadership effectiveness research, the target population should be effective leaders rather than general leaders. Therefore, collecting data from general leaders diverges from the original purpose of this paper and could bring errors to analysis results. They used a sample of people in leadership without documenting their effectiveness (Wong & Law, 2002).

3.2 The meaning and relevance of ESI competencies in effective Chinese leaders

Confucian said, "I will not be concerned at men's not knowing me; I will worry if I have the competencies" (Analects, chapter 14:30). ESI competencies include twelve most prominent competencies demonstrated by excellent leaders in various cultures. In the following, I will discuss the meaning and relevance of these competencies by referring to traditional Chinese thoughts.

  Emotional self-awareness

Emotional self-awareness refers to the ability to understand one's emotions, the underlying reasons and their effects (Boyatzis, 2009), as well as the ability to use one's values and goals as

an ongoing guide of decision making (Goleman, 1998, p. 54). Emotional self-awareness contains both cognitive and emotional dimensions, because it "starts with attunement to the stream of feeling that is a constant presence in all of us and with a recognition of how these emotions shape what we perceive, think and do" (Goleman, 1998, p.55). It also reflects one's perception of values, purpose or passion on work.

Confucian highly stressed the importance of inspecting and understanding one self. For instance, "I do examine myself daily on three points: whether I have not been faithful when acting for friends; whether I am not sincere when getting along with friends; whether I have not practiced again and again the knowledge instructed by my teacher[1]" (Analects, chapter 1: 6). Examining one's behaviors and attitudes is necessary for further development.

The awareness of one's emotions is not only in terms of the independent self. One of Confucius' disciples in Analects 1:4 stresses that the "self-examination consisted in evaluating his relationships with others, this practice being based on the idea that the individual in relation to others constitutes an important element in self-evaluation" (Lai, 1995, p253-4). This supports the use of the behavioral model of EI and collecting data about a person's EI behavior from others with whom they interact.

In the Guodian text of *Xing zi ming chu* (nature derives from mandate), it discusses the relationship between *xin* (mind-heart) and *qing*(emotion). Like it says, "all concern, when followed by reflection, becomes sorrow; all pleasure followed by contemplation becomes happiness, for all thinking employs the heart very deeply" (Translated by Chan, 2009). It seems that the ability to understand emotions is a complex mechanism that combining thinking, contemplation and reflection. Actually, *xin* is indispensable when dealing with emotions; it

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[1] The sentences from *Analects, the Great Learning, the Doctrine of Mean* refer to James Legge's translation. Because the Chinese classics are well-know, I do not list them in the references.

carries both cognitive and affective capabilities (Chan, 2009). However, the understanding of one's emotions is morally sensitive and thus naturally connected with the moral goals.

From the statement, we could see that in Chinese and western cultural context, emotional self-awareness is combined with thinking, contemplation, and reflection, and intellectual understanding. Meanwhile, it seems that self-awareness in various cultures also taps into being aware of one's values and the consistency of one's behavior with one's values and feelings. It seems that this competency has consistent meaning in different cultural contexts. In Figure 1, category 1 represents competencies having the same meaning in Chinese context and western culture. This competency is in Category 1 (Figure 1).

Several studies have supported the positive relationship between self-awareness and leadership effectiveness (Church, 1997; Shipper & Dillard, 1994; Sosik & Megerian, 1999). Shipper, Kincaid, Rotondo, and Hoffman (2003) discussed the relationship between emotional intelligence and managerial effectiveness that may apply to Chinese leaders. They found that in low power distance cultures like UK and US self-awareness is positively related with interactive skill effectiveness, whereas in high power distance cultures like Malaysia self-awareness is positively related with controlling skill effectiveness.

Proposition 1: emotional self-awareness can predict Chinese leader's effectiveness in controlling skills.

Empathy

Empathy has been considered as a cognitive or emotional process. As a cognitive process, it stresses the understanding of others' point of view according to his/her situation (Hogan, 1969). As an emotional process, it has been defined as sensing, perceiving, and experiencing the

vicarious emotional components of the other (Rogers, 1975; Batson, Fultz, & Schoenrade, 1987). Even though Rogers stated empathy to be a state in his 1957 or 1959 work, he reconsidered empathy as a process rather than a state (Rogers, 1975).

 Coke and Baston (1978) considered the cognitive and emotional empathy could interact, but they stated that perspective taking and empathic emotions as the source of altruistic motivation and helping behavior. From the competency perspective, empathy is given both cognitive and emotional meaning, but it does not involve intense feelings like sympathy and altruistic care. Empathy means putting oneself in others' place, understanding, sensing and interpreting their feelings, behaviors, perspectives and concerns (Boyatzis, 2009). It demonstrates the intent to understand others by standing in theirs place. For leaders, empathy enables them to get along well with people from diverse backgrounds (Goleman et al., 2002).

In Confucian, the concept *shu* (tolerate) refers to understand others' internal feelings, "do not do to others what you would not like to do" (Analects, 12: 2). Only by standing in others' place, one can understand their internal feelings. In this sense, it seems that one tries to understand others from his/her own perspective. In Analects, the discussion of *shu* is Confucius' answer of *ren (humanity/benevolence) in one context*. The meaning of empathy in Chinese culture cannot be fully explained without referring to *ren*.

According to Confucian, *ren* is a fundamental principle in self-cultivation and interpersonal relations. Even though the Analects talks about *ren* in many times, there is no consistent and accurate definition of *ren*. Scholars basically agree that, being *ren*, one should express care for others, sympathize with others, and show concern for the relationships with others (Chan, 2003; Li, 2008). Mencius said, "All the ten thousand things are there in me. There is no greater joy for

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me than to find that I am true to myself, try my best to treat others as I would wish to be treated myself, and I will find that this is the shortest way to benevolence (*ren*)" (Tu, 1998, p. 24).

It seems that *ren* in Chinese context adds to empathy the color of sincerity and true care for others, even though we cannot deny that in the modern economic society people's action is more purposeful and practical. Therefore, from the competency approach, the meaning of empathy seems different in western culture and Chinese context. However, if taking into account the consequence of empathy, this competency has a shade of difference which I see as more of an enhancement than difference. The competency empathy may or may not include a higher level of caring, but it does mean noticing and sensing. Meanwhile, in Chinese context, empathy also plays the role of self-enjoyment and being sincere. This competency is more likely in category 2.

A few studies have been carried out on the relationship between empathy and leadership effectiveness with Chinese leaders as samples. Cheung and Chan (2008) analyzed Chinese leadership styles from traditional Confucian and Daoist perspective firstly; then, based on the analysis of interview data, they arrived at that empathy and benevolence predict Chinese leadership effectiveness, in the form of followers' admiration, coordination and commitment to collective goals.

Besides, in the theory of multiple intelligences, Gardner (1993) defined interpersonal intelligence as the ability to perceive and understand the emotions, feelings and intentions of other people, which is very similar with the meaning of empathy in ESI. Chan (2007) took 510 gifted Chinese students in Hong Kong as a sample and found that interpersonal intelligence was a significant predictor of successful leaders' flexibility in working with different people. Therefore, even though their analysis was based on the Hong Kong Chinese students, their finding sheds light on the general effective Chinese leaders' competencies.

Proposition 2: Empathy with slight modifications in a higher level of caring predicts Chinese leaders' effectiveness.

Influence

Influence means "wielding effective tactics for persuasion" (Boyatzis, 2009). The underlying concern is to convince, persuade or have an impact on others. It reflects people's need for power (McClelland, 1985). Accurate interpersonal understanding is necessary for effective application of one's influence (Spencer & Spencer, 1993, p. 47). People good at influence can sense or predict others' reaction and can effectively lead others toward an intended goal (Goleman, 1998, p. 169).

When looking at this competency in traditional Chinese thoughts, I find that influence in Confucian philosophy has two special characteristics: firstly, there is a sufficient prerequisite for one to conduct behaviors of influence, that is, "To cultivate and develop oneself before convincing and impacting others" (Analects, chapter 14: 42). Mencius said, "When one takes action but don't get the desired result, he must turn inwards and examine himself. Once a ruler behaves correctly, all others will turn to him with recognition and submission" (Mencius, Chapter 4).

Secondly, the Chinese way to influence is more implicit, instead of the effortful persuasion. As a Chinese metaphor saying, "the peach and the plum do not speak, yet a path is worn beneath then for their attractive flowers and fruit" (the Records of the Grand Historian: Biography of General Li), a man with strengths or virtues (i.e., sincerity, honesty) will influence others in a natural way. Thus, Chinese leaders tend to use indirect forms of influence (Lin, 2008). This sounds like the same thing with some subtly in Chinese action. So this is category 2.

Since Chinese leaders tends to influence and impact others in a more subtly way, they like to use indirect forms of influence like coalition tactics and upward appeals; in this process, the assistance of a third party may also be involved (Bond, 1991; Fu & Yurl, 2000).

This specialty of Chinese leaders' ability to influence turns out to be effective. For instance, when there is conflict in the team, the leader's informal visits can make all members feel involved, so that the conflicts between them fade gradually (Li, Xin, Tsui, & Hambrick, 1999). Also, a cross-cultural empirical study supports that managers from China are less effective at using rational persuasion than proactive influence tactics (Fu & Yurl, 2000).

Proposition 3: Influence with slight modifications in a more subtly way can predict Chinese leader's effectiveness.

Coach and Mentor

The Coach and Mentor competency refers to the ability to learn about others' needs, and provide information or other kinds of support to stimulate their development (Boyatzis, 2009). The intent is clear to stimulate people to develop the abilities or improve performance. In Confucian thoughts, there are also viewpoints about coaching and mentoring others, based on the argument about self-other relationship.

"To be *ren*, if a man wishes to be established himself, he should also seek to establish others; if he wishes to succeed himself, he should also help to succeed others" (Analects, chapter 6: 30). Therefore, in Confucian, self-development and self-realization is not independent of developing and mentoring others. Speaking of the attitude of cultivating others, Confucius said "never being wearied when instructing others" (Analects, chapter 7: 2). This means that being a coach or

mentor, one should care for others and provide on-going support and mentoring with consistent patience.

It seems that developing others is a prerequisite for and a necessary component of self-development. As a learner, a saga, and a scholar, Confucius' success lies in his power to cultivate knowledge in his followers, at the same time improving his own knowledge by connecting with them (Dhakhwa & Enriquez, 2008).

The competency- coach and mentor in Chinese context share the mutual meanings with that in western culture. However, in Chinese context, it seems that self-development and mentoring others are indispensable of each other. But this competency is the same, therefore Category 1.

Vilkinas, Shen and Cartan (2008) classified Chinese leaders' roles into integrator, deliverer, monitor, developer, and broker, according to two dimensions "people-task and external-internal". The empirical result supports that Chinese leaders are mostly focused on being a deliverer and a developer, both of which contribute mostly to the prediction of leadership effectiveness, compared with the left three roles.

The managerial application for being a developer includes: "being aware of individual needs and facilitating development; developing teams", which is much similar in meaning to the competency - coach and mentor.

Proposition 4: Coach and mentor can predict Chinese leaders' effectiveness.

Achievement Orientation

Achievement orientation means "striving to improve or meeting a standard of excellence" (Boyatzis, 2009). The intent is to accomplish desired goals or improve one's performance, with the concern of doing something better (Boyatzis, 1982, p.62). It is also demonstrated by setting

goals or expectations for the performance of other people or the whole team (Spencer & Spencer, 1993, p. 29). In order to improve one self and to do better, relevant behaviors have to be taken, for instance, setting challenging goals, taking calculated risks, striving to meet a quantitative or qualified standard. For an individual, with the intent to do one's best and do things better, the person must be striving continuous for improvement in his/her life time.

In Chinese culture, the value of "striving to do one's best and be the best oneself" has its root since ancient times. As it is said in the Great Learning, "the essence of great learning is to illustrate illustrious virtue, to renovate the people, and to seek the utmost excellence"(The Great Learning, chapter 1). The role of people seems more like an innovator, with feasible planning and continuous efforts (Boyatzis, 1982, p.62). "To seek the utmost excellence" is the ever-lasting goal for oneself. In Confucian, the utmost excellence refers not only to the own virtue development, but also to one's expectation of other people's development.

Specific behaviors are required in the process of pursuing one's best self. For instance, "if you can one day renovate yourself, do so from day to day. Let there be daily renovation." (The Great Learning, chapter 3). Once a person has the need of achievement, it does not matter if he has what kind of deeds in the past, or what a terrible state he is in at present. What matters is that with the desire of achievement, one can take specific actions to renew one-self, to change oneself, and to approach excellence gradually.

Therefore, the meaning of achievement orientation is consistent in the west and Chinese cultures, to do one's best and to be the best one self. In Figure 1, achievement orientation is in category 1. Meanwhile, achievement orientation also has the extension meaning of having higher expectation of others and inspiring them towards the goal. It seems that this extension meaning of achievement orientation is relevant to the competency of inspirational leadership.

According to Vilkinas, Shen and Cartan (2008), the managerial application for being a deliver includes: "being work-focused, motivating behavior, setting goals, clarifying roles, scheduling, coordination and problem solving", which is quite similar to the meaning of achievement orientation. It contributes to the prediction of leadership effectiveness.

Proposition 5: Achievement orientation can predict Chinese leaders' effectiveness.

Emotional self-control

Emotional self-control means controlling for disruptive emotions and impulses, and remaining calm even under high stress (Boyatzis, 2009). The intent is to control inappropriate emotions and keep them in a proper condition.

Confucian 'Doctrine of the Mean' (*zhongyong*) means moderation; it emphasizes that harmony is 'most precious' in relationships among people and with the external world (Chan, 1963). Individuals are to control their emotions and work with others in a harmonious manner (Tjosvold, Poon, & Yu, 2005). Taking into account of Confucian *zhongyong*, Yearley (2003, p. 150) defined people's ability to control emotional reactions and to modulate their desires for things.

Also, the actualization of li (propriety) is helpful for one to control own emotions. The actualization of li is mainly about introspective self-discipline (Tu, 1998, p. 23). *Xunzi* argued that li aids to regulate human's pursuit of the satisfaction of various desires (Chan, 2009). In traditional Chinese thoughts, li as norms of appropriateness within the social context, it does not only govern social behavior, it also regulates individual behavior in keeping with what counts as normative (Lai, 1995, p.254). In this sense, emotional self-control demonstrates both one's ability to control one's impulses and bring good to others.

But in the *dao* and Confucian discussion of *qing* (emotions), traditional cultural patterns (i.e., rites and music) were used to cultivate proper emotions and feelings in people by training one's *xin* (Chan, 2009). The Great Learning also talks about "rectify one's *xin*", which means getting rid of all kinds of unease impulses and keep internal peace. To achieve success in one's self-cultivation (knowledge or accomplishment), family and career, rectifying one's *xin* and retaining proper emotions are the basis.

Thus, emotional self-control in China does not only have the meaning of managing disruptive emotions and impulses of oneself, for the good of others, it also extends to keep ones' emotions in a normal and harmonious relationship among people or with external surroundings. Thus, it is in category 2.

Silverthorne (2001) took Chinese effective and ineffective leaders as comparison samples to test the big five personality (Neo PI-R) in the Republic of China (Taiwan). The result shows that there is a significant difference between effective and ineffective Chinese leaders on the emotional stability and the conscientiousness dimensions. Emotional stability is also called neuroticism, which is one of the big five personalities (McCrae & Costa, 1985). Even though emotional stability is a personality, people with low emotional stability reflect some emotional traits like anxious, angry, upset, embarrassed, and worried (Barrick & Mount, 1991). These are also the behavioral demonstration of people who are not good at emotional self-control. In Silverthorne (2002) study, effective Chinese leaders score lower on neuroticism scale than ineffective leaders ($t = -.834$, $df = 50$, $p < .001$). This means that effective Chinese leaders are emotionally more stable than ineffective leaders.

In a study about the joint effect of leader-member- exchange and emotional intelligence on followers' burnout and work performance, Huang, Chan, Lam and Nan (2010) found that

regulation of one's emotion is positively related with work performance, with a sample from Mainland China. Regulation of the emotion means an individual's ability to regulate his or her emotions (Wong & Law, 2002), which has some overlapping meaning with self-control. Although Huang et al. (2010) measured EI with Wong and Law (2002)'s scale, which is a self-reported measure, the result at least provides us with some evidence that Chinese leaders' effectiveness is positively related with their ability of emotional self-control. It bears some meaning to the following proposition:

Proposition 6: Emotional self-control with slight modifications in the normative consideration can predict Chinese leaders' effectiveness.

Adaptability

Adaptability reflects one's ability to adapt to changing situations, individuals or groups (Spencer & Spencer, 1993; Boyatzis, 2009). The intent is to adapt to changing circumstances. It also refers to one's ability to perceive and understand the connect conditions, and adapt to the new condition.

In the Art of War (chapter 6), it is said, "Water shapes its course according to the landform of the ground over which it flows; the soldier works out his victory as a result of the enemies. Therefore, just as water retains no constant shape, so in warfare there are no constant conditions. Those who adapt tactics in relation to their opponents and thereby succeed in war may be called a born leader." In China, these phrases are usually used to inform people to adapt to external changes, for instance, the changes in environment or competitors. One's agility to recognize the changing circumstances is the prerequisite for one to quickly and successfully adapt to the new changes.

Therefore, the meaning of adaptability is consistent with the Chinese culture. Built upon one's rational awareness of the changes, one makes adjustment flexibly. It should be in category 1.

Adaptability is a requirement for effective leaders in Chinese societal culture (Cheung, 2008). Effective leaders in Chinese context have to be adaptive so that their management can be compatible with societal culture and changes.

By examining the impact of both adaptive and non-adaptive leaders in Taiwan on productivity, Silverthorne and Wang (2001) found that the level of leader's adaptive ability is positively related with the productivity of the organization. They use 6 criteria to measure productivity: absenteeism, turnover rate, quality of work, reject rates, profitability, and units produced. Even though Silverthorne and Wang (2001) analyzed adaptability from situational leadership perspective, the meaning of adaptability in their research has the quite similar meaning with that of adaptability as a competency. For instance, both perspectives stress the requirement of leaders' ability to be flexible and adaptive to situational changes, to adapt the leadership styles when influencing employees and groups. Besides, as Taiwan and Mainland China have the same Chinese cultural traditions and Philosophy, it seems that effective Mainland Chinese leaders are also good at adaptability.

Proposition 7: Adaptability can predict Chinese leaders' effectiveness.

Conflict management

Conflict management refers to one's ability to negotiate and resolve disagreements (Boyatzis, 2009). The intent is to arouse individuals or groups to discuss and find a resolution to a conflict. The person can be in or outside of the group in a conflict situation.

In traditional Chinese philosophy, harmonious thoughts dominate people's behaviors and attitudes towards the relationship management. As it is said in Confucian, "a superior man is at a harmonious relationship with others, without compromising his viewpoint to the others'; a mean man easily compromises to the uniformity, but hardly keeps a harmonious relationship with others" (Analects, chapter 13: 23). The higher standard for one to handle with disagreement is not catering to or complying with others' viewpoints without careful consideration, but to recognize the differences and arrive at an integrative effect by complementing each other. Like Xunzi said, "Empty one but static" (Xunzi, Chapter Jiebi), even facing disagreement, one should be open-minded, reflect quietly, and find the answer. In fact, with harmony in mind, people are genuinely with a concern for feelings of trust, compatibility, and mutually beneficial behaviors (Leung, Koch, & Lu, 2002). This motive may stimulate Chinese people to discuss the conflict openly and directly, which is considered useful in collectivist cultures (Ohbuchi, Suzuki, & Hayashi, 2001; Tjosvold, Poon, & Yu, 2005). Thus, on the one hand, it seems that the abilities to tolerate differences and make a harmonious atmosphere are important in face of conflicts; on the other hand, it seems that the ability to solve conflicts by openly and directly discussion may be also useful for Chinese people. The experimental and filed studies by Tjosvold and colleagues demonstrate that open discussion for Chinese people is helpful to build high quality relationship, stimulate understanding, and arrive at high quality solutions (Tjosvold, Hui, & Sun, 2004; Tjosvold, 2008). On the contrary, avoiding conflicts seems to destruct relationships and effectiveness (Chen & Tjosvold, 2002).

One's intent on how to handle conflicts should depend on whether or not they have a shared vision. In a conflict situation, creating a harmony relationship with others but not necessarily uniformity is viewed as charismatic of effective people with moral qualities. However, for those

without mutual goals, with poor moral qualities and no ambitions, a distinct method of handling conflict should be adopted. Confucian said, "don't work with people who is not your way" (Analects, chapter 15: 40), in which case the conflicts are ignored and no cooperation is achieved.

Therefore, it seems like that conflict management in Chinese context is more about one's ability to tolerate differences, insist on internal reflection, and create a harmonious relationship with those sharing a goal. But solving conflicts by openly and directly discussion is also useful in Chinese context. So, this competency should be in category 2.

Although Chinese culture is collectivist and uncertainty avoidance, this does not mean that avoiding conflicts is effective for Chinese leaders (Tjosvold, 2008). Conflict management is necessary for effective Chinese leaders, because conflict management by leaders can strengthen genuine harmony and trust, prove the competency of leaders, and promote understanding (Tjosvold, Hui, & Sun, 2004).

Proposition 8: Conflict management with slight modifications in the consideration of tolerating differences can predict Chinese leaders' effectiveness.

Teamwork

Built upon shared goals, teamwork reflects one's ability to work together with others (Spencer & Spencer, 1993, p. 61; Boyatzis, 2009). The intention is to work cooperatively with others in pursuing collective goals.

In Chinese context, Confucian *he* (harmony) thoughts set the basis for teamwork. Mencius said, "Opportunities afforded by heaven are surpassed by terrestrial advantages, which in turn are surpassed by the harmony among people" (Mencius, Chapter 4). The harmonious relationship with other people is the foundation for teamwork. In fact, "the harmonious relationship among

people" refers to the cooperation between people. In the war, the cooperation among the team members is the most important factor to win the enemy. Also, as it is said, "harmony is the essential in the application of *li*" (Analects, chapter 1: 12). Li is used to regulate and cultivate people's behaviors; in this context, the ability to cooperate with others should be put in the first place.

On the contrary, if one cannot cooperate with others, there will be no mutual goal. "A man must first despise himself, and then others will despise him. A family must first destroy itself, and then others will destroy it. A state must first smite itself, and then others will smite it", "when Heaven sends down calamities, it is still possible to escape them; when we occasion the calamities ourselves, it is not possible any longer to live" (Mencius, chapter 7: 8). One's ability to engage in teamwork and cooperation sets the basis for individual success, harmony at home, and country development. While the positive synergy effect brought by teamwork is powerful, the negative effect brought by selfishness is destructive.

 Therefore, it seems that the meaning of teamwork in Chinese culture has the same meaning with that in western culture. It should be in category 1.

With the impact of collectivism culture, Chinese people generally value harmonious interpersonal relationships and do not like aggressive ways of working with others. With executives from more than 100 organizations in China, the study result shows that the leader's ability and values to work together with the top management team, and to commit to people and productivity may convince top management team members that this leader values people and production, which finally stimulates leadership effectiveness (Chen, Tjosvold, & Liu, 2006). Another study conduct in China arrives at the result that if a leader considers that his goals and the goals of members are co-operatively related, and he enables members to realize that their

goals are cooperative, the group will work together effectively towards the cooperative goals (Hui, Law, Chen & Tjosvold, 2008).

Proposition 9: Teamwork can predict Chinese leaders' effectiveness.

Inspirational leadership

Inspirational leadership refers to one's ability to inspire and guide individuals and groups (Boyatzis, 2009; Goleman, 1998). It is based on the articulation and arousal of shared vision, values, and concerns (Boyatzis, 1982, p. 100). Therefore, a leader with inspirational leadership competency tends to inspire and lead subordinates towards a specific direction.

In Chinese tradition, if one wants to make great achievement, chi (ambition and strong will) is required except for efforts. For instance, "the commander of Amy forces may be changed, but the strong will and ambition of a general man cannot be changed" (Analects, Chapter 9: 25). For a leader, the key point for success is to inspire others with this will and ambition and thus to build common goals.

In Confucian thought, a leader's accomplishments are viewed as harmony in families, wealth and peace of a country. In order to make great accomplishments, one has to follow the "eight principles" behaviorally and emotionally. "Things being investigated, knowledge was acquired; their knowledge being acquired, their thoughts were sincere. Their thoughts being sincere, their *xin* were then rectified. Their *xin* being rectified, their persons were cultivated. Their persons being cultivated, their families were harmonious. Their families being harmonious, their States were rightly governed. Their States being rightly governed, the whole kingdom was made tranquil and happy" (the Great Learning). The "eight principles" can be seen as a dynamic process for one to overcome challenges in each period and arrive at the final success. Among

them, "rectify one's *xin* (hear-mind)" is the core point and a threshold. With rectifying one's xin, a leader can then renovate the people. "To renovate the people" seems more like the competency of inspirational leadership, demonstrating one's virtues and thus inspiring others to renovate themselves.

Compared with inspirational leadership developed in western culture, this competency in Chinese context has special meaning: firstly, "rectifying one's *xin*" is taken as a necessity for one to successfully inspire others; besides, inspirational leadership is demonstrated in different situations. Except for in the working set, inspirational leadership take effects in other events or contexts. Spencer and Spencer (1993, p. 21) talked about three competency scale dimensions, among which the breadth of impact is one dimension. It seems that inspirational leadership in Chinese culture also has broader scope of impact. It could be in the organizational setting, family, community or the nation. Moreover, one's intent to inspire is accompanied with cognitive or emotionally relevant behaviors like experiencing and investigating things, acquiring knowledge, rectifying one's impulses, cultivating one self, and retaining harmony in the family. Therefore, because of the need for harmony in many aspects of life and different expression in different settings, in Figure 1, the competency inspirational leadership falls into category 3.

Related with Confucius values, Communist ideologies, and modern management values, inspirational leadership is considered and reported as an important attribute for effective leaders in China; it is defined as "making people feel inspired, encouraged, and motivated" (Fu & Tsui, 2003).

Chinese leaders can develop effective relationship to inspire and motivate employees to perform effectively (Tjosvold &Wong, 2000). In the Chinese service industry, a leader's ability to inspire the front-line team members, especially to elicit the positive effects, is closely related

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with their service performance (Bai, 2011). The leader could be one of the important predictors of employees' service performance; specifically, the leader's ability to motivate employees and articulate a compelling vision inspiring and appealing to the employees impacts employees' service performance (Liao & Chuang, 2007).

Proposition 10: Inspirational leadership with major changes in the breadth of impact can predict Chinese leaders' effectiveness.

Positive outlook

Positive outlook means the ability to see the positive aspects of others, situations and the future (Boyatzis, 2009). For instance, seeing more positive emotions in people than negative emotions, seeing more opportunities rather than threats in external surroundings, and seeing more hope than desperation towards the future. It is similar with optimism, with the intent to appreciate and capture positive elements.

In Confucian, it stresses the importance of persistence and bright outlook towards one's future development and tasks (Analects, chapter 8:7). To pursue the perfect virtue, one can even take great efforts and ambition until death. Meanwhile, in Confucius and Mencius philosophical thoughts, they assume human beings to be kind and good rather than evil, and to be in a harmonious relationship with the nature. Thus, from their perspective, people should see things around in a positive view.

Similarly, in a poem created in Song Dynasty, it was said, "where hills bend, streams wind and the pathway seems to end, past dark willows and flowers in bloom lies another village". It implies that newly positive trends will always show up. Until nowadays, people still use similar

words to encourage and comfort themselves and others. So, the meaning of positive outlook is consistent in western and Chinese cultures. It should be in category 1.

Positive outlook is considered relating with leadership effectiveness. By content analyzing stories in two major official Chinese newspapers, Fu and Tsui (2003) arrived at effective Chinese leader's attributes which relate to Confucius values, Communist ideologies, and modern management articulate; optimism is one of the attributes, which means "always believing in obtaining a positive result" and being optimistic about what they do. Besides, with a survey in service industry, the positive service climate, created by leaders to represent the strategic focus, is helpful to enhance employee service performance (Liao & Chuang, 2007).

In an empirical study to learn about the successful characteristics of Chinese organizational leaders, temporally optimistic is considered as one of the characteristics for effective leaders (Wang, 2011). Even though the author considered optimistic as temporally, it might not be the case; he used Kotter's (1986) viewpoint of leaders' temporally optimistic without considering Chinese culture and philosophical context. Thus, being optimistic is considered important for effective Chinese leaders.

Proposition 11: Positive outlook can predict Chinese leaders' effectiveness.

Organizational awareness

Organizational awareness refers to one's ability to understand the emotional currents and power relationships of a group (Spencer & Spencer, 1993, p. 48; Boyatzis, 2009). The group might be an individual's own organization or other organizations. Organizational awareness usually contains the "complexity or depth of understanding" and "the size of the organization the individual understands". Its typical indicators contain: understand the informal structures of an

organization, recognize the unspoken rules, and recognize the underlying problems and opportunities (Spencer & Spencer, 1993, p. 49).

In Chinese philosophy, organizational awareness appears in different contexts and relationships. At first, it is considered as an essential factor relating to success in war. "If you know the enemy and know yourself, your victory will not stand in doubt; if you know Heaven and know Earth, you may make your victory complete" (the Art of War, chapter 10). If a leader wants to succeed in war, he should not only be aware of his own force, but also be aware of the competitors and surroundings.

Organizational awareness is also expressed in Confucian family culture and family-nation relationship. Mencius said, "Treating with the reverence the elders in your own family, meanwhile, the elders in the families of others should be similarly treated; treating with the kindness the young in your own family, meanwhile, the young in the families of others should be similarly treated. Doing this, the whole nation may be made to go round in your palm" (Mencius, chapter 1: 7).

Family is usually considered as a basic unit of the existence of a country and society. In a family, one should care about and cultivate the young, as well as respect and take care of the elder. Beyond that, one should also treat the young and the elder in other families in the same way as his own, in which condition the whole nation would be managed easily.

Philosophical thoughts expressed in a family culture can also be applied in an organizational context. In this sense, organizational awareness is a necessity for organizational development and effectiveness. However, the organizational awareness in China is based on the family culture, so, it also reflects a feeling of caring. Therefore, the meaning of organizational

awareness in Chinese context is not completely equivalent to that of western culture. It should be in category 2.

Based on literature review and behavioral event interview, Zhang (2006) developed 23 items to measure Chinese leaders' emotional intelligence. Two items "sense relationships in the group" and "recognize unspoken principles" could partially reflect the meaning of organizational awareness. The result shows that the factor represented by these items is significantly related with leadership performance. Even though the author does not use effective leaders as the subjects, the result is helpful to propose the relationship between organizational awareness and effectiveness.

Proposition 12: organizational awareness with slight modifications in family-like caring can predict Chinese leaders' effectiveness.

Guanxi building

The Western social psychological theories usually insist that interpersonal relationship is culture free (Chen & Chen, 2004), that is, it is the consistent psychological reaction in various cultures. However, in China, *guanxi* is an indigenous phenomenon and has its roots in traditional Chinese culture.

Guanxi is defined as "an informal, particularistic personal connection between two individuals who are bounded by an implicit psychological contract to follow the social norm of *guanxi* such as maintaining a long-term relationship, mutual commitment, loyalty, and obligation" (Chen & Chen, 2004). It tends to build upon a set of background factors impacting interpersonal relationships (kinships, birthplace, work unit, alma mater etc.) (Chen, Chen & Xin, 2004; Farh et al., 1998).

From relationship perspective, there are coworker *guanxi* and supervisor-subordinate *guanxi* (Chen, Friedman, Yu, Fang, & Lu, 2009) research in the organizational context. However, in these research, *guanxi,* as a noun, cannot reflect one's ability of building *connection*. *Guanxi* building, as a verb, sounds more likely to demonstrate one's ability of building connection. No matter in what types of *guanxi*, *guanxi* building is an important ability necessary to build good connections. The consideration of several characteristics of *guanxi* might lead to the discovery of a new competency – *guanxi* building for effective Chinese leaders.

Firstly, g*uanxi* has broad social bases and thus is not confined to the internal organizational environment. *Guanxi* is a dominant form of social exchange in China (Lin, 2001). In ancient Confucian, the word "*lun*" is used to express the importance of human relationships in the society (King, 1991). "*Wu lun*" is the basis of all the social relationships: ruler-subject, father-son, husband-wife, elder brother-younger brother, and friend-friend. Mencius proposed the five moral principles – *zhong* (loyalty), *xiao* (fealty), *ti* (respect), *ren*[2] (tolerance), *shan* (goodness) - to regulate these relationships. Nowadays, *guanxi* building is often initiated based on the identification of *guanxi* base that are unique to Chinese culture (Chen & Chen, 2004). Sufficient collection, recognition and use of *guanxi* base are practically important for Chinese leaders.

Besides, guanxi building demonstrates one's ability to build implicit rather than explicit interpersonal psychological contract, which reflects the strong dyadic connection and obligations not influenced by the shared group identity; also, it reflects one's ability to make use of the connections for specific purposes (Chen & Chen, 2004). Therefore, *guanxi* building is related with the informal psychological understanding and differs from those competencies related with explicitly hierarchical task relationship.

[2] Ren here does not refer to the benevolence ren, even the pronunciation is the same; it means tolerance.

Similar with ESI competencies, *guanxi* building has an emotional foundation in Chinese culture. Q*ing* (emotion/feeling) sets the foundation of *guanxi*. Without *jiaoqing* (obligation), friend-friend trust may not be built (Chen & Chen, 2004). Without *qinqing* (family affective attachment), father-son, husband-wife, and elder brother-younger brother *guanxi* may not exist. In this sense, one's ability to build implicit interpersonal psychological contract cannot exist without *qing*. Thus, *guanxi* building has both cognitive and emotional components, which makes it more like an ESI competency. *Guanxi* building represents one's ability to build connections and make use of various resources. Its outcome *guanxi* reflects a personal relationship with the feature of sentiment and obligation, probably a long-term connection.

The challenge of taking *guanxi* building as a competency also exists. It seems that whether one is good or not at building *guanxi* can be used to differentiate effective and ineffective leaders, but we can hardly tell whether *guanxi* building is based on individual, job demands, and organizational environment fit. Since *guanxi* building is more related with informal psychological understanding than the hierarchical task relationship, *guanxi* building is not necessarily task-related. So, more research needs to be done to see if *guanxi* building could be another competency in the cluster of relationship management.

In China, *guanxi* is recognized as necessity to thrive and success in business (Xin & Pearce, 1996). With a sample of executives from Mainland China, Xin and Pearce (1996) confirmed the importance of *guanxi* to executives, especially those with less structural protection (for instance, private-company executives). *Guanxi* not only demonstrate people's ability to build connections among various people in an implicit way, in the case of no institutional support, this ability is also essential for a leader to carry out task-related or social related behaviors.

Farh et al. (1998) conducted two empirical studies to explore the importance of *guanxi* between supervisor and subordinate, as well as executives and their important business connections; they found that *guanxi* is significantly related with subordinate trust in the supervisor and business connections' trust with executives.

Focusing this phenomenon at work, Wong, Ngo and Wong (2003) proposed subordinate-supervisor *guanxi* and defined it as the reciprocal relationship between a subordinate and his or her immediate supervisor. Actually, effective Chinese managers tend to make full use of this strategy to acquire employees' trust and loyalty.

Proposition 13: *Guanxi* may be a new competency of relationship management in Chinese context, which can predict Chinese leaders' effectiveness.

Figure 1 Competencies and Chinese Traditional culture and philosophical thoughts[3]

Competencies	Chinese Traditional culture and philosophical thoughts		
	Category 1	Category 2	Category 3
Emotional self-awareness	I did examine myself daily on three points; Xin-qing;		
Empathy		*shu*; *Ren;*	
Influence		To cultivate and develop oneself before convincing and impacting others; The peach and the plum do not speak, yet a path is worn beneath then for their attractive flowers and fruit;	

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[3] Note: Category 1 represents competencies having the same meaning in Chinese context and western culture; Category 2 represents competencies having some similarity in Chinese context and western culture, but not the same; Category 3 represents competencies having different meanings in Chinese context and western culture.

Coach and mentor	Establish others & succeed others; Never being wearied when instructing others;		
Achievement orientation	Doing better, doing as well as you can, proving to yourself that you are wrothy; Seek the utmost excellence; Daily renovation;		
Emotional self-control		Zhongyong; the actualization of li; proper emotion (tao); rectify one's *xin;*	
Adaptability	As water retains no constant shape, so in warfare there are no constant conditions. Adapt tactics in relation to their opponents and succeed;		
Conflict management		A superior is at a harmonious relationship with others, but not at uniformity; Empty one but static; Don't work with people who is not your way;	
Teamwork	*he* (harmony)		
Inspirational Leadership			chi (ambition); The eight principles

Positive outlook	Persistence and bright outlook towards one's future development and task; Past dark willows and flowers in bloom lies another village;		
Organizational awareness		Know the enemy and know yourself, your victory will not stand in doubt; know Heaven and Earth, you may make your victory complete; Family culture; Family- country relationship	
Guanxi			*Wulun; qing*

3.3 Summary

As I discussed above, the competency approach to EI bears the highest probability to analyze effective Chinese leaders' emotional intelligence. Firstly, ESI competencies can be applied to various cultural contexts; besides, it has strong psychometrical properties towards the real-world effective leaders' EI; thirdly, the behavioral approach of EI fits the Chinese cultural context; finally, we can examine effective Chinese leaders' competencies, as well as their meaning and possible changes in definition.

4. Discussion and future research direction

Leaders growing up in a culture will probably internalize the dominant cultural values; these values impact their attitudes and behavior in such ways that may not be conscious (Adler, 1997). The curiosity to find the truth stimulates me to explore whether ESI competencies

developed in almost 94 countries have the same meanings in Chinese context, and to see what competencies are demonstrated by effective Chinese leaders.

By referring to Chinese philosophical and traditional cultural thoughts, I checked the meanings and relevance of ESI competencies in China. The primary finding is that six competencies have the consistent meaning in Chinese context, emotional self-awareness, coach and mentor, achievement orientation, adaptability, positive outlook, and teamwork. Meanwhile, empathy, influence, emotional self-control, organizational self-awareness, and conflict management in Chinese context have some similarity with the general accepted meanings, but are not the same. However, the competency, inspirational leadership, has different meanings in Chinese and western cultures.

Guanxi emerges as a possible new competency unique in Chinese cultural context. According to the original research on competency, it is used to distinguish the excellent leaders from the general ones. However, the empirical research testing whether *guanxi* can be used to distinguish effective Chinese leaders from the average Chinese leaders is limited, so, this competency needs further examination.

Based on existing research focused on Chinese leaders, I proposed that thirteen ESI competencies can predict Chinese leaders' effectiveness. However, these propositions are far from sufficient at this period. Several issues are emerged on this point: firstly, do some ESI competencies really have unique meanings in Chinese contexts? Secondly, are the meanings of ESI competencies derived based on traditional Chinese culture and philosophical thoughts consistent nowadays with the modern Chinese management reality? Thirdly, are these ESI competencies significantly related with effective Chinese leaders' performance? Fourth, is

guanxi really a new competency unique in the Chinese context? Will the empirical study support the propositions?

As a first step, it is necessary to test the meanings of each competency based in a qualitative inquiry using the behavioral event interview (BEI) of effective Chinese leaders. Using this method, we can tell whether the meaning of each competency is consistent in a Chinese cultural background. If it is not, we have to find out where the differences are. Using thematic analysis of the interviews, we can see if one or more new competencies emerge, and what are they (*guanxi* or others).

If the propositions are confirmed in the qualitative study, it is then necessary to modify items in selected ESI scales and empirically examine if the distinguish effective Chinese leaders from less effective ones. Focus groups might be a way to determine the accuracy of such items in the Chinese context.

Moreover, some scholars still question the rigorous validity of ESI competencies, compared with general mental ability and personality. Some studies have been carried out in western countries to test the predictive and discriminant validity of EI and ESI. Future studies in China could test the predictive validity and discriminant validity of ESI scale for leadership effectiveness. Empirical studies need to be carried out in China, to test the construct validity and predictive validity of ESI scale, by comparing it with other EI measures, cognitive intelligence, and personality.

The challenges are unavoidable in this process. Asking subjects to be open during interviews and not preoccupied with "saving face" may threaten validity of interviews. Another challenge is generalization of findings to all of China. There might be differences in effective leaders' competencies between Hong Kong, Mainland China, Taiwan and Singapore. Even

though all of these areas stem from the same traditional culture civilization, the economic and social reality varies among these countries and areas. In order to generalize ESI, specific samples would have to be collected from each area.

5. Conclusion

This article extends the ESI competency research to the Chinese effective leaders. I illustrated the reasons of why to analyze Chinese effective leaders' ESI competency. Also, considering traditional Chinese cultural and philosophical thoughts, I examined the meanings of twelve competencies in Chinese context and proposed a possible new competency specific in Chinese culture. By doing so, this paper contributes to the ESI competency research in China.

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