

Review of: "A Conception of Yi (): Harmony, Fairness, and Justice in Management – A Prospective Inquiry Framework"

Alicia Hennig¹

¹ Technische Universität Dresden

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I have been asked to review this article. I found it an interesting read, but for a variety of reasons, I often struggled to make sense of it.

As another reviewer mentioned, the aim of this paper is to contribute to the wider management literature. However, this would have required a proper literature review and, following on from this, a clear identification of a research gap in that body of literature. Neither has been undertaken in this paper. Therefore, the academic contribution of this paper remains completely unclear.

There is also a lack of substance when it comes to Chinese and Western philosophy. Although the authors frequently refer to both Confucianism and Aristotelianism, important comparative works on Confucianism and Aristotelianism are missing (see the works of May Sim and Jiyuan Yu). Philosophical terms are not properly introduced. Here are some examples.

The authors make the bold claim that "the concepts of yi, harmony, fairness, and justice have been fundamental principles in East Asian societies, particularly in Chinese culture, for millennia", but provide no reference to substantiate this claim. Also, if all these terms are supposedly derived from Chinese philosophy (or culture), why aren't Chinese characters used here for harmony, justice, and fairness? As the focus is on the concept of yi, I particularly wonder why there isn't more information on the history, context, and definition of this term. It is also unclear how yi and harmony, which are concepts from ancient Chinese philosophy, relate to fairness and justice; the latter rather being a concept rooted in ancient Western philosophy.

It seems to me that the authors also equate the Confucian "middle way" with Aristotle's "mean". Moreover, the original works of Aristotle don't mention a "golden mean"; the original terminology is "mean". Furthermore, it is not clear to me why the authors refer to a rather irrelevant source (the Cunningham reference) in this context rather than to the original text. Aristotelian philosophy doesn't mention harmony in relation to the mean either.

In another section, the authors state "This principle [probably referring to *zhong yong*] is grounded in the belief that the natural harmony in the cosmos represents eternal and universal justice, which can be realized through virtuous behaviour." But I don't understand how the authors get from *zhong yong*/harmony to justice? These are two very different concepts, and again, there is no explanation of how they are related. No reference is given for this relation either.

Elsewhere in the paper, the authors also talk about a "management theory of justice", but they don't explain what they mean by this, nor do they provide a reference for this supposed management theory. There is only a theory of justice by John Rawls (contemporary), and also Aristotle had a clear concept of justice (ancient), among others, but none of them is related to management.

Most importantly, the authors fail to explain the overall meaning and context of *gongping zhengyi*. In fact, it is a rather recent term and is not derived from original works of Chinese philosophy. It was used by Hu Jintao, head of state from 2002 to 2012, in relation to Chinese socialism (, translated as "fairness and justice are inherent requirements of socialism with Chinese characteristics <http://theory.people.com.cn/n/2012/1116/c49156-19600089.html>). How this term actually relates to ancient Chinese philosophy, e.g., Confucianism, is also nowhere explained.

Later in the paper, the authors state that "Western and Chinese philosophical traditions have developed distinct doctrinal foundations; their similarities in the area of ethics, as evidenced by the shared interest in the concept of *gongping zhengyi*." This is a misleading statement. First of all, Aristotle is by no means representative of the whole range of Western philosophical traditions. Therefore, a general "shared interest" cannot be established. Secondly, since *gongping zhengyi* is a modern concept, it would be anachronistic to link it with ancient philosophy, especially with regard to Western philosophy.

In conclusion, I'm not convinced by this work, and I find it lacks academic rigor. Most of the terms are not properly introduced and contextualised, which would have been crucial here. How they relate to each other is often unclear. I don't see a meaningful contribution to the field of management, as the literature is neither systematically introduced, nor reviewed, nor is a research gap identified. The philosophical concepts remain on a superficial level, as they are often not adequately supported by appropriate references. Finally, I found myself unable to understand the purpose of this paper, as there are too many terms and concepts used, sometimes confused and related to each other without further or sufficient explanation.