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## Change leadership in universities: the Confucian dimension

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The intensified competition of the global, market-based knowledge economy requires change leadership in universities and colleges throughout the world. National policy makers increasingly see knowledge as a core resource of modern economies and a prerequisite for global competitiveness. By implication, the quality of university leadership becomes crucial, both in the West as well as in Asia which has demonstrated the most rapid growth globally over the past decade. This paper explores the nature of leadership of university leadership in ‘Confucian cultural lands’. Due to certain characteristics of Confucianism, university leaders in these countries may possess certain advantages in terms of changing their organisations to become more effective in terms of meeting the goals of national policies. This link between leadership and the cultural context is discussed in terms of both potential benefits and costs with respect to leading East Asian universities in this global era.

**Keywords:** change; Confucianism; leadership; universities

The intensified *competition* of the global, market-based knowledge economy requires changed leadership practices in universities and colleges everywhere in the world. However, due to differences in university traditions, different national economy and different status of the professoriate, the speed of change varies. As a trend, national policy makers increasingly see knowledge as the core resource and dynamic of modern economies, and prerequisite for nations’ global competitiveness. The main source of productivity and competitiveness in the Information Age (Castells, 1996) is knowledge, both as input, but increasingly also the knowledge production process (Bell, 1976; Castells, 1996; Stehr, 1994). Knowledge is seen as both discipline-based pure/scientific knowledge and as know-how, or human capital vested in nations’ and firms’ applied research for practical problem solving (Gibbons, Limoges, Nowotny, Schwartzman, Scott, & Trow, 1994). To strengthen both scientific knowledge and general competence, national policy makers are increasingly recasting higher education and research policies to cater for knowledge based economical growth.

Thus, within the global knowledge economy, the university takes centre stage in economic and industrial policies. In the words of Castells (1994, p. 16): ‘If knowledge is the electricity of the new informational-international economy, then the institutions of higher education are the power sources on which the new development process must rely’. In order to competitively meet demands in the global higher education market, the production (research, teaching and service) must be changed to be relevant for the new

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situation. Changed production requires a changed organisation. The operating steering core of the university as an organisation is its executive leadership (President/Vice-Chancellor/Rector). At the core of organisational change is the quest for a renewed capacity to make relevant decisions about visions and missions, find adequate strategies for production, marketing and ways of restructuring available resources, in other words – a need for adequate leadership and management *practices* (Tjeldvoll, 2002; Welle-Strand & Thune, 2003; Welle-Strand & Tjeldvoll, 2002). At first glance, globalisation might be seen as the key impact factor for the ongoing changes. However, the general developments of tertiary education internationally may in itself have contributed to pushing for an international model of higher education.

With the dynamic and competitive rise of economical power in the ‘Confucian Lands’ in general, and China in particular as backdrop, it seems fair to wonder if the particular culture of the Asia Pacific region has a favourable effect on leadership. (‘Confucian Lands’ are the East Asian countries where the ideas about education expressed by the Chinese philosopher Confucius have stamped educational policies, curricula and class room practice for more than two thousand years). More specifically, it is fair to ask whether the particular influences of Confucianism could be an advantage for more effective university leadership. This query led to initiating a research project aiming at checking this assumption. The project titled *Change Leadership of Universities in Confucian Lands* (CLINC) was established at National Chi Nan University, Taiwan in 2008 (Tjeldvoll, Chen, & Yang, 2008). By taking western higher education changes as frame of reference, an indirect implication of the project would be to bring western experiences eastwards, to the Confucian Lands. Hence, the project might work as a global meeting place for university leadership thinking in West and East. Learning about changes in the West, might save the East for some unnecessary reinventions.

Before attempting to establish a rationale of linking Confucianism to leadership, western university models are categorised in terms of leadership and change. One of these models – the ‘service university’ – is highlighted. This model seems to be the one responding most effectively to the requirements of globalisation.

In modern times, western universities, first German, and later American, have set the stage for what has been regarded as the ‘right’ approach to university organisation. This mode of organisation has been analysed in terms of constitutive logic, criteria of assessment, reasons for autonomy and motivation for change. Applying these four dimensions, according to Olsen (2005), four visions of the western university can be envisaged. The paper draws implications for future university leadership from this analysis.

#### **Four western university rationales**

In Table 1, four visions or models of university are contrasted in terms of their (a) rationale or constitutive logic, (b) criteria of assessment, (c) reasons for autonomy and (d) change. The two upper models are similar in the sense that they have shared norms and objectives. The two lower are similar in terms of having conflicting norms and objectives within them. In terms of *governance/leadership*, the two visions to the left are similar in being governed by internal factors. Different actor groups, especially the professoriate have the decisive hand in decision-making. The top leadership position is often more a symbolic than a real leadership function. The models on the right side are similar in being steered by external forces (e.g. market or State), and in having a more distinct, often appointed leadership, with real accountability to a board of mandators.

Table 1. Four visions of the university (Olsen, 2005).

Autonomy/Conflict	University operations and dynamics are governed by <i>internal</i> factors	University operations and dynamics are governed by <i>environmental</i> factors
Actors have <i>shared</i> norms and objective	<p><i>The University is a self-governing community of scholars</i></p> <p>Constitutive logic: Free inquiry, truth finding, rationality and expertise.</p> <p>Criteria of assessment: Scientific quality.</p> <p>Reasons for autonomy: Constitutive principle of the University as an institution: authority to the best qualified.</p> <p>Change: Driven by the internal dynamics of science. Slow reinterpretation of institutional identity. Rapid and radical change only with performance crises.</p>	<p><i>The University is an instrument for national political agendas</i></p> <p>Constitutive logic: Administrative: Implementing predetermined political objectives.</p> <p>Criteria of assessment: Effective and efficient achievement of national purposes.</p> <p>Reasons for autonomy: Delegated and based on relative efficiency.</p> <p>Change: Political decisions, priorities, designs as a function of elections, coalition formation and breakdowns and changing political leadership.</p>
Actors have <i>conflicting</i> norms and objectives	<p><i>The University is a representative democracy</i></p> <p>Constitutive logic: Interest representation, elections, bargaining and majority decisions.</p> <p>Criteria of assessment: Who gets what: Accommodating internal interests.</p> <p>Reasons for autonomy: Mixed (work-place democracy, functional competence, <i>realpolitik</i>).</p> <p>Change: Depends on bargaining and conflict resolution and changes in power, interests, and alliances.</p>	<p><i>The University is a service enterprise embedded in competitive markets</i></p> <p>Constitutive logic: Community service. Part of a system of market exchange and price systems.</p> <p>Criteria of assessment: Meeting community demands. Economy, efficiency, flexibility, survival.</p> <p>Reasons for autonomy: Responsiveness to 'stakeholders' and external exigencies, survival.</p> <p>Change: Competitive selection or rational learning. Entrepreneurship, adapting to changing circumstances and customers.</p>

In terms of *change*, the two models to the left, change, if happening at all, will normally depend on the opinions of the professoriate (upper left) and on negotiations between different actor groups (lower left). Until recently, motivation for thinking change was quite low due to the fact the funding from the State was safe and regular. Now, when the State is reducing funding, and pushing universities to take increased responsibility for their budgets, also these universities are forced think about change strategies. The two models to the

right have normally had to consider change. The upper right has been used to this for a long time, and is, hence better prepared for increased needs for change (and own restructuring) when governments reduce funding, and leave university leadership with the challenge of finding revenues themselves.

Finland is a particularly interesting country case that will be used to illustrate this analysis and its implications. Its current higher education reform policies (Tjeldvoll, 2008) serve as a valid example of how a country is changing from ‘representative democracy’ to ‘service university’, in terms of (a) rationale or constitutive logic, (b) criteria of assessment, (c) reasons for autonomy and (d) change (Olsen, 2005). A summary of Finland’s most recent legislative university reforms can be found in a recently published paper (Aarrevarra, Dobson, & Elander, 2009).

### **Constitutive logic**

In the typical Scandinavian equality and strong democracy traditions, the constitutive logic of Finnish universities has seen the election of different groups of actors to governing boards at all levels. Board decisions have been based on bargaining and majority decisions. In line with the Humboldt model they have been governed by internal factors, the values and interests of academic staff, administration and students, although with conflicting norms. Now the constitutive logic is changing from being internally to externally based. The change is towards the external market and a price system. The university has to serve its surroundings, regional, national or global. The university is forced to look for customers of its products, in order to survive. Although, in the Finnish case, the State will act as guardian for quite some time, in order to give ‘birth help’ to universities in the market place (Tjeldvoll, 2008).

### **Criteria of assessment**

In the Finnish university as a representative democracy, assessment was based on ‘who gets what’. Internal interests were accommodated to make every group as satisfied as possible. There was little need to take external stakeholders’ opinions into consideration. Accountability was diffuse. Even if there was a low efficiency level, there was no risk of bankruptcy. In the future, the assessment will be based on to what degree the university is meeting community demands. Key words indicating success or failure are economy, efficiency, flexibility and survival. If these are not delivered, survival is not certain (Tjeldvoll, 2008).

### **Reasons for autonomy**

In the traditional Finnish university, institutional autonomy was seen as part of the Humboldt tradition. However, in a distinct Scandinavian democracy tradition, ‘work place democracy’ has also been a hallmark. The combined effect of these two traditions effected strong exclusive institutional autonomy and very high individual academic freedom. Now the underpinning of autonomy is dramatically changing. The Finnish university must now operate independent of the State, be autonomous in order to react flexibly and fast to changing market demands, as well as respond to its own stakeholders. Autonomy is now essential for survival, while being accountable to its stakeholders (Tjeldvoll, 2008).

## **Change**

Changes in Finnish universities until now have been products of bargaining between different groups, and conflict resolutions. Changes in internal structure, programmes, change of persons in chair positions have happened as effects of changes in power, interests and alliances between groups. Changes have generally not been very extensive, and they have been an entirely internal business. When the current Finnish higher education reforms take effect, changes will occur related to what will increase competitive strength. Learning must be effective in producing competence demanded by the market. A slogan from other parts of the world where universities already have become 'service universities' is that they have 'to learn or burn' (Welle-Strand & Tjeldvoll, 2002). Dynamic and effective internal learning processes will be a key feature of changes in the future. If the leadership is not able to make the university competitive, it will have to change its leadership. The same will be the case with professors who do not teach or research in a way that respond to market and customers' demands. Although Finnish universities will enjoy special economic support from the State for quite some time, the new logic is clear: the Finnish university has to be entrepreneurial and take responsibility itself for its economy.

Summarised it is fair to claim that the Finnish university is leaving a historical phase where its main features were that of a safe 'representative democracy', protected fully by the State, to a future where it is 'a service enterprise embedded in competitive markets' (Tjeldvoll, 2008). The vision is frequently labelled the 'service university'. In this vision of the university there is a marked contrast to the traditional research university in terms of focus on research or teaching, length of programmes, length of courses, personnel policies, organisational relation between research and services, decision making/leadership and funding (Tjeldvoll, 2002).

## **The 'service university'**

In most European countries all the four visions are active at the same time, but with different strength. Although the oldest universities in Scandinavia began as institutions mainly for training of professionals, the Humboldt Model that appeared (in Germany) from the beginning of the nineteenth century had profound influence worldwide. Post Second World War development also meant strong influence on European universities by the American functionalist vision (Table 1, upper right field). In the aftermath of the Vietnam War, Mao Tse Tung's thoughts, the Cultural Revolution in China and the student radicalism at western universities of the 1970s, also the vision of the university as a representative democracy gained solid ground in several European countries (Table 1, lower left field).

During the last decade, however, it is the fourth vision – the service university (Table 1 lower right field) – that has become increasingly dominant (Tjeldvoll, 2010). While, for example, Norway at large still is mostly influenced by the 'representative democracy' vision, the one private higher education institution in Norway of some size, the Norwegian School of Management BI, is gaining strong ground nationwide. This latter institution has its funding mainly from selling research and education services to clients in a market. This private institution's structure, leadership and strategies reflect the service university.

However, the second largest public university in Norway, the Norwegian University of Science and Technology recently took organisational steps making it the clearest move by a public institution in the service university direction. The most prominent indication for this move was the fact that the university board in 2005 decided to change its management system, from elected to appointed president. Student representatives in the university board

Table 2. Comparison of research and service universities (Tjeldvoll 2002, based on Cummings 1995).

Traditional research university	Academic service university
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Arts and science centred</li> <li>● Two-tier + instructional programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Professional schools</li> <li>● Post-baccalaureate degree &amp; training programmes tailored for clients</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Year-long courses</li> <li>● Life-long personnel</li> <li>● Research organisation layered on top of teaching organisation</li> <li>● Decentralised choice of research agenda</li> <li>● Funding by gifts and grants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● One-week to four months courses</li> <li>● Many adjuncts</li> <li>● Service carried out in parallel units</li> <li>● Central planning and contracting of service</li> <li>● Funding by contracts</li> </ul>

tipped the decision in favour of more effective leadership, against the vote of the professor representatives. Norway's largest university, University of Oslo, however, is still strongly settled in the 'representative democracy vision', and continues a practice of electing its most popular professor as president.

Ideal-typical differences between the traditional research university (visions 1, 2, upper and 3, lower left, in Table 1) and the service university (vision 4, lower right) are visualised in Table 2.

Taking Norway in a national context, the (public) University of Oslo exemplifies the models to the left and the (private) BI Norwegian School of Management the model to the lower right. Management personnel are elected at the University of Oslo, while it is appointed (after a head-hunting process) in the BI Norwegian School of Management. In the service university, research and teaching tend to be carried out separately, either within one university, or between two institutions, one being a pure research university and the other a pure teaching university.

Both Australia and England are discussing policies for differentiating between pure teaching universities and pure research universities. For both, the ambition is to have 'world class quality' of teaching and research, respectively. Top quality teaching universities are seen as necessary in order for these countries to continue to attract international fee-paying students to the countries' extensive and lucrative higher education industry.

It is within this global picture of countries and institutions struggling to find leadership and strategies for becoming excellent and competitive that the Confucian dimension and possibly positive effects on leadership takes particular interest. Is there an East Asia cultural dimension affecting leadership quality resulting in high competitiveness?

### **Linking university leadership efficiency and Confucianism**

On the above described backdrop of universities' role in the global knowledge economy's competition, and the lightening economic successes of Asia Pacific countries, it is fair to wonder whether the leadership of universities located in 'Confucian Lands' has a cultural advantage in the increasing global competition. Due to certain characteristics of Confucianism, university leaders in these countries may prove more effective and efficient than their competitors in other world regions in terms of changing their organisations to become more effective means for national policies. This query is the concern of the CLINC Project (Change Leadership in Universities of Confucian Lands), where university leadership in Japan, Hong Kong and Taiwan are studied and compared to international trends



of changes in universities organisation, as well as observing how universities in East Asia are doing on the international rankings, e.g. the Times Higher Education (THE) ranking (Tjeldvoll et al. 2008). However, against this assumption it could be claimed that the deep respect for education and university professors in the Confucian culture might also make it difficult to reform leadership to become able to make organisational changes. This query is stimulated by direct observations at a Taiwanese university in 2008–2009, and by information given in interviews at Japanese universities in autumn 2009. Moreover, the different Confucian Lands (Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Korea, mainland China and Singapore) may share the same Confucian cultural legacy, but constitute profoundly different national context in terms of development stage.

Three particular dimensions of Confucianism are assumed to be favourable for university leaders in East Asia. First, a common, deep-rooted respect for *education* as a value, and, by implication, strong *motivation* by people in general to pursue and invest money and time in education (Cheng, 1995; Sims, 1968, p. 128). Hence, Confucian university leaders are likely to have students that are generally more motivated to work harder, than in other countries. Present day facts supporting this assumption about strong motivation for education is the remarkably high achievements by 15 years old students from Taiwan, Japan, Hong Kong and Singapore – in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) tests (OECD, 2007), and that close to 90 per cent of Taiwanese high school graduates continue into tertiary/higher education (Tjeldvoll, Tang, & Vore, 2009).

Second, related to the social implications of the Imperial Examinations, students in these countries are used to see *competition* as something natural. The Imperial Examination System in China lasted for 1300 years, from its founding during the Sui Dynasty in 605 to its abolition near the end of the Qing Dynasty in 1905. The system is seen as having its roots in Confucius' education thinking (Liu, 2002). Since competition is a distinct feature of globalisation, students in Confucian countries are assumed to have more readiness and acceptance of competitive behaviour. The advantage for university leaders then is that they have students with a mindset that will contribute more strongly to strengthening the university's competitiveness than universities in other cultures.

Third, despite dynamic democracy development and concrete social equality policies in most Confucian countries, natural acceptance of *social hierarchy*, which is a distinct feature of Confucianism, is still a cultural and mental reality in these countries. Communist party-led countries like the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) may not be seen by many as having had much democracy development, and also many would claim that democracy in Singapore has serious limitation. However, it is worth while pondering over that Chinese and Singaporean leaders' claim they pursue a form of democracy with Chinese (or Confucian) characteristics. Both the behaviour of Asia Pacific students in western universities and the student behaviour experienced by western professors in Asia Pacific classrooms give support to a cultural particularity. The implication being that there might be more acceptances of requests from above, and a widespread respect for the leader. The leader's authority can be applied more indirectly than in the West. In the West, particularly in western Europe, university democracy and academic freedom have been distinct forces, and elected university leaders with mostly symbolic authority have been common practice. Now, this is changing in the West, due to the need for a more achievement-oriented leadership. This change is normally not appreciated by the professors. They fear 'managerialism' (Currie & Tjeldvoll, 2001), less democracy and reduced individual academic freedom.



In contrast, the third Confucian feature (acceptance of hierarchy) may contribute to more efficiency for the university as a whole. Traditional acceptance of hierarchy and orders from above are assumed to increase university leaders' possibilities for more efficiency, and making them more effective in implementing competitive strategies. These assumed links between Confucianism and more effective university leadership are supported by Castells' analysis of how the global power centre in the future will move from the North Atlantic Region to the Pacific Rim (Castells, 1996).

Confucianism is seen as an important source for cultural refinement, combining intellectual and moral virtues (Garrett, 1993). It developed over more than two thousand years, independent of major outside influence. Humanism comes out as a central dimension of Confucianism, founded in three key principles: a) *ren* – love for others), b) *yi* – fairness and c) *li* – proper behaviour (Chen, 1997). A particular organisational implication of these principles is their effects on communication. According to Chen (1997) Confucianism sees interpersonal relationships as long-term and mutually binding. This is regarded as more important than the actual business activities. Related to leadership, an important quality is to maintain good relationship with followers, creating a feeling of family where pleasures and sorrows are shared (Lin & Clair, 2007). This will create certainty and predictability. In sum, communication in the Confucian tradition will tend to be more process-oriented than in the West, where there tends to be more direct focus on outcomes (Lin & Clair, 2007). However, today it clearly looks like the Confucian countries are highly productive and certainly delivers economic outcomes.

People and nations' wellbeing certainly does not depend on economy alone. Cultural values for sure are crucial to make life meaningful. However, without a sufficient economic foundation, it may even be impossible to keep up valuable culture. To secure a healthy national economic development seems to have been goal number one for Asia Pacific countries after the Second World War. First, Japan rose to the second largest economy in the world, followed by the successful Asia Pacific Economic Dragons (South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore). Particularly the history of Taiwan is amazing, from being 'undeveloped' before 1895, being a Japanese colony for 50 years, until 1945, then enduring a hard dictatorship for nearly 40 years, before towards the end of the last century appearing as the Taiwan Miracle, both in terms of economic, social and democratic development (Gold, 1986). To what extent have Confucius' ideas about education and society contributed to these successful socio-economic changes in the Asia Pacific region?

In the CLINC Project (Tjeldvoll et al., 2008) an attempt is made at grasping the thinking of university leaders in Japan, Hong Kong and Taiwan about the following six dimensions of a university, assumed to be important for its competitiveness in the market: management; research and teaching; ICT (information and communication technology); personnel policies; funding and market relations; and internationalisation (meaning student exchange and foreign staff). In the CLINC Project, strong motivation/efforts, high competition orientation and natural acceptance of hierarchy/leadership were found to be three particular features of Confucianism. The CLINC Project focused on looking for reflections of these features in the university leadership's thinking about how to increase the institutions competitiveness. Moreover, special attention was paid to how Confucian communication style and the establishment of long-time personal relations are manifested. In particular, what happens when restructuring (seen as unavoidable) leads to a confrontation between the old values and the more brutal requirements of the market?

Preliminary analysis of interviews with university leaders in Hong Kong, Japan and Taiwan basically confirmed the presence of the three Confucian value orientations: strong

motivation for achievement in order to be more competitive internationally, respect for education and acceptance of social hierarchy. However, there are differences between the three in terms of how these values play out on two of the six strategic dimensions. In terms of *management*, Japan and Taiwan still applies a rather complicated election process, while Hong Kong appoints the university leaders. The leaders in Japan and Taiwan have less power than their counterparts in Hong Kong. The other dimension where there are clear differences is *internationalisation*.

The three display different positions on a scale from slow to dynamic. Japan seems to internationalise with gritted teeth. All the formal rhetoric about internationalisation is in place. But, when it comes to implementation, it seems like there are strong forces trying to protect the universities from internationalisation, e.g. there is a requirement for foreign students to master Japanese before being accepted. There are few programmes in languages other than Japanese. Taiwan seems more dynamic, among other things due to the fact that the majority of senior academic staff are trained in the West. However, in a good number of universities the internationalisation strategy is window dressing. Everything goes on in Chinese. This happens even in universities boasting to have internationalisation as overall strategic goal.

The level of proficiency in English among students and staff is remarkably low, especially seen in relation to the huge investments in teaching of English in primary and secondary schools. In Taiwan 'the protection' against internationalisation is more indirect than in Japan. In sharp contrast to Japan and Taiwan, Hong Kong sticks out as highly dynamic. The command of English is general (there is extensive student exchange) and the proportion of foreign staff is high.

Although academic *motivation* is high for all the three, it plays out differently. Both in Japan and Taiwan, staffs in general are hard working, and eager to gain promotion. However, their efforts do not necessarily affect more effective achievement of university goals. The leadership seems neither powerful nor motivated, to *lead* the staff for common goals. This is in turn both a reflection of the overall higher education policies in Japan and Taiwan, and the continuing influence of a European academic legacy. Hong Kong is the opposite. Motivation is high and achievements are high.

According to a Japanese university leader, a reason for this difference may be that Japan and Taiwan are not as 'hungry' as they used to be. They have become 'full' welfare states. The opposite case is China, who seems to have a much higher motivation. Taiwanese leaders confirmed the Japanese's view, pointing to the fact that some years ago, Taiwan and Hong Kong were quite similar in higher education achievements. While in recent years, Hong Kong has become an international higher education winner. Taiwanese leaders claimed that a main reason for Hong Kong's high motivation for achievement in higher education was that it has no raw materials and no industry, except the finance industry. Hence, it is dependent on knowledge production and education for keeping its high standard and international position.

The research findings so far has triggered two new needs for more specific knowledge. First, it would be interesting to look closer at the other Confucian nations (mainland China, Korea and Singapore), because although the specific Confucian values seem to be present, the study so far has shown that specific national culture characteristics and economic conditions may make these values play out differently. It could even be claimed that in Japan and Taiwan Confucian values are counterproductive to competitiveness, because they may contribute to making the universities conservative and little motivated for change. The second need is to investigate more specifically the Confucian dimension of university leadership. So far it has not been possible to do this systematically enough. In particular it would be

tempting to observe this dimension among university leaders in the world's second largest economy, which is now also the most dynamic economy in the world.

### **Measuring the Confucian influence on leadership**

Recently a study of potentially high relevance for studying the Confucian dimension of university leadership was carried out at the University of Colorado in the United States. The project sought to determine if it was possible to measure the Confucian influence on leadership. This was the starting point for a study by Kaibin Xu (2008).

Like in the CLINC Project (Tjeldvoll et al., 2008) his motivation was triggered by the fact that globalisation has led to increased interest in leadership in different cultural contexts and, also, in organisations like universities. Universities are generally considered to comprise a particular species of organisations, traditionally without clear-cut goals or an achievement-oriented leadership. Xu's particular assumption is that the Chinese cultural context may provide particular effects on current leadership development in universities (Xu, 2008, pp. 2–4). The specific focus of the study was to develop an instrument for measuring higher education leadership in the Chinese social and cultural context.

As a theoretical frame of reference for his study, both western leadership theories (Xu, 2008, pp. 16–27) and instruments, and the Confucian philosophy of leadership were examined. The survey Xu developed he found with six confirmed factors to be reliable – morality, academic expertise, nurturing, communication, fairness and managing (Xu, 2008). His findings suggest that the Chinese view of leadership is consistent with the Confucian philosophy of leadership. In further studies it will be relevant to include Xu's rationale and to consider whether his instrument could constructively be applied in further, extended empirical research on how university leaders in Confucian countries are thinking about both their short term and long term strategies for change to enhance their international competitiveness. In terms of geographical areas, in addition to Japan, Taiwan and Hong Kong, university cases from mainland China ought to be included, because China as country case today is quite different from the highly modernised and partly westernised East Asia Economic Dragons. Figure 1 below illustrates how Xu's research will be included in further CLINC studies.

### **Concluding remarks**

The motivation for this paper at the outset came from observations over the last fifteen years of how universities worldwide seemed to be forced to change their organisational structure and leadership capacity. The development is significantly different in the Anglo-American world, the European continent and the Asia Pacific region. The service university (model) appeared first in Anglo-America. The label 'service university' was first applied by a Canadian research council (Tjeldvoll, 1997) and has since spread around the world.

Reading THE's university ranking 2009 (limitations of rankings admitted), it is amazing to observe how dominant the Anglo-American world is in terms of the number of universities among the 50 best in the world (Times Higher Education [THE], 2009). Positions numbers 1–20 are all occupied by Anglo-American universities. Continental Europe is also struggling, having only five universities among the top 50. A country such as Germany, origin of the Humboldt Model, has none. Confucian countries' universities are climbing in the rankings, compared to earlier years, and are confirming an assumption about their increasing international competitiveness. They have nine universities among the

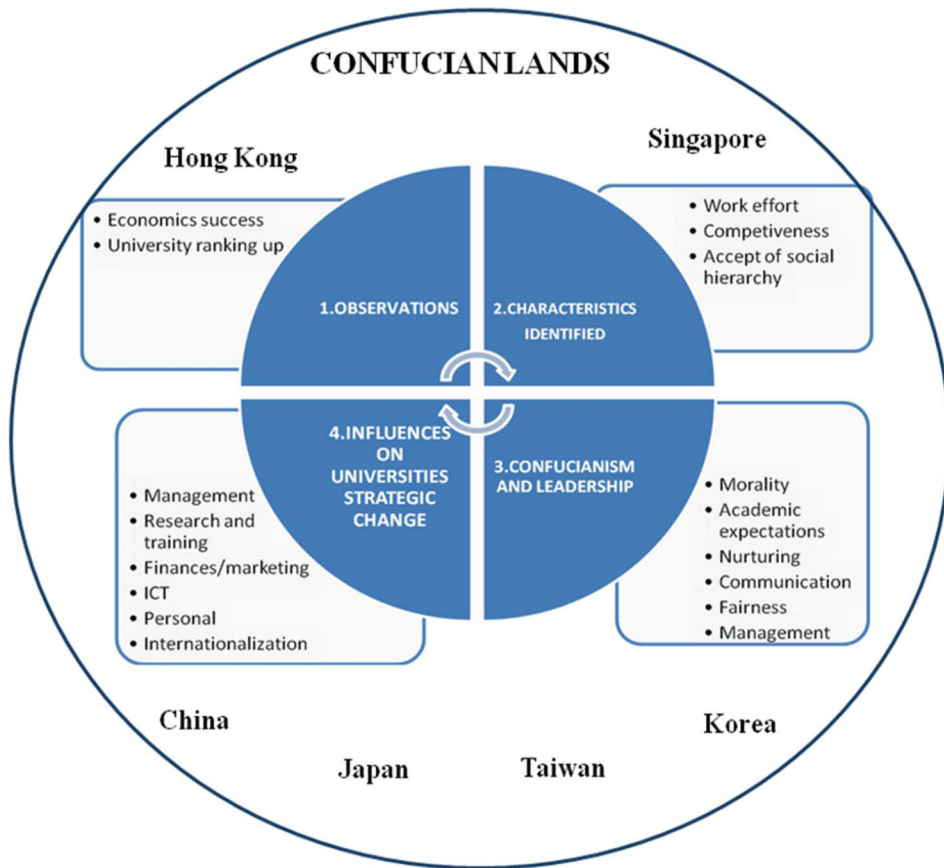


Figure 1. Change leadership in Confucian universities.

top 50 top, making the Asia Pacific region ranking number two world region, after Anglo-America. Perhaps most amazing of all is that a small entity like Hong Kong (eight million people) has three universities among the 50 top. Sweden (nine million people) has none.

However, on the other side, Asia Pacific universities may also face some problems caused by the traditional strong social status of professors, and high respect for them. The Cultural Revolution in China was also an attempt to curb the traditional power of academics. After the revolution they resumed their high social status, confirming also the strength of the Confucian tradition. Opinions by Japanese education researchers, as well as observations in Taiwan give support to a concern about ‘conservative Confucian-inspired’ professors making it difficult to carry out change leadership. However, contextual differences between countries in the Asia Pacific region are likely, affecting leadership. Among other factors there might be different accountability and external evaluation measures carried out by the governments of these countries.

In China, Confucius’ ideas about leadership are already confirmed as influential. In further studies it will be particularly interesting to follow a sample of Chinese universities’ structural and leadership/strategy development, not least when taking into account the fact that a high number of universities have had to merge, and, by implication have been forced to develop a new structure, and to find leadership capacity to effectively manage an

institution quite often spread on different campuses. For further research the first goal is to have confirmed the Confucian influence in the region at large, and secondly, to assess whether this is an advantage for leadership efficiency, or not.

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