# Knowledge Map of Chinese Management Philosophy Research—Visualization Analysis Based on Cite Space

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## Abstract

*In order to clarify the research status of management philosophy in China, this paper uses scientific measurement and Cite Space to analyze the papers published in journals of management philosophy in China from 1983 to 2018. Since 1983, the number of papers on management philosophy in China has been increasing slowly. Based on the co-occurrence cluster analysis of keywords, the literature can be roughly divided into eight categories: management philosophy, social science, management personnel, enterprise management, Chinese management philosophy, Laozi, Confucian management philosophy and human resource management philosophy. On the whole, the research of Chinese management philosophy has given full answers to the questions of how to construct and what kind of management philosophy to construct. The most important characteristics of Chinese management philosophy research are the diversity of research perspectives and the innovation of research logic.*

## Keywords

*Management philosophy; Knowledge map: Cite Space; Chinese management philosophy*

## Introduction

Management philosophy is an applied philosophy, which is located in the cross field of management and philosophy. It mainly studies the internal mechanism of management and provides metaphysical basis and methodological guidance for management science, and also provides important theoretical guidance for human management practice. In order to clarify the research status of management philosophy in China, this paper uses the scientometrics method to systematically and quantitatively count and analyze the literature of management philosophy, and makes auxiliary explanation in the way of information visualization.

## Methods and Tools

The scientific measurement tool used in this paper is Cite Space, a commonly used bibliometric and visualization software for scientific researchers. The Cite Space program, developed by Professor Chen

Chaomei from Drexel University based on Java, is mainly used to measure and analyze scientific literature data, identify and display new trends and trends of scientific development, and is accurate, convenient and efficient in analyzing and visualizing co-citation networks. The literature data in this paper comes from the comprehensive academic information resource database of China Knowledge Infrastructure Project (CNKI). In the literature retrieval strategy, we take the method of taking the subject words as the keywords to retrieve and collect the periodical literatures with the theme of management philosophy.

## General Situation Research

Since the earliest relevant literature was published in 1983, the retrieval time of journal literature is set to be 1983-2018. Through the retrieval, a total of 1259 records were obtained, and invalid documents such as news, profile and directory were manually deleted. Finally, 1055 valid papers were obtained.

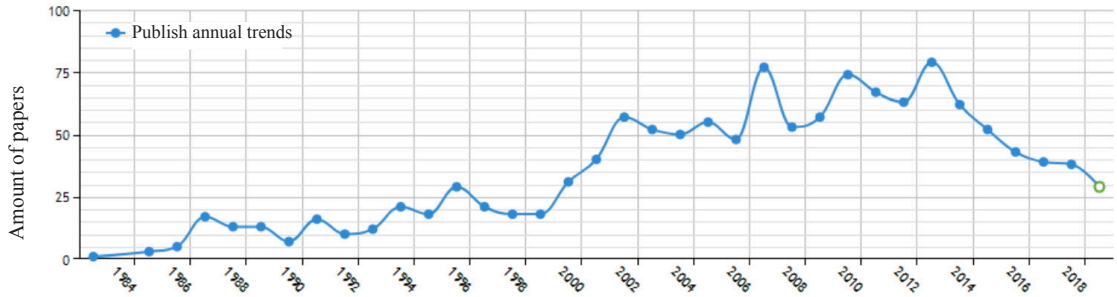



*Figure 1. Distribution chart of publishing time of management philosophy research papers (source: collated by the author)*

Since Hua Xiaoqing's "Probing into enterprise management with Mao Zedong philosophy" was published in the *Journal of Mao Zedong Thought Study* in 1983, the number of papers on management philosophy in China showed a slow growth on the whole, indicating that the research on management philosophy has been paid close attention to and deepened by researchers. From 2014 to 2018, the number of publications decreased year by year. To some extent, it shows that the academic enthusiasm of management philosophy has declined. The reason may be due to the change of social and economic environment, or the failure of relevant research to make new breakthroughs due to the limitations of methods and tools when encountering research bottlenecks, thus slowing down the development process of research.

## Research Category and Representative Literature

In order to have a deeper understanding of the research focus of management philosophy and the existing achievements, the author further analyzes the keywords co-occurrence of 1055 effective documents, extracts the research categories and representative literature for analysis. The data of the effective literature obtained from CNKI are exported in Refworks document type format. Then, the data is converted through Cite Space and the converted data is saved. When the data processing threshold is Top50, Cite Space is used to analyze the keywords co-occurrence of the converted literature data. After the visualization co-occurrence image is

obtained, the clustering analysis based on keywords and LLR algorithm is continued.




*Figure 2. Co-occurrence cluster diagram of keywords in management philosophy research (source: collated by the author)*

From the keyword co-occurrence cluster diagram, we can see that the research of management philosophy is divided into seven categories. Among them, Cite Space automatically names the first category as philosophy. Because the meaning of philosophy is too broad, it can not summarize the meaning of this category with philosophy as the identifier. We renamed the term "social science" with higher LLR (log likelihood rate) value in the label words of LLR, and changed "#1 philosophy" to "#1 social science". The higher the value of LLR (log likelihood ratio), the deeper the degree that the noun represents the category, and the more power it has to be used as the identification of this category. The eight categories of management philosophy are management philosophy, social science, management personnel, enterprise management, Chinese management philosophy, Laozi, Confucian management philosophy and human resource management philosophy. The clustering average contour values of these eight categories are all over 0.5, which means that the seven categories of research literature can be considered as reasonable.

When selecting representative works of various types of papers, on the one hand, the author considers the frequency of hot words used in the field, which is the basis for the software to rank representative works; on the other hand, considering the interpretation value of the paper, priority should be given to the included literature published in CSSCI, the catalogue of Peking University core journals and other journals with higher impact factors, and pay attention to the citation of the paper itself

The representative works of each category and the specific research situation are as follows:

**Category 1** "Management Philosophy": in this category, the LLR value is second only to management philosophy, and it is philosophical reflection. This category of research is based on philosophy as the entry point and reviews the status and development of Management Science in the way of theoretical reflection. On the basis of discussing the attributes and tasks of management philosophy, this paper revises the name of management philosophy as a discipline. Sun Anji and Wei Zhongjun published two papers "On the nature

and basis of management philosophy" and "A review on the research of Chinese management philosophy" in 1988. Sun Anji and Wei Zhongjun divided the subject of management philosophy into philosophy: "management philosophy belongs to applied philosophy, which is different from the simple application of philosophy in the field of management", and hold that the subject task of management philosophy is to solve the problems that cannot be solved or not solved well by management science, attaches importance to the dual attributes of the object's material and spirit, and examines management practice from the dual relationship between subject and object. They pointed out that the purpose of management philosophy is complex and diverse. Although it is based on the needs of Chinese management practice, it does not explain the practical and specific problems in management, but rather philosophizes the management theory and separates it from the category and principle higher than the management practice. Sun and Wei's management philosophy theory is based on the management practice of China at that time, and the discussion does not involve the research results of western countries' management philosophy.

In the west, management philosophy, which is recognized as the foundation work of *Management Philosophy*, was written by Oliver Sheldon, a British management scientist, as early as 1923. It was nearly 60 years earlier than the 1980s when Cui Xuzhi systematically studied management philosophy in mainland China.

Zhou Kezhen and Zhang Wei's paper "On the emergence of management philosophy and its disciplinary nature" solved the delineation of research scope and the confirmation of research objects of management philosophy on the basis of summarizing the research of management philosophy in China and other countries for decades. This paper traces back to the generation and development of knowledge, philosophy and science, and sorts out the development track of knowledge. Starting from the relationship between philosophy and science, this paper determines the disciplinary nature of management philosophy, which is also a branch of scientific philosophy and management science. It is considered that management philosophy is a scientific philosophy that studies the general essence and general laws of management. In order to solve the general theoretical problems of what is management (management essence), why management (management meaning) and how management is (Management Law) in Management Science (Theory), the construction process of management philosophy itself should be to construct its own theoretical system through abstraction and generalization of existing management theoretical knowledge (Zhou & Zhang, 2010).

In the same year, Zhou Kezhen (2010), in another paper "Innovation and development of management science and its path—Also on the function and task of management philosophy", has a more clear explanation on the subject task of management philosophy. Management philosophy provides people with the meta theoretical knowledge of management science. Zhou further divides management philosophy into three parts: the meta theory of management refers to the theory of management essence, the theory of management essence, the theory of management philosophy, and so on. The general management science, which consists of the theory of management meaning and the theory of management law, defines the specific content and purpose of management philosophy as a discipline.

**Category 2** "Social Science" integrates the discipline construction of management philosophy into the academic environment of social science, and constructs the disciplinary skeleton in the comparison and discrimination with other disciplines. Zhang Changli (2003) excavates the generality between management and ethics from the perspective of philosophy, and points out that the orientation of the two-way philosophical

relationship is unity of opposites.

Cheng Zhongying, a philosophy professor at the University of Hawaii and President of the International School of management in China, combines the traditional Chinese five elements theory with western management theory, and puts forward a new management philosophy—C Theory, which includes centrality, control, continuity, creativity and coordination.

Xu Xiyan (1999) believed that Cheng Zhongying put forward the management philosophy of the combination of Chinese and western, and demonstrated its possibility. She pointed out that modern management needs integrity, dependence, harmony, creativity, flexibility and practicality, which can be found in Chinese philosophy. Cheng Zhongying creatively put forward the management philosophy of the combination of Chinese and western, which provided a philosophical basis for the modern practice of Chinese enterprise management.

Ouyang Xueqing (1999) commented on Li Lanfen and Cui Xuzhi's *Management Culture*, and pointed out that the author studied management philosophy from the perspective of management culture. Its research method and perspective is the innovation and breakthrough of management philosophy research. The recognition that management culture belongs to the territory of management philosophy has not been seen in the research of Chinese management philosophy since then. There may be intersection between management culture and management philosophy, but there is still lack of theoretical proof.

**Category 3** "Managers Studies" discuss management subjects and their behaviors, and discriminate the assumptions about management subjects in western management science. *Guangzhou Studies* Journal launched a column entitled lecture on management philosophy in 1987. This paper has been published for about two years in terms of philosophy and management. Cai Maosheng's "why management should introduce behavior science—on the meaning of the category of 'behavior'" explains the behavior of managers proposed in management science from the perspective of management philosophy. In addition, he believes that "the behavior mentioned in management philosophy is an external activity, or, to be specific, the external manifestation of the internal motivation of people and organizations." (1988) With the help of system theory, the causality, purposefulness, autonomy and variability of management behavior are expanded from individuals to organizations to illustrate the interaction between organizations and the environment. In fact, behavior is only the external expression of human nature. To explore the behavior of managers, we can not do without the analysis of human nature hypothesis.

Chen Lili (1996) put forward four kinds of human nature hypothesis related to management successively in western management philosophy. Chen, standing in the field of socialist market economy, considers the hypothesis of human nature of management with the guidance of practical application. Chen's paper "on the theoretical evolution of human characteristics in western management philosophy" has not put forward new ideas, but it can learn from other people’s research to correct its own mistakes.

Wang Daqian (1996) made a detailed analysis of X theory and Y theory in *Human Nature of Enterprises* written by McGregor, Professor of Industrial Management Department of Massachusetts Institute of technology in 1960, and criticized it from the standpoint of Marxist human nature. However, the lack of

human management theory in the field of post-2000 management can not be made up for by the lack of management philosophy in China. The attitude of rethinking the existing theories is gradually replaced by the construction of new theories or the inspection of modern Chinese management practice.

**Category 4** "Enterprise Management" mainly discusses the application of management philosophy in the practice of enterprise management, such as thinking from management philosophy and guiding specific management practice activities with management philosophy, thinking about the improvement of financial management from the perspective of management philosophy, and discussing the effectiveness of management philosophy from the perspective of government management.

Wang Dihua (1995) regards the management philosophy in financial management as the direct result of the philosophical development of financial management, and points out the specific content of financial management philosophy from three aspects of significance, method and object.

Li Yimin (1999) discusses the specific application of management philosophy in general enterprise management from three aspects of management procedures, management skills and management subjects, and puts forward some management ideas with universality, but his understanding of the concept of management philosophy is not distinguished from that of management thought and management method.

Generally speaking, category 4 enterprise management carries on the applied elucidation to the management philosophy, although it endows the management philosophy with more practical value, it is easy to show a “physical” tendency in the process of demonstration, and it is also easy to confuse the management philosophy and management thought, thus obscuring the mission of management philosophy to explore the law and essence of management.

**Category 5** "Chinese Management Philosophy" mainly studies the discipline orientation, history and characteristics of Chinese management philosophy. Li Peiting of Renmin University of China is the most important author of category 5. His theses "on the internal mechanism of the basic positioning of Chinese management philosophy", "30 years of Chinese management philosophy: Academic track, focus perspective and logical logic", and "on the essentials of Chinese management philosophy change" are representative works of this category. By combing the existing literature, he summed up three periods of Chinese management philosophy: "the academic change of Chinese management philosophy is not linear change. It can be divided into: 'One-side'—the emergence and hot discussion period characterized by the study of Marxist management philosophy; 'Cosmopolitanism'—after the wandering period of diversification and multi-level, there are new breakthroughs in the connotation and extension of the period; 'Chinese and Western'—Modern elucidation of management philosophy factors in Chinese culture" (Li, 2010).

The combination of Chinese and Western culture—a modern explanation of the factors of management philosophy in Chinese culture. The three stages from far to near in the time axis are the process of the academic development of Chinese management philosophy from “soliloquize” to dialogue, and also the preparation process of making the ancient serve the present in Chinese culture. From the change of the orientation of Chinese management philosophy, we can see the turning process of Chinese management philosophy from a clear and systematic boundary to a more in-depth analysis of the problem domain of

management philosophy: the definition of Chinese management philosophy is no longer an accurate concept pedigree.

It is a unique problem domain, which is different from other management knowledge. This kind of turn does not focus on static thinking, trying to make management philosophy fixed 'system', but puts management philosophy in the interaction between philosophy and management, and grasps its dynamic balance. Chinese traditional culture contains management philosophy belonging to China, which is summarized and refined. It is one of the main ways to construct the discipline of Chinese management philosophy, such as the rule of law in Chinese traditional thought. The ancient people used the rule of law mainly in the scope of national governance. Professor Li Honglei believes that Chinese management philosophy is the theoretical guide of state management in China's traditional society for thousands of years.

Cheng Yuhong (2003) thinks that we can find a perspective of dialogue between Chinese traditional governance thought and western modern management in the sense of meta management. In the specific design and construction of order, the priority of cultural value or the priority of efficiency, as well as the similarities and differences between the two balance ways, can be found and It further makes this dialogue possible.

**Category 6** "Laozi" studies the connotation and content structure of Chinese management philosophy with *Laozi* as its main content. Zhang Bodong (2010) proposed four development forms of Taoist management based on the elaboration of the core concepts of Taoist Management: Taoist outlook on development of management value, concept of human nature (development of management life), concept of self-cultivation (development of management personality) and concept of cognition (development of management methods). Finally, the paper constructs the theory of Taoist management philosophy with the concept of unity of body and function. "Body" refers to "self-cultivation", which is to create and experience unique management value, management personality and management life according to the core management thought of Taoism. "Using" refers to "appeasing employees". It focuses on how to solve the ever-changing management problems faced by contemporary management science through the establishment of management objectives, the implementation of management mode and the pursuit of management realm according to the values believed by the managers and the managed (Zhang, 2010).

Geng Xiangkui (2007) took Laozi's Inaction as a philosophy of management. He believed that the Inaction management philosophy advocated by *Laozi* should be applied to practical work. It is the working method of inaction management. Specifically, it is to comply with the natural law and make the group develop rapidly in a natural and harmonious environment. From the micro perspective, it is to make the team work efficiently by tapping and giving play to the potential and wisdom of subordinates. In addition, he also analyzes the relationship between enterprises and the government with the concept of Inaction management philosophy. In combination with the situation of socialist market economy, this paper points out that government management should have something to do and something not to do.

Li Zhankui (2010) also explored the way of modern Chinese management by interpreting the connotation of *Laozi*. In the process of discussion, Geng Xiangkui and Li Zhankui adopted the concept of materialism to compare Laozi's thought. For example, Laozi's weak and strong thought is regarded as a kind of dialectics, in

order to realize the modernization of *Laozi* management philosophy. This practice may cause misreading and easily cover up the real value of *Laozi* management philosophy.

**Category 7** "Confucian Management Philosophy", which is similar to the research strategy of Category 6, explores content that is beneficial to modern management practices in Chinese traditional culture. Category 6 takes Confucianism as the main object and refines its management philosophy. As far as the Chinese and Western ideas are concerned, they are more likely to control each other in terms of systematic and theoretical control.

Shen Yuanxin (1998) believes that the Confucian management philosophy is mainly aimed at the control of people The core and basic principle of Confucian management philosophy is rule of virtue and propriety, and its social and political control is derived from this. He also pointed out that the morality and propriety of Confucian management philosophy are both exterior and interior, and the management control of individual is from inside to outside, and then extends to the whole society and the whole country. Shen explains the characteristics of Confucian management philosophy by pre control and post control, which is to interpret Confucianism with western management concepts, and to correct the name of Confucian management philosophy by means of cross-cultural comparison, so that Confucian management philosophy can have its own position in the management coordinates constructed by western management experts. However, the mechanism of Confucianism is fundamentally different from that of Western management thought. If we do not highlight the differences in the same, it will produce far fetched and invalid interpretation.

Different from Shen Yuanxin, Wu Zhixiong (1998) explored a new way to explain the Confucian management philosophy by comparing the various schools of thought in the spring and Autumn period with it, so as to clarify the proper meaning of the Confucian management philosophy. He believes: in the whole system of management and control, the Confucianists not only put forward the management and control concept of morality in the way of Tao, and courtesy in order to achieve effective management control, managers must achieve "unity of knowledge and practice", "self-cultivation and appease people" and "integrity of people".

Xiang Zuochun (2003) analyzed the main characteristics of human resource management in Confucian management philosophy with the help of chaos theory. Chaos theory is a method of qualitative thinking and quantitative analysis. It is often used to discuss the behavior of dynamic system that must be explained and predicted by the whole, continuous rather than single data relationship. “Today's research on chaos theory shows that in the chaotic world picture, order and disorder, certainty and randomness, stability and instability are organically unified.” The thinking characteristics of the concept of chaos are clearly reflected in the hierarchical system, human nature assumption, management means, management methodology and social organization structure of Confucian management thought. With the help of chaos theory, Xiang Zuo Chun explained the characteristics of Chinese traditional management philosophy and provided ideas for the modernization practice of Confucian management philosophy. In this category of research, there are also studies on the application of Confucian management philosophy to enterprise management practice, but most of them are qualitative description, with new insights and lack of solid and effective demonstration.

**Category 8** "Philosophy of Human Resource Management" is a philosophical refinement of human resource management in management science. The representative documents of human resource management

philosophy are all from Liu Gang (2011): "Exploration of the origin: on the occurrence of human resource management philosophy", "Why can human resource management philosophy be possible" and "Development of the connotation of human resource management philosophy". Liu Gang defined the philosophy of human resource management. The so-called philosophy of human resource management is the general term of teleology and epistemology of general human resource management. It is a high-level summary and summary of people's understanding of human resource management. He also believes that the philosophy of human resource management is an inevitable subject under the situation of the deepening understanding of human in the management field, the historical development of human resource management theory and the development of management philosophy (Liu, 2011). The concept of human resource management philosophy has not received the response and attention of the academic circles. The reason is that the connotation of the concept is not clarified in the paper. The philosophy of human resource management can be regarded as an organic part of management philosophy.

## Conclusion and Reflection

On the whole, the research of Chinese management philosophy has given full answers to the questions of how to construct and what kind of management philosophy to construct. The most important characteristics of Chinese management philosophy research are the diversity of research perspectives and the innovation of research logic. The modernization of management philosophy is a problem that many scholars pay special attention to and try to solve. The modernization of management philosophy is not only related to the modernization of management discipline, but also indirectly affects the practice of modern management. In the existing research, there is still a situation: they want to rely on a western thinking rather than pay attention to the actual management of contemporary China. In fact, it is not easy to realize this because the static interpretation can only hide the interactive and changing relationship between people and the world, and can not get a real and reliable understanding.

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