

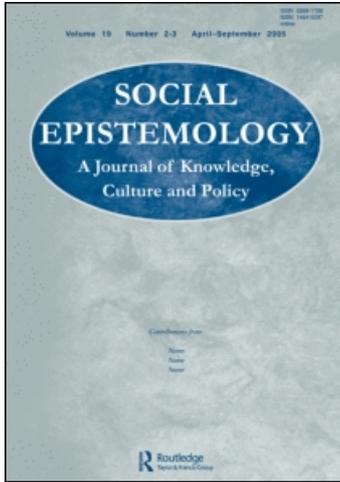
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Martin Evenden; Gregory Sandstrom

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INTERVIEW

Calling for Scientific Revolution in Psychology: K. K. Hwang on Indigenous Psychologies

Martin Evenden and Gregory Sandstrom

This interview with Kwang-Kuo Hwang offers an introductory insight into the emergence of the field of indigenous psychologies. In the process of doing so, it attempts to illuminate the main historical factors behind its development, its key issues of debate and the important challenges it faces. It also provides details pertaining to new theories and methods that have recently emerged in connection with the indigenous approach and how they have contributed to its advancement. In addition, it outlines Hwang's proposed strategy towards the goal of developing a universal psychology.

Keywords: Indigenous Psychologies; Culture; Psychological Theories

Until recently, it had been widely assumed that psychological theories developed in the West could be easily transplanted and validly applied to external cultures worldwide. However, this assumption is now being openly challenged by the indigenization movement that has been inspired by political as well as epistemic reasons.

One of its leading exponents, Kwang-Kuo Hwang, finished his PhD at the University of Hawaii and returned to his native Taiwan in 1976. He soon encountered difficulties with applying the knowledge and methods he had acquired from the West when carrying out field research in Taiwan. Since then, Hwang has devoted his attention towards the problem of why conceptual frameworks and research methods developed in the West have been unable to solve the problems of daily life faced by people in non-western countries. Moreover, he has been interested in not only developing theories

Dr Martin Evenden is Assistant Professor in the Department of Applied English at Lunghwa University of Science and Technology. Dr Gregory Sandstrom is Post-Doctoral Researcher at the Institute for Applied Mathematics and Systems (IIMAS), Autonomous National University of Mexico. Correspondence to: Dr Martin Evenden, Lunghwa University of Science and Technology, No. 300, Sec. 1, Wanshou Rd., Guishan, Taoyuan County 33306, Taiwan (R.O.C.). Email: evendenmartin@hotmail.com

that are culturally specific to the local people within non-western countries, but also in pursuing the development of a universal psychology that can successfully account for both the cross-culturally invariant functionings of the human mind and its culturally specific manifestations.

The following interview with Professor Hwang aims to introduce new readers to the relatively recent and rapidly evolving field of indigenous psychologies (IPs). We cover the main issues related to the central debates over IPs to establish the direction of the field, to outline the methods and theories IPs offer in order to provide solutions to problems and to generate new knowledge, and to trace the internal and external factors that have influenced the field's development thus far.

Interview

Q: For the benefit of those readers who are new to the topic of indigenous psychology (IP) or IPs, could you please briefly explain how it differs from and/or how it relates to mainstream psychologies and anthropology? Is it *in* the mainstream now or is it trying to become part of the mainstream?

A: The field of IP is different from mainstream psychology in the respect it takes into serious consideration the effects of cultural influence on human behavior in its theoretical construction. In particular, while most theories in contemporary mainstream psychology are based on presumptions of individualism, those used in IP are based on presumptions of relationalism. I think someday, if mainstream psychologists understand the approach of IP, they will find that IP is more comprehensive than mainstream psychology. This is because individualism is very narrow and relationalism is more comprehensive than individualism.

In comparison to anthropology, IP is different in the sense that it emphasizes the importance of theoretical verification by empirical methods of psychology, including experiments.

Geertz said that:

Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning. (1973, 5)

I do not agree with Geertz that IP and experimental psychology do not mix like water and oil. In fact, IP is trying to establish a new paradigm to integrate these two traditions of research.

Q: You talk about relationalism in comparison to individualism. First of all, what do you mean by relationalism more specifically; that is, are you referring to a kind of collectivism, holism or the interdependent self? Second, you mention that it is more comprehensive than individualism, and thereby making IP more comprehensive than mainstream psychology. What exactly do you mean by this? For instance, is it simply an opposing methodology, an alternative to individualism as an ideology or perhaps some kind of integral approach?

A: In Chapter seven of my book *A proposal for scientific revolution in psychology* (Hwang 2011), I criticized the research paradigm of Individualism–Collectivism which has dominated the field of cross-cultural psychology for more than 30 years. I argued that individualism represents the cultural ideal of western civilization after the Renaissance and that many psychological scales that have been developed to measure it are valid. However, collectivism is a more ambiguous and all-inclusive concept meaning that most instruments that can be used for measuring it are invalid. Therefore, it should be elaborated with some more exact concepts, including relationalism.

I constructed a theoretical model of *face and favor* on the philosophical basis of scientific realism (Hwang 1987), intending it to be a universal model that is applicable to various cultures. In Chapter four of my book *Confucian relationalism* (Hwang 2009b), I illustrated how the four kinds of interpersonal ties discussed in that model—namely, *expressive ties*, *mixed ties* and *instrumental ties*, as well as the *vertical relationship* between petitioner and resource allocator—are corresponded with Fiske’s (1991) four elementary forms of social behavior; namely, *communal sharing*, *equality matching*, *market pricing*, and *authority ranking*.

Fiske is an anthropological psychologist. He argued that the four elementary forms of social behavior represent the universal mind in dealing with various kinds of interpersonal relationship which can be found in all cultures of the world.

Viewed from this perspective, the western ideal of individualism emphasizes and exaggerates only the relationships of *market pricing* or *instrumental ties*. It is biased in the sense that it neglects or ignores other kinds of interpersonal relationship. Based on the philosophy of structuralism, I have strong confidence that any theory constructed on such a biased presumption will suffer from a crisis of infinite regress, while a theoretical model of psychology which has been constructed on the deep structure of human mind tends to be more robust and endurable for purposes of empirical examination.

By the same vein of reasoning, I constructed a *Mandela model of self* to represent the deep structure of self with various stages of spiritual transformation that can be found in most religions of the world.

Q: A terminological question: How do you distinguish “indigenous psychology” from “indigenous psychologies” or “psychology of indigenous peoples”?

A: This discipline of mainstream psychology emerged from the European–American cultural region of the world. It is rooted in the Judeo–Christian religious–philosophical tradition and has been passed on to the West through the Greco–Roman thought tradition.

Mainstream western psychology (WP) has been exported to non-western countries in accompaniment with the victory and expansion of western imperialism and colonialism over the last few centuries and it has also been accepted by non-western intellectuals with an earnest motivation to be modernized by learning advanced western sciences.

However, because many scholars and practitioners have since found that the imported WP is irrelevant or inappropriate for them to understand their own people, knowledge generated by WP cannot be used to solve their daily problems. Thus, some psychologists decided to devote themselves to the development of IP as a reaction to the dominance of WP.

According to an international survey conducted by Allwood and Berry (2006), the indigenization movement of psychology has happened in different regions all over the world since the 1980s. So we may have many IPs, but not one singular IP.

The term “indigenous psychology” itself is used to denote the research approach of studying the psychology of people in their own cultural context, while the term “indigenous psychologies” is used when this approach is applied to study IP in a particular culture. There is a very important fundamental principle for IP suggested by Shweder et al. (1998) called “one mind, many mentalities”. It means the minds of human beings are all the same, but the mentalities influenced by cultural factors are very different and if you want to study IP, first you have to develop a theoretical model to explain what the common mind of human beings is. Then you must use this model to study cultural factors and how they influence people living in a particular culture.

Q: Okay, you have said that IPs correspond to different mentalities identified with different cultures. Can you tell us how we would actually define a cultural mentality given that the term culture is a very broad one? Do you have a specific definition of culture that can be used to help denote a particular mentality?

A: The mentality aspect refers to a psychological orientation or community which has been influenced by a particular cultural tradition. The basic way to think about culture itself is in terms of habit. If you are living within a culture, you use a language, a particular kind of language, to deal with daily problems such as problems of living. And in every culture there is some habitual way of dealing with these problems. Therefore, I think that language is the most important carrier of culture and that the approach of IP needs to pay close attention to the language games played by people in a given culture, as well as the received wisdom for action, cultural values and worldviews which support them in playing these language games.

Q: You have just pointed out WPs were not working when applied by scholars and practitioners in their local cultures. Could you please explain what other important factors have led to the development of IPs? For instance, there is the Declaration of Indigenous Human Rights, Official Apologies by the Australian and Canadian Governments, Land Returns in New Zealand, Meetings on Truth and Reconciliation, and so forth.

A: There are external and internal factors that have led to the development of IPs. The most important external factor is the rise of new powers in the contemporary world, especially China, but also India, Indonesia and other countries with huge populations. They have lots of students who study abroad, and when they come back

some of them teach in universities, but most of the theories and research paradigms they teach in their local universities are imported from the West. These countries are not satisfied with this situation and are therefore eager to build up their own independent theories of social sciences in order to recognize themselves and to solve their own problems.

However, I think the most important internal factor to push forward the progress of a particular science is the element of academic achievement itself.

I have participated in the Asian Association of Social Psychology (AASP) since 1997 and was elected as its president from 2005 to 2007. This experience enabled me to realize that the shortage of comprehensive understanding on the western philosophy of science is a common problem to all social scientists of non-western countries. Therefore, I decided to seek out a way of solving this problem through my own research work.

I was appointed as the principal investigator of the Project In Search of Excellence for Research on Chinese Indigenous Psychology at the beginning of 2000. When the project ended in 2008, I integrated findings from previous related research into a book entitled *Confucian relationalism: Philosophical reflection, theoretical construction and empirical research* which was published in 2009 (Hwang 2009b).

Based on the philosophy of post-positivism, this book advocated that the epistemological goal of IP is to construct a series of theories that represent not only the universal mind of human beings but also the particular mentality of a people within a given society. On the basis of this presumption, I explained how I constructed my theoretical model of *face and favor* which was supposed to represent the universal mind for social interaction and then I analyzed the inner structure of Confucianism and discussed its attributes in terms of western ethics. In the following chapters of this book, I constructed a series of theories based on the presupposition of relationalism to integrate findings of empirical research on the concepts of social exchange, face, achievement motivation, organizational behaviors, and conflict resolution in Confucian society.

The Asian Association of Indigenous and Cultural Psychology (AAICP) held its first international conference on 24–27 July 2010 at Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, where I was elected as its first president. In my keynote speech delivered at its inauguration ceremony, I mentioned that Hendrich, Heine, and Norenzayan (2010a, 2010b, 2010c) from the University of British Columbia reported findings of their research in the journals *Nature* and *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, which indicated that 96% of samples of psychological research published in the world's top journals from 2003 to 2007 were drawn from western, educated, industrialized, rich, and democratic (WEIRD) societies, which house just 12% of the world's population. In fact, the psychological dispositions of such a WEIRD sample are very particular and unique.

Therefore, I criticized those theories of western social psychology which had been constructed on the presumption of individualism as too WEIRD to be applied in non-western countries. The mission of the Asian Association of Indigenous and Cultural Psychology is to initiate a scientific revolution by constructing a series of theories on the presumption of relationalism to replace the western theories of WEIRD psychology

so as to help people of non-western countries solve the various problems they encounter in their daily lives.

Now I have translated *Confucian relationalism* into English in order to provide an exemplar for non-western indigenous psychologists to echo in support of the scientific revolution and to establish their own IPs.

After the first international conference of the AAICP, I also developed a Mandela model of self. According to my advocacy, the progress of IPs in non-western countries must be pushed forward by theoretical construction, not only through the collection of empirical data. Therefore, I wrote a book entitled *A proposal for scientific revolution in psychology* to illustrate my ideas, which contains the following chapters (Hwang 2011):

1. Mandela model of self;
2. From wisdom to theory;
3. Philosophical switch of Positivism;
4. From Behaviorism to cognitive psychology;
5. Scientism and naive positivism;
6. Anti-inductive theory and self-centered integration;
7. Call for scientific revolution in psychology;
8. Cultural value and wisdom for action;
9. Self-cultivation and realms of life in Confucianism;
10. Confucian ethics for ordinary people and model of action.

Q: With regards to the history of the subject or sub-field (i.e. with respect to the maturity of IP), what stage of development do you think it is at in terms of its scientific and academic status? For example, if you compare it to a sub-discipline or field like the history and sociology of science, while you have just noted that you already have an international conference for the Asian Association of Indigenous and Cultural Psychology, do you also have your own exclusive journals? In your opinion is “Indigenous Psychologies” an underdeveloped, developing or developed discipline?

A: We already have a journal called the *Asian Association of Social Psychology*, which was established in 1990 I think, and we are going to publish an international journal next year which will probably be called the *Asian Association of Indigenous Psychology*. Furthermore, again, as suggested by Shweder et al. (1998), the most important rule for theoretical construction in IP is “one mind, many mentalities”. We have to construct a theory which represents not only the universal mind of human beings, but also the mentality of those people in a specific culture. Granting this as the goal for the development of IPs combined with the fact that there are many scholars in local cultures who are still using western paradigms, I would say that it is still a developing discipline in most areas, but it may develop very fast in the near future.

Q: You previously mentioned that as a result of both internal and external factors China, alongside other countries, wish to develop their own autonomous social sciences. How long do you anticipate it will take for a fully fledged Chinese social science to be developed? Furthermore, as you also mention, one of the problems in

successfully achieving this aim, particularly in China, is that students who study abroad tend, on returning home, to rely on knowledge of, and habits from, the western paradigms in which they have been taught, seemingly reinforcing “colonization”. If true, the situation appears antithetical and counter-productive to the stated aims of indigenous social scientific development and so what, if anything, should be done?

A: I have confidence that it will be easy for non-western countries, especially China, to develop their own autonomous social sciences so long as they recognize my advocacy in *A proposal for scientific revolution in psychology* (Hwang 2011), take enough time to comprehend the progress of western philosophy of science and think about how to apply it to their own research work.

I do not think that studying abroad is a correct way to achieve this aim, because you cannot expect western scholars to provide expedient answers to serious problems faced by intellectuals of non-western countries.

I strongly agree with you that studying abroad may make non-western students rely on the knowledge of and adopt habits from the western paradigms in which they have been taught. They may become self-colonized when they return home without reflection on those issues.

My book *Logic of social sciences* (Hwang 2009a) has been published in both simplified characters in mainland China and traditional characters in Taiwan. I always tell my graduate students: “It took the West four hundred years to develop the philosophy of science. I used ten years to organize their ideas and write this book. You should use at least one year to study it!”

Most graduate students in China are very intelligent and very smart. If they follow my advice, I do believe that the Chinese will establish their own autonomous social sciences very soon.

Q: In your work you suggest it is necessary for indigenous psychologists to understand the western history and philosophy of science, but why is that absolutely necessary or fundamental? Why does the construction of a theory in an indigenous culture have to rely on the western history and philosophy of science?

A: In my book *Logic of social sciences* (Hwang 2009a), I reviewed five major philosophies of science which have been developed for social scientists to construct science during the 20th century, including positivism, post-positivism, structuralism, hermeneutics and critical theory. In this book, I compared the ontological, epistemological and methodological switch from positivism to post-positivism by taking *Tractatus logico-philosophicus* (Wittgenstein 1922/1961) and *Evolutionary Epistemology* (Popper 1963, 1972) as two representative examples: the positivists advocated *naïve realism* for its ontology and argued that the only reality is that which can be experienced by one’s sensory organs. Hence, they claimed it is unnecessary for scientists to look for ultimate causes beyond the sensory experience of human beings. Such a position of radical empiricism urged them to advocate for an epistemology of truth which views scientific theory as representation of *truth*; as well as a methodology of *verification*

which stresses that “the meaning of a proposition is the method for its verification” (Schlick 1936, 148).

In contrast to this, the post-positivists adopted the ontology of *realism* which assumes that an ontological reality exists beyond our sensory experiences. Therefore, a scientist has to construct a theory for describing the objective world by conjecturing about the nature of the subject of his study. Because theory is nothing more than the conjecture made by a scientist, the epistemology of post-positivism views scientific theory as an *approximation to the truth*, but not truth in itself. In the same vein, it advocates the methodology of *falsification* which attempts to falsify the major propositions of a theory by all means of dialectical reasoning as well as empirical evidence in order to eliminate errors that might be contained in the theory.

Most psychologists of non-western countries have generally adopted a position of naïve positivism and assumed that western theories of psychology represent *truth*. They will certainly find problems with this approach after a certain period of practice. The emergence of IPs in different regions of the world since the 1980s as indicated in Allwood and Berry’s (2006) international survey indeed reflects the fact that paradigms of WP have encountered numerous anomalies which are calling for a scientific revolution in psychology (Kuhn 1969).

Q: What are the greatest challenges currently facing IPs?

A: Most researchers of IP advocated for the bottom-up approach of building theories on the basis of local phenomena, findings, and experiences by the research methods which are appropriate to their cultural and social context. They have conducted numerous empirical researches, accumulated a lot of empirical data, and constructed many substantial theoretical models. Many of them advocated that findings of IPs may contribute to the progress of mainstream psychology, and the final goal of IPs is to develop a universal or global psychology. But it is logically impossible for them to overcome the barriers to attain this goal by using the inductive method of the bottom-up approach.

Q: What “schools of thought” or “academic groups” have formed to face them?

A: Since I devoted myself to the indigenization movement of social sciences in the 1980s, I have realized that the fundamental barrier for Chinese social scientists to make a genuine breakthrough in their research works is a shortage of comprehensive understanding on the progress of western philosophy of science which is the essential ethos of western civilization.

All the knowledge sought and taught in the western colleges has been constructed on the grounds of philosophy. In order to help Chinese young scholars understand the progress of the western philosophy of science, I spent more than 10 years writing my book entitled *Logic of social sciences* (Hwang 2009a) to discuss different perspectives on crucial issues of ontology, epistemology and methodology which had been proposed by 17 representative figures of western philosophy in the 20th century. The first half of this book addressed itself towards the switch in the philosophy of natural science from

positivism to post-positivism. The second half expounded the philosophy of social science including structuralism, hermeneutic and critical science.

Q: Who are the leading contributors to the discourse?

A: I finished my PhD training of psychology in University of Hawaii where Professor Anthony Marsella served as my mentor and enlightened my cultural consciousness. Soon after I returned to Taiwan in 1976, another mentor of mine Professor Kuo-Shu Yang began to initiate the IP movement in Taiwan, which stimulated my problematic consciousness. I met Professor Richard Shweder at the 1999 AASP conference in Taipei. His works provided me with the most important principle of cultural psychology for solving the crucial problem of IP. I would say that these three people are the most significant contributors to my discourse on this topic.

In addition to them, Uichol Kim (Korea), James Liu (New Zealand), Girishwar Misra (India), Regelia Pe-pua (Philippines), Kwok Leung (Hong Kong), Faturchman and Kwartarini Yuniarti (Indonesia) and my colleagues of the IP group in Taiwan are the major contributors to the current IP movement in Asia.

Q: In your work you also indicate that as a result of globalization, modernization, industrialization processes, and so on, most indigenous cultures are no longer “pure” because they have become “contaminated” with western ideas. What problems does this present for the development of IPs and how are they resolved?

A: As a result of globalization, modernization and industrialization, cultural hybridization and interpenetration has become so common that traditional cultural differences are being eroded (Hermans and Kempen 1998), and some cultures and languages may even disappear. But, do not forget that language is the most important carrier of culture. Who can believe that the Chinese language will disappear someday?

I certainly understand my approach of IP contains reification of culture. But, I would like to emphasize that western psychology is also an indigenous one, because it is dependent on the western cultural background. This is the main point of my comments on Allwood’s (2011) article published in *Social Epistemology* (25 (1)): why is reification of western culture a merit for the progress of psychology and reification of non-western cultures a mistake for understanding human beings?

Q: Having mentioned some of the main issues that unite indigenous psychologists—that is, practical and political reasons for wanting to develop indigenous social scientific methods—can you outline for us the main issues that divide them or any important points of contention between them?

A: Most indigenous psychologists tend to take a position of academic anti-colonialism when faced with the same problematic situation (for example, Enriquez 1992). They have argued that current mainstream psychology is basically a kind of westernized or Americanized psychology and its theory and research methods contain a western

ethnocentric bias (Berry et al. 1992). When the western psychology research paradigm is transplanted blindly to non-western countries, it is usually irrelevant, inappropriate, or incompatible for understanding the mentalities of non-western people (Sinha 1984, 1986, 2003). Such a practice has been regarded as a kind of academic imperialism or colonialism (Ho 1993). By ignoring the fact that many western theories of social psychology are culturally bound, duplication of a western paradigm in non-western countries may result in neglect of cultural factors that may influence the development and manifestation of human behavior.

Based on such reasoning, many indigenous psychologists have advocated “a bottom-up model building paradigm” (Kim, Park, and Park 2000, 265) to promote “the study of human behavior and mental processes within a cultural context that relies on values, concepts, belief systems, methodologies, and other resources” (Ho 1998, 94), and that treats people “as interactive and proactive agents of their own actions” that occur in a meaningful context (Kim, Park, and Park 2000, 71). They perform a “scientific study of human behavior (or the mind) that is native, that is not transported from other regions, and that is designed for its peoples” (Kim and Berry 1993, 2) in order to develop a “cultural-appropriate psychology” (Azuma 1984, 53), “a psychology based on and responsive to indigenous culture and indigenous realities” (Enriquez 1993, 158) or a psychology whose “concepts, problems, hypothesis, methods, and tests emanate from, adequately represent, and reflect upon the cultural context in which the behavior is observed” (Adair, Puhan, and Vohra 1993, 149).

Because this approach may be linked with wisdom for action via language in a given culture, its findings might be useful for understanding social action, facilitating interpersonal communication, and helping people to solve daily problems in that society. However, if psychologists in a particular culture do not know how to capture indigenous theory from core values of their cultural tradition, findings of their research might become too fragmentary to be accepted by mainstream psychologists.

Due to the discontinuities of empirical data collected by the quantitative approach of naïve positivism, some psychologists advocated the use of qualitative interviews to collect participants’ discourses on their life experiences. The freshness of this phenomenological approach may have attracted researchers’ attention at the very beginning. However, the qualitative approach also emphasizes the importance of a researcher’s sensitivity for theoretical construction (Glaser 1978). Compiling qualitative data without any attempt to construct theory is just another approach of naïve positivism which is doomed to be unfruitful for scientific progress.

Q: Moreover, do any political and epistemological disputes arise between indigenous psychologists and local psychologists “colonized by the western paradigm” and if so, can you provide details as to the nature of these disputes?

A: The IP approach described above has been criticized by mainstream psychologists. For example, Triandis (2000) points out that anthropologists have used a similar approach for years, and that accumulating anthropological data with an idiosyncratic

approach may not have much significance in terms of contribution to the development of scientific psychology. Poortinga (1999) indicates that the usage of the plural “indigenous psychologies” by many indigenous psychologists suggests an implicit restriction on the potential for development of IP. The development of multiple psychologies not only contradicts the scientific requirement of parsimony, but also makes the demarcation of cultural populations a pending problem. If every culture has to develop its own psychology, how many IPs should there be? How many psychologies would have to be developed for Africa? What is the optimal number of IPs? What is the meaning of an IP developed in a specific culture to people in other cultures?

The reason why mainstream psychologists have put forward such challenges is because the so-called bottom-up approach adopted by most indigenous psychologists has been constituted on the philosophy of naïve positivism. They split the research field of IP into several independent domains and collected huge amounts of empirical data which might be useful for understanding some particular psychological phenomena in a given culture, but it is very difficult to generalize those findings to other cultures and it is also not easy for people from other cultures to understand them.

Q: You argue that indigenous psychologists need to develop a theoretical model of human mind and use this model to successfully study different cultural mentalities in terms of how different cultural factors influence the people residing in that culture. Can you elaborate more on that and explain more specifically how it might actually be done?

A: Once again, as I mentioned before, the most important principle for theoretical construction in cultural psychology is “one mind, many mentalities” (Shweder et al. 1998).

The accomplishment of the *Mandela model of self* and the theoretical *model of face and favor* represents two universal models for future development of indigenous theories on self and interpersonal interaction, respectively.

We may use them to analyze any great cultural traditions of the world. In Chapter five of my book *Confucian relationalism*, I explained how I used the *model of face and favor* as a framework to analyze the inner structure of Confucianism (Hwang 2009b). In my book *Knowledge and action: A psychological interpretation of Chinese cultural tradition*, I also use it to analyze Daoism, Legalism and the Martial School (Hwang 1995). In Chapter nine of *A proposal for scientific revolution in psychology*, I used the *Mandela model of self* to analyze the Confucian teachings of self-cultivation and spiritual transformation (Hwang 2011). By doing so, we are able to construct a series of theoretical models at the cultural level which can be used to answer important questions for conducting empirical research of Chinese IP.

I have demonstrated how to use this strategy to conduct empirical research in my book *Confucian relationalism: Philosophical reflection, theoretical construction and empirical research* (Hwang 2009b).

Q: Your paper “The epistemological goal of indigenous psychology: The perspective of constructive realism” (2004) as the title suggests draws on constructive realism which

appears to be a relatively recent development in the philosophy of science. Could you give us a brief outline of it and tell us what its most important ideas are?

A: Constructive realism is a relatively recent development in the philosophy of science which was proposed by Fritz G. Wallner (1994), Professor of philosophy in Vienna University, who attempted to integrate various philosophies of science that emerged after World War II. He argued that when a particular term of language in culture A is translated into culture B but no equivalent term can be found, it means that the term is specific to culture A.

Constructive realism emphasized the distinction between scientific microworlds and lifeworlds. I elaborated the difference between these two worlds and used it to emphasize the importance of theoretical construction in the progress of the IP movement (Hwang 2006).

Q: Can you provide an explicit and practical example of strangification to help us understand a little more about how it works?

A: The strategy of strangification can also be used to integrate different theories addressing on the same noumenon. For example, I constructed my *face and favor model* in terms of social exchange theory (Hwang 1987), while Francis Hsu (1971) constructed his theory of psychological homeostasis in the terminology of psychoanalysis.

In Chapter eight of my book *Confucian relationalism*, I argued that my *model of face and favor* can be translated into the terminology of Hsu's theory, but Hsu's theory of psychological homeostasis cannot be translated into my model (Hwang 2009b). It means that my model of face and favor has higher strangification ability.

For indigenous psychologists in non-western societies, the criticisms from mainstream psychologists represent outsiders' viewpoints because they do not understand the language and culture of those indigenous societies and are culturally blind to non-western culture. Nonetheless, they may accept the indigenous approach if they have a sympathetic understanding about a particular non-western culture. Furthermore, in cases where researchers have a profound understanding of the core values in a given culture, they may go beyond the level of data collection and attempt to develop a substantial theory to integrate findings of empirical research in a specific domain.

According to the philosophy of constructive realism, in cases where IP researchers believe that their substantial theory or findings of empirical research are useful for people in other cultures, they should be able to use the technique of strangification and translate them into the language of that culture. By doing so, they may know if their theory is specific to a particular culture.

But, this is not the crucial point. In order to overcome the challenges currently facing IPs, I think it is necessary for indigenous psychologists to have a comprehensive understanding about various schools of thought in western philosophy of science and use them to untangle the threads of difficulties facing them.

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