

## BOOK REVIEW

# Chinese Business Ethics: Global Perspectives and Local Reconfiguration

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**Abstract**

This review examines the book "Chinese Business Ethics: Global Perspectives and Local Reconfiguration" (in Chinese 中国商业伦理学：全球视野与本土重构), edited in 2023 by Lü Li, Huang Haixiao, Cheng Jiang, Liu Haibo, Cao Zhenjie, Yang Liangcheng, Shi Feizhi, and Wang Qian, which offers a pioneering exploration of business ethics through the lens of Chinese philosophical traditions and global frameworks. The book addresses the dominance of Western theories in Chinese business ethics education and proposes a localized perspective by integrating Confucian, Daoist, and other indigenous ethical principles. Through seven thematic chapters, the authors analyze topics such as marketing, human resource management, accounting, sustainability, and entrepreneurship, providing theoretical insights and practical applications. Enriched with vivid case studies, this work bridges the gap between historical traditions and contemporary business challenges, offering a model of ethical decision-making that is both culturally rooted and globally resonant. This review highlights the contributions of the book to the field of business ethics and its potential to inspire future scholarship and practice.

**KEYWORDS**

Chinese business ethics, Confucian philosophy, Daoist ethics, Global-local perspective, Ethical decision-making, Localized ethical frameworks, Chinese philosophical traditions, Business ethics education.

The recently published 中国商业伦理学：全球视野与本土重构 (Chinese Business Ethics: Global Perspectives and Local Reconfiguration), edited by prominent scholars Lü Li, Huang Haixiao, Cheng Jiang, Liu Haibo, Cao Zhenjie, Yang Liangcheng, Shi Feizhi, and Wang Qian, offers a compelling and timely exploration of the intersection between traditional Chinese ethical thought and contemporary business practices in a globalized economy. Published by Enterprise Management Press in August 2023, the book aims to bridge a significant gap in the study and teaching of business ethics in China, which Western frameworks have often dominated. Through a rigorous synthesis of historical, philosophical, and practical insights, this work provides a much-needed localized perspective on business ethics, with broad implications for both academia and practice in line with the principles of Indigenous Scholarship (Rodriguez-Escobar 2024). At the heart of this book is the recognition that mainstream business ethics textbooks in China tend to rely heavily on Western philosophical and ethical frameworks (such as

(Sahut et al. 2023ba), often neglecting the rich tradition of Chinese ethical thought. This creates a disconnect between ethical theories taught in universities and the ethical practices observed in China's dynamic business environment. The authors set out to address this disconnect by drawing on both Western universal principles and Chinese philosophical traditions, such as Confucian values of "仁义礼智信" (benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and faithfulness), the Daoist concept of "道法自然" (following the natural way), and other foundational ideas from China's intellectual history. By weaving these elements into a unified theoretical and practical framework, the book provides a roadmap for constructing a distinctively Chinese approach to business ethics. The book is organized into seven chapters, each addressing critical aspects of business ethics. The opening chapter traces the historical evolution of Chinese business ethics, showcasing how ancient philosophical traditions and economic practices shaped early conceptions of ethical commerce. By highlighting the ethical principles espoused by figures such as Guan Zhong and Fan Li, the chapter situates Chinese business

ethics within a long-standing tradition of harmonizing individual and collective interests for societal benefit. Subsequent chapters delve into specific domains of business ethics. The second chapter explores ethical considerations in human resource management, juxtaposing Western and Chinese perspectives. It emphasizes the value of harmonious relationships, respect for individual potential, and collective welfare, rooted in Confucian and Daoist principles. This dual perspective not only provides theoretical depth but also offers practical insights into managing people in modern Chinese enterprises. The third chapter, focusing on marketing ethics, is particularly illuminating. It examines the ethical challenges of globalization and digital transformation which are focal topics in today's research agenda (Boyer 2024, Bonet and Lissillour 2023), with a special focus on consumer privacy and data ethics. The authors propose a framework that integrates the Western emphasis on transparency and fairness with Chinese values of moderation and sincerity. By emphasizing the ethical implications of marketing strategies in the digital age, the chapter underscores the importance of fostering trust and mutual respect between businesses and their customers. In its exploration of accounting ethics, the fourth chapter examines the ethical dimensions of financial management and reporting. Drawing parallels between Western concepts of accountability and the Chinese principle of "诚信" (integrity), the chapter highlights how ethical financial practices can enhance organizational sustainability and societal trust. Similarly, the fifth chapter addresses the ethical imperatives of sustainable development, proposing a fusion of global sustainability norms with traditional Chinese concepts of ecological harmony, such as "天人合一" (the unity of humanity and nature). The penultimate chapter discusses the role of entrepreneurial spirit in ethical innovation. It celebrates the rich legacy of Chinese business leaders who embody the ideals of "商以载道" (business as a vehicle for moral purpose) and advocates for a renewal of these ideals in the context of modern entrepreneurship. The authors argue that Chinese enterprises can lead the way in demonstrating how business success and ethical responsibility can be mutually reinforcing. Finally, the concluding chapter envisions the future of Chinese business ethics, advocating for a synthesis of Western and Chinese approaches. By promoting the idea of "伦理合一" (the unity of ethics) and "创造即责任" (creativity as responsibility), the authors call for a proactive and inclusive approach to addressing ethical challenges in a rapidly changing world. The book's strength lies not only in its comprehensive theoretical framework but also in its practical relevance. Through vivid case studies and real-world examples, the authors demonstrate how ethical principles can be applied to tackle contemporary challenges, from digital marketing and corporate governance to global trade and sustainability. These examples bring the theoretical concepts to life, making the book accessible and engaging for a diverse audience, including students, scholars, and practitioners. This book is an ambitious and groundbreaking contribution to the field of business ethics. It not only enriches our understanding of Chinese business practices but also provides a valuable lens through which global audiences can appreciate the unique contributions of Chinese ethical thought. The editors and contributors have succeeded in creating a work that is both

deeply rooted in local traditions and open to global perspectives, making it a must-read for anyone interested in the intersection of ethics, culture, and commerce. By presenting a vision of business ethics that is distinctly Chinese yet globally relevant, this book sets a high standard for future scholarship in the field. Future studies in leadership could contribute by integrating ethical reflection into prior research (Sabbah 2024, Baio et al. 2024, Luo 2024, Quashigah and Amuzu 2024) which ignored ethical variables in the study of leadership. These studies will be able to the core of business decision-making and a testament to the enduring relevance of cultural heritage in shaping ethical practices in the modern world.

## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The authors contributed to conceptualization, writing, reviewing, editing and addressing reviewer comments.

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None reported.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no potential conflict of interests.

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