

Organizational Lifecycle Review: Empirical Reflections and I-Ching-Inspired Perspectives¹

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Abstract

The text examines the organizational life cycle (OLC) and strategic management frameworks, critically analyzing the limitations of the assumption that organizations must grow and age in a predictable manner, and the inadequacy of Western management strategies. It presents various OLC models and reviews the literature on OLC characteristics and the strategic processing framework of Mintzberg in Western and Eastern perspectives. The identified gaps include theoretical, methodological, and knowledge deficiencies, emphasizing the necessity of empirical and philosophical propositions to address these gaps and provide systematic solutions for business survival. This research highlights the need for a change philosophy that incorporates both prescriptive and descriptive components to achieve longevity in organizations. It also identifies the gaps in literature, including the theoretical gap, methodological gap, and knowledge gap.

Keywords: OLC linear, non-linear Cyclic OLC I-Ching philosophy

1. Introduction

Organizations undergo complex, non-linear development processes that are not adequately captured by existing organizational lifecycle (OLC) models and strategic management frameworks. These models, predominantly based on Western perspectives, often lack explanations for internal driving forces behind organizational change and revival. There is a growing need for more holistic approaches that integrate both Western and Eastern philosophical insights, particularly from ancient Chinese texts like I-Ching. Such integration could provide a more comprehensive

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understanding of organizational dynamics across different lifecycle stages, addressing gaps in current theories regarding organizational longevity, revival, and long-term survival.

This literature review examines organizational lifecycle (OLC) models and strategic management frameworks, critically analyzing their limitations and gaps and exploring their relationship to the philosophical domain of I-Ching management.

1.1. Background

There are various OLC models proposed by scholars, which typically describe 4-5 stages from inception to decline. However, the review highlights that these linear, deterministic models fail to adequately capture the non-linear development of organizations due to constant environmental changes. The text critiques the assumption that organizations must follow predictable growth stages akin to biological systems, noting that social systems operate differently. The review covers strategic processing approaches, including cross-sectional and longitudinal strategies. It discusses business visioning and cultural approaches, examining Japanese management practices and traditional Chinese philosophical concepts like I-Ching. The text identifies key gaps in existing research: i) A theoretical gap in providing holistic, systematic provisions for enterprise decision-making and strategy; ii) A methodological gap in neglecting oriental philosophical perspectives; and iii) A knowledge gap regarding cyclic OLC models, business vision content, and oriental strategic planning. The review concludes that current OLC and strategic management literature lacks philosophical reflexivity in both ethical considerations and systematic solutions for long-term business survival. It calls for more integrated theories incorporating non-Western cultural contexts and philosophical insights, particularly from I-Ching, to develop more comprehensive frameworks for organizational lifecycle management and sustainable development.

The practical background of this research stems from the limitations observed in current organizational lifecycle (OLC) models and strategic management frameworks. Organizations today face complex, non-linear development trajectories due to constant environmental changes, which are not adequately captured by existing linear, deterministic models. These models, typically describing 4-5 stages from inception to decline, fail to provide holistic, systematic provisions for enterprise decision-making and strategy in real-world scenarios. Additionally, there is a notable lack of incorporation of non-Western perspectives, particularly oriental philosophical insights, in current strategic management approaches. This gap is significant given the increasing globalization of business and the potential value of diverse cultural viewpoints in developing more comprehensive frameworks. The practical implications of these limitations are substantial, as they hinder the ability of organizations to effectively plan for long-term survival and adapt to rapidly changing business environments. There is a pressing need for more integrated theories that can better guide organizations through their complex lifecycles, incorporating both Western and non-Western philosophical insights to create more robust and adaptable

strategic management frameworks.

1.2. Problem statement

Current organizational life cycle (OLC) models and strategic management frameworks are limited in their approach and effectiveness. These models often assume that organizations follow a predictable, linear progression through stages similar to human development, which may not accurately reflect the complex and dynamic nature of modern businesses. Additionally, traditional Western management strategies, rooted in military doctrines, tend to employ rigid structures and mechanistic approaches to strategic management processing. These approaches may be inadequate in addressing the challenges faced by contemporary organizations operating in rapidly changing environments. The problem is further compounded by the lack of integration between Eastern and Western philosophical perspectives in organizational management. Specifically, the ancient Chinese text of I-Ching, which emphasizes harmony with nature and adaptability, offers valuable insights that are often overlooked in conventional strategic management theories. This disconnect between traditional OLC models, Western strategic frameworks, and Eastern philosophical principles creates a gap in our understanding of how organizations can effectively navigate their growth and development more holistically and sustainably. This research aims to address these limitations by critically examining the deficiencies in current OLC models and Western management strategies while exploring the potential contributions of I-Ching philosophical propositions to organizational development and strategic processing. By integrating these diverse perspectives, the study seeks to develop a more comprehensive and adaptable approach to understanding and managing organizational growth and change in today's complex business landscape.

1.3 Significance

The significance of this paper lies in its comprehensive review and critical analysis of organizational lifecycle management literature, highlighting important gaps and proposing new directions for research. Key points of significance include:

- i) Critique of linear OLC models: The paper challenges the assumption that organizations must linearly progress through predictable stages, arguing this view is overly simplistic given the complex, non-linear nature of organizational development.
- ii) Identification of theoretical gaps: It highlights the lack of holistic, systematic frameworks for understanding organizational lifecycles and strategic management across cultures, particularly noting the absence of Eastern philosophical perspectives.
- iii) Recognition of methodological limitations: The paper points out the predominant focus on Western-oriented concepts and the lack of interpretive methods incorporating Asian cultural and philosophical approaches, especially Chinese thought systems.
- iv) Proposal for integrating I-Ching philosophy: It suggests exploring the ancient Chinese I-Ching text as a potential source of insights for developing more comprehensive

OLC models that account for cyclical patterns and revival. v) Emphasis on intrinsic driving forces: The review notes the absence of explanations for internal forces driving organizational change and revival, proposing that I-Ching concepts could provide a framework for understanding these dynamics. vi) Call for cross-cultural perspectives: By highlighting the knowledge gap around non-Western strategic management approaches, the paper advocates for more diverse cultural perspectives in OLC research. vii) Linking philosophy to practice: The paper suggests that incorporating philosophical reflexivity, particularly from Eastern traditions, could enhance both ethical considerations and systematic solutions for long-term business survival. ix) Identification of revival as a key concept: By emphasizing the neglected concept of organizational revival, the paper opens new avenues for research on how declining organizations can rejuvenate and achieve longevity. This comprehensive review and critical analysis lay the groundwork for future research that could significantly advance our understanding of organizational lifecycles and strategic management, particularly by incorporating diverse cultural and philosophical perspectives.

2. Extant Theoretical Organizational Life Cycle

The organizational life cycle concept is predicated on the premise that all organizations undergo processes of birth, growth, aging, and death as they progress through a series of predictable life stages. Each life cycle stage is characterized by distinct determinants and misfits, which contribute to the non-linear development of the organizational life cycle.

2.1 Linear organizational life cycle pattern

Virtually all economic models of business creation posit firm growth after firm birth (Aldrich & Reuf, 2006; Schoonhoven & Romanelli, 2001). Research on the organizational life cycle (OLC) has yielded various predictive models. The following section presents models proposed by different authors in Table 1.

Table 1 Overview of Organizational Life Cycle Model

Overview of Organizational Life Cycle Model								
Extant organizational lifespan								
1965	1967	1972	1983	1984	1987	1989	2010	2012
Gardner John William	Anthony Downs	Greiner	Churchill & Lewis; Quinn & Cameron	Danny Miller and Peter Friesen	Mel Scott & Richard Bruce	Adizes Ichak	Edgar H. Schein	Hamid Tohidi
Youth	Genesis	Creativity	Existence	Birth	Inception	Courtship	Birth of growth	Growth
		Direction	Survival		Survival	Infancy		
						Go-go		
Flourishing , strength	Dynamic of growth	Delegation	Success	Growth	Growth	Adolescence	Middle of life	
			Disengagement		Expansion			
			Growth					
		Coordination	Take-off			Prime		
	Effects of age	Collaboration	Resource-mature	Maturity	Maturity	Stability	Organizational maturity	Maturity
Old age	Death of bureaus			Revival				Decrease
				Decline		Aristocracy		
						Recrimination		
						Bureaucracy		
Renew				Restore		death		Innovation for survival

The literature on organizational growth predominantly conceptualizes business development as a series of discrete stages (e.g. Churchill & Lewis, 1983; Greiner, 1972; Hanks, Watson, Jenson & Chandler, 1994). As evidenced by the chart, scholars typically propose four or five phases, generally encompassing initiation, expansion, peak performance, contraction, and cessation (or resurgence), though nomenclature may differ across studies. For example, Mel Scott & Richard Bruce (1987) utilized the terms inception, survival, growth, expansion, and maturity. Adizes' (1989) Organizational Life Cycle (OLC) model stands out by delineating ten stages: courtship, infancy, go-go, adolescence, prime, stability, aristocracy, recrimination, bureaucracy, and death. However, the specific number of stages is less crucial than the precision with which each phase is identified and characterized. Whether a framework comprises 3 stages (Smith et al, 1985), 4 stages (Lyden, 1975), 5 stages (Churchill & Lewis, 1983), or 10 stages (Adizes, 1979), the fundamental premise of the OLC remains constant: the challenges, prospects, and risks faced by a business, both internally and externally, evolve in accordance with its developmental stage. Further,

it is observed that little attention is given to the evolution (neo-cycle) of the different stages except for the work of a few scholars such as Gardner (1965) who observed that an organization may go from youth to old age in two or three decades or may last for centuries and Miller and Friesen (1984) have touched the concept of revival.

The literature review reveals a notable gap in addressing the dynamics of organizational longevity, particularly the factors contributing to extended survival or premature demise of businesses. A holistic framework must encompass both the sequential stages and underlying mechanisms of the organizational life cycle. This research endeavors to amalgamate existing scholarship on organizational life cycle content and processes, formulating an integrated model for sustained business viability grounded in the philosophical tenets and wisdom of I-Ching.

The organizational life cycle (OLC) has been extensively studied by renowned scholars such as Greiner (1972), Adizes (1979), Kimberly (1979), Miller and Friesen (1984), Lester and Parnell (2006), and Hanks (1990). This concept portrays organizational development as a progression through distinct phases, spanning from inception to full maturity. The appeal of a linear, sequential, deterministic, and invariant life-cycle model lies in its ability to distill the complexities of transformational change into a coherent, predictable pattern (Stubbart and Smalley 1999). Despite its inherent flaws, this framework continues to be employed in contemporary research. However, as previously noted, there remains considerable ambiguity regarding the precise number and composition of stages within an organization's life cycle. Moreover, empirical evidence suggests that organizations may cease operations at various points in their development, not solely during the decline phase, and some may even experience a resurgence following a period of decline.

This analysis draws upon the foundational research of Miller and Friesen (1984), which identified four distinct phases in the organizational life cycle: (i) birth; (ii) growth; (iii) maturity; and (iv) decline.

2.1.1 Founding Stage

The initial phase of an organization's life cycle, known as the birth or founding stage, is marked by the entity's efforts to establish itself and ensure its continued existence (Churchill and Lewis, 1983). During this period, organizations often find themselves susceptible to external forces and must devise methods to navigate their environment effectively. Concurrently, the nascent organization must foster an innovative process that converts concepts into profitable products or services. This endeavor must be undertaken while assembling a dedicated and capable founding team. The simultaneous development of these components is crucial for establishing a thriving enterprise with operational mechanisms that efficiently harness the value generated.

2.1.2 Growth Stage

The literature identifies multiple stages of organizational growth, spanning from early to late phases. In the initial growth period, companies are expected to broaden their potential market reach (Scott & Bruce, 1987) and optimize their teams for business expansion (Quinn & Camera, 1983). As organizations progress to later growth stages, teams typically gain increased autonomy, necessitating a shift in leadership approach. At this juncture, it becomes advisable for leaders to step back from departmental decision-making processes, thereby facilitating the maturation of distinct business functions.

2.1.3 Matured Stage

This phase is characterized by organizational equilibrium, enhanced security, and a subtle leveling off. During this period, firms have amassed assets, achieved consistent profitability, and solidified their market position. The corporate framework and operational systems have reached completion (Schein, 2010). There exists a high degree of coordination and synergy among the various business units (Greiner, 1972). The enterprise has attained a state of optimal stability (Adizes, 1989).

2.1.4 Decline Stage

During the decline phase, organizations often grapple with bureaucratic challenges, while individual members increasingly focus on personal interests. This progressive deterioration erodes the entity's operational effectiveness, eventually culminating in its demise.

Nevertheless, Noel M. Tichy (1980) emphasized that organizations do not adhere to predictable biosocial stages of development, as the principles governing social systems differ from those of biological systems. He asserted:

Organizations do not follow predictable biosocial stages of development. They share some common properties with biological systems, for example, they are born, they import energy, transform it, and produce an output, and are differentiated and functionally specialized. However, they also have unique capacities such as negentropy, and go through changes that are explained more by such factors as environmental threats, opportunities, size, and technology than by unfolding maturational processes. Organizations are not easily categorized by such labels as “childhood”, “adolescence”, and so on. The laws of social systems are not the same as those of biological systems.

The author elucidated three principal challenges encountered in the health care center case study: cultural and ideological issues, technical obstacles, and political complexities. He emphasized that these challenges interacted with social factors across various developmental stages. Specifically, environmental and cultural factors were prominent during the initial phase, while technical concerns emerged during system and procedural development. The subsequent stage of productivity and efficiency enhancement was characterized by technical stabilization and consolidation. Finally, the self-renewal phase grappled with both technical and

political challenges.

Subsequently, the author (Kuzmin, 2017) identified that the primary challenges in the case study of a healthcare center were cultural and ideological issues, technical problems, and political concerns. The author asserted that these factors would interact with social elements at various stages: cultural factors of the environment during the start-up phase, technical issues in the system and procedures development stage, technical stabilization and consolidation in the productivity and efficiency improvement phase, and both technical and political problems in the self-renewal stage.

Business life cycle development does not move in a linear form as the contemporary business world is one of constant changes.

2.2 Non-linear development owing to constant change

Kuzmin (2017) and Miller & Friesen (1984) demonstrated that organizational life does not progress linearly due to continuous political, economic, societal, technological, legal, and environmental changes.

According to Schein (2010), organizations and their leaders must evolve into continuous learners to avert stagnation and decline, enhancing their ability to navigate each phase of the organizational life cycle. While not all organizations cease operations, many undergo mergers and transformations, potentially experiencing multiple life cycle shifts. Achieving longevity, however, demands more than a linear, rational approach to strategic management; it necessitates a change philosophy that incorporates both prescriptive and descriptive components. This philosophical framework offers metaphorical and theoretical underpinnings, along with assumptions and methodologies, to facilitate organizational change.

The prevailing OLC models in contemporary literature predominantly follow an evolutionary logic based on the biological life cycle. These models exhibit notable limitations of insufficient attention to the Neo-cycle, encompassing processes such as renewal and regrowth, and a conspicuous absence of strategic discipline and comprehension in balancing organizational flexibility with controllability. Although Schein (2010) advocated a more fluid and non-linear approach to strategy planning and execution, few have successfully broken free from the constraints of this rigid life cycle framework.

3. Extant Strategic processing in a range of long-term OLC

Prominent strategy process researcher, Henry Mintzberg is the first to categorize the strategy process into three modes of strategy making (Mintzberg, 2002) In the

interest of clarity, ease of referencing and to facilitate practical applicability, the two generic steps in the strategy-making process is: business visioning (envisaging), and long-term orientation (realizing) are elaborated and form the basis to explain how strategies are crafted through different strategic stages.

3.1 Business envisaging and determination

Cross-sectional research presented in a descriptive method encompassing the growth performance (Penrose, 1959, 2009), the flourishing phase prominence (Peters, 1982, 1985; Geus, 1997,1998, 2002; Collins, 2005, 2011; Stadler, 2007; Kawaguo, 2017), and as well with the recession grim (Collins, 2009). They could be charted as (see Table 2):

Table 2 Overview of business envisaging and determinations

Cross-sectional achievements				
Academia	Section	Focus		Remark
		Ideology	Strategy	
Penrose	Growth	Entrepreneur ambition	Entrepreneur versatility	G r o w t h requirement
Peters	Any stage	Entrepreneurship	Dialectical management	Excellence tactics
		Prevailing the odds	<i>Simplicity</i>	
		Customer expectation	Adept business Actions	
Geus	Visionary company	Ongoing community	Situation sensitivity	V i s i o n a r y attractiveness
		Learning organization	Flexible steering and control	
Collins	Enduring great company	Vision	End of the beginning	Enduring liabilities
		Audacious goals	Creative	
		Culture of discipline	Technology sensitivity	
			<i>Hedgehog concept</i>	
			Level 5 leadership	
	Flywheel			
Declining	Hubris from success	Denial of risk and peril	Declining cause	
Source	Penrose, 1959, 2009; Peters, 1982, 1985; Geus, 1994, 1995, 2011; Collins, 2001, 2002, 2005, 2009, 2011			

From the special stage performance, we investigated the internal and external resources strategy. As for the enterprises' strategic thinking of using the resources above, the arrogance from success, or the unawareness of the potential risk were denounced. Then Penrose (1959, 2009) paid attention to the entrepreneur's ambition; Collins (2001,2002, 2005, 2011) the core ideology, envisioned future, big hairy

audacious goals, and called for the discipline culture to cultivate the different levels of leadership and the human resource; Peters with his colleagues (1985) concerned with the morale to fight against the extreme odds and the customer opinions except for the entrepreneurship; Geus was impressed with the group ongoing sensation. As for the strategy, Peters, Collins, and Geus all mentioned the simplicity (hedgehog concept), creativeness, sensitivity of the situation, and technology, they addressed the comprehensive concern (end of the beginning) and step-by-step (flywheel) procession.

All these researches of cross-sectional performance are fragmented and dispersed in empirical induction.

3.2 Culture approach for longitudinal OLC

Longitudinal strategies encompass enterprise anthropology, which measures business management with human or social issues such as the business vision, social structure, culture, and human resource cultivation.

In the 1930s, there was already a moral or value-based strategy (Barnard, 1938) calling for an instrumental ideology foundation. Scholars continued to pursue the business vision (George, 1999) and core ideology (Collins, 2005)². Against the “economic human”, self-achieved man (Maslow, 1943), the social man (Mayo, 1945; McGregor, 1960), the learning man (Senge, 1990, Geus, 1997, 1998), and complex man (Schein, 2010) were proposed.

The generic discussion on humane management distinctions did not delineate the business vision into specifics, so scholars pursued national or representative culture to interpret strategic long-term business with good performance.

Amongst these, Traditional Chinese philosophy was developed by some scholars (Xinheng, 2023; Kuang-cheng, 2002, 2005). As well Japonism (Hsiao-Tung, 1939; Jordan, 2002; Hirochika, 2003; Motofusa, 2007; Sasaki & Sone, 2015; Kawaguo, 2017) seemed to be described in the phenomenal ways. If tabulating their achievements, it could be shown in the following (see Table 3):

Table 3 Overview of enterprise culture

Enterprise culture achievements	
Academia	Focus

² According to Richard T. De George’s “*business vision*” (5th ed.), business vision underpins “truth” in marketing and advertising, the justice, moral responsibility, safety, and strict liability; and even affirmative action, reverse discrimination and environmental protection (George, 1999). Later Jim Collins put forward core ideology (core purpose, core value) to build to last (Collins, 2005), but he did not tell what they should be.

Japanism	
Ouchi	Generalist employees, informal control with formalized measures, long-term staff and self-development, common virtues, teamwork
Drucker	Taking competitiveness seriously, self-examination, and national interest first
Pascale	Style, staff, skill, the supreme goals
Traditional Chinese Culture	
Xinheng, FAN; Kuang-cheng	Filial Piety culture transitions into organizational behavior, customers, especially the elderly ones should get products cheaply by big discounts of 65%; five-element OLC management.
Ouchi, 1981; Drucker, 1981, 985; Pascale, et al, 1981; Xinheng, 2023,2024; Kuang-cheng, 2002, 2005	

The table above shows the major achievements since the 1980s, which focused on Japan's social culture system, and traditional Chinese philosophy. The subsequent section highlights the details.

3.2.1 Japanism

The remarkable ascendancy of Japan in the post-World War II era has captivated scholars and industry professionals, prompting investigations into the enigmatic workings of Japan Inc. and the cultural soft power it wields. A prime exemplar is Konosuke Matsushita, whose business approach, infused with spirituality and a profound sense of historical continuity and community connection, stands in stark contrast to the oppressive autocracy that hindered ITT's progress (Pascale & Athos, 1981). The Japanese ethos of intense competitiveness and their cultural proclivity for perfecting every aspect have been instrumental in propelling technological advancements and fostering both domestic and global development. Japan's ability to maintain its technological preeminence, despite recent economic stagnation, can be attributed to its practices of introspection, prioritization of national interests, and the intricate network of trade organizations, interest groups, guilds, industry coalitions, professional bodies, and well-structured economic federations.

William Ouchi (1981), a management scholar, posited that Western organizations could derive valuable insights from their Japanese counterparts. His Theory Z, an amalgamation of Eastern and Western management philosophies, emphasizes the cultivation of "generalist employees" through job rotation and ongoing training. This approach aims to broaden employees' understanding of organizational processes while developing a diverse skill set. The expectation is that those who ascend to leadership roles will, in turn, nurture and develop their subordinates similarly. This distinctive Japanese organizational philosophy,

underpinned by cultural values and work ethics, is considered a paramount resource (Sasaki, et.al, 2015; Olejniczak, 2013). Japan's resilience as a nation is fundamentally rooted in its capacity for adaptation and reinvention.

3.2.2 Traditional Chinese Five-element OLC

In his research, Kuang-cheng Wang (Cn. 王光正) established a correlation between the ancient Chinese five-element symbolism and the Organizational Life Cycle (OLC), encompassing the stages of birth, survival, success, decline, and renewal. Wang proposed that these stages could be represented through the interplay of the five elements. Specifically, he associated the water-fire dynamic with the initiation and trajectory of business growth, the fire-metal interaction with a company's market competitiveness, and the earth-water relationship with an organization's capacity for learning and innovation (Wang, 2002, 2005). However, Wang's analysis was limited to this initial mapping and did not delve deeper into the implications of the five-element theory on the OLC.

The five-element school has effectively integrated the I-Ching's eight trigrams, represented as metal, wood, water, fire, and earth, into management principles. Wang's (2002, 2005) conceptual framework illuminates the metaphorical stages and draws parallels with the Western OLC model.

In ancient Chinese philosophy, the theory of the five elements (wood, fire, earth, metal, and water) serves as the cornerstone of systems thinking. These elements have been employed to elucidate the nature of relationships in the observable world. Building on this tradition, Kuang-cheng Wang (Cn. 王光正) has applied the symbolic meanings of the five elements to correspond with five organizational stages (gold, wood, water, fire, and earth stages).

To sum up, (i) the organizational life cycle model has illustrated dynamic non-linear development. However, it lacks the intrinsic driving forces; (ii) the extant matrix through strategic processing appears to focus on the Western context and the achievements seem to be fragmented and dispersed owing to the extant practical approach limitations. The systematic thinking and learning organizational schools are still at the initial thinking and there is a need for a more integral or systematic theory of organizational life cycle management.

4. Research Gaps

Business strategic management mainly lacks philosophical reflexivity in both ethical consideration and systematic resolutions for businesses surviving the challenges in the long haul.

Furthermore, the pragmatic way of the Western economic entity hindered the

rationale of the non-Western situation and did not consider the different cultural context in its conceptualization.

Specifically, three gaps from the previous study: the theoretical gap, the methodological gap, and the knowledge gap were identified. The principal gap is the theoretical gap – extant literature does not provide holistic and systematic provisions for enterprise decision-making. The methodological gap is the neglect of oriental philosophical reflexion leading to a knowledge gap that lacks either the content of business vision or the knowledge of long-term survivability management. In terms of a knowledge gap, there is a need for I-Ching academic research to develop the corresponding components with the strategic planning and strategy formulation. The gaps are illustrated in Table 4:

Table 4 Overview of gaps

Extant strategy		Theoretical gap	methodological gap	Knowledge gap
Cross-sectional strategy		No holistic, systematic strategy	No Chinese context	No perpetual sense, No revival sense although visionary sense
Culture management	Japanism	No holistic, systematic strategy	No Chinese context	No revival sense
Ancient Chinese philosophy	I-Ching	No theory testing	Not enough empirical evidence	Not enough case analysis of organizational behavior
	Five-element model	No holistic, systematic strategy	Confused with I-Ching philosophy	Not enough case analysis of organizational behavior

5.1 Theoretical gap

5.1.1 No holistic and systematic provisions

Although OLC research has been investigated from both the longitudinal and cross-sectional perspectives utilizing system thinking, enterprise anthropology, or the partial ancient philosophical perspective, they have failed to account for the cyclic and holistic strategic processing to establish the systematic provisions of vision, strategy planning and the strategy formulation towards sustainable development.

5.1.2 No corresponding strategy to enhance the internal resource

Since the 1960s, managerial academia has developed strategies mainly from

the inside-out³ to find the creative forces of the internal static resources and dynamic capabilities, but it did not tell how to cultivate the internal resources systematically.

Despite the various contributions by renowned authors and researchers such as Edith Penrose (1959) who stressed the managerial forces, especially the entrepreneurial ability, Henderson (1968) the experience curve effect (learning curve effect), Andrews (1971) the strategic resources heterogeneity and immobility, Barney's (1991) attributes in line with the value, rareness, the unimitability, and the sustainability, Prahalad and Hamel's (1990) the core competence, Grant 's(1996) knowledge-based theory and Peters' (1982, 1985) excellence conceptions and Collins' (2001) hedgehog concept where he discussed the intersection of three circles: i) what you are deeply passionate about, ii) what you can be the best in the world at, and iii) what best drives your economic or resource engine; none of these theories, concepts and practices were able to holistically captured the internal forces which allow the organization to adapt their. Most of these concepts and theories do not have a corresponding strategy for implementation, and Prahalad and Hamel (1990) have highlighted the importance of simultaneous processing to realize the enterprise strategic intent, they lack systematic strategies on how to develop the internal forces.

5.2 Methodological gap

Western-oriented strategic management concepts neglected Chinese pragmatics and ancient Chinese philosophy due to the lack of interpretive methods and academic rigor of I-Ching thinking.

5.2.1 Incomplete Asian Culture

There is a dearth of studies on oriental philosophy except in some Asian countries such as Japan (Ouchi, 1981; Pascale & Athos, 1981; Ohmae 1991; Olejniczak, 2013); unfortunately, the rest of Asia is largely left unexplored. There are limited studies on the Chinese thought system. According to Starbuck (1971) many of the studies are inspired by Chinese pragmatics elaborated in its own culture.

5.2.2 Insufficient empirical cases of I-Ching's philosophical management

It seems that there is not enough empirical evidence of I-Ching philosophical development. As the primary resource and the provenance of realities, I-Ching is deducted into different schools of ancient Chinese, including Confucianism, Taoism,

³ There is another approach on side of outside-in, i.e., the market structure determinant theory details in the structure-conduct-performance (SCP) pattern, was first published by **Edward Hastings Chamberlin** in his "*The theory of monopolistic competition: a re-orientation of the theory of value*" in 1933. Then Joe S. Bain developed in his *Industrial Organization* (2nd ed.). SCP the theory indicates the influence of competitive forces on the industry, but not from the inside resources and capabilities on the corporate itself.

Warring strategist, legalism, Physician, Logician, Mohist⁴, and many conceptions have been popularized in social life and work⁵, so it requires case analysis to provide with more empirical evidence to academic and practices.

5.2.3 No interpretive method

Due to the practical exploitation of the strategic decisions in an objective sense, the extant research forgot the traditional approach of “interpretation” that is correlated with arts and humanities and allows the subjective recognized creative and imaginary to discover the new inspired meaning.

The term “interpretation” is essential to qualitative research owing to qualitative research’s focus on meaning and the meaning-making process and has achieved greatness in all the disciplines of social science, especially in making meaning of religious text and philosophical text.

Although Collins (1994, 2005) acknowledged the importance of business vision, his conception of a great company did not embed the philosophical reflexive access to inform the ideological component essential for the envisioned, sustainable future of the enterprise – “What should be the core ideology?” and “What should be the core purpose, core values?”

From our review, the philosophical exploitation of alternative strategic planning or strategy formulation is still lacking.

⁴ Confucianism highlights social ethics, institutions and ideal of transcendent, the representative is Kongzi (Cn. 孔子, kǒngzǐ; BC 551-BC 479, confucious, Kong Zhongni, Kong Tzu), Mengzi (Cn. 孟子, Mèngzǐ; BC 372 – 289, Mencious, Meng Ke, Meng Tzu). Taoism takes concerns of natural laws, and attaches importance to the objective situation, which is different from the Confucianism’s subjective ideal transcendent, and the icon is Laozi (Cn. 老子, Lǎozǐ; BC 570-470, also called Lao Tzu, Li Er, Laodan). Warring strategist has derivatives of strategic dispositions, the representative is Sunzi (Cn. 孙子, sūnzǐ; BC 545-BC470, Sunbin, Sun Tzu). Legalism cares of legal institutions, and its represnetatives are Guanzi (Cn. 管子, guǎnzǐ; BC725-645, Guan Zhong) and ZhaoYang (Cn. 赵鞅, zhàoyāng; ?-476). Physician refers to the Traditional Chinese Medicine, has taken Yin and Yang laws of I-Ching, and the figure of it is Zhang Zhongjing (Cn. 张仲景, zhāngzhòngjǐng; 150-219), Sun Simiao (Cn. 孙思邈, sūnsīmiǎo; 541-682). Mohist, takes sight of kindness, frugality, valuing talents, the icon is Mozi (Cn. 墨子, mòzǐ; BC479-BC390, Mo Di, Mo Tzu). Logician is attentive to the relationships between the name and the nature, Huishi (Cn. 惠施, huishī; BC370-310) and Gong Sunlong(Cn. 公孙龙, gōngsūnlóng; BC320-BC250).

⁵ There are lot of conceptions are from I-Ching hexagram judgement (Cn. 卦辞, guàcí) or the Great Commentary(Cn. 彖传, tuànzhuan), or the image(Cn. 象辞, xiàngcí). Take the conception “keep persistent” as an example, it is from the 32nd hexagram image “Héng(Cn. 恒, héng)”, which proclaims, “The Junzi(Cn. 君子, jūnzǐ), the notable man should have the direction to persist in(Cn. 君子以立不易方, jūnzǐyǐlìbúyìfāng)”. “Rescuing should be in speed (Cn. 解救从速, jiějiùcóngù)”, is from the judgement According to Niu Niu (2012) in his “Daily Interpretation of I-Ching(Cn. 日讲易经解义, rìjiǎngyìjīngjiěyì)”.

5.3 Knowledge gap

As a result of the methodological gap, there exists a knowledge gap which includes the absence of the cyclic nature of the OLC, the content of the business vision, and the oriental strategy planning formula.

5.3.1 Lack of Revival System

In previous research, the Organizational Life Cycle has lost sight of the revival provisions and neglected the intrinsic driving forces of the cyclic nature of organizational life.

1) Revival absent

The revival of the business (Cn. 贞下起元, zhēnxiàqǐyuán), although has been noticed by John William Gardner (1965), Danny Miller et. al. (1984) with his partner pragmatically, is not a prevailing disposal in the extant literature. Some scholars (Kay, 2013) even claimed that it is rare for a declining business to get a revival. How could the defunct get resurrected? How could they spread efforts to stave off the backfire? There is no theoretical explanation.

Revival in oriental culture has its way of realization such as in Chinese I-Ching philosophy, it is seminal of the cyclic resolutions to the long run with good performance, so the down-up grounded litany should give way to I-Ching's thoughts system interpretation.

2) No intrinsic or inherent driving forces

The academic literature characterized the stage without reference to the driving force. According to Quinn and Cameron (1983), and Lavoie and Culbert (1978), the linear and hierarchical progression of the life cycle from birth to decline did not provide the possibility and explanation of how an aged company could move back and forth in the stages and rejuvenate move back into the new growth stage. Various studies attributed this to the lack of understanding of the inner fundamental driving force and instead focused extensively on the external uncertainties to explain the business issues (Miller & Friesen, 1984; Greiner, 1983; Lester, Parnell, & Carraher, 2003). In other words, maximizing economic benefit is not the solution to sustainability. This study proposed that the driving forces inherent in the I-Ching life cycle together with its moral and ethical factors can affect the business survivability profoundly.

5.3.2 Uncompleted Ideology Content

Ideology is the fundamental motive in the long survival since the culture-excellence (Pascale & Athos, 1981; Drucker 1981), Collins, 1994, (2005) in his popular book "Good to Great" states "even the visionary companies studied need to continually remind themselves of the crucial distinction between the core and non-core". Here the "core" refers to the core values and core purposes, and non-core refers

to the change, the operating practices, and the specific goals or tactics. However, he did not explain what this Core ideology's purpose could be.

5.3.3 No corresponding oriental situation analysis

Various analysis tools such as PEST analysis, SWOT analysis, five forces mix, and 3Cs formula were often used for situational analysis, however, the deeply insightful scenarios and situations embedded in the hexagrams of the ancient text of I-Ching were not considered powerful tools for strategic planning.

Senge's (1990, 2006) vision of a learning organization where he puts system theory and shared vision to work to make sense of organizational questions and issues is great but it lacks the interventions that can turn the organization into a learning organization. In summary, there should be the employment of both Western pragmatism and Eastern spiritualism and holism.

6. Cyclic OLC in I-Ching

Chinese philosophy has significantly influenced the development of modern Chinese philosophical thought and systematic reasoning. The ancient text I-Ching serves as the foundational source of Chinese discourse and the origin of conceptual realities. Xinheng (2023; 2024) posited that I-Ching concepts warrant the development of parallel strategic processing methodologies in Western thought to ensure transferability.

6.1. Cyclics based on seasonable primaries

The illustration presents the initial four words of the I-Ching text, specifically the hexagram statement for Qian 乾: Yuan Heng Li Zhen 元亨利贞. These words correspond to four stages of change, which can be aligned with the four seasons, lunar phases, or cardinal directions. Binghe (2016), a Qing Dynasty (1636-1912) I-Ching scholar, remarked:

“Yuan, Heng, Li, and Zhen (YHLZ), are just like the processing of spring, summer, fall, and winter. In other words, they circulate to go forwarding, upward in dynamic processing untiringly and would not exhaust (Cn. 元亨利贞, 即春夏秋冬, 往来循环, 不忒不穷; yuánhēnglìzhēn, jìchūnxiàqiàdōng, jìdōngnánxībēi, zhènyuánlìhēngduìlìkǎnzhēn, wǎnglǎixúnhuán, bú tè bù qióng)”.

This interpretation suggests a cyclical nature of life processes. However, such philosophical commentaries often face criticism for lacking empirical basis and are frequently deemed inadmissible. Moreover, the absence of explanatory notes in many of these commentaries renders them incomprehensible to the general public.

This research seeks to bridge management and Chinese philosophy, as exemplified in the ancient I-Ching text. The study operates on the premise that organizational development does not follow a predetermined timeline or sequence. It proposes that I-Ching can serve as an alternative framework for organizational leadership and evolution, addressing challenges at various life cycle stages. The research posits that I-Ching's wisdom can aid managers in contextualizing their existence, reassessing their worldview, and formulating practical strategies for overcoming obstacles. The study contends that the principles of perpetuity are embedded within the eight trigrams and sixty-four hexagrams of I-Ching. Extracting this wisdom necessitates a comprehensive analysis of these trigrams and hexagrams, which this study aims to undertake.

The primary objective of this research is to construct a business longevity framework based on I-Ching's ancient wisdom, elucidating the ontological level of thinking that represents the nature of existence (A. Whiteley & J. Whiteley, 2007). Additionally, it explores how organizations can adopt a cyclical management model informed by I-Ching's strategic principles to foster long-term survival. This study contributes significantly to the development of a theory of perpetual organizational life cycle.

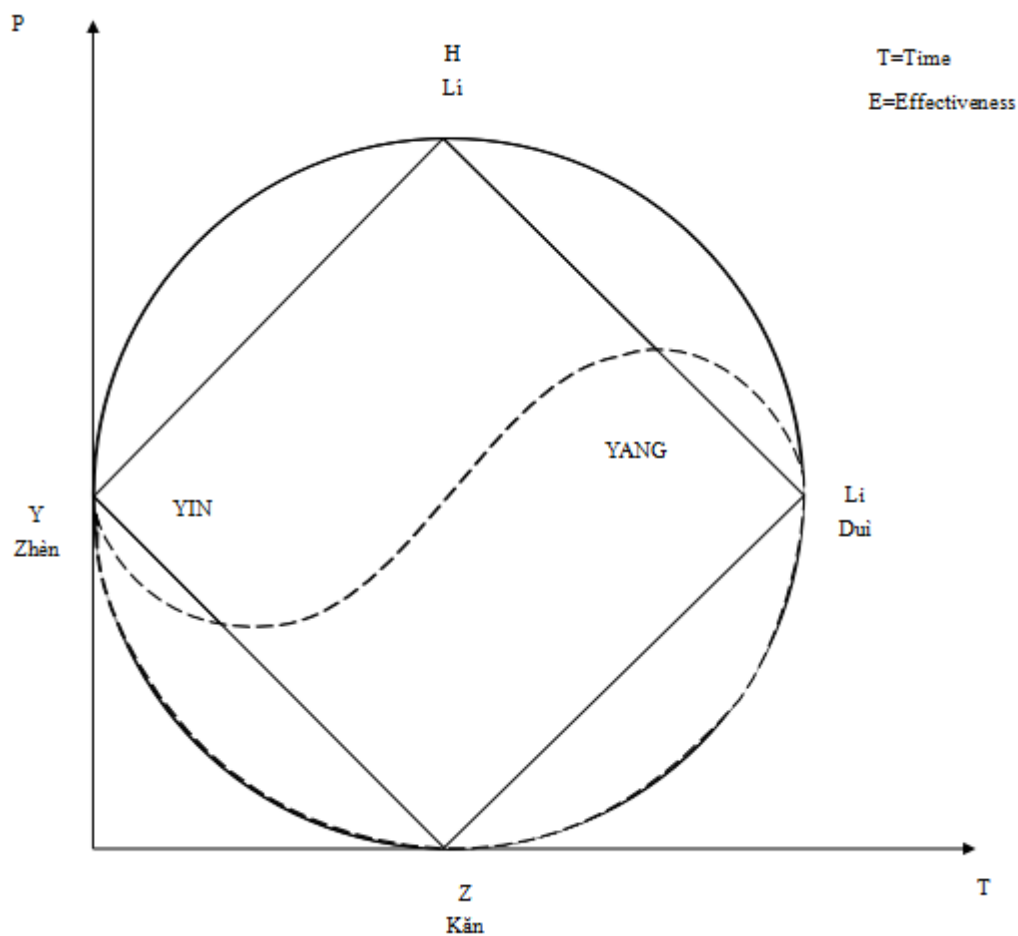
6.2. Dynamic Strategic Processing Forces

As demonstrated, Yuan, Heng, Li, and Zhen are analogous to spring, summer, fall, and winter. Binghe (2016) further posits that four dynamic forces guide development and evolution, which are represented by the trigrams of Zhèn (Cn. 震, zhèn), Lí (Cn. 离, lí), Duì (Cn. 兑, duì) and Kǎn (Cn. 坎, kǎn). He states that:


“There in the east, west, north, and south are four potential dynamic forces⁶, they are respectively Trigram Zhen force in the stage of Yuan, Trigram Lí force in the stage of Heng, Trigram Duì force in the stage Lí, and Trigram Kǎn force in the stage Zhen. With the four dynamic forces, things would develop in an unceasing process (Cn. 东南西北, 震元离亨兑利坎贞, 往来循环, 不忒不穷; dōngnánxīběi, zhènyuánlíhēngduìlikǎnzhēn; wǎnglǎixúnhuán, bú tè bù qióng).”


⁶ According to Niu Niu (2012) in his “Daily Illucidation of I-Ching (Cn. 日讲易经解义, rìjiǎngyìjīngjiěyì)”, Trigram Zhèn is in the east, Trigram Duì is in the west, Trigram Lí is in the north, and Trigram Kǎn is in the south.


Based on the interpretation of the cycle of YHLZ and its four dynamic forces, the following diagram illustrates the synchronization of the cyclic movement.




Graph 1 Four Dynamic Processing of Cycle (FDPC)

In the figure above, it is evident that Stage Zhen is analogous to the force in the east, represented by Trigram Zhèn  (Cn. 震, zhèn), which symbolizes thunder, the strong driving force that generates an upward push at the outset of the Yuan stage. Trigram Zhèn may also symbolize vocalizations that warn of the potential for extreme adversity at the beginning (Zhongni, 2007; Niu, 2012).

Stage Heng originates from the force in the north, represented by Trigram Lí  (Cn. 离, lí), which signifies brightness or light that shines like fire to reach far and wide, thus symbolizing "penetration" into distant and remote locations (Zhongni, 2007; Niu, 2012).

Stage Li derives its dynamic force from the West, represented by Trigram Dui  (Cn. 兑, duì). The Chinese character and expression denote joyfulness (Shen, 1963) and may also symbolize "communication" or social interaction with others. The

symbolic meaning of the Li stage implies the pleasure and satisfaction derived from sharing with others.

Stage Zhen is associated with the south and portrayed by the Trigram force of Kǎn  (Cn. 坎, kǎn), which symbolizes multiple potential disruptions and damages that necessitate actions to rectify and adapt to the environment to accumulate the capabilities to prepare for and seek new opportunities (Binghe, 2016).

In summary, the four dynamic forces are Zhèn, Lí, Duì, and Kǎn, which correspond to their roles within the stages of Yuan, Heng, Li, and Zhen. Consequently, Yuan, Heng, Li, and Zhen, as the four stages of the life cycle derived from the I-Ching, represent an unceasing process, which affirms the possibility of perpetuity in business survivability as demonstrated in the process of the four dynamic forces in the Trigrams of Zhèn, Lí, Duì, and Kǎn.

6.3 TRIINT strategies implied in I-CHING

The ancient Chinese philosophical treatise, I-Ching, incorporates the YHLZ OLC (Yuan-Heng-Li-Zhen元亨利贞) paradigm, which exemplifies an infinitely cyclical theoretical framework (Xinheng et al., 2023). This model was applied in examining Tianyuan Group Co. Ltd, a case study situated in Shanxi Province, China, to elucidate empirical evidence through the perspective of traditional Chinese filial piety. The investigation aimed to demonstrate resilience in the face of various challenges, including market turbulence, inflationary pressures, trade barriers, the COVID-19 pandemic, and economic instability (Xinheng et al., 2024). The YHLZ perpetual OLC is further enhanced by the TRIINT concept, which delineates three interaction types: "generating" (相生, xiāngshēng; GI), "overcoming" (相克, xiāngkè; OI), and "transforming" (相化, xiānghuà; TI) (Er, 1972; Deyi, 2014). This comprehensive framework has been extensively employed across various fields, including philosophical discourse—particularly within the five-element school—medical practices, and decision-making processes in both professional and personal domains.

7.0 Discussion

The review reveals significant limitations in current organizational lifecycle (OLC) models and strategic management frameworks. Linear, deterministic OLC models fail to capture the complex, non-linear development of modern organizations in rapidly changing environments.

Existing models lack explanations for internal forces driving organizational change and revival. Additionally, there is an overreliance on Western management theories, neglecting valuable insights from non-Western perspectives, particularly Eastern philosophies like I-Ching. Three major gaps were identified: theoretical, methodological, and knowledge. The theoretical gap stems from the lack of holistic,

systematic frameworks for understanding organizational lifecycles across cultures. Methodologically, there is a neglect of oriental philosophical perspectives and interpretive methods incorporating Asian cultural approaches. The knowledge gap is evident in the absence of cyclic OLC models, comprehensive business vision content, and oriental strategic planning approaches.

To address these gaps, the review proposes exploring the ancient Chinese I-Ching text as a potential source of insights for developing more comprehensive OLC models that account for cyclical patterns and revival. Integrating both Western and Eastern philosophical perspectives could create more robust and adaptable strategic management frameworks. Developing interpretive methods that effectively incorporate Asian cultural and philosophical approaches into organizational theory is also suggested. Finally, conducting empirical research to test and refine I-Ching-inspired OLC models and strategic planning approaches is recommended. This integrated approach could provide a more nuanced understanding of organizational dynamics across different lifecycle stages and cultural contexts, potentially leading to more effective strategic management practices in diverse global business environments.

8.0 Conclusions, Implications, and Future

This comprehensive review of organizational lifecycle (OLC) models and strategic management frameworks has revealed significant limitations in current approaches and identified important gaps that need to be addressed.

The predominant linear, deterministic OLC models fail to adequately capture the complex, non-linear development trajectories of modern organizations operating in constantly changing environments. These models typically describe 4-5 stages from inception to decline but lack explanations for internal forces driving organizational change and revival. Additionally, existing frameworks are largely rooted in Western management theories and military doctrines, neglecting valuable insights from non-Western cultural and philosophical perspectives, particularly from Eastern traditions like the ancient Chinese I-Ching. The review highlights three key gaps: i) A theoretical gap in providing holistic, systematic provisions for enterprise decision-making and strategy across the full organizational lifecycle; ii) A methodological gap in neglecting oriental philosophical perspectives, especially interpretive methods incorporating Asian cultural approaches; and iii) A knowledge gap regarding cyclic OLC models, business vision content, and oriental strategic planning approaches. Current literature lacks philosophical reflexivity in both ethical considerations and systematic solutions for long-term business survival. There is a pressing need for more integrated theories that can better guide organizations through complex lifecycles, incorporating both Western and non-Western insights to create more robust and adaptable strategic management frameworks.

To address these gaps, this review proposes exploring the ancient Chinese I-Ching text as a potential source of insights for developing more comprehensive OLC

models. The I-Ching's cyclical worldview and concepts like Yuan-Heng-Li-Zhen (YHLZ) offer an alternative framework for understanding organizational development as an ongoing, regenerative process rather than a linear progression. Integrating the I-Ching philosophy with modern management theory could yield new perspectives on organizational revival, intrinsic driving forces for change, and ethical business practices. Future research should focus on empirically testing I-Ching-based OLC models, developing corresponding strategic planning methodologies, and conducting in-depth case studies of organizations successfully applying these principles. By bridging Eastern and Western approaches, a more holistic and culturally inclusive theory of organizational lifecycle management can emerge, better equipping businesses to navigate the complexities of the modern global economy and achieve long-term sustainability.

Current linear OLC models fail to adequately account for organizational revival and renewal. Incorporating cyclical concepts from Eastern philosophies like I-Ching could provide valuable insights into organizational longevity and rejuvenation. There is a lack of understanding of the intrinsic driving forces behind organizational change and development. Exploring concepts from the I-Ching philosophy may help elucidate these internal dynamics. Existing frameworks are predominantly Western-centric and lack diverse cultural perspectives, particularly from Eastern traditions. Integrating non-Western philosophical insights, especially from I-Ching, could lead to more comprehensive and globally applicable models. There is a need for more empirical research testing the applicability of I-Ching concepts to organizational behavior and strategic management. Developing an integrated framework that combines Western pragmatism with Eastern holistic thinking could significantly advance our understanding of sustainable organizational development and long-term business survival.

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