

# Navigating the CSR Landscape in China: Interplay between Confucian Tradition and Institutional Isomorphism

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## **Abstract**

Despite the common perception of CSR in China as an adaptation of Western principles, we argue that the Confucian tradition, combined with institutional isomorphic pressures and their dynamic interplay significantly shapes CSR initiatives among local Chinese firms. Using in-depth interview data from 15 local firms in China, we follow coding approach to uncover underlying thematic patterns. Our study emphasizes the key role of Junzi virtues from Confucianism and isomorphic pressures in shaping local firms' behavior. Our findings underscore the substantial influence of Confucian tradition, particularly through normative pressures, alongside coercive and mimetic pressures linked to government CSR regulations and foreign practices. Our findings notably highlight the profound impact of Chinese culture and values that is discernible in the prevalence of normative and coercive isomorphic pressures, which signify the firms' strong sense of obligation towards both society and the government.

**Subject Areas:** *Inter-organizational Collaboration, Organization Relationships*

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