

A Tentative Case Study on Confucius Institute

----From a Cross-culture Perspective

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Abstract

The Confucius Institute is an educational and cultural exchange institution designed to promote Chinese culture, providing the most formal learning platform for Chinese language learners around the world. However, in today's society, the development of Confucius Institutes has encountered many difficulties. The most important one is a series of problems brought by the severe epidemic situation. At the same time, due to the differences in culture and teaching methods between China and the West, Confucius Institutes cannot be accepted by many people, which is also the challenge that Confucius Institutes are now facing. Through a comprehensive analysis of the origin and current situation of Confucius Institutes, this paper summarizes the existing problems and the causes of the problems from many aspects, and summarizes several suggestions to help the development of Confucius Institutes.

Keywords

Confucius Institute; Intercultural communication; Cultural difference; Current situation; Suggestions.

1. Introduction

The theme we choose is more on the side of Multicultural Life, and the topic we choose is Confucius Institute. Confucius Institute is a non-profit educational institution established in cooperation between China and foreign countries, committed to adapting to the needs of people to learn Chinese, enhancing people's understanding of Chinese culture, strengthening China's educational and cultural exchanges with other countries in the world, developing friendly relations between China and foreign countries, promoting the development of the world's multi-cultural development and building a harmonious world. Confucius Institute Headquarters are located in Beijing, officially operating in 2007, under direct supervision of Chinese Language Office. Ever since its birth, Confucius institute has been widely welcomed and accepted by almost all nations and culture across the globe. Up to August 2015, there are 338 Confucius Institutes in 90 countries, 93 in Asia, 24 in Africa, 106 in Europe and 103 in America. Every year million of learners from different cultures in Confucius Institutes are learning Chinese language, calligraphy, painting, history, and art. In the past decade, along with the "Belt and Road" Initiative, Confucius Institutes played an important role in Chinese language education, Chinese culture and art introduction, civil exchanges and communication, diplomatic relation reinforcement. It has achieved a great success in connecting the world and telling Chinese stories, attracting attention from home and abroad.

2. Current situation and Suggestions of Confucius Institute

2.1. Current situation

2.1.1. Lack of teachers and low teaching quality

The outbreak of COVID-19 has an unprecedented impact on Confucius Institutes across the country. The most direct impact includes two aspects: first, the shortage of teachers; Second, the number of students enrolled decreased sharply. The teachers of the Confucius Institute are mainly composed of Chinese language teachers from foreign cooperative institutions, Chinese language teachers, Chinese volunteers, Chinese students and local Chinese language teachers. When the epidemic broke out, in order to prevent the rapid spread of the epidemic abroad, the Confucius Institute headquarters suspended the distribution of all Chinese teachers and Chinese presidents, which means that Confucius Institutes across the country are facing a serious shortage of Chinese teachers and administrative staff. [2] Although the vast majority of TCFL teachers have rich knowledge of Chinese language and culture, their Chinese teaching model is difficult to be recognized. For example, the adoption of Chinese education methods does not conform to the thinking and living habits of foreign students.

2.1.2. Old textbooks and insufficient funds

The textbooks used in some Confucius Institutes in other countries are still those compiled in the 1980s, and some textbooks also have a certain political color, which makes it more difficult to promote Chinese internationally. Many textbooks are just copies of the domestic Chinese textbooks, which cannot meet the different requirements of learners and are difficult to attract them. The compilation of textbooks also ignores the life and thinking habits of foreigners. Moreover, the funding sources of various Confucius Institutes are different. Some of the supporting funds of Confucius Institutes are not stable, and the Institute itself is in the initial stage of Chinese language teaching, so it is impossible to obtain enough profits to maintain the daily operation of Confucius Institutes.[3][4]

2.1.3. The management system is not standardized

Due to the poor adaptability of the development strategy of the promotion and dissemination of Chinese culture in the international overseas field, and the relevant management system for the development of Confucius Institutes is not mature and perfect, China cannot provide favorable support for the overseas development of Confucius Institutes.

2.2. Suggestions

2.2.1. Strengthen the strength of master resources

Cross cultural training for teachers. Many Chinese teachers do not understand the cultural differences between China and foreign countries, do not recognize the particularity of overseas Chinese teaching, and can carry out appropriate cross-cultural training for these Chinese teachers. Make them aware of different countries and regions. The differences in the way of thinking and even in the way of life, of course, require constant adjustment by the Confucius Institute and constant exploration and adaptation by teachers themselves. Famous domestic scholars and scholars were invited to Confucius Institutes in various countries to conduct cultural tours, spread Chinese culture and expand the influence of Confucius Institutes. In the future, we should continue this mode of communication and give play to the talent gathering effect. [5]

2.2.2. Improve teaching quality

The Confucius Institute Headquarters shall formulate basic standards for the compilation of textbooks, organize some teachers with overseas Chinese teaching experience to compile targeted textbooks, and take into account the living habits and thinking methods of foreign countries. Focus on building several brand textbooks. [6] On the premise of maintaining the

core content, develop personalized textbooks that adapt to the cultural background of various countries, different people and different levels of needs. Teachers should also develop teaching methods suitable for local people according to different cultural backgrounds of different countries. They should learn from each other, not just rely on textbooks, but also have their own views with scholars. [7]

2.2.3. Improve management system

The Confucius Institute Headquarters shall formulate corresponding policies and norms to guide, coordinate, coordinate and inspect the quality assurance behavior of the Confucius Institute. The school management and education system should be improved, and adequate preparations should be made when the main school is built. [8] The management system of the school is very important, which will determine whether the school can ensure its own teaching quality and effectively deal with various problems encountered by students. More funds should be invested in the hardware equipment of the school, and the government should also set up relevant assistance policies to promote the publicity of the Confucius Institute.

3. Literature References

3.1. Analyzing the Cross cultural Case of Confucius Institute with the Six Value Orientation Theory

Clarkhon and Szchobeck believe that human beings face six major problems together, and the concepts, value orientations and solutions of people in different cultures to these six major problems can reflect the cultural characteristics of these groups. These six problems are: the view of human nature, people's view of themselves and the external natural environment, people's view of their relationship with others, people's activity orientation, people's space concept, and people's time concept. We choose several of these values to analyze the cross-cultural case of Confucius Institute.

3.1.1. Analyzing the Differences of Values in Different Cultures by Using People's Time Concepts

Human time orientation can be divided into three types: first, the past orientation, emphasizing tradition and respecting history. The second is the present orientation, which usually focuses on the short-term and immediate. The third is the future orientation, which emphasizes long-term and change. Chinese people attach great importance to the "past". They worship their ancestors, respect the elderly, respect teachers, and attach importance to age and experience, because these aspects are related to the "past". Past orientation has always affected Chinese behavior and thinking mode. In Chinese society, people are not very interested in the future, unless it is a distant or ideal future. When people do things, they usually need to consider whether someone has done it in the past, what successful experiences can be learned, and what lessons should be learned from failures. Therefore, following the rules has become a social norm.

The Arabs are now oriented in the concept of time and are unwilling to predict future events. The culture of the Indians in the Philippines, some Latin American countries and northern Arizona also belongs to the present time orientation. Compared with other cultures, these cultures have more randomness and randomness in their attitudes towards time. In the United States, the variety and packaging of new products emerge one after another, because they believe that only in this way can they attract customers. In the past oriented Chinese society, people usually believe in old brands and time-honored brands.

Although there are cultural differences in different places, and different countries and nations have different views on the value orientation of time, each view has its own unique features. With the continuous development of globalization, local cultures continue to integrate and

cultural diversity develops. Confucius Institutes pass on Chinese culture to the world and develop together in the impact of different cultures.

3.1.2. Analyzing the differences of values in different cultures from people's perspectives on themselves and the external natural environment

According to the value orientation theory of Clarkhon and Stoterbeck, there are three potential relationships between man and nature, namely, conquering nature, living in harmony with nature and obeying nature. The Chinese Confucian view of human nature explains the relationship between man and nature from the perspective of the integration of man and nature. It holds that the integration of man and nature is both the necessity of human nature and the goal that man should pursue. To achieve the integration of man and the way of heaven, man should preserve and expand what heaven has given to man, and ultimately carry forward the idea of the integration of man and nature. Humanism in the West advocates the transformation of the environment with reason and will in life, and encourages people to conquer nature and enjoy the material life in this world.

In addition to the above two orientations, some cultures believe that the relationship between man and nature is subject to nature. For example, for the Southeast Asian tsunami event, most Southeast Asians attributed it to their fate and believed that catching the tsunami was God's arrangement. Although they were sad, they had nothing to complain about. Some people in Southeast Asia believe that this natural disaster is the result of human offending nature, and it is the retribution for human beings. The American reaction to this is completely different. They believe that this is the result of inaccurate human prediction and insufficient preparation for possible disasters. If humans can design more accurate scientific instruments or prepare for possible disasters in advance, disasters can be completely avoided.

Different countries have different attitudes towards nature. The intensification of global warming in recent years has aroused people's concern about nature. China calls for building a community with a shared future for mankind, protecting the environment and protecting people's common homeland. More and more countries agree with this view and realize the importance of protecting the environment. The Confucius Institute conveys Chinese ideas to the world, integrates them with different cultures, strengthens the understanding of China among countries around the world, and promotes cultural exchanges.

3.2. Analyze the cross-cultural case of Confucius Institute with Hofstede's Cultural Dimension Theory

Gilt Hofstede, director of the Research Institute of the Netherlands Cultural Association, has provided scholars with a coordinate scale to observe different cultural differences. In 1980, Hofstede published a great work on cultural influence: Cross border Comparison of Values, Behavior, Institutions and Organizations. Later, he adopted the supplement of Penmark and other scholars to his theory and summarized six dimensions to measure values, namely, power distance dimension, uncertainty avoidance dimension, individualism/collectivism dimension, masculinity and femininity dimension, long-term orientation and short-term orientation dimension Self indulgence and constraint dimension. It enables people to understand the cultural differences of different countries from different cultural dimensions, so as to better handle cultural conflicts, break through cultural barriers and achieve equal exchange. We will choose power distance dimension, individualism/collectivism dimension, long-term orientation and short-term orientation dimension to analyze the cross-cultural case of Confucius Institute.

3.2.1. Analyzing the cultural differences of different countries through the Power Distance Dimensio

Power Distance refers to the degree to which people with low status in organizations or institutions of a country accept the unequal distribution of power in social organizations. The power distance involves a wide range of families, schools, companies, etc. The power distance difference is reflected by the "Power Distance Index". There are great differences in this dimension between countries because of their different understandings of power. Europeans and Americans don't value power very much, they pay more attention to personal ability. Asian countries, on the other part, focus on the binding power because of institutional relations. For example, the United States pays more attention to personal ability, while China, which is deeply influenced by the traditional Confucianism, pays more attention to the binding force of power. China attaches great importance to the traditional hierarchical concept of seniority and inferiority, and Chinese social relations are more formal and strict than Americans.

Corresponding to this theory, Asian countries with a long history of authoritarianism are more receptive to such inequalities, and the difficulty of accepting such inequalities in the Liberal and Equal South American cultural circles reflects the cultural conflict in which Chinese teachers in the classroom explain filial piety and Brazilian students do not understand and question it. Filial piety to parents has always been the most important position in Chinese social morality. This morality is also reflected in China's current law, which is the "obligation to support parents".

This is because China has long been a farming society, where the average productivity of the people is relatively low. Most people can't accumulate enough savings for old age before they lose their old age, and social welfare protection is far less than in the developed west. This creates the dilemma that most people will not be able to survive on their own (and their partners) in old age. The corresponding solution is to rely on children for support. In the western developed countries, because of the high national average productivity, as well as the more perfect social welfare security system, most of the elderly do not have the pressure to survive. They believe that all men are created equal and love for parents is based on equal interaction with parents. In addition, western countries are dominated by commercial development, and business people are more concerned about interests, so they are easy to form the psychological pursuit of freedom. Many people in the West come from different places and have no blood relationship, but they live together on the basis of mutual understanding and seem more free and loose. The concept of family is particularly weak in their consciousness. Therefore, in the society of the western developed countries, it will not give birth to the moral culture of filial piety.

It is precisely because of the difference in power between high and low cultures that Chinese and Western families have completely different results in the cultivation of children. Because Chinese parents do, although the children respect their parents, but the child formed a habit, dependence of mindset, won't make a decision, he was waiting on the sidelines, lack of interest, did not dare to try, independent life ability is bad, not to mention the original opinion and creative, serious lack of understanding of people to the society. American children show a strong ability to support themselves from an early age. The vast majority of children above the age of 18 rely on their own money to study. American children also showed a strong ability to adapt to society, because of the small hard temper, has the courage and perseverance to overcome difficulties, a presence of mind, positive and optimistic, strong thirst for knowledge, and dare to try, can bear hardships, | Ken that you get along with people around, there are independent as members of the society and the confidence and courage, these qualities and skills, Lay a solid foundation for them to enter the society in the future.

Although there are differences of high and low power distance between Chinese and Western cultures, we can analyze and perspective these power differences in many ways. [9]With the globalization of the world, the globalization of economy and the progress of science and technology, the cultures of various nations are increasingly integrated and deepened. Although we cannot completely eliminate these differences in power distance, we should analyze and solve problems from multiple perspectives to better promote cultural exchanges.

3.2.2. Analysis of differences in social views through Individualism/Collectivism Dimension

Individualism/Collectivism Dimension is a measure of whether a society as a whole is concerned with the interests of the individual or the interests of the collective. The relationship between people in individualistic society is loose, and people tend to care about themselves and small families. The collectivist society pays attention to inter-ethnic relations, cares about the extended family, strong ethnic relations can give people sustained protection, and the individual must be absolutely loyal to the ethnic groups.

In the field of education, Chinese teachers tend to build the whole class, clinging to the establishment of class spirit, the establishment of class training and the formation of a good class atmosphere, in a relatively higher position to build the class body, in the usual education process often emphasize the importance of unity and collective consciousness, but neglect to understand the individual students; In western countries, teachers and students make friends and communicate face to face on an equal basis.

Teachers have strong empathy and can understand the specific situation and ideas of each student, and deeply understand the advantages and disadvantages of each student so as to use different teaching methods. However, most teachers in Confucius Institutes adopt Chinese teaching, and most students grow up in the Western teaching atmosphere, so there will be conflicts of individual and collective consciousness between students and teachers.

The BBC has produced a documentary, Teaching Chinese Teachers in the U.K. In applying Chinese-style teaching to British classrooms, several teachers encountered difficulties: "Chinese teachers have no experience with such undisciplined students, this free expression of ideas, arbitrary challenges to a authoritative students, we are not used to." But one of the school's leaders commented after attending a Chinese-style class: "It reminds me of a lesson I had when I was a kid on Thursday afternoon, where I died a thousand times in a heat wave, but I couldn't get my head on the table and listen to the teacher's non-emotional lectures."

4. Conclusion

Today, China is the world's second-largest economy, with increasingly close ties with the rest of the world. China needs to tell its own story and shape its national image. [10]The world wants to not only listen to China, but also to go into China and understand China. And language is just such a bridge. Confucius Institutes, which are responsible for promoting Chinese language and spreading Chinese culture, have a long way to go. Although it faces a lot of challenges right now, including the COVID-19 and cultural differences. But we firmly believe that Confucius Institutes, which teach Chinese language and disseminate Chinese culture, will provide better services for people all over the world to learn Chinese and China's profound culture for thousands of years, will become more and more popular with all countries in the world, and will become a bridge for China to communicate and connect with the world, play an important role in expanding economic, cultural and other exchanges and cooperation between China and other countries in the world, enhance China's influence in the international arena, safeguard world peace and promote mutual understanding among peoples, make more contributions to friendship and cooperation. [11]

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