

Evaluating the Management System in Overseas Confucius Institute

Xiaochen Ren

Inner Mongolia Honder College of Arts and Sciences, Hohhot, China

Abstract: *In the context of rapid growth of economy in China, economic and cultural exchanges between China and other countries have become closer, and the number of people who learn Chinese also show an upward trend. In order to meet people's needs in different countries in their learning of Chinese, China established overseas Confucius Institutes (for short: CIs) to teach Chinese and promote Chinese culture. The headquarters of CI is located in Beijing with authority to administrate name, logo and brand; at the same time, the headquarter of CI also draws up internal regulation, construction plan and criteria of assessment for the institutes. Due to the CI is a non-academic and unprofitable cultural institution, the CI can focus on how to improve learning efficiency of Chinese learners and how to let more people has a comprehensive understanding for China, and how to reduce prejudice and promote long-term development of amicable relations between China and foreign countries in terms of implementation of courses and activities. In order to tackle the problem of running CIs with a sole model, the director of overseas CIs could tap into the local education resources to explore more cooperation opportunities. It is expected that overseas CIs could create an environment to efficiently learn Chinese and Chinese culture by optimizing their management system and teaching content.*

Keywords: *Confucius Institute; Management; Cultural Exchanges*

1. The Development of Overseas Confucius Institute

In the context of rapid growth of economy in China, economic and cultural exchanges between China and other countries have become closer, and the number of people who learn Chinese also show an upward trend. In order to meet people's needs in different countries in their learning of Chinese, China established overseas Confucius Institutes (for short: CIs) to teach Chinese and promote Chinese culture. The establishment of CIs used the experience of "Goethe Institute" of German, "Alliance française" of France and "Instituto Cervantes" of Spain for reference on how they have promoted their national language and culture (Liu, 2007) [14]. As a nonprofit educational institute, CIs face the world to promote Chinese learning and enhance other people's understanding towards Chinese culture. It mainly provides Chinese learning, lectures on Chinese culture, training program for teachers of Chinese, and service like consultation for students who want to study in China, meanwhile it holds diversified Chinese cultural activities such as Taichi club and calligraphy class, aiming at enhancing the understanding of people in the world towards Chinese and Chinese culture and developing friendly relations between China and other countries (Yu, 2010) [22]. Confucius, as a prominent thinker and educationist is a representative figure of traditional Chinese culture. According to Fan (2012), using Confucius as brand to promote Chinese and Chinese culture could reflect the long history of China [6]. At the same time, CIs play an important role in raising national image of China and developing soft-power. By December 2015, 500 CIs are established in 125 countries (CIH, 2016) [3]. Those overseas CIs widely distributed in Asia, Europe, North America, Oceania and Africa. In Asia, since the first Confucius institute (CI) founded in Seoul in November 2014, after ten years' development, the total number of CIs has reached 110 (CIH, 2016) [3]. CIs in South Korea, Japan and Thailand harbor the largest scale, South Korea is the first country that introduced Confucianism and there are 18 CIs so far; as a country deeply influenced by traditional Chinese culture, Japan sees a rapid development of CIs with similar characters, Japanese are stronger in learning Chinese (Wu, 2009) [20]. There are 169 CIs in Europe, and those in Russia are in the largest scale and number, with a total number of 14 (CIH, 2016) [3]. Besides, CIs in Russia have great demand on business Chinese, because numerous young people take Chinese as one of their employment ability (Wu, 2009) [20]. Similarly, Tsinghua University of China worked jointly with London Business School established the first Confucius Institute of Business in the world in October 2006, it focuses on teaching people in business Chinese; London South Bank University founded Confucius Institute for Traditional Chinese Medicine London jointly with

Heilongjiang University of Chinese Medicine ,Harbin Normal University and the Office of Chinese Language Council International in February 2008(Confucius Institute for TCM,2016)^[4]. CIs in North America are mainly distributed in the United States, Canada and Mexico. America has the largest number of CIs in the world with a total number of 81, taking more than half of the proportion with 157 in total (CIH, 2016)^[3]. It is worth mentioning that the first Confucius Institute Online was established in Michigan State University in 2006 and harbor 300,000 registered students in total (Li and Dai, 2011)^[13]. CIs develops slowly in Oceania and Africa compared with those in Asia, Europe and North America. There are 18 CIs in Australia and New Zealand; due to friendly developmental relationship between China and Africa, Africa currently has 46 CIs, when African countries were in short of Chinese teachers, Chinese government recruited volunteers to work overseas teaching Chinese through “Chinese Volunteer Program for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language” launched in 2008(CIH,2016)^[3]. So far, about 1000 Chinese teachers are dispatched to Africa and Chinese volunteers and teachers in African CIs are mainly in Kenya, Nigeria and Zimbabwe as well as South Africa (Wan, 2009)^[18].

Currently, CIs in the world have conducted 9000 different types of lectures on Chinese and Chinese Culture, there are 260,000 registered students and 7500 cultural exchanging activities in various scales (Zhou,2015)[24]. However, problems of management and leadership are easily overlooked at times, and this brings negative effect to the teaching quality of CIs and Chinese learning experience of foreign learners, those negative impacts may pose a threat to the development of overseas CIs. Though CIs in different regions hold a lot of distinctive activities combining with the local conditions, current managing system and scale of development still cannot meet the learners’ need in different countries, as Knapp, et al (2003) defined, the Leadership for learning refers that strong and equal opportunity should be created for students, educators and the system to involve them in taking the advantage of these opportunities actively[10]. Therefore, this essay mainly focus on evaluating the system of management and leadership of CIs from the perspective of learner-centered learning system, through evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of managing system for help CIs adjust and improve its system of management and leadership for further development. Trying to develop various teaching models that fully consider local conditions and provide every Chinese learner with excellent learning experience. This paper consists of six parts. The first part is a brief introduction on global development of CI, the second part is the analysis of current running and teaching model of CI, then assessed advantages and disadvantages of management system are presented in the third and fourth part respectively. In the fifth part, some suggestions for improving the deficiencies of management and leadership are presented. The last part is a summary of the whole essay.

2. Current Management System

The headquarters of CI is located in Beijing with authority to administrate name, logo and brand; at the same time, the headquarter of CI also draws up internal regulation, construction plan and criteria of assessment for the institutes (CIH, 2016)[3]. This means that overseas CIs are established in accordance with the standards which drew by the headquarter of CI. Besides, overseas CIs are branches of the headquarter of CI in Beijing, as long as the overseas CIs adopt the model of cooperation in running institute, the investment should be evenly distributed by headquarters and partner, and the headquarters examines and approves the annual financial budget as well as financial statement and plans of courses of overseas CIs (Li and Tian,2015; Yang, 2015; Zhou, 2015)[12][21][24]. On one hand , this running mode guarantees the proper management and flexible adjustment of the working capital, on the other hand , to examine and approve annual plans of courses is able to supply the overseas CIs with management, teaching faculty, and resources such as textbooks, courses and multimedia software in accordance with local situation. In doing that, China can provide coordination, direction and assessment for the running of overseas CIs in a comprehensive manner.

In foreign countries, establishment of CIs must comply with laws and regulations of host countries and accept supervision and inspection of local administrative department of education (Yang, 2015)[21]. The director accountability system under the council should be practiced in every overseas CIs. The council of overseas CI consists of members both China and host countries, the local educator hold the post of overseas CI’s director, and Chinese educator hold the post of associate director who is in charge of daily teaching and activities. Chinese teaching in overseas CIs follows the model and teaching resource provided by the headquarters and overseas CIs may make adjustments depend on performance and situation of local learners (Zhan and Li, 2014)[23]. For instance, Chinese characters are used both in Chinese and Japanese, therefore CIs in Japan may shorten the class hours for learning

Chinese characters. However, for the other Chinese learner who come from countries where Chinese character are not used should spend more time in studying them, since Chinese character plays an important role in learning Chinese and it decides that how well can Chinese learners read and write in Chinese. Moreover, from evaluating teaching achievements, overseas CIs employ unanimous systems and standards of teaching, testing as well as training, such as the Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi(short for HSK: a kind of Chinese Proficiency Test) , and the “Teaching Objectives for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language” that worked out according to Chinese listening, speaking, reading and writing. Overseas CIs open to all people of the host countries and provide Chinese learning course or lectures on Chinese culture. The key points of learning in CIs lie in the application of Chinese language and the understanding of Chinese culture, therefore, CIs are non-academic training institute (Zhan and Li, 2014)[23]. With such kind of background, leadership is not individual decision, it is a process of joint participation (Murphy et al, 2009) [16]. Whether CIs in Beijing or overseas, in order to attain ideal teaching outcome, both sides take active cooperation is in the administrative management and daily teaching, the leadership for learning is not only focusing on students’ learning, teaching courses and assessment as it always does, but other educational managing works are also playing an important part in improving students’ learning experience, such as administration, organization and financial affairs (Leithwood et al., 2004)[11]. This learner-centered leadership should improve students’ learning effectiveness as well as experience from these perspectives in real sense.

3. The Strength of Management Structure

3.1 Implementation of Flexible and Diversified Teaching Courses and Cultural Promotion Activities

Due to the CI is a non-academic and unprofitable cultural institution, the CI can focus on how to improve learning efficiency of Chinese learners and how to let more people has a comprehensive understanding for China, and how to reduce prejudice and promote long-term development of amicable relations between China and foreign countries in terms of implementation of courses and activities (Yang, 2015) [21]. Facing different cultural ideologies of different countries, the overseas CIs are actively seeking for some methods to better blend in educational systems of the host countries. At the same time, the CI also cooperates with demand of the host countries, offers cultural information and assistance, and implements specific Chinese teaching that are in accordance with different demands of different groups. For instance, it offers consultation services in terms of studying in China and governmental scholarship. At the present stage, the CI of different functions is still in pilot operation phase; therefore the quantity is not big. More and more CIs of diverse majors may be established in the future after a period of operation and adjustment.

In terms of offering Chinese language courses, the CI divides it into Chinese teaching towards adults and non-adults in accordance with situations of students. As with survey of Zhou(2015) in America and Germany, the adults who participate in the studying course include undergraduates in college, researchers, public officials, entrepreneurs, company employees, artists and some retiree, as well as lawyers, teachers and merchants who have been to China[24]. Thus, it can be seen that the CIs face the society and offers open Chinese training to satisfy demands of different groups. Generally speaking, it opens training courses of Chinese with five levels, for instance, primary level, pre-intermediate level, intermediate level, upper-intermediate level and senior level. Meanwhile, it also opens courses for Chinese in terms of special majors such as business, tourism and medicine. Moreover, depend on specific situations of the Chinese learners, overseas CIs developed some new courses. For instance, the CIs in Dutch set up training courses of Chinese language and Chinese culture for adopted children and their parents, this is because adoption of Chinese orphans in Dutch families is comparatively common (Zhou and Ning , 2015), this course could let those parents know Chinese culture and facilitate cultural communication between the parents and adopted children[25]. At the same time, it also opens the equivalent courses for Dutch parents who will adopt Chinese orphans so as to allow them to know Chinese culture better and offers relevant legal consulting in terms of adoption and helps them make good preparation for adoption. The University of Western Australia Confucius Institute and local Chinese chamber of commerce jointly carried out Chinese training for local companies of petroleum, natural gas and mining and gave lectures with regard to economy and trade of China for middle-level and senior management personnel (Yu, 2010), which has already surpassed Chinese and culture[22]. It can be seen as academic preparation for facilitation of Sino-Australia trade cooperation to ensure successful cooperation between them. At last, the example of London Business School has enlightened other overseas CIs. The Confucius Institute of London Business School provides senior business people with one-to-one model of teaching, customizes exclusive courses of

Chinese. Therefore, offering personalized tutorship for learners is currently an advantage of the CIs.

The scale of Chinese teaching towards children and juveniles is likewise expanding. Australia, Japan, South Korea and Thailand have already listed Chinese as one foreign language subject for college entrance exam, nevertheless the Chinese teaching's development situations of a country in different regions are imbalanced, thus teachers of local CIs actively set up courses of Chinese introduction in middle and primary schools to help students overcome psychology of difficulty to study Chinese, in addition, they cooperate with headquarters of CI, held summer camp in various forms(Wan,2009)[18]. Meanwhile, teachers regularly cooperate with volunteers in CIs to hold Chinese salons, set up HSK remedial class in accordance with the actual situations. For instance, the Confucius Institute of Ritsumeikan University has opened 26 Chinese courses and there are 4100 middle school students participated in these courses (Li and Tian, 2015)[12]. It has also developed teaching materials for "Happy Learning of Chinese" for middle school students. In order to motivate and encourage middle and primary schools where the CI locates implement Chinese teaching, some overseas CIs made deep surveys and researches of middle and primary schools and offered investigation reports for host country's education policy-making department. For example, the Confucius Institute of University of Miami convened a seminar in allusion to the investigation report of Chinese studying for middle students. According to suggestion of combining Chinese teaching materials with digital technology, the Confucius Institute of University of Miami designed and made Chinese materials of network games in accordance with characteristics of students' age and freely offered it to 2100 students for trial (Li and Dai, 2011)[13]. With development of Chinese learning among teenagers, more and more CIs will formulate teaching methods and materials, which are suitable for youths' Chinese studying in order to improve their studying efficiency of Chinese and arouse their interests at the same time.

Additionally, regular holding of cultural promotion activities represents one of advantages of overseas Confucius Institute. This is because cultural promotion activities can help CI improve popularity in local areas. Those activities are one of direct and effective publicity means. Moreover, cultural activities of various forms are benefited to form Chinese cultural environment. Due to differences of eastern and western cultures, western countries emphasize on direct and clear language to deliver messages, while Chinese culture pays more attention to deliver and understand messages in way of perception (Li, 2007)[14]. For this feature, the CI re-appears traditional cultural scenes through activities such as calligraphy, martial art, Peking Opera and celebration of Spring Festival, those activities can deep the learners and participants' understanding of cultural environment in the processes of cultural experience. Meanwhile, the CI capitalizes on cultural communication activities to motivate learners to study Chinese. For example, an international Chinese speaking contest "Chinese Bridge". This contest is hold by headquarter of CI and divided into "Chinese Bridge" Chinese Contest of International University Students, "Chinese Bridge" Chinese Contest of International Middle School Students and "Chinese Bridge" Chinese Contest of International Overseas Students in China (Hanban, 2015)[9]. Until now, the university students' contest has been held for nine times with 812 university students coming from over 60 countries participating in the intermediary heats and finals; Contestants firstly participate in the preliminary heats held in their countries, and then winners would be invited to China to participate in the final. The winners of the final will gain corresponding awards such as scholarship for studying in China. Therefore, the overseas CIs of numerous countries are responsible for training and selecting excellent contestants. According to the survey of Zhou (2015), the number of overseas students gaining the government scholarship has been increased from 4,100 in 2009 to 6,929 in 2013[24].

It can be seen that the development of special programs and holding of cultural communication activities of overseas CIs makes every overseas CI displayed different characteristics, as well as embodies innovation and development in terms of curriculum design. At the same time, different promotion mode can enrich academic functions of the CIs and constantly expand culture of internal organization, let Chinese learners know diversified education function of the CIs.

3.2 Developing Professional Staff

The operation of overseas CIs cannot be isolated from management of two aspects. The first one is administrative management, including enrollment, teaching organization, arrangement of teaching hours, and communication with local educational and administrative departments, most of which should be completed by local staff. When overseas CIs recruit personnel for administrative posts, the natives or people who familiar with local education and management situations should be given with the priorities. Because those people are familiar with local educational situation and can communicate with educational and administrative departments or other local groups more clearly and accurately, it

has positive effect on reducing misunderstandings that arise from different systems and cultures (Bottery, 2005), therefore, high efficiency of administrative management can be assured [1].

The second is teaching management. From perspective of human resources, it refers to faculty resources. Teachers play a very important role in any educational groups. As noted by Leithwood et al (2004), teacher is the technical core of Schooling and their professional level directly influences the teaching quality of the teaching organization and studying results of students [11]. Therefore, the CI has strict norm with regard to training and recruitment of Chinese teachers. First, the teacher must own an educational background of bachelor degree with major in language or culture and master a foreign language; if the applicant notes that he or she is skilled in English or other foreign languages, he or she has a comparative advantage in recruitment. Second, he or she should have solid specialty, that is to say, the Chinese teacher can speak standard Mandarin and is equipped with "Chinese Mandarin Professional Standard Level" two or above; moreover he or she should be proficient in traditional culture of China (Hanban, 2016) [9]. Third, Chinese teachers should have good teaching capacity (Wu and Shen, 2008) [19]. As an international Chinese teacher, he or she will face students from different countries and with different faiths, trying to avoid influence arising from cultural differences; forth, he or she should have ability to research and solve problems, due to Chinese teachers live abroad and may meet some unexpected problems, they need to face and solve those problems by themselves; fifth, the international Chinese teachers should have an open and inclusive mentality (Mao and Tang, 2007) [15]. This is because teachers and students grow up in a different environment with different cultural values, teachers should treat various cultures with an open, understanding and inclusive attitude. Especially, when conflict with local students happens due to cultural values, teachers should avoid further development of cultural conflict and try to lead students' attention from cultural conflict to interest in Chinese culture. In fact, many scholars showed that the educational aim of the CI decides double duties of teachers in the Confucius Institute, namely language teaching and cultural teaching (Guo, 2013; Mao and Tang, 2007; Wan 2009; Wu and Shen, 2008) [7] [15] [19]. Therefore, combining with five necessary qualities of Chinese teachers, the Confucius Institute Headquarters presents an increasingly stricter trend in the course of teacher recruitment. In accordance with survey of Zhou (2015), the CIs adjust recruitment conditions of Chinese teachers every year, that is to say, with constant progress of overseas CIs, the Confucius Institute Headquarters puts forward new requests on capacity in accordance with the annual development report each year [24].

In addition, the Confucius Institute Headquarters adopts multi-layer and multi-mode method to train teachers of Chinese language. There are four major methods for training of teachers of Chinese, the first is a training project for overseas teachers of Chinese, which cultivate native Chinese teachers for overseas CIs through joint cultivation of universities at home and abroad; the second is that foreign teachers of Chinese come to China for advanced study and some universities which is designated by the Confucius Institute Headquarters offers 24 training courses upon demands of Chinese teachers of different levels; the third program is that Chinese education expert groups go overseas for training, this project mainly focuses on exchanging experience and training activities which are held jointly by headquarters of CI and foreign Chinese teaching institutions (Hanban, 2016) [9]. The last program is setting up Chinese international professional master degree of education in China, Chinese international education which refers to the Chinese language teaching for non-native people overseas, the Chinese international education Master's degree named in English is "Master of would Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages" (MTCSOL) (Hanban, 2016) [9]. The four training programs launched by Confucius institute headquarters for different Chinese teachers improved the quality of faculty. These four principles also conform to the practice of education in the development of people put forwards in the Leadwood et al, (2004), such as actively helping the development of Chinese professional ability, providing personalized support and appropriate training methods [11]. According to Zhou's (2015) statistics, Chinese mandarin teacher presents a rapid upward tendency since 2006, from 1,004 in 2006 to 5,800 in 2013. The same growth is presented in the number of volunteers from 1,050 in 2006 to 5,660 in 2013. Compared to the trends of rapid growth, training in local teachers has fallen slightly. Talents from MTCSOL cultivation showed a trend of fluctuations [24]. Although the number fell slightly, combined with the four projects mentioned above, the decline of local teachers is possibly the result that experts' overseas training and training of foreign teachers play a role. Accordingly, these four training programs for Chinese teachers are all play a role and they cooperate and complement with each other.

4. The Weakness And Challenges Of Management Structure

4.1 A Single Model To Institutes

From past decade, Confucius Institutes (CIs) predominantly run by domestic and foreign agencies in way of cooperation. In contrast, no substantial progress has ever made in operating CI projects through licensing or with direct investments made by the CI headquarters (Yang, 2015; Zhou, 2015)[21][24]. Overseas CIs still require further adjustments and improvements in their operation models and construction planning. Despite an increasing number of individuals who are studying Chinese and Chinese culture, with overseas CIs being built more rapidly, which have captured the attention of foreign communities, different restrictions have been inflicted on CIs projects during their construction in some countries. Ti and Wu (2009) also noted that CIs have been unreasonably distributed in certain nations. Two reasons are responsible for the problems above [17]. Firstly, some countries are dedicated to protecting local languages and cultures, exemplified by France and Germany, their original intention was to maintain the diversity of languages and cultures, however, they failed to proactively understand the process during which exotic cultures are promoted and introduced (Fan, 2012)[6]. Actually, Chinese and Chinese culture have contributed to the diversity of global languages and cultures. In this sense, the emergence of CIs have enabled the international community to be aware of the fact that our world is not solely dominated by English and western culture. CIs have played a role in spreading oriental culture, designed to provide the rest of the world an access to learn about China. However, when CIs committed to popularize Chinese and Chinese culture, their rapid development pace and associated colossal cost have engendered concerns and suspicions in countries which harbor different social system from China. These countries contend that CI's robust expansion around the globe will result in the negative impact of "cultural invasion"(Li and Tian, 2015)[12]. For example, although the U.S. has always been open and inclusive to varied cultures, it has shown a wait-and-see and vigilant attitude towards the establishment of CIs in local areas. Some U.S. media have questioned about CIs, misunderstanding that they are strategic platforms to improve Chinese soft power and promote its values. In May 2012, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) issued a directive, it claimed that some teachers who worked at local CIs with a J-1 visa violated their visa requirements and must return to China prior to 30 June. In addition, the directive required all local CIs to reapply for US academic accreditation. However, eight days after a new directive stated that according to the updated visa requirements, these J-1 holders did not have to leave the country, and the authorities even canceled the request to reapply for accreditation (Zhan and Li, 2014)[23]. The new directive demonstrated the U.S. Federal Government's confidence and trust in CIs, and the USCIS promptly corrected its mistakes. Yet CIs still needed to improve communications with local U.S. administrative authorities for avoiding such misunderstandings happen again.

4.2 Partners' Differences in Comprehensive Strength and Positioning

The Confucius Institute headquarters and their foreign partners generally fund the construction of overseas CIs jointly. The ratio of their contributions is 50% respectively, which could be properly adjusted on the basis of the mutual consultations between both sides (Yu, 2010)[22]. Such a funding method is an example of a cooperative relationship based on equal terms and mutual trust. Nevertheless, not everything can be equally divided during the cooperation. For instance, in terms of teaching aims, CI is non-profit educational institute and their earnings mainly focus on launching education activities and improving teaching conditions, this is conducive to their own sustained development (Zhan and Li, 2014)[23]. Their foreign partners, however, may differentiate from them in teaching objectives, because some partners are profit-making institutions, inclining to commercialize the institutes during the development process. Such an emphasis on profit is likely to exert a more negative impact on CIs' prospective teaching quality. The notable divergence between the Chinese and foreign sides in economic strength is another story, some of the foreign sponsors overly depend on their Chinese partners in funding and education resources, which lowers CIs' operation capacity. In some African countries, CIs are even regarded as a free places for learning Chinese (Ti and Wu, 2009)[17]. Potential problems of Sino-foreign in CI operation will negatively influence the cultural diplomacy between the two sides. Therefore, how to correct the foreign partners' understandings about CIs' education goals should be considered by CIs' Chinese and foreign directors.

4.3 The Absence of Uniform Evaluation Standards

Since CIs are jointly running by two cooperative partners and their management involves two parts, which is the Chinese parties' management system and the Sino-foreign joint management system. First, CIs are a cultural brand forged by Chinese various ministries, including the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (CHI, 2016). Despite the development of CIs in a rapid pace, due to it has been founded for merely dozens of years still have much room for improvement in their strategies and policies to spread Chinese globally. In particular, CIs have not drawn up uniform quality standards. So far, the only appraisal standards of educational quality is HSK exam that is launched by the Confucius Institute headquarters (CHI, 2016)[3]. This exam is a test of Standard Chinese language proficiency, specially designed for non-native speaker and divided into five different levels. However, compared with the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) launched by the British Council, which comprehensively tests participants' English listening, speaking, reading and writing skills, HSK evaluates candidates' Chinese listening and reading abilities only and has no test for their speaking and writing skills. For some non-native Chinese learners, their Chinese speaking and writing capabilities may have to be improved by attending CIs or other Chinese education institutions.

5. Recommendation

5.1 Developing Cooperation of Multi-Channel

In order to tackle the problem of running CIs with a sole model, the director of overseas CIs could tap into the local education resources to explore more cooperation opportunities. For example, they could combine with local Chinese research institutes to launch joint research projects, or independently launch research projects to attract more scholars to join them. As a result, the strength of overseas CIs will be built up through professional academic studies, laying a foundation for independent operation of CIs. In addition, as the leaders of CIs, the directors could learn from the productive models of other language and culture institutions, in an attempt to help develop overseas CIs based on the successful experience. Taking the German Goethe Institute for example, with a history of over 50 years, the Goethe Institute have always been independently running its Chinese branches while maintaining long-term cooperation with other excellent Chinese universities in the provision of some academic and teaching projects (Ti and Wu, 2009)[17]. With regard to the skepticism about the motive of CIs, CIs should clearly position educational task and not shun the growth of their soft power. This is because all languages are expressions of cultures, the popularization of Chinese is bound to promote the Chinese culture and values. In this case, the establishment of CIs is not a cultural invasion as preached by some western media, and overseas CIs should evidence the fact with actions.

5.2 Well-Defined Obligations and Duties

The respective obligations and duties of the two sides should be well defined during the cooperation between the Chinese CIs and overseas education institutes. It means that the Chinese CIs' teams are not supposed to be held responsible for all work; also, they should not reject all suggestions or requests proposed by their foreign partners. Instead, the two parties should carry out dialogues and negotiations with each other, figuring out every operational detail and issue to prevent any unnecessary misunderstandings or trouble in future cooperation (Chen, 2012)[2]. Indeed, CIs' development of CIs needs funding support. Therefore, directors of CIs can design development strategies from a commercial perspective to maintain and cement CIs' sustainable growth. However, it should be noted that CIs are essentially non-profit education institutes, intending to enable foreigners to learn about China and make CIs a window to showcase Chinese time-honored history, culture as well as modern development. Economic profits have never been the coal targets of CIs. If directors from both sides neglect this fact and focus on digging profit possibilities or maximizing profits, the operation philosophies and principles of CIs would be fundamentally disrupted. Therefore, the two sides in cooperation should make clear each other's attitudes and relevant input, which guarantees CIs' long-term development in the future.

5.3 Uniform Evaluation Standard

Currently, overseas CIs lack of relevant evaluation standards. Due to uneven education quality of

CIs in different foreign regions (Fan, 2012), it is necessary to build a teaching experience and resources sharing mechanism, whereby overseas CIs that harbor a stronger teaching capacity could share their successful experience with and provide assistance for inexperienced overseas institutes[3]. If uniform and targeted evaluation standard is to be established, overseas CIs should have a good knowledge of analysis on the results of students' daily studies, which could be reflected by tests, homework and students' feedback, class performance and attendance, it is in accordance with the monitoring proposed by Davies (2009)[5]. These methods help educators to not only learn about their students' learning results, but also improve their own professionalism. Accordingly, relevant education quality evaluation systems should be established in light of the different performance of students from different countries, and the assessment results should be collected and sent to the Confucius Institute headquarters so that the headquarters could formulate an education quality evaluation standard that is relatively appropriate for more regions.

6. Conclusion

This essay primarily evaluated the management and operation of overseas CIs from concept of learner-centered management and leadership. Firstly, the article offers an introduction to the background of CIs' establishment, operation features and development situation in detailed data and specific examples, followed by a description on CIs' current management and operation models around the globe, based on which the pros and cons of overseas CIs' management systems and leadership are evaluated respectively. Overseas CIs' operation merits include flexible curriculum arrangement and diversified cultural activities. The institutes tried to meet different learners' needs related to their Chinese studies, meanwhile overseas CI also improved their understanding about the Chinese culture through varied cultural exchange activities. The other management strength is cultivation and training of Chinese teachers. The CI headquarters have launched four training programs, including training project for overseas teachers of Chinese in China, advanced study for Chinese teachers, and the establishment of Master of Teaching Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages (MTC SOL). Consequently, the teaching quality of CIs' faculties has been improved through the four programs. However, the rapid development of CIs has caused some foreign countries to be alert to China's soft power and cultural invasion. Over the last decade, CIs have been predominantly run by domestic and foreign agencies through a partnership. In contrast, no substantial progress has ever made in operating CI projects through licensing or with direct investments from the CI headquarters. During the long-term cooperation, the Chinese and foreign parties are likely to diverge from each other due to different educational goal, because China defines CIs as non-profit education institutes, whilst some of the overseas partners lay more emphasis on profitable operation and management methods. Besides, some of the foreign institutes overly depend on their Chinese partners' investments and resources, spoiled the equality and trust under their cooperation, which is detrimental to overseas CIs' sustainable growth. The last noteworthy demerit is the uneven teaching quality of overseas CIs, resulting from the difficulty to formulate a uniform standard for educational quality. In response to these disadvantages and challenges, relevant improvement proposals are also presented in this essay, such as undertaking multi-channel academic exchanges and cooperation, clearly defining the rights and obligations of the two sides involved to ensure a smooth joint operation. In addition, the Confucius Institute headquarters could collect the information on the education situations of overseas CIs to design a relatively uniform standard for teaching quality evaluation. It is expected that overseas CIs could create an environment to efficiently learn Chinese and Chinese culture by optimizing their management system and teaching content.

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