

Survey on Financial Support in Chinese Language Promotion

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Abstract

In the promotion of Chinese language, the funding that Confucius Institutes can rely on only comes from Hanban. From 2009 to 2014, the number of new Confucius Institutes opened is much higher than before. With the increasing number of Confucius Institutes established in various countries, the funding for promoting Chinese language has limited its development. The development situation of Confucius Institutes in Australia is diversified with very rich experience. The market-oriented development of Confucius Institutes has also tried many times. The Confucius Institutes in the Lancang-Mekong region have less experience but they can learn from various experiences from Australia to provide better ideas and paths for the development of Confucius Institutes in this region and the promotion of Chinese. This paper uses the strength, weakness, opportunity, and threat (SWOT) model to analyze the market feasibility of financial support for the development of Confucius Institutes and makes certain suggestions for the promotion of Chinese language in the Lancang-Mekong region.

Keywords

Chinese Language, Financial Support, Office for Chinese Teaching, SWOT

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

With the globalization of the world economy and the acceleration of regional economic integration, China's economic and trade exchanges with other countries in the world have become increasingly close. Trade with other countries has made Chinese more and more concerned in exchanges and negotiations and promoted the development of Chinese language training. Especially in recent years, with the proposal of One Belt and One Road, China has strengthened exchanges with countries in the Lancang-Mekong region, and the promotion of the Chinese language has become one of the important policies.

1.2 Literature Review

At present, the research direction of Confucius Institutes is relatively concentrated. Overseas research mainly includes Chinese language education, introduction of Confucius Institutes in a particular country or continent, analysis of the relationship between Confucius Institutes and China's soft power, and

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elaboration of the relationship between Confucius Institutes and China's foreign policy, etc. Domestic research mainly includes the following directions: the development of Confucius Institutes, existing problems and related countermeasures, the model of Confucius Institutes, the Confucius Institute's sustainability strategy, comparison of Confucius Institutes with language, and cultural promotion institutions in other countries around the world, and resource allocation issues and economic value of Confucius Institutes.

1.3 Research Method

The paper used strength, weakness, opportunity, and threat (SWOT) and questionnaires to demonstrate views. The questionnaire was designed to investigate the Chinese language understanding, culture, and learning interest in three major Australian cities (Sydney, Melbourne, and Brisbane). Through the analysis of the Chinese learning market in Australia, it aims to make recommendations for developing Chinese language education in countries of the Lancang-Mekong region.

2. Sample Survey of Chinese Learning in Australia

The survey is located in Sydney, Melbourne, and Brisbane, the three most representative cities in South Wales, Victoria, and Queensland. It aims to find out whether there is interest in Chinese language learning in large Australian cities. If so, what is the motivation for learning, and whether the enthusiasm for Chinese learning in major Australian cities is enough to support the Chinese language teaching market.

2.1 Subjects and Methods

The author contacted Australian students by email and phone, and sent questionnaires in Sydney, Melbourne, and Brisbane city centers to obtain data for research. A total of 300 questionnaires were sent to the survey, 100 in each city, and 292 were recovered (Table 1).

Table 1. Overview of the survey respondents

	Number of participants	Proportion (%)
Gender		
Male	157	53.77
Female	135	46.23
Age (yr)		
<12	21	7.19
12–18	97	33.22
18–23	104	35.62
23–28	38	13.01
>28	32	10.96
Nationality		
Australia	201	68.84
Asian countries	37	12.67
European and American countries	19	6.51
Others	35	11.98

2.2 Design of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire has a total of 13 questions, all of which are objectively multiple-choice questions for ease of recycling, and all stem and options are translated into English (as shown in Table 2). The questionnaire includes three parts: the basic information of the respondent, including nationality, age, education, income, etc.; whether the respondents had access to the Chinese language; whether the respondents are interested in Chinese and the factors that affect their learning of Chinese.

Table 2. Statistics of questionnaire results

Type	Question#												
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
A	21	201	149	96	153	16	0	0	83	34	75	162	9
B	271	37	97	117	106	230	263	19	68	79	158	82	141
C	-	19	32	47	31	27	13	116	60	132	44	43	57
D	-	35	14	32	2	19	16	157	81	47	15	5	85

2.3 Analysis of Questionnaire

2.3.1 Analysis of the situations of the respondents

According to the statistical results (Table 2), there were 21 non-first-generation immigrants of Chinese descent, accounting for 7.19%, and the vast majority of respondents had Australian nationality. Among the 292 respondents, 46.23% had a bachelor's degree or above, which is related to the time and place of the survey, and the location of the questionnaire was selected to be distributed in the downtown of the three most prosperous cities in Australia.

2.3.2 Analysis of respondents' opportunities to learn Chinese

Among the 292 respondents, although Chinese descendants accounted for only 7.19%, the proportion of Chinese friends or relatives was very high, and 67.12% of the respondents would come into contact with Chinese in their lives, so the demand for Chinese was obvious. Fig. 1 shows the proportion of 292 respondents who knew Chinese.

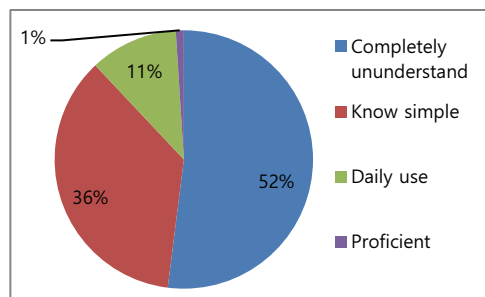


Fig. 1. Respondents' knowledge of the Chinese language.

From Fig. 1, there were 47.6% of the fifth question of the questionnaire about the respondents' understanding of the Chinese language knew or heard some simple Chinese words, and the number of

people who did not understand Chinese at all was 153, accounting for 52%. In the survey of 292 people, Chinese nationals and the first generation of Chinese immigrants who are native Chinese speakers have been avoided and the proportion of people who can contact Chinese reached 47.6%.

2.3.3 Interest and influencing factors

When asked whether they are interested in Chinese, only 5.48% of people chose not to be interested at all, but it did not mean that the rest of the respondents are interested. 78.77% expressed curiosity about Chinese. This part of the people may already be learning Chinese, some may not have been contacted, as shown in Fig. 2.

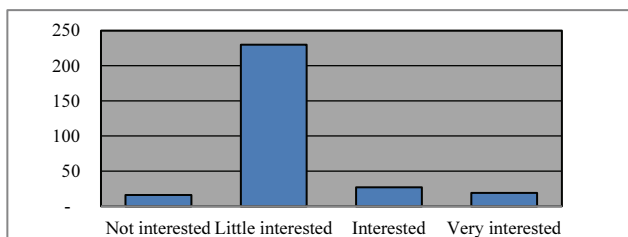


Fig. 2. Whether the respondent is interested.

In the ninth question of the questionnaire, the second foreign language question was asked, that is what language was learned in addition to English. The data showed that 23.29% of the people were already learning Chinese, most of them were Asians, and some Asians could communicate directly in the Chinese language during the questionnaire distribution. 78.77% of the respondents were interested in Chinese, while 23.29% were already studying, which once again proved that the interest in Chinese in Australian large cities is not decreasing, and the market space needs to be developed.

The main factors for learning Chinese were: hobbies, work, daily communication, and price, accounting for 48.29%, 29.11%, 19.52%, and 3.08% respectively, so price was not the most important factor affecting the number of learners. In the choice of price range, 54.11% of people thought that 6 hours of Chinese lessons, the range of 100–200 Australian dollars is acceptable.

Through the statistics of the respondents, the following conclusions can be drawn: Australia's "Chinese fever" enthusiasm is undiminished [1,2]. Most people are curious about the Chinese language; Although there are currently a large number of Chinese language schools in Australia, including 13 Confucius Institutes, there is still a lot of room in the market; Tuition income is not the most important factor affecting learning Chinese, and income can be increased through a moderate tuition increase, thereby improving teaching software and hardware. Through the data analyzed by the above questionnaire, it can be considered that there is a market for learning Chinese in Australia.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1 The Feasibility of Financial Support

The SWOT method is a comprehensive summary and analysis of all aspects of internal and external

conditions, through the analysis of strengths and weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of an analysis method. This method is used to analyze the feasibility of financial support for the development of Confucius Institutes in Australia.

3.1.1 Strength

The strengths of the Confucius Institute: Confucius Institutes have developed in Australia for nearly 10 years and have accumulated a good reputation and popularity. There were a total of 13 Confucius Institutes and 35 Confucius Classrooms. In the cooperative education, domestic cooperative institutions of higher learning were strong and the faculty was very strong which has played a great role in the development of Confucius Institutes in Australia [3-5]. The number of Confucius Institutes in Australia accounted for only three percent of the world, but they covered almost all types of Confucius Institutes.

Strengths of financial support: At present, the funds of Confucius Institutes is limited to government financial support and excessive dependence on the government's financing model will inevitably limit its sustainable and long-term development. The support of the financial market can solve the worries to a certain extent [6-8]. Creating surplus value is the essence of capital, that is, capital will independently flow to high-return fields and regions, and choose to flow to profitable and high-quality enterprises and projects. This recommends the Confucius Institute to improve its business model, optimize quality, and improve profitability from another perspective, so financial support has promoted the Confucius Institute to improve its business mode from one side, which is conducive to its long-term development [9].

3.1.2 Weakness

In the current model, the Confucius Institute is funded mainly by Hanban grants and project funds at the headquarters of the Confucius Institute and it is impossible to ensure the normal operation of the Confucius Institute in the long run. The support of China's financial institutions for cultural enterprises is far from enough, the number of financial products is small, the innovation is insufficient, and there is no suitable evaluation mechanism in the field of credit, which makes it difficult to provide financial support for the development of Confucius Institutes.

3.1.3 Opportunities

The development of Confucius Institutes: Confucius Institutes including Asia, Europe, and the United States, have gradually formed a sense of market competition. Based on the trend of Chinese fever, the number of students has increased, so Confucius Institutes have established the concept of industrial management, begun to carry out fee-based teaching activities, absorbed fund support, and gradually increased the number of projects supported by social donations. Financial support can further expand financing channels and expand funding sources, which is in line with the future development trend [10-12].

The policies' support: The important point is that China's economy is moving forward steadily and its influence is increasing on the world stage. Language, as a manifestation of soft power, needs a strong economic foundation as a backing. China's economy has brought a solid foundation for the development of the Chinese language. The number of Chinese immigrants in Australia increased sharply. The government has incorporated Chinese into the education system. Direct funding supports the spread of the Chinese language and Chinese culture in Australia, etc.

3.1.4 Threats

In Australia, Chinese language education developed earlier and many powerful private schools have been established for a long time, and in large numbers, which is more competitive for Confucius Institutes. In addition, Australia attaches importance to the Asian language, which as the most spoken language in Australia other than English, has received financial and policy support from the government, and has been incorporated into the school education system very early. Financial support requires enterprises to be able to continue to make profits. The Confucius Institute in the development process is more concerned with public welfare. Profitability has not been confirmed, so it is difficult to obtain a basis for financial support at this stage, which hinders the development of Confucius Institutes.

3.1.5 SWOT matrix

Based on the above analysis, a SWOT analysis matrix was established. Under the analysis of four aspects, development opportunities and methods were obtained, and risks and disadvantages were avoided, so that the Confucius Institute could seize the development opportunity and achieve sustainable and stable development. The specific matrix is shown in Table 3.

Table 3. SWOT matrix analysis

		Internal factors	
		Strength	Weakness
		1. Official; high reputation; 2. China-Australia joint universities are strong; 3. Financial support can bring development; 4. Fame accumulation and great influence.	1. Lack of funds; 2. Financial innovation is insufficient; 3. Financing is very hard.
External factors	Opportunities	SO	WO
	1. In recent years, the Chinese government has continued to introduce policies to support the cultural industry; 2. Australian government attaches great importance to Chinese language study.	1. With government support, it provides rare development opportunities; 2. Financial support provides development opportunities.	1. Expand financing channels; 2. Reform the existing business methods to meet the requirements of financial institutions and obtain financial support; 3. Cooperate with innovative financial institutions.
		ST	WT
Threats		1. Strengthen the official nature, attract more Chinese language lovers with an honest attitude; 2. Clarify the functions of language agencies, and do not talk about politics; 3. Innovative management.	1. Expand influence and strive to find funding sources; 2. Cooperate with financial institutions through their own reforms.

3.2 Experience of Promoting Chinese Language in Australia

Confucius Institutes are non-profit in nature and need state financial support. China is still a developing country, thus it is impossible to invest a large amount of money in the development of Confucius Institutes for a long time. The involvement of the financial sector is inevitable. This paper puts forward two suggestions for financial support for the development of Confucius Institutes: Firstly, the government's macro-financial policy guidelines for Confucius Institutes; Secondly, financial institutions to micro-financial services for Confucius Institutes. Confucius Institutes are non-profit. So it is an important way to establish a cultural enterprise under the Confucius Institute to obtain financial support.

4. Inspiration for Promoting Chinese Language in the Lancang-Mekong Region

4.1 Situation in the Lancang-Mekong Region

The Lancang-Mekong region includes Thailand, Myanmar, Cambodia, Vietnam, and Laos. Thailand is the most important partner in trade cooperation between China and the Mekong countries. Thailand has 15 Confucius Institutes and 20 Confucius Classrooms. More than 1,700 Chinese language education volunteers are serving in Thailand. Myanmar has a long history of economic and trade exchanges with China. At present, there are three Confucius Institutes in Myanmar and the development space is exciting. Chinese is one of the most widely spoken languages in Cambodia and is officially integrated into the Cambodian national education system. The teaching sites of Confucius Institutes have spread to six provinces and cities in Cambodia, with a total of two Confucius Classrooms, 19 Chinese Language Centers, and two university Chinese departments. In Cambodia, a "Chinese fever" has been formed and there is a great market demand. Vietnam which is adjacent to China has a stronger demand for Chinese language learning. There is only one Confucius Institute in Vietnam and the development of the Chinese language market is promising. The demand for the Chinese language has reached an unprecedented height.

4.2 Suggestion

4.2.1 Financial support from the government

Based on the nature of Confucius Institutes, the government's leading position should be maintained to improve China's soft power. It should ensure legislation and provide convenience so that Hanban's funding can become a sustained investment.

4.2.2 Developing market-oriented products

Confucius Institutes should devote to developing their own products and be committed to product marketization. Firstly, the HSK test has been promoted, expanding its influence to achieve profitability. For example, the HSK1 level (150 yuan) charges the lowest fees. In 2013, there were 5.02 million Chinese language test takers and the direct exam fee also reached 750 million yuan. Therefore promoting HSK is one of the important sources of revenue for Hanban. Secondly, it needs to actively develop Chinese

language textbooks and promote them overseas to achieve copyright export and ultimately achieve profitability.

4.2.3 Bank financing

The support of banks is one of the important ways for Confucius Institutes to obtain funding. As an important indirect financing method, Confucius Institutes can be financing from Bank. Hanban provides a foundation for this type of credit guarantee.

4.2.4 Investment by enterprises and individuals

In past development, Confucius Institutes from various countries have received a large number of donations from enterprises and individuals. Confucius Institutes should use their own advantages to attract donations from various institutions, individuals, and foundations in society, and actively promote the influence of Confucius Institutes.

4.2.5 Creating cultural enterprises to obtain financial support

From international experiences, a country often relies on the overseas expansion of its cultural enterprises and the export of cultural products to achieve a cultural powerhouse. The task of relying solely on Confucius Institutes to promote culture is obviously too arduous. It should encourage Confucius Institutes to establish cultural enterprises or use existing domestic cultural enterprises to jointly share the national promotion work. Confucius Institutes establish relevant cultural enterprises and utilize overseas markets to achieve cultural power and cultural dissemination through the export of cultural products.

5. Conclusion

This paper conducted research and investigation on the Chinese language market in Australia and analyzed the feasibility of financial support. Through analysis, the author believes that the current Chinese learning market has broad development space and financial support has a theoretical basis. The article gives suggestions and financing models based on this: (1) the government has created a good institutional environment, (2) the financial sector provides excellent financial services, and (3) the Confucius Institute and its subsidiaries have self-improved to enhance the attractiveness of funds.

Due to the limited time and energy, the author only used the survey of the Australian Chinese market to do market analysis which had certain limitations. At the same time, due to the limited level, there were still some shortcomings in the design of the questionnaire.

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