

Analysis on Current Situation of Confucius Classrooms in Thailand and Suggestion on Systemic Model¹

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Abstract

Based on reviewing the news published by Confucius Classrooms (CCs) in Thailand for promoting their activities, the author has calculated the total volume of activities held by CCs in 2011 and classified the activities of promoting Chinese language learning then analyzed them using qualitative research method, finally give out suggestions on establishing the systemic model for CCs to do the future activities.

Keywords: Confucius Classrooms in Thailand, Chinese language learning and culture promotion, Systematic Model

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การวิเคราะห์สถานการณ์ปัจจุบันของห้องเรียนขงจื๊อในประเทศไทย และข้อเสนอแนะเกี่ยวกับรูปแบบระบบ³

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บทคัดย่อ

จากการทบทวนข่าวที่ได้รับการตีพิมพ์โดยห้องเรียนขงจื๊อ (CCs) ในประเทศไทย เพื่อส่งเสริมกิจกรรมต่างๆ ผู้เขียนได้ประมวลข่าวทั้งหมดที่ได้รับการตีพิมพ์เกี่ยวกับกิจกรรมที่จัดโดยห้องเรียนขงจื๊อ (CCs) ในปีพุทธศักราช 2554 และแบ่งประเภทกิจกรรมที่เกี่ยวข้องกับการส่งเสริมการเรียนรู้ภาษาจีน แล้วนำไปวิเคราะห์โดยใช้กระบวนการเชิงคุณภาพ และให้ข้อเสนอแนะเกี่ยวกับการจัดรูปแบบระบบของห้องเรียนขงจื๊อ (CCs) เพื่อการจัดกิจกรรมต่างๆ ในอนาคต

คำสำคัญ: ห้องเรียนขงจื๊อในประเทศไทย การส่งเสริมการเรียนรู้ภาษาและวัฒนธรรมจีน รูปแบบระบบ

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Studies on how to improve the management of Confucius classrooms in Thailand

Since Hanban (The Chinese National Office for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language) established the cooperation with Thai Ministry of Education, Chinese teaching and learning in Thailand has been promoted widely. The numbers of the schools and universities which offer Chinese language courses and the students who study Chinese have increased rapidly, from 242 schools and universities and 80, 500 students in 2003 to 1, 713 and 655, 000 in 2010 respectively. The figure is expected to grow continuously.⁵

Table 1: Figures of Schools and universities which offer Chinese language courses and students who study Chinese in Thailand⁶

Year	2003		2008		2010	
Numbers School& University	Schools and universities	Students	Schools and universities	Students	Schools and universities	Students
National	100	50000	500	20,000	878	400,000
Private	121	30000	483	18,000	595	220,000
Higher education	21	500	120	20,000	130	20,000
Vocational	-	-	-	-	110	15,000
Total	242	80,500	1120	400,000	1713	655,000

Currently there are 11 CCs in Thailand held by Hanban, taking responsibilities of delivering Chinese language teaching for most of local schools. The paper has reviewed the current situation of the activities for promoting Chinese language organized by CCs in Thailand and classified the activities according to the analysis on the figures collected from the official announcement of HANBAN and then proposed the suggestions on how to promote Chinese language teaching.

General Situation of CCs in Thailand

Along with the growing on Sino-Thai diplomatic relations and the development of the inter-business, more and more Thai people would like to learn Chinese language. Since 2006, 11 CCs were established to meet the demand of offering Chinese languages courses and promote the culture for the primary and middle schools in Thailand (Table 2). Meanwhile, every year CCs have organized huge amounts of Chinese language contests, culture experiences activities etc. which are quite popular among Thai students.⁷

⁵ 中国国家汉办驻泰国代表处编著：《赴泰汉语教师志愿者必读》，留中大学出版社，2011，p8

⁶ 中国国家汉办驻泰国代表处编著：《赴泰汉语教师志愿者必读》，留中大学出版社，2011，p8

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⁷ <http://www.hanbanthai.org/kongzixueyuan/>

Table 2: Confucius Classrooms in Thailand⁸

No	Name	Province	Chinese partner School	Date of establishment
1	Chitrala School	Bangkok	The affiliated High School of Peking University	June, 12, 2009
2	Traimit Witthayalai School	Bangkok	TianJin experimental high School	Nov, 16, 2006
3	Srinakorn School	Songkhla	-----	Mar, 6, 2009
4	Suankularb Witthayalai School	Bangkok	-----	Mar, 17, 2009
5	Xingmin School Phitsanulok	Phitsanulok	-----	Mar, 26, 2009
6	Swang Boriboon Witaya School	Pattaya ,Chonburi	-----	Mar, 27, 2009
7	Lampang Kanlayanee School	Lampang	-----	Mar, 31, 2009
8	Rayong Wittayakrom School	Rayong	-----	July, 28, 2009
9	Nawamintachinuthid Horwang Nonthaburi	Nonthaburi	-----	July, 30, 2009
10	Phuket Wittayalai School	Phuket	-----	July, 31, 2009
11	Assumption Commercial College	Bangkok	-----	Aug, 28, 2009

(Source: <http://www.hanbanthai.org/kongziketang/>)

2.1 Current situation of Chinese Language Teaching conducted by CCs

CCs are responsible for delivering Chinese language courses for primary and middle schools. Confucius Classroom at Chitralada School offers the language courses for 1,370 students at 30 classes in 15 grades as well as basic Chinese training to the school staff and Chinese Proficiency tests training. Confucius Classroom at Traimit Witthayalai School organizes the training courses for the local teachers frequently and has published 18 textbooks named 'A Happy Trip to China' with Chinese and Thai versions, which are adopted by thousands of students in the primary and middle schools in Bangkok. Srinakorn School offers language courses using multi-media system. The rest CCs have offered relative Chinese language teaching course as well.

⁸ <http://www.hanbanthai.org/kongziketang/>

2.2 Current situation of Culture Promotion activities organized by CCs

CCs have organized a great deal of Chinese culture activities suitable for Thai students in primary and middle school. Chitralada School has promoted Chinese physical exercises at the royal school and organized 'Chinese bridge' speech contest, Chinese language and culture camp, Queen's birthday' Celebrate Mother's day' performance show etc.

Traimit Witthayalai School have organized the 2-3 weeks camp to China two times every year, designed the special courses such as Chinese Kongfu, drama, paper folding, fun drawing. The school held the 6th 'Chinese bridge- Diamond King Cup' international Chinese competition successfully and established 'Diamond King cup' as the brand name for this competition afterwards. Till now over 10 thousands students from Thailand, the US, Korea and Malaysia have participated the competition. Besides, other CCs in different provinces in Thai have held 'Chinese bridge' Chinese competition for the middle school students and organized Chinese custom and tradition culture activities.

Research Methodology

The methodology adopted in this paper is to review the literature and conduct statistic analysis, from the news published on the official website of Hanban's office in Thailand, on Chinese language and culture promotion activities organized by CCs in Thailand. After describing the figures, qualitative analysis are conducted to compare and analyze, then conclusion are made accordingly.

3.1 Data recourses

The main data are collected from the news published in 2011 by the official website of Hanban's office in Thailand and materials from 'The 3rd Confucius Institutes conference documents' and 'Confucius Institutes in Asia unique program collection' written by Confucius Institute and Classrooms Headquarter.

3.2 Quantity statistic

The statistic includes the total numbers of activities organized by all the CCs in Thailand in 2011 and numbers of activities per month.

3.3 Classification of all activities held by CCs in Thailand

The author has reviewed all the activities organized by CCs in Thailand and classified them into the categories as below:

1) Competition: Students Speech Competition, Singing Competition, Drama Competition and 'Chinese bridge' Chinese language competition etc.

2) Chinese proficiency test: HSK, YCT (Youth Chinese test), BCT (Business Chinese test). Practice exams are not included.

3) Language training:

Language training here refers to training programs offered for the primary and middle school students and local teachers at off class time and those programs normally are not included on the curriculum schedule.

4) Training for the volunteers:

Training courses for new Chinese volunteer teachers are to help them to know how to live and work in Thailand as some CCs need to take responsibility to managing the volunteer teachers in the nearby areas, eg. CC in Phuket needs to take care of those volunteers not only in Phuket but Suratthani and Krabi etc. and some CCs have even organized the volunteers to get together on National day or Chinese New Year in order to listen to them about any difficulties while working and living in Thailand.

5) Cultural activities:

Chinese culture activities are organized to promote Chinese culture in the special events such as Dragon boat festival, Chinese new year and mid-autumn and traditional performance shows made by Chinese artists invited from universities in China are to help the locals to appreciate Chinese arts, Thai festival and culture promotion (to promote Chinese culture in Thai traditional days), Culture lectures on Chinese culture.

6) Academic activities:

It refers to academic lectures and conferences in the field of research on Chinese language teaching methodology, Chinese culture and South-east Asia culture.

7) Culture experience activities:

Cultural camp organized in Thailand for middle students, summer and winter camps in China, culture training (paper-cutting, Chinese knot making, calligraphy etc.)

8) Exhibitions:

Education exhibitions for Chinese teaching achievements, Chinese books exhibitions, performance show with Thai students involved, art exhibitions for calligraphy, paintings and food & beverage.

9) Visit and exchange:

Visit and exchange among universities and middle schools, government and royal members, companies, media, overseas Chinese communities and CCs.

10) CCs construction:

Basic construction and maintenance for CCs with investments from Thai partner schools. During 2009-2010, every CC has established a cultural center.

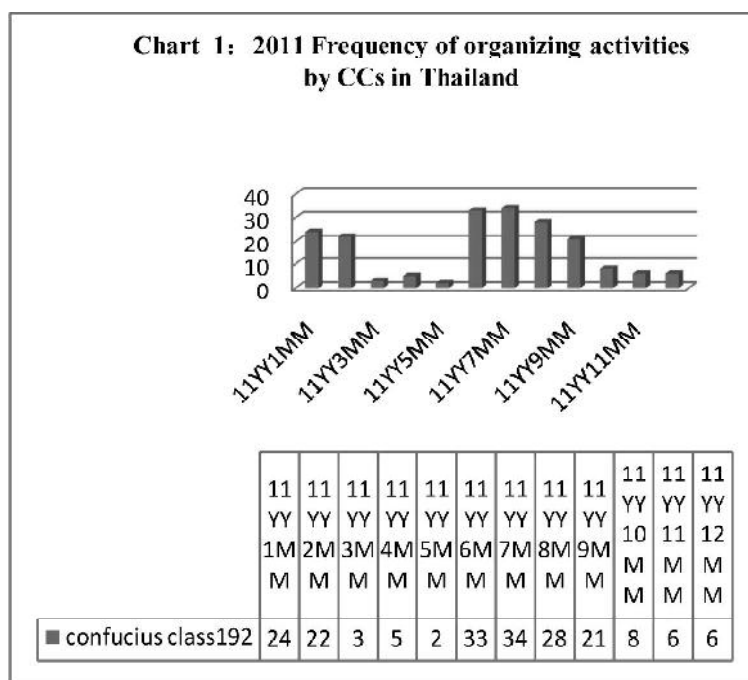
11) Others:

CCs internal meeting, council meeting etc. Those meeting are for management and the main way to communicate with Thai partners.

Data Analysis

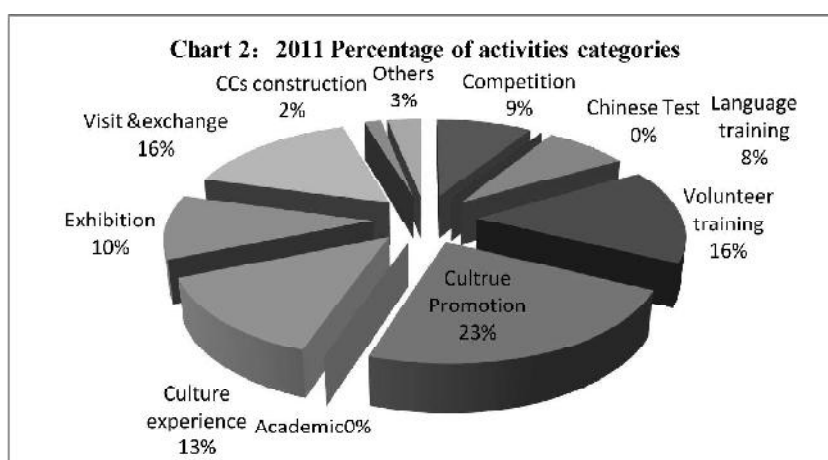
4.1 Data description

4.1.1 Frequency description



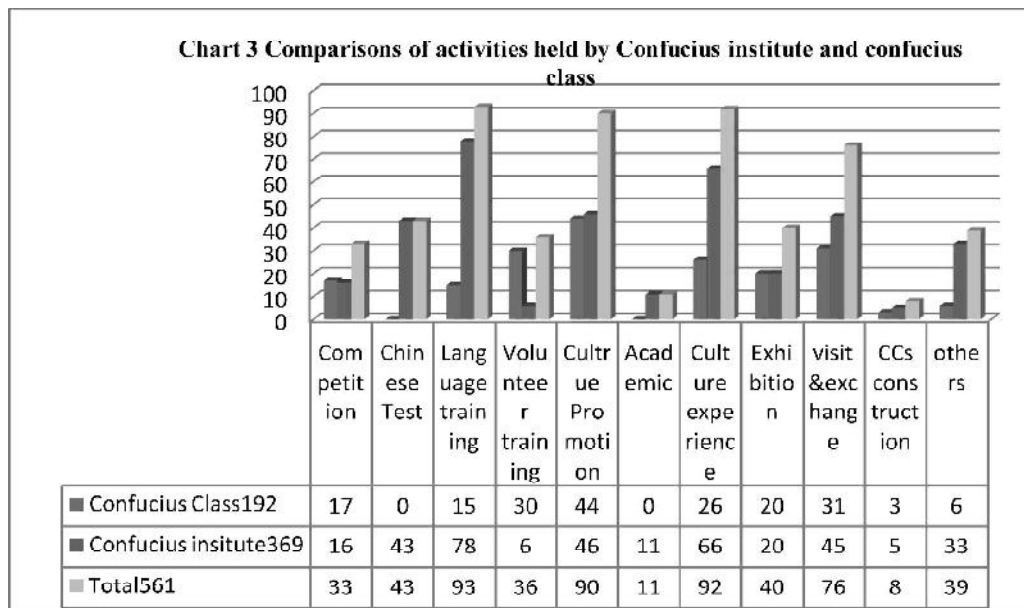
In 2011, CCs in Thailand have organized 129 activities throughout the year. Most of the activities are done in June, July, August and September; fewest are done in March, April and May as shown in chart 1. Since Songkran Festival symbolizes the start of New Year in Thailand in the middle April, the school vacations start normally from March till May, therefore CCs have less work to do during this period.

4.1.2 Activities Categories



As shown in chart 2: Competitions account for 9%, Chinese test for 0%, Chinese training 8%, training for volunteers 16%, cultural promotion 23%, academic 0%, cultural experience 13%, exhibition 10%, visit and exchange 16%, CCs construction 2% and others 3%.

4.2 Comparative analysis



Since there are also Confucius Institutes in Thailand, the comparison between the activities held by CIs and CCs are for analyzing the problems which CCs have when organizing Chinese language and culture promotion activities.

1) Competition, Culture promotion and Exhibition

The total number of competition activities held by CCs is about the same as CIs. Most of them are Chinese knowledge competition; Chinese song competition, 'Chinese Bridge' competition and most are for the 2 or 3 times, which become the leading Chinese learning activities. Among those, the 'diamond king's cup' Chinese competition is the most popular one. Every year, students from primary schools and middle schools are well selected to join the competition; it is now the influential Chinese language competition in Thailand. The 'Chinese Bridge' selection competition is also one of main competitions organized by CCs.

2) Chinese Language training and culture experience camp

CCs are offering Chinese language courses at schools while organizing camps to teach the culture.

3) Chinese proficiency test and academic studies

Since CCs are set up in primary and middle schools, there is no need for them to organize Chinese proficiency tests as CIs in the universities do. Besides, the volunteers working at CCs are comparatively fewer than CIs. Therefore, it would be difficult for them to organize the test but easier to do the test training courses.

4) Volunteer training

During 2003 to 2010, Hanban has sent 9 groups of Chinese volunteer teachers, of totaling over 4,000. In 2011, 1,500 volunteer teachers has been working in Thailand, most of them work in primary and middle schools. As CCs are set up in the primary and middle schools, it would be easier to take care of the volunteers.

5) Visit and exchange

In terms of visit and exchange, CCs performs as a bridge to promote cooperation programs for the partner schools. Furthermore, some of them have established cooperation with companies and Medias. CCs are mainly visited by royal members in Thailand and government officials as reported by Hanban's office in Thailand.

6) CCs' construction

These can be seen as the investment from two parties. During 2009-2010, all the CCs and CIs have set up cultural centers, the venues are provided by Thai schools and universities while Chinese parties offer materials for teaching Chinese and culture. The figures shown are adopted from the CCs' construction records in 2011.

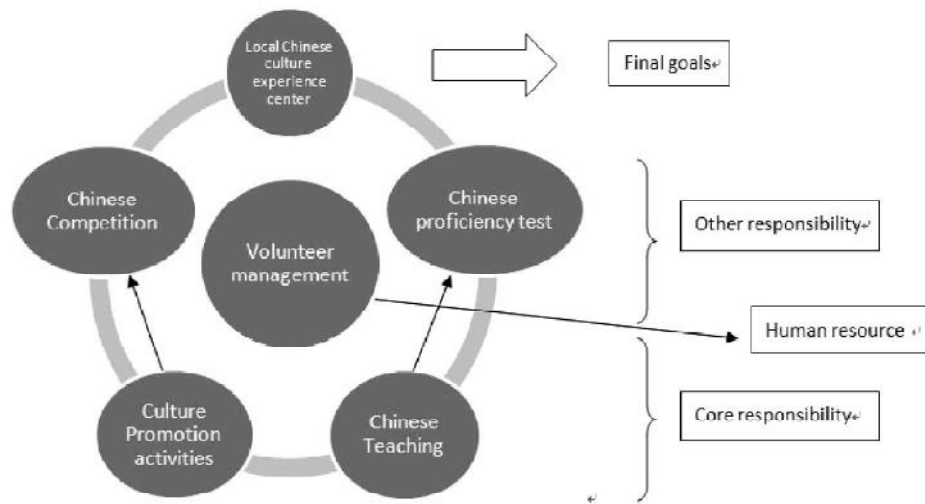
7) Others

Internal meetings and council meetings held by CCs. CCs have held the council meeting on a regular basis to communicate with each other.

Conclusion

CCs are established to serve students from primary and middle schools. CCs' co-founders are national and private schools, which are managed by Thai Ministry of Education of fundamental education association and private schools education association. Besides, CCs can help the students to improve the language proficiency and make full preparation for them to study in China by promoting on Chinese teaching and organizing official tests. Culture promotion activities are systemic work and should be based on Chinese teaching; and the official Chinese test should be promoted through Chinese teaching and the students are encouraged to organize the leading competition through cultural activities in order to establish Chinese and culture experience center in Thailand.

Chart 4 CCs Systemic Model



1. CCs should promote Chinese language learning and culture. Chinese language teachings are offered for primary and middle school students to arouse their interests for learning Chinese language in their early school years, while culture is promoted through exhibition and camp activities to motivate the students' desire for Chinese culture in higher education.

2. Practice HSK exam aims to help the students fully prepare for official HSK and YCT. HSK level 5 is one of the requirements to get an offer to study in China and obtain scholarship as required by most of the universities in China. The students can also have the opportunities to join the camp to China by taking YCT. Based on teaching, exams improve students' language proficiency.

3. Competitions are ways to build up CCs brand name. By organizing different activities, integrated with pedagogical psychology and local culture, CCs can showcase the culture to the largest extent through different competitions.

4. Volunteers management is one of the important jobs. Since a large number of the volunteers work for the primary and middle schools, CCs need to take responsibilities to manage them. On the other hand, volunteers can help CCs to get more and more schools involved in the cultural promotion and competition.

5. CCs development objectives

In conclusion, based on Chinese teaching and cultural promotion, CCs should promote Chinese proficiency tests and competition; get volunteers involved in those activities linking different middle schools so as to be the Chinese cultural experience center at local area.

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