



Exploration of the Development Dilemmas of Private Chinese Language Training Institutions in Vietnam and Related Sino-Vietnamese Cooperation Strategies

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Abstract. As a country along the 'Belt and Road' initiative, Vietnam has seen a growing demand for private Chinese language learning, and private Chinese language training institutions have developed rapidly; however, there are still some dilemmas in their development. This article investigates the development needs of teachers and students in Vietnamese Chinese training institutions. The survey found that private Chinese training institutions in Vietnam face challenges such as insufficient teaching staff, lack of digital teaching resources, high teacher workload, low remuneration, the need for teacher training, and the necessity to collaborate with Chinese partners to offer online courses (including “Chinese+” courses). Students express a demand for increased opportunities for studying abroad and exchange visits, Chinese teachers dispatched from abroad, the establishment of “Chinese+” courses, and the organization of rich cultural activities related to China by the institutions. In response to these issues, this article proposes several suggestions for cooperation between Vietnamese private international Chinese training institutions and China (Yunnan).

Keywords: Cooperation needs; International Chinese; Private training institutions; Vietnam

1 Introduction

The development of international Chinese in a country-specific context and the cooperation and development of international Chinese training institutions are currently important hotspots and pressing issues in the development of international Chinese^[1]. As a country along the 'Belt and Road' initiative, Vietnam's economic development and cooperation with China urgently require a large number of talents proficient in Chinese. Therefore, private Chinese training institutions in Vietnam, as an important component in training Chinese talents, have emerged. Their cooperation with Chinese universities and enterprises is of significant importance for the development of these institutions as

well as for their students and teachers. However, currently, these institutions lack cooperation with Chinese universities and enterprises, which is detrimental to their development.

Currently, research on relevant Chinese training institutions in Vietnam is predominantly case studies, with identified issues and proposed suggestions mainly targeting individual institutions; There is a lack of a comprehensive and systematic investigation into the dilemmas faced by the institutions' teachers and students, as well as their cooperation needs. Investigating the cooperation needs between Vietnam's private Chinese language training institutions and our country is beneficial for meeting the local demand for Chinese language learning and promoting Sino-Vietnamese economic cooperation and exchange.

Therefore, this paper mainly focuses on the dilemmas encountered by teachers and students in Vietnam's private Chinese language training institutions, as well as the need for cooperation with China, and has designed a survey questionnaire, which was conducted during a 10-day field study in Vietnam in January 2024. The questionnaire is divided into a teacher's questionnaire and a student's questionnaire, both of which have high reliability and validity.

2 Survey Subjects

2.1 Survey Institutions

There are approximately over forty institutions in Hanoi, Vietnam, with a few large-scale institutions mostly being chain organizations. The number of people learning Chinese has reached several thousand, even tens of thousands, and the number of Chinese language teachers in these institutions has reached three to four hundred, such as at the Qingmei Training Center in Hanoi; Some institutions are relatively small, such as Huanglian Training Center, which has only about thirty students and three to four teachers; In Ho Chi Minh City, there are fewer Chinese training institutions compared to Hanoi, with about twenty or so, and the size of the institutions varies. The Chinese language training institutions we surveyed in Hanoi mainly include Huanglian Training Center, Qingmei Training Center, YOYO Training Center, etc.; The main institutions surveyed in Ho Chi Minh City include SHZ City Commercial Chinese Training Center, University of Literature, etc.

2.2 Distribution of Survey Sample Characteristics

Distribution of Student Survey Subjects. Among the 433 students surveyed, there are 95 male learners and 338 female learners ; Before coming to the institution for study, there were 324 learners with zero foundation in Chinese, and 63 learners who had studied up to HSK levels 1-2. This indicates that nearly ninety percent of the Chinese learners had a level of HSK 1-2 or below before coming to the institution. It can be seen that most learners had either no foundation or only a little foundation in Chinese before attending the institution, which means that teachers often need to start teaching from scratch, making the teaching difficulty quite high.

Distribution of Teacher Survey Subjects. In this survey, there are 76 teachers from private Chinese language training institutions, of which 15 are male and 61 are female; there is only one Chinese teacher. Regarding the educational qualifications of the institution's teachers, there is 1 teacher with a high school diploma, 5 with a college diploma, 35 with a bachelor's degree, and 35 with a master's degree or higher.

3 Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis of the Cooperation Needs of Teachers

During our field investigation and interviews, we found that there are relatively few international Chinese training institutions in Vietnam cooperating with Chinese institutions. To more accurately understand the teaching difficulties and needs of teachers, the teacher questionnaire includes multiple-choice and open-ended questions in addition to scale questions. The scale questions are mainly divided into four dimensions: future development needs of teachers, cooperation needs with educational departments, cooperation needs with Chinese schools, and cooperation needs with enterprises. The reliability test of the teacher scale questionnaire shows that the Cronbach's Alpha is 0.957, and the validity test with KMO and Bartlett's test value is $0.849 > 0.60$, with an approximate chi-square value of 9479.575, and significance $P < 0.001$, indicating it is suitable for factor analysis. The total variance explained by the four factors is 86.865%. The four factors are named according to the content of the questions: the development needs of teachers themselves, the support needs from the government and education departments, the cooperation needs with Chinese schools, and the cooperation needs with enterprises. The following text will analyze the cooperation needs reflected by the four factors in detail.

3.1 Analysis of Teachers' Development Needs

Teachers lack training and resources for personal growth. The average score for teachers' demand to enhance their academic qualifications is 4.21, while the average scores for the demand for institutions to provide assistance and resources for studying abroad are 4.07 and 4.17, respectively, indicating a high demand from teachers for support from training institutions in their future development; The score for teachers' future development in private Chinese language institutions is 3.75, indicating that teachers' willingness to engage in long-term Chinese teaching at these institutions is not high. We found answers through the subjective question entitled 'What do you think are the main difficulties and challenges encountered while working in Chinese language training institutions?' In this context, teachers face two major dilemmas in their development within institutions: low salaries and high workloads, along with limited future prospects. The two teachers we surveyed had already resigned from private training institutions in Vietnam by July 2024. The provision of training resources by institutions plays an important role in both teachers' teaching and future growth; however, the lack of training for teachers is detrimental to their professional development and the stable growth of the institutions.

3.2 Government and Educational Department Support Needs

The demand for teachers in the two-dimensional factor analysis shows scores above 4, indicating that teachers believe it is urgent for the Sino-Vietnamese governments to provide policy and financial support for private Chinese language training institutions, as well as to offer more and better employment opportunities. The rapid development of Vietnam International Chinese Training Institutions not only indicates a high demand among students for learning Chinese, but also highlights that the institutions' growth is closely tied to government policies and financial support. Teachers hope that both the Vietnamese and Chinese governments can provide more and better employment opportunities to escape the current predicament of low wages and high workloads.

3.3 Cooperation Needs with Chinese Schools

Teachers at the institutions have a high and urgent demand for professional training provided by Chinese schools and hope to establish cooperation for exchange. The expected cooperation content includes “Chinese+” courses, cultural activities, etc. with cooperation partners being university teachers, dispatched volunteers, etc. “I hope Chinese schools can allow me to participate in regular teacher training” scored 4.34, “I hope both sides can establish a friendly teacher internship cooperation base” scored 4.38, and “I hope the institution and Chinese schools can jointly offer 'Chinese+' courses” scored 4.34. This indicates that teachers from Vietnamese Chinese training institutions urgently hope to cooperate with Chinese higher education institutions. In response to the expectations of institutional teachers for cooperation in developing “Chinese+” courses, we designed a multiple-choice question; the top three “Chinese+ Courses” responses are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Statistics on Teachers' Demand for Sino-Vietnamese Cooperation in Building the top three “Chinese+ Courses”

Chinese+ Course Frequency Statistics			
	Number of Cases	Percentage	Case Percentage
Chinese+Staff Training	54	26.9%	71.10%
Chinese Language+Economics	59	29.4%	77.60%
Chinese Language+Tourism	58	28.9%	76.30%

From Table 1, it can be seen that among the 76 teachers who wish to offer “Chinese+” courses, the highest proportion chose “Chinese+Economics” (77.60%) , followed by “Chinese+Tourism” (76.3%), and the third most selected course was “Chinese+Staff Training” (71.1%). We conducted a multi-way table chi-square test on these frequencies, with the test result showing a Pearson chi-square value of 193.055, a degree of freedom of 5, and a significance value less than 0.001. The N value for this test was 446, with 0 cells having an expected count less than 5. This test result indicates that there is a significant difference in teachers' demand for “Chinese Language + Courses”, with very high demand for “Chinese Language+Economics”, “Chinese Language + Tourism”, and “Chinese Language+Staff Training”, all exceeding 70%.

In the fill-in-the-blank question regarding the cooperation that institutional teachers hope to have with Chinese volunteers, institutional teachers mainly hope for collaboration and communication between both parties. This communication with volunteers primarily includes academic and cultural exchanges, while institutional teachers also hope to share teaching experiences with Chinese volunteers. Institution teachers hope to send more Chinese volunteer teachers to the institution for Chinese language classroom teaching cooperation, as well as to collaborate on textbook writing and create an environment for students to communicate in Chinese.

3.4 Demand for Cooperation with Enterprises

Cooperation between institutions and enterprises to promote the joint development of online and offline Chinese language teaching is an inevitable trend. Li Quan (2020) pointed out that we should seize the opportunities of online teaching, make long-term plans for international Chinese education, and promote the high-quality and efficient development of international Chinese education. ^[2]In today's rapidly developing online teaching and cooperative course environment, institution teachers have a strong desire to establish online APPS and develop online courses. Online teaching helps to break the limitations of space and time, with the development of Chinese language teaching APPS scoring the highest at 4.33, the development of online teaching platforms scoring 4.21, and the demands for online teaching, recording lessons, and live broadcasting scoring 4.25, 4.09, and 4.17 respectively.

4 Analysis of Students' Collaborative Learning Needs Questionnaire

This survey included 433 students, with the questionnaire comprising scale questions, multiple-choice questions, and fill-in-the-blank questions. The main content of the survey includes students' basic information, their perceptions of the institution's teachers, textbooks, communication needs, etc. Below, I will analyze the students' questionnaire.

The reliability test of the student questionnaire yielded a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.961, and in the validity test, the KMO value was 0.960, with an approximate chi-square value of 8621.043 and significance $P < 0.001$, indicating suitability for factor analysis. The first factor mainly includes questions regarding students' study abroad and visiting study needs, hence named study abroad and visiting study needs; The second factor includes students' demands for institutional curriculum, study abroad intentions, and dispatch teachers, thus named curriculum and teacher demand. The cumulative total variance explained by the two factors is 68.57%. Below, a specific analysis of the two factors will be conducted.

4.1 Analysis of Students' Study Abroad and Visiting Study Demand Dimensions

In the application for students' study abroad and visiting study programs, the most concerning items for students are study abroad scholarships (4.17) and study tour formats (4.17); In short-term programs to study in China, students are particularly concerned about the specific content of study (4.18), the learning institution (4.18), and the authority of the certificate (4.18). The specific values are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Average values of students studying abroad and visiting studies

Content of the topic	Average score
If the institution wants to offer study abroad application programs, I am particularly concerned about	
1. Low application service fees	3.96
2. Low tuition fees of the applying schools	4.05
3. Which universities can be applied to	4.07
4. Which cities can be applied to	4.09
5. Which disciplines can be applied to	4.12
6. Is it possible to apply for a scholarship	4.17
7. Successful cases previously applied by the institution	4.05
8. Authority of the school	3.99
If the institution wants to offer short-term study programs in China, I am particularly concerned about:	
9. Application service fees	4.09
10. Duration of the program	4.12
11. Start time	4.11
12. Which schools can be applied to	4.18
13. Whether the study tour formats are diverse and rich	4.17
14. Specific content of study	4.18
15. Whether an authoritative certificate can be obtained	4.18

4.2 Analysis of Students' Demands for Courses and Teachers

From Table 3, it can be seen that the highest scoring item for students' demands for courses and teachers is: I hope the institution has more Chinese teachers (4.15). In this survey, it was found that there was only one Chinese teacher in the institution, while students had a relatively high demand for learning other Chinese language courses (3.97), "Chinese Language + Vocational Skills" (4.01), and Chinese cultural activities (4.09).

Table 3. Analysis of curriculum and teacher demand dimensions

Curriculum and Teachers	Content of the topic	Average score
	1. I hope the institution can have more Chinese teachers.	4.15
	2. In addition to the courses I am currently studying, I would like to learn other Chinese language courses, such as calligraphy, phonetics, reading, etc.	3.97

3. I am willing to pay for the institution to help me successfully apply for a study abroad program in China.	3.88
4. If the institution can provide paid short-term study programs during winter and summer vacations, I am willing to participate.	4.14
5. If the institution offers a series of “Chinese+ vocational skills” courses, I am willing to participate.	4.01
6. I hope the institution can hold more Chinese cultural activities.	4.09

In the student questionnaire, we used multiple-choice questions to survey students on the “Chinese+” courses and cultural activities they hope to establish; the survey results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Statistics of Students' Demand for the top three “Chinese+” Courses

'Chinese+' Course Frequency Statistics				
		Number of Cases	Percentage of Total	Case Percentage
Chinese +Courses	Chinese +Tourism	276	29.6%	63.7%
	Chinese +Cross-Border E-Commerce	211	22.7%	48.7%
	Chinese +Economics	259	27.8%	59.8%

Among the 433 surveyed students, the top three “Chinese+” courses are: “Chinese+Tourism” (276 participants, accounting for 65.1%), “Chinese+Economics” (259 participants, accounting for 61.1%), and “Chinese+Cross-Border E-Commerce” (211 participants, accounting for 49.8%). Using the multi-way table chi-square test, with an effective sample size of 3031 and all expected values in the cells greater than 5, the Pearson chi-square value is 802.298, with a degree of freedom of 6, and a significance value less than 0.001, proving that the demand differences among the 7 “Chinese+” courses are significant. Students' preference for 'Chinese+ courses' is not only influenced by the rapid development of the Chinese economy but also reflects the high demand for 'Chinese+' talents in the Vietnamese job market.

In addition to the curriculum, the top five options for Chinese cultural activities that students hope to organize include Chinese cuisine (343 participants, 79.2%), music (297 participants, 68.6%), clothing (254 participants, 58.7%), tea art (209 participants, 48.3%), and calligraphy (211 participants, 48.7%). We conducted a multi-way table chi-square test on the demand for Chinese cultural activities among students, with a valid sample size of 2162, and all expected values in the cells greater than 5. The Pearson chi-square value was 128.15, with 4 degrees of freedom, and the significance value was less than 0.001, proving that the demand differences for the five “Chinese+” courses among students are significant. The percentage of demand for the five Chinese cultural projects is all above 48%, with the demand for cuisine and clothing exceeding 70%. This indicates a high demand among students for these Chinese cultural projects, and their love for Chinese culture provides a favorable condition for Sino-Vietnamese friendly exchanges and cooperation.

5 Suggestions for Chinese Assistance Based on the Needs of Teachers and Students in Vietnam's Private Chinese Language Training Institutions

The questionnaire indicates that teachers have a high demand for strengthening cooperation with Chinese schools, enterprises, and volunteers, while institutional teachers face challenges such as limited personal development and lack of professional training; Students also have a high demand for academic exchange activities, courses, and dispatched teachers. In the multiple-choice questions, the common needs faced by both teachers and students include the increase of “Chinese+” courses, and students hope for more cultural exchange activities. In the open-ended questions, students expressed a desire for more job and internship opportunities, more exchange activities and scholarships, and more dispatched teachers. Based on the above research results, this paper proposes the following solutions.

5.1 Cooperation among Chinese Parties and Institutions to Promote Regular Training and Assessment of Teachers

Tangshiqiulan (2019) found that foreign teacher recruitment difficulties, an incomplete training system, inadequate assessment mechanisms, and a lack of a comprehensive incentive mechanism for foreign teachers are common issues in higher education institutions.^[3] In this survey, we found that institutions also face these problems and can draw on the relevant assessment standards of authoritative Chinese entities such as the Chinese Language Cooperation Center to strengthen the establishment of teacher assessment and evaluation standards; In addition, institutions can also learn from and exchange experiences with other large institutions to improve training and assessment systems, establish sound incentive mechanisms, and strengthen teacher workforce development.

5.2 Chinese Institutions Dispatch Teaching Staff and Organize Student Academic Exchanges to China

Chinese higher education institutions can sign cooperation agreements with institutions to also consider Vietnam's private Chinese language training institutions as practical training bases for international Chinese education.

In addition, higher education institutions can sign agreements for study abroad, academic visits, and exchange students. Popular Chinese cultural projects among students include Chinese cuisine, music, clothing, tea art, and calligraphy. The Ministry of Education's Center for Language Exchange and Cooperation can comprehensively coordinate and organize relevant cultural curriculum training for dispatched teachers, collaborating with Chinese higher education institutions and enterprises to design and host cultural activities favored by the Vietnamese, thereby promoting Sino-Vietnamese economic and cultural exchanges.

5.3 China Provides Support to Institutions in Terms of Policy And Talent for The Establishment of “Chinese Language+Courses”

“Chinese Language+Tourism”, “Chinese Language+Economics”, and “Chinese Language+Cross-Border E-Commerce” are all courses that have high demand from teachers and students. The training of “Chinese Language+Courses” can be conducted after understanding the professional requirements and technical knowledge required by relevant enterprises. The Ministry of Education of China can assist higher education institutions or enterprises in cultivating corresponding teaching staff and management teams, and then assign professional teachers to various Chinese language institutions in Vietnam to teach, thereby cultivating specialized technical talents. For example, in the training aspect of “Chinese Language + E-commerce”, a management team and teaching staff can be established to jointly cultivate technical talents who are familiar with Chinese, understand the cross-border e-commerce market and cultural differences between China and Vietnam, and possess strong capabilities in cross-border e-commerce platform operations, product sales, as well as dynamic information acquisition and analysis. ^[4]Chinese enterprises and Vietnam's private Chinese language training institutions can jointly develop targeted vocational training programs; ^[5] Enterprises can also participate in the formulation of teaching content to ensure that the training is more aligned with actual work needs. which also helps institutions meet students' internship and employment needs.

5.4 Promote Cooperation Between Chinese Enterprises, Higher Education Institutions, and Organizations to Develop Online Teaching Resources.

The co-construction of online teaching platforms, online APPs, and online courses is also in high demand by Vietnam's private Chinese language training institutions. The Chinese government can formulate relevant policies to coordinate and encourage Chinese higher education institutions and enterprises to conduct in-depth research on the actual situation of Vietnamese students and develop online teaching resources suitable for their learning.

6 Conclusions

The rise of private Chinese language training institutions in Vietnam reflects the market demand for Chinese language training in Vietnam. If China can provide support in multiple areas such as policy, teaching staff, teaching platforms, and curriculum development, it will better meet Vietnam's demand for Chinese language talents, promote multi-faceted cooperation and exchanges between China and Vietnam, and achieve win-win cooperation. It is hoped that the research findings and recommendations of this article will contribute to the cooperation between private Chinese language training institutions in China and Vietnam.

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