

# Research on the Positive Effect of “Confucius Institutes” in the Exchange and Development of Dalian Cultural Industry Against the Background of “the Belt and Road Initiative”\*

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**Abstract**—This paper first introduces the development of “the Belt and Road Initiative” strategy proposed by China, as well as economic and trade and cultural exchanges in virtue of this strategy. Then it describes the current situation and development of “Confucius Institutes” in China and their role in culture spreading, and analyzes obstacles and countermeasures in the process of spreading. Next, it presents the status quo and development of Confucius Institutes in Shanghai, discusses the problems existing in the establishment of “Confucius Institutes” in Dalian, and compares the status quo of “Confucius Institutes” in Dalian from many dimensions including the region (the whole country, Liaoning, Shenyang and Shanghai) by using the method of data analysis and comparison. Finally, it puts forward some suggestions for development of cultural industry and economy in Dalian based on “Confucius Institutes” and “the Belt and Road Initiative” resources, which are mainly discussed in two parts of “going out” and “bringing in”.

**Keywords**—“the Belt and Road Initiative”; “Confucius Institutes”; cultural industries

## I. INTRODUCTION

“The Belt and Road Initiative” strategy is conducive to the “going out” of cultural industries. As a major carrier for Dalian to go global and establish a good international image, “Confucius institutes” are an important support for cultural exchanges between Dalian and countries along “the Belt and Road Initiative”, which can carve out an international development space for Dalian’s cultural industries. Therefore, based on Shanghai universities’ experience of developing “Confucius Institutes”, and combined with characteristics of Dalian universities, it is of great practical significance to study how to make full use of the advantages of “Confucius Institutes”, promote Dalian universities and culture to go out, and introduce outstanding talents and enterprises to Dalian, and advance the development of Dalian, so as to provide strong support for the construction of Dalian’s two leading

areas.

## II. THE DEVELOPMENT OF “THE BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE” IN CHINA

### A. Basic Situation of “the Belt and Road Initiative”

Since the speech of Promoting the Friendship between the People for a Better Future delivered by President Xi Jinping at Nazarbayev University in Kazakhstan in September 7, 2013, as of the end of 2018, China had signed 170 documents on jointly building “the Belt and Road Initiative” with 122 countries and 29 international organizations, according to National Development and Reform Commission. [1]

### B. Trade Exchanges Situation of “the Belt and Road Initiative”

As of 2017, the sum of GDP of 71 “the Belt and Road Initiative” countries was estimated at 14.5 trillion dollars, accounting for 18.4% of global GDP. The total population was projected to be 3.44 billion, accounting for 47.6% of the global population; the total foreign trade volume was 9.3 trillion dollars, accounting for 27.8% of the total world trade, and occupied an important position in the global trade territory. [2]

### C. Cultural Exchange Situation of “the Belt and Road Initiative”

Since the construction of “the Belt and Road Initiative”, we have made rapid progress in the cultural work first, and achieved remarkable results. The Ministry of Culture has formulated “The Belt and Road Initiative Cultural Development Action Plan (2016-2020)”, which has identified five major tasks of constructing mechanisms, building platforms, creating brands, prospering cultural industries, and promoting cultural trade. From the central to the local governments, and from government leadership to the participation of the whole society, the cultural work of “the Belt and Road Initiative” has strengthened cultural exchange and communication among countries along the routes, and also

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deepened mutual understanding among people of all countries. The concept of community with a shared future for mankind, and values of mutual respect, mutual benefit and tolerance and win-win cooperation have been widely recognized by the people of many countries day by day. [3]

Confucius Institutes play an important role in cultural exchanges. Since the proposal of “the Belt and Road Initiative” was put forward, Confucius Institutes in relevant countries have continuously cultivated language talents, conducted cultural activities and promoted people-to-people contacts, becoming a significant force in advancing the construction of “the Belt and Road Initiative”. Among the 65 countries along “the Belt and Road Initiative”, 53 of them have established 137 Confucius Institutes and 130 Confucius Classrooms, accounting for about a quarter of the total number of Confucius Institutes worldwide. Confucius Institutes are committed to deepening “the Belt and Road Initiative” research to provide intellectual support for “the Belt and Road Initiative”, and a large number of talents trained have also become the main force in the construction of “the Belt and Road Initiative”. [4]

### III. DEVELOPMENT OF CONFUCIUS INSTITUTES IN CHINA

According to the Annual Development Report of Confucius Institutes (2017), by the end of 2017, a total of 146 countries (regions) had established 525 Confucius Institutes and 113 Confucius Classrooms.

#### A. *The Role of “Confucius Institutes” in Cultural Diffusion*

In the process of cultural diffusion by Confucius Institutes, the implementation of “the Belt and Road Initiative” strategy provides a driving force for the “going out” of cultural industries. Relevant departments and enterprises in the provincial and urban areas within its radiation range actively conduct the construction of characteristic cultural products and projects of “the Belt and Road Initiative”, advance Chinese culture to go out with the help of cultural products and projects, and promote the real development of cultural industries. In the meantime, humanities exchanges and cultural cooperation between China and countries and regions along the route will be strengthened. [5]

#### B. *Obstacles and Countermeasures of “Confucius Institutes” in Cultural Diffusion*

1) *Obstacles*: First, there is a shortage of teachers. Confucius Institutes in some areas have the situation that many Chinese teachers leave but few come in. For example, Confucius Institute of Egerton University in Kenya, Africa, is located in a relatively backward area with poor public order, and Chinese teachers are reluctant to go to teaching or make an adjustment. [6]

Second, the practice resources are insufficient. The lack of teaching funds, equipment and practical resources weakens the influence of cultural diffusion, resulting in putting emphasis on knowledge explanation and transmission rather than cultural exchange and practice. Cultural teaching of “quenching thirst by looking at plum blossoms” is far from meeting the needs of

Chinese learners and Chinese culture lovers, which greatly reduces the effect of cultural diffusion.

2) *Countermeasures*: We should strengthen the training of Chinese teachers, establish strategic alliances among colleges and universities, and improve the efficiency, scale and quality of teacher training. We also should enrich practical resources, increase the amount of scholarship, take a long-term view, and focus on cultivating local teachers. Moreover, we should increase publicity through official and non-governmental organizations, do a good job in guiding foreign people to positively recognize China and reduce their resistance to Confucius Institutes. More importantly, we should keep pace with the development of science and technology, build digital Confucius Institutes, pay special attention to the management and communication of countries with high political risks, and make various plans in advance.

#### C. *The Role of “Confucius Institutes” in Promoting the Exchange and Development of Cultural Industries*

1) *Building a digital learning platform for “Confucius Institutes” to promote the development of the cultural industry chain*: In 2010, the southern base of the Confucius Institute at Xiamen University successfully developed the world’s first mobile Internet terminal for teaching and managing Chinese as a foreign language, “Confucius Institute mobile learning platform”. It will build the world’s first Chinese cloud data center and the world’s first private wire network for international promotion, and become an industry model leading the promotion of “education cloud” from concept to practical application. [8]

2) *“Confucius institutes” publicize Chinese culture and promote the tourism industry through “Chinese bridge” and other projects*: Winners of the Chinese competition of “Chinese bridge” held by “Confucius Institutes” can go to China to participate in the semi-finals and finals. These excellent young students will return to their home countries with their real experiences in China after the competition, and become good “opinion leaders” who continue to publicize the charm of Chinese culture and tourism resources. [9]

### IV. CURRENT SITUATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF SHANGHAI CONFUCIUS INSTITUTES

As of December 2017, 11 universities and 10 primary and secondary schools in Shanghai had built 46 Confucius Institutes and 73 Confucius Classrooms in 29 countries (shown in “Fig. 1”), spreading over five continents of the world. [10]

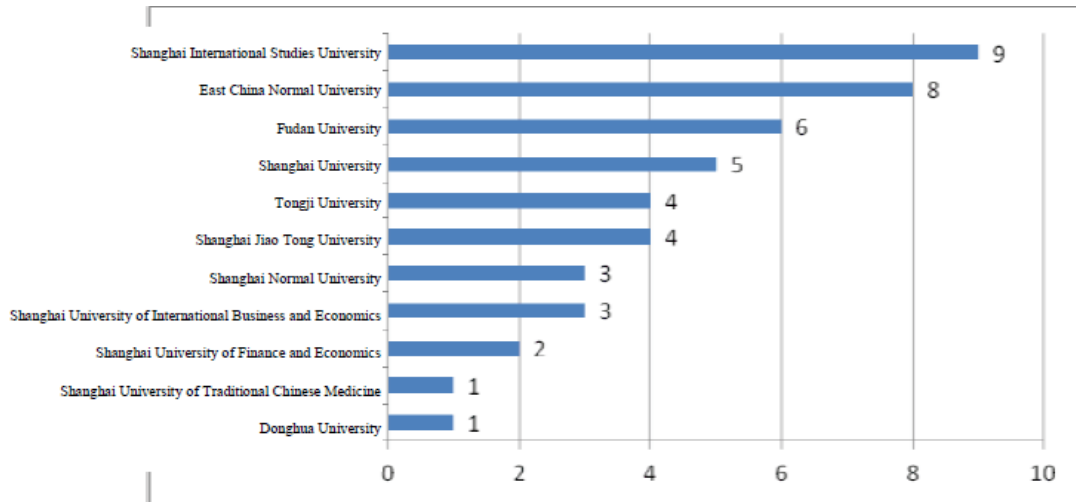


Fig. 1. The number of Confucius Institutes of Shanghai Universities.

In December 2016, the establishment of “Shanghai Confucius Institute Work Alliance” played a positive role in promoting the development of Confucius Institutes. The Alliance is composed of 11 Chinese universities and colleges that have run Confucius Institutes and 7 primary and secondary schools for promoting Chinese language internationally in Shanghai, and its secretariat unit is Shanghai International Studies University. [10]

V. CURRENT SITUATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF DALIAN “CONFUCIUS INSTITUTES”

By the end of December 2017, according to publicly available information, a total of 5 universities in Dalian had cooperated to build 15 Confucius Institutes and 6 Confucius Classrooms in Asia, Africa, the United States and Europe.

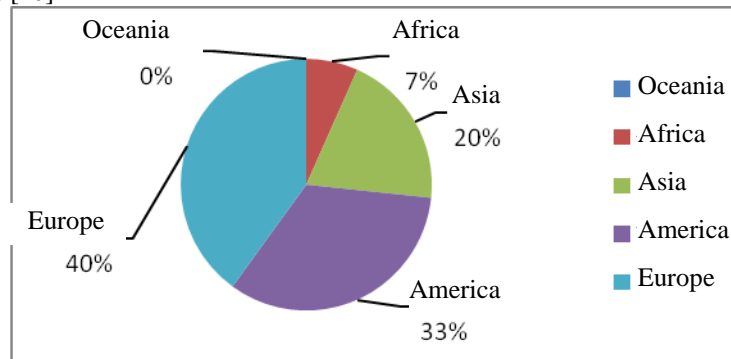


Fig. 2. Distribution of Dalian Confucius Institutes.

As can be seen from “Fig. 2”, as of December 2017, Dalian Confucius Institutes were mainly concentrated in Europe and America.

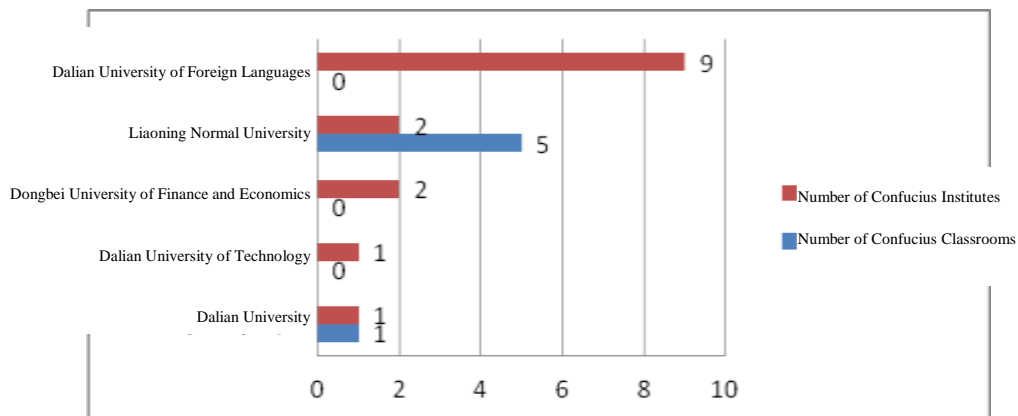


Fig. 3. The number of Confucius Institutes of Dalian universities.

It can be seen from “Fig. 3” that Dalian University of Foreign Languages outshines others in the number of Confucius Institutes. Its Confucius Institutes account for 60% of the total number of Confucius Institutes of Dalian Universities and it has become an important founder of

Confucius Institutes of Dalian Universities. The number of Confucius Classrooms of Liaoning Normal University accounts for 83% of the total number of Confucius Classrooms of Dalian Universities, and it has become an important founder of Confucius Classrooms of Dalian Universities.

TABLE I. THE NUMBER OF CONFUCIUS INSTITUTES OF DALIAN, SHENYANG, LIAONING, SHANGHAI AND CHINA

Regions	Dalian	Shenyang	Liaoning	Shanghai	China
Number of Confucius Institutes	15	8	24	46	525

From “Table I”, we can see that compared with universities in Liaoning province, Dalian universities are in an absolutely leading position in the establishment of Confucius Institutes, but are relatively backward compared with Shanghai universities.

By inquiring the introduction information on the websites of foreign language colleges of various universities, the following table is made:

TABLE II. A COMPARISON OF THE NUMBER OF CONFUCIUS INSTITUTES AND THEIR LANGUAGE OF TEACHING BETWEEN DALIAN AND SHANGHAI

Dalian			Teaching language	Name of universities	Types	Shanghai			
Confucius Institutes		Quantity				Name of universities	Teaching language	Confucius Institutes	
Proportion	Subtotal							Proportion	Subtotal
				Dalian University of Foreign Languages	Foreign languages	Shanghai International Studies University			
				Dongbei University of Finance and Economics	Economy and trade	Shanghai University of Finance and Economics			
						Shanghai University of International Business and Economics			
				Liaoning Normal University	Normal university	Shanghai Normal University			
						East China Normal University			
				Dalian University	Others	Shanghai University			
				Dalian University of Technology		Donghua University			
						Shanghai University of Traditional Chinese Medicine			
						Shanghai Jiao Tong University			
						Tongji University			
						Fudan University			

The foreign language universities in both places are the main force in the establishment of Confucius Institutes, which benefits from the foreign language advantage of foreign language universities, namely, the talent advantage. (“Table II”) Besides, compared with Shanghai, there is a big gap in the proportion of Dalian normal universities and other universities in the construction of Confucius Institutes.

Based on the above data, it can be found that the main gaps between Dalian universities and Shanghai universities in the construction of Confucius Institutes include:

A. The Number of Confucius Institutes

Among the 11 Shanghai universities, each has an average of 4.18 Confucius Institutes, while among the 5 Dalian universities, each has an average of 3 Confucius Institutes. The gap between the two cities reaches 29.5%. Normal universities and other universities account for a low proportion.

B. The Number of Confucius Classrooms

11 universities and 10 primary and secondary schools in Shanghai have established 73 Confucius Classrooms in 29 countries. The 5 Dalian universities have only 6 Confucius Classrooms and no primary and secondary schools in Dalian are involved in the construction.

C. The Degree of Organizational Perfection

Externally, the establishment of “Shanghai Confucius Institute Work Alliance” is beneficial to the understanding of Shanghai Confucius Institute from all walks of life. Internally, it can strengthen the communication, coordination, optimization of resources and exchange of needs among colleges and universities. From the analysis of public news, there is no similar work alliance in Dalian at present. Meanwhile, the website of Confucius Institutes in some

universities is updated slowly, which is not conducive to expanding their popularity and influence.

## VI. SUGGESTIONS ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF “CONFUCIUS INSTITUTES” IN DALIAN

### A. Relying on “Confucius Institutes” to “Go Global”

At present, “Confucius Institutes” are stepping up efforts in the online teaching, and provide Chinese teaching by means of multimedia technology. For example, we have adapted the original 3D animation “Douer” from BMC Communication Co., Ltd., which is one of the series courses of “watching animation and learning Chinese” created by the Confucius Institute Online. Dalian should make good use of its own animation industry advantage and geographical and cultural characteristics, encourage cultural industry enterprises to make a batch of excellent cultural products including cartoons of “learning Chinese” for the markets of Japan, Korea, Russia and Central Asia. With the support of the government and universities in Dalian, depending on “Confucius Institutes/Classrooms”, we should promote these cultural products to the countries along “the Belt and Road Initiative”, and drive the development of surrounding industries, forming a situation that “Confucius Institutes” use products produced by cultural enterprises. “Confucius Institutes” provide feedback and suggestions for improvement in teaching and cultural enterprises modify and upgrade their products in the first time, forming a virtuous circle. We will realize the continuous iteration and improvement of products and Chinese teaching quality, and truly create a cultural brand of Dalian that is competitive in the market and recognized by Chinese learners.

We should encourage more colleges and universities, including Dalian Maritime University and Dalian Neusoft University of Information, and primary and secondary schools to go global. Furthermore, we should encourage universities that have established “Confucius Institutes” to sum up their experience, and start more excellent Confucius Institutes, so as to fully expand the scope of influence of “Confucius Institutes”.

We should learn from the experience of Shanghai. Dalian University of Foreign Languages should take the lead in forming the “Dalian Confucius Institute Work Alliance”, coordinate internal work, share work experience and resources, cooperate with the government and relevant enterprises, and do a good job in overseas promotion of Dalian cultural industry. In particular, the training of Chinese teachers and the construction of related cultural industries enable Dalian to have obvious technical advantages in the creation of the Confucius Institutes.

We should give full play to the flexibility and efficiency of the private economy, encourage private Chinese language training institutions to become bigger and stronger, push into the countries along “the Belt and Road Initiative”, especially Japan and South Korea, Russia and central Asia markets, and cultivate Dalian’s own “New Oriental” language schools to complement and promote each other with the “Confucius Institutes”.

### B. Relying the Introduction of “Confucius Institutes”

Adhering to the principles that Chinese language teaching is the fundamental task and cultural exchange is the secondary task, under the unified planning of “Dalian Confucius Institute Work Alliance”, we should increase contact with other regions and enlarge the popularity of Dalian. In virtue of various cultural exchanges, we should imperceptibly introduce Dalian’s culture and economy to people who are affiliated to “Confucius Institutes” and enhance their understanding and love for Dalian. Attracting talents and funds to provide a “burning aid” for Dalian’s economic construction and industrial restructuring, we can make Dalian develop in a faster and better way.

We can produce a variety of Chinese multimedia teaching films and introduce Dalian to students while teaching Chinese. Besides, we can use Dalian’s unique cartoon characters, scenes, and story plots, show the beauty of Dalian, release the charm of Dalian, so that the audience can “learn Chinese and know Dalian”. We strive to make Dalian become the preferred destination for travel and business in China.

We should establish “Dalian Scholarship”, provide free Chinese language teaching services to local enterprises and government personnel in virtue of “Confucius Institutes”, regularly introduce Dalian’s industrial economy, select the outstanding personnel of the “Confucius Institutes” to conduct further education, encourage industrial cooperation and trade.

While conducting Chinese language teaching, we should strengthen cooperation with local government agencies, introduce preferential policies in China and Dalian, and attract foreign investment.

With the good relationship between the “Confucius Institutes” and the cooperative schools, we will strengthen personnel cooperation and exchanges, attract renowned international professors to give lectures, and attract outstanding foreign graduates to start business in Dalian.

## VII. CONCLUSION

With the development of China’s economy and politics, China will play a more and more important role in the world. So it is necessary spare no efforts to set up more excellent Confucius Institutes so as to let the world know more and better about China.

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