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Master's Thesis

# **Confucius Institute and China's Soft Power**

공자학원과 중국의 소프트파워

August 2018

Graduate School of International Studies  
Seoul National University  
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# Confucius Institute and China's Soft Power

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## **Abstract**

Recently China has acknowledged the importance of soft power and has adopted cultural diplomacy policies. The representative example of implementing cultural diplomacy is the foundation of Confucius Institute all over the world. By April 2018, there are more than 500 Confucius Institutes established. In Korea alone, there are 23 Confucius Institutes in December 2017. The establishment and management of Confucius Institute are directed by the Headquarter of Confucius Institute, Hanban. Chinese government and Hanban have been actively promoting Confucius Institute as a means of cultural diplomacy as well as the effectiveness of Confucius Institute. However, since 2013, some Confucius Institutes, especially the ones located in European countries, have been closed down mostly for educational and political reasons. Along with the closures, the effectiveness of Confucius Institute has been questioned, and accordingly, the doubts on China's soft power have been raised.

This study reviews several literatures with regard to soft power and cultural diplomacy in order to understand the concepts of soft power and cultural diplomacy and to understand how China has perceived soft power and cultural diplomacy. Then, as a representative example of cultural diplomacy

implementation, the Confucius Institute is examined. Furthermore, the rationale behind the recent closure of few Confucius Institutes is examined.

**Key Words:** China, soft power, cultural diplomacy, Confucius Institute

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## **I. Introduction**

### **1. Research Question and Purpose**

Since 1978 when Deng Xiaoping initiated the economic reform, China and the rest of the world have become more connected in terms of economy, politics, society, and culture. From 1980 onwards, the Chinese government actively encouraged foreign businesses to invest in China, and established special economic zones (Hartig 2015a: 4). Foreign trade and foreign investment into China expanded to a large extent, and the economic relations of China were intensified. Accordingly, China has achieved yearly economic growth of 9.67% and it has emerged as the core competence of East Asian order in recent years (Lee 2010: 38). The desire of becoming a powerful nation has been half-achieved through building powerful economic base.

Along with economic development, China adopted a new strategy of image making and it was to project a positive international image of “New China” (Ding 2008: 120). The strategy was referred to as “foreign propaganda with Chinese characteristics.” Later, the term “propaganda” was changed to “publicity,” as China realised the fact that the West understood propaganda as

a critical term (Ding 2008: 120). China has rather pursued “peaceful development” and “harmonious world.” As a result, it was discovered that American people who had “mostly unfavourable” to “very unfavourable” perceptions towards China decreased from 65 percent to 10 percent, while those who had “mostly favourable” to “very favourable” perceptions towards China increased dramatically in the 1980s (Ding 2008: 120). Nevertheless, due to expanding influence of China over the world, there has been a concern “whether China’s rapid rise will be peaceful or disruptive to the existing international order” (Zhao & Liu 2009: 3; Hartig 2015a: 4). Thus the so-called “China threat theory” derived from the concerns regarding to the rising China (Hartig 2015a: 4). Representatively, Mearsheimer (2010) has argued that the peaceful rise of China is impossible.

Due to the concerns of the outside world, China realised the necessity to actively communicate with the world and to improve its global image. Based on its harmonious world theory, China has literally emphasised harmony and also the diversity of values and cultures (Lee 2010: 50). Since the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, China has been cooperating with foreigners to promote its language and culture. In the mid-2000s, the economic development plan began to

include public diplomacy and soft power policies (Hartig 2015a: 5). The awareness of public diplomacy and soft power policies was to enhance the influence of Chinese cultural products and Chinese culture in general.

Not only China, but also any other countries in the world pursue to develop positive images of themselves among international publics, because they acknowledge that the positive images are important in achieving their objectives in terms of foreign relations (Goldsmith *et al.* 2014: 88; Hartig 2015a: 5). It is also argued that the image-making process has steadily increased, since the importance of publics with regard to foreign affairs has been rising (Hertz 1981: 184; Hartig 2015a: 5). In short, the power of positive national image is so strong that it can help the country to build alliances with others and help the country to enlarge its international influence (Kinsey & Chung 2013: 6; Hartig 2015a: 6).

In line with this, China has also concentrated time and effort in strengthening its soft power, especially on establishing Confucius Institute. The main goal of Confucius Institute is to promote Chinese language and Chinese culture. Since 2004, the number of Confucius Institute has increased sharply, and it has been established in every continent over the world. In

general, Confucius Institute is evaluated as an effective and a peaceful means of stimulating China's soft power and cultural diplomacy (Pan 2013: 29). However, there also exists negative perspective on China's soft power, cultural diplomacy, and Confucius Institute. It is increasingly insisted that China's soft power is not soft, but that China is hiding its true purpose and pretending its soft power is gentle and peaceful (K.L. Chun 2015: 526). Moreover, the effectivity of Confucius Institute is still doubtful (Lee 2011: 134).

This thesis examines how the concept of soft power and that of cultural diplomacy have been recognised from Chinese perspective. Then, how Confucius Institute has been operated and how much it has been effective is analysed based on a survey conducted with Korean people who have studied Chinese language. Lastly, the future of China's soft power and cultural diplomacy is discussed.

## **2. Research Methodology**

This study will examine the concept of soft power, cultural diplomacy policy and cultural diplomacy implementation in China, mainly based on existing literatures. Then the current state of Confucius Institute located all

over the world and Confucius Institute located in Korea will be examined, based on the official homepage of Hanban. Moreover, in order to obtain information about Confucius Institute based on one's personal experience at Confucius Institute, a survey will be conducted.

In order to evaluate the practical effect of Confucius Institute, it is necessary to ask individuals who have studied at Confucius Institute. Thus the survey will be carried out targeting Korean people who have studied Chinese language, because several Korean people are ardent learners of Chinese language these days, and also because there are many Confucius Institutes in South Korea. Additionally, before learning a foreign language, it is assumed that Korean people look for diverse channels where they can learn the language effectively.

Among the respondents, there should be individuals who have studied Chinese language at Confucius Institute. The survey will mainly focus on the experience of individuals who have studied Chinese language at Confucius Institute. The survey will be spread through Google Survey link, thus respondents will be collected through Social Network Services. Moreover, copies of the questionnaire will be distributed on the spot of Confucius

Institute. 308 Korean respondents in total, regardless of age and sex, will be questioned.

## **II. Soft Power and China's Cultural Diplomacy**

### **1. Concept of Soft Power**

According to Joseph Nye, power is “the ability to influence the behaviour of others to get the outcomes one wants” (2004: 2). One of the important characters of power is that power is contingent upon the context in which the relationship exists (Nye 2004: 2). This implies that power does not always refer to a physical ability, but power is a broader concept and there is more than one type of power. Thus, power can be distinguished into two types of power: hard power and soft power. While hard power refers to a physical ability, soft power is based on the ability to shape the preferences of others, and it co-opts others instead of coercing them (Nye 2004: 5). The concept of soft power is closely related to intangible assets, such as an attractive culture, political values and policies. But it should be noted that soft power is not same as influence. Influence is a status quo of the preference pattern of proactive state spreading to reactive state (Kim 2010: 11). Thus, influence is the outcome of mutual interaction and it is asymmetrical (Rubinstein 1975: 10; Kim 2010: 11). While influence is a concept related with process and product,

soft power is a tool for exerting one's influence. If a nation fails to derive changes in awareness and behaviour from the other nation, it is the failure of exerting influence (Percival 2007: 152; Kim 2010: 11).

The key difference between hard power and soft power is on the variety of methods of obtaining the desirable outcomes. Soft power does not use force or money to stimulate cooperation. It rather emphasises the importance of an intangible attraction which is possible to persuade people to follow others' purposes without any explicit threat or exchange. However, both hard power and soft power are necessary in obtaining one's purposes by affecting the behaviour of others. Some scholars argue that hard power and soft power are inseparable, as "soft power can facilitate the growth of hard power, whereas hard power can demonstrate and support the growth of hard power" (Li 2009: 29).

Soft power is defined in various ways, but it is usually defined as an attractive power. Soft power is simply defined as the ability to convince others, and the attractiveness and appeal of values, lifestyle and social system (Shin 2009: 38). It is also contended that soft power has a non-exclusiveness, a diffusiveness, and the possibility of overlapping between soft powers of

different countries (Zhu 2002; Shin 2009: 38). There have been many discussions on the relationship between soft power and hard power, and especially, there has been a high interest on the dialectic relationship between “soft” and “hard.” For instance, soft power can promote the development of hard power, and hard power also can support the improvement of soft power (Shin 2009: 38).

However, according to Yan Xuetong, it is argued that the strengthening hard power is not directly linked to the enhancement of soft power (Shin 2009: 38). Yan emphasised that even though the economic power and military power are in high level, if a nation is not recognised as a moral nation in the international society, its international mobilisation ability may face very low level (Shin 2009: 38). Furthermore, it is argued that soft power will enhance hard power, not directly, but by decreasing the necessary expenses in enhancing hard power. It is expected that soft power will make hard power to be easily and gradually accepted by people (Shin 2009: 38-39). In short, soft power and hard power are mutually related, but they do not directly influence the other.

Soft power has already become the crucial ways and means in diplomatic

policies. In fact, there has been a further discussion on “smart power” in the United States, which is an organically-combined form of hard power and soft power (Armitage & Nye 2007; Shin 2009: 36). Thus, by expanding the investment and supply of global goods through utilising powerful military power and economic power, the United States can strengthen its soft power and may exercise power more wisely (K.L. Chun 2010: 513). It is evident that soft power and hard power are somewhat intertwined, and soft power has been recognised as an important tool in diplomacy even in the United States.

## **2. Perception of Soft Power in China**

China has a rich history along with rich cultural heritage, and it has been an important source of its soft power. Chinese intellectuals began to get interested in soft power since 1990s, and the concept of comprehensive national power emerged in the late 1990s (Cho & Jeong 2008: 455). Soft power is the significant component of comprehensive national power, and it is described that comprehensive national power is comprised of hard power, soft power and coordinating power (Huang 1999; Cho & Jeong 2008: 455). The inclusion of coordinating power seems unique, and political structures,

government leadership, management capabilities and organisational decision-making power are the examples of it (Cho & Jeong 2008: 455).

Since Hu Jintao era, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has taken a profound interest in encouraging soft power. Hu argued that soft power via culture is crucial in Chinese standing and capabilities (Craig 2012: 177). This is because soft power is necessary in transforming China from the regional power into the world power. Hu also stated that hard power and as well as soft power will demonstrate the increase in China's international status and influence (Craig 2012: 177). These imply that China has realised the significance of international image and soft power in order to obtain its status as a global power (Shambaugh 2013: 207; Hartig 2015a: 1). Furthermore, according to the 2006 Five-Year Plan for Cultural Development, attraction is not the only foundation of China's soft power, but its soft power is also based on "whether it possesses strong propaganda methods and strong propaganda capabilities ... to form public opinion powers commensurate with China's international status" (Glaser & Murphy 2009: 15; Craig 2012: 175). The important question is "not what is unique about China, but what is universal about China" and this is the "essence of soft power" (Shambaugh 2013: 212).

Thus building a strong soft power is regarded as the way to maintain a peaceful neighbourhood, and ultimately, it is the way to achieve a favourable international status. Indeed, China has aimed at a certain country or region and focused its soft power resources to be utilised (Cho 2010: 51).

The Chinese soft power is contingent upon three resources: the Chinese developmental model, foreign policy centred on peaceful rise theory and Chinese civilisation. First, as China has gone through a unique process of development, the Washington Consensus did not fit in the Chinese case. Thus, the term “Beijing Consensus” was coined in order to explain the China’s development model (Ramo 2004). It refers to the development of market economy under authoritarian regime, and it is basically led by China. The Beijing Consensus has been considered as a centrepiece of China’s soft power strategy (Craig 2012: 172). The Chinese development model focuses on innovation, considers sustainability and equality as top priorities, and aims for self-determination in foreign policy (Ramo 2004; Cho & Jeong 2008: 466). Second, it aims for peaceful development. Based on the peaceful rise theory, China has endeavoured to become a powerful nation in a peaceful way by gaining the acceptance of neighbouring countries. Third, while some expected

that Chinese civilisation would be influential only in Confucian East Asian countries, in fact, it has been exported to Southeast Asian countries, African countries and Latin American countries (Lee 2011: 127).

In sum, the claims of Nye that soft power enables leverage and capacity in terms of achieving political objectives are reflected in China's thinking of soft power. But the idea that soft power is "derived from and contributes to domestic stability and the strength of the state" is added to China's thinking (Craig 2012: 176). Indeed, China had to begin using soft power strategy in order to promote East Asia cooperation policy. As China and the United States have competed for East Asian regional hegemony, China attempted to get rid of its obsolete image of a socialist state, and attempted to build up a new image of world power (Byun 2011a: 11). The considerations on global image and soft power have made Chinese decision-makers to concern about cultural diplomacy in China. In cultural diplomacy, the utilisation of soft power is necessary, through sharing and spreading culture, values and ideas.

### **3. Cultural Diplomacy Policy**

In international relations, it is necessary to make a good image of a

nation. It is noted that image-making constitutes more than half of ‘power politics’ and that image-making has increased along with the rising importance of publics in foreign affairs (Hertz 1981: 187; Hartig 2012: 53). Public diplomacy is one of the most salient political communication issues in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, although there is no generally accepted definition (Gilboa 2008: 73; Hartig 2012: 54). Public diplomacy is broadly understood as “a country’s engagement and communication with foreign publics” (Wang 2011: 3; Hartig 2012: 54-55), and it is also defined as “an international actor’s attempt to advance the ends of policy by engaging with foreign publics” (Cowan & Cull 2008: 6; Hartig 2012: 55). The task of China’s public diplomacy is to introduce itself to the world and help others to understand the real China (Zhao 2009; Hartig 2012: 56). In this context, international cultural exchange and communication will enhance friendship with foreign countries (Zhang 2009: 13; Hartig 2012: 56).

The practice of public diplomacy can be divided into five elements: listening, advocacy, cultural diplomacy, exchange diplomacy, and international broadcasting (Cull 2008: 31; Hartig 2012: 56). As a strategy of public diplomacy, a country may make use of its art and culture in order to

make a positive impression upon a foreign population (Kwan 2013: 111). Cultural diplomacy refers to an activity exchanging one aspect or an identity of ideology, values, traditions, and culture in order to promote socio-cultural cooperation, to strengthen relationship, and to promote the national interests (Constantinescu 2016; Do 2017: 182). Thus, soft power can be promoted and maximised through cultural diplomacy which considers culture as means. But there is a clear distinction between soft power and public diplomacy. While soft power derives from society, public diplomacy is an instrument managed by governments (Shambaugh 2013: 209). Public diplomacy can contribute to soft power, but it is argued that public diplomacy will be much less effective without intrinsic soft power (Shambaugh 2013: 209).

In the past, the distinction between public diplomacy and cultural diplomacy in China was not so clear. Instead, culture and cultural exchange were generally considered as a part of foreign policy, and public or cultural diplomacy was regarded as a tool to conduct the cultural exchange (Hartig 2012: 56). But as the awareness of cultural diplomacy has increased, the distinction between public diplomacy and cultural diplomacy has been made. Within China, cultural diplomacy is defined as “a diplomatic activity utilising

culture as means, in order to achieve specific political aim or external strategic aim” (Li 2005: 24; Do 2017: 182). In addition to this, cultural diplomacy in Chinese context is referred as “a kind of cultural exchange and communication activity which is adopted to ultimately enhance attitude, policy and conduct of one’s own country” (Zhang 2013: 59; Do 2017: 183). Moreover, it is insisted that China pursues practical cultural diplomacy which possesses strong sense of government-led politics and policies (Do 2017: 183). In general, cultural diplomacy has mitigated tensioned global politics and ideology conflict, and it also has accelerated the establishment of a new relationship so far.

China has made a lot of effort in cultural diplomacy in terms of nation branding. It is to move away from the national image of underdeveloped or developing country, but to inculcate a decorated national image of a country which possesses high technology and high culture (Park 2010: 104). China has been seeking ways to increase its influence by exhibiting its peaceful image all over the world (Nogayeva 2015: 595). China’s cultural diplomacy in the modern sense has emerged since the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, in the tide of globalisation. The economic reform in 1978 accelerated China’s cultural

exchange with foreign countries. In fact, the number of cultural agreements signed between China and foreign governments doubled after the economic reform (Pan, Nam & Jang 2011: 111). However, due to Tiananmen Square protests of 1989, the international society imposed several sanctions against Chinese government. But in 1992, as Deng Xiaoping embarked on the Southern Tour, China again marked a watershed in economic development (Pan *et al.* 2011: 111). Along with the economic development, as the international society pursued peace and stability, China began to put more emphasis on cultural exchange.

In 1997, Jiang Zemin officialised that cultural diplomacy had become the significant part of Chinese diplomatic activity in 21<sup>st</sup> century (Pan *et al.* 2011: 112). Along with this, financial crisis in the East Asia provided China a great opportunity where it could improve its global image. At that time, China resisted the pressure of depreciating its currency ‘Yuan’ (Lee 2011: 124). By resisting the depreciation, China emphasised the stabilisation of regional economy, and by going through the crisis, China could secure its status as a responsible regional power (Lee 2011: 125). The Southeast Asian countries chose to cooperate with China rather than the United States or Japan in order

to overcome the crisis (Ahn 2008: 41; Pan *et al.* 2011: 112).

In 2005, cultural diplomacy first appeared as one independent form of diplomacy at the 5<sup>th</sup> Plenum of 16<sup>th</sup> Central Committee of the CCP (Pan *et al.* 2011: 112). Later, Hu Jintao proposed a direction regarding to the enhancement of China's national soft power at the 17<sup>th</sup> National Congress of the CCP (Pan *et al.* 2011: 112). In 2010, the improvement of soft power became one of the main policies of China's 12<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plan (Lee 2011: 124). The next year, at the 17<sup>th</sup> Central Committee of the CCP, the main topic was culture and the national goal was declared as "to build our country into a socialist cultural superpower" (Shambaugh 2013: 207-208). Hu asserted the importance of spreading Chinese culture, and instructed the Chinese cultural industry that political missions about cultural diplomacy must be completed (Pan *et al.* 2011: 113).

In 2014, Xi Jinping announced that China's soft power should be enhanced, a good Chinese narrative should be given, and China's messages should be well delivered to the world (Shambaugh 2015: 100). In the same year, at the 50<sup>th</sup> commemoration of diplomatic relations between China and France, Xi cited Napoleon Bonaparte's well-known saying, "China is a

sleeping lion. Let her sleep, for when she wakes she will move the world,” and added that the lion is a peaceful and tender lion of culture, and it has already woken up (Do 2017: 178). Moreover, China’s “One Belt, One Road” initiative became the official national agenda, as a diplomatic policy and an economic cooperation scheme since 2014. One Belt, One Road initiative is a long-term project for achieving “Chinese Dream” which aims for a great revival of China (C.W. Lee 2017: 121). China has gradually attached great importance to cultural diplomacy, and has put its plan and strategy into action.

One Belt, One Road initiative involves a national vision that China would become the central nation in Eurasia by setting forth the Silk Road, which is the symbol of cultural exchange between the East and the West. China newly proposed a concept called the “Silk Road spirit”. Since the Silk Road has been a platform for an exchange, diverse ethnicities, races, religions and cultures used to be blended at the Silk Road (C.W. Lee 2017: 136). During the long-term process of exchange, peace and co-development between nations with different cultural backgrounds will be formed, and this is at the core of Silk Road spirit (C.W. Lee 2017: 136). China emphasises that One Belt, One Road initiative is a new international cooperation model for collaborative

development (C.W. Lee 2017: 135). The ultimate goal of China is to form a community bound together by a common destiny, through intensifying mutual win-win situation. By putting emphasis on both cooperation and culture, China has attempted to eliminate concerns of international community with regard to China threat theory.

#### **4. Cultural Diplomacy Implementation**

China has attempted to eliminate its negative impressions, such as non-democratic and inhumane images. Through hosting a large-scale international event, such as Beijing Olympics and Shanghai Expo, China has improved its national image. The Beijing Olympic Games held in 2008 representatively shows the efforts of China promoting its soft power. It was a great opportunity for China to show the whole world about its native culture and history. A variety of contents on Confucius were newly created at the Olympic Games. At the opening ceremony, national squads entered the stadium not in alphabetical order, but in the order of making strokes in writing a Chinese character (Chae 2008: 327). This can be interpreted as revealing “China Standard” in order to solidify its cultural capacity (Chae 2008: 327). Moreover,

the Four Great Inventions from ancient China – papermaking, printing, compass and gunpowder – were embodied at the opening ceremony, and the eternality and brilliance of Chinese culture were highlighted (Chae 2008: 327-328).

It is clear that China has constructed a positive image of peacefully developing country, based on its long history and tradition, as China is a culturally rich country. In 2003, Chinese government proposed a plan called Chinese Bridge Project, and the plan expected that Chinese language and culture would be disseminated to the world by means of the Chinese Bridge Project (Pan *et al.* 2011: 115). In accordance with the plan, China has been exporting national and traditional Chinese cultural products: Chinese philosophies and values, language, traditional fine arts, and the Chinese interpretations about the world (K.H. Chun 2010: 397).

The most dominant philosophy in Chinese culture is undoubtedly Confucianism, and the Confucian thoughts have shaped the principles of Chinese foreign policies. However, as a figurehead of China's cultural diplomacy, it is questionable why Confucius was chosen instead of Mao Zedong. In fact, the Chinese government ordered to “destroy the Four Olds”

during the Cultural Revolution (Lee 2011: 137). The Four Olds refer to old customs, old culture, old habits and old ideas. In the same vein, since Confucianism is one of old ideas, Confucius was harshly criticised. From the perspective of CCP, Confucius and Confucianism were regarded as a reactionary sentiment which forced peasants to be obedient, opposed to revolution and advocated slavery (Lee 2011: 137). Due to the basic tenets, it was impossible for Confucianism to be compatible with socialism. Since traditional culture was an obstacle to communist dictatorship, China attempted to get rid of the trace of Confucius and Confucianism.

However, ironically, China has endeavoured to establish a new Chinese ideology based on Confucius ideology for the past few decades. There are five reasons why China chose “Confucius”. Firstly, Confucius is one of the Four Saints, along with Buddha, Socrates and Jesus (Kim & Cui 2014: 29). As Confucius is famous all around the world, the name is familiar to foreigners. Accordingly, it is easy to be spread. Secondly, Confucius has not only a worldwide reputation but also a high ideological status. Thus Confucius is the appropriate character, well coincides with the purpose of spreading Chinese culture to the world (Kim & Cui 2014: 29). Thirdly, Confucius formed people-

oriented system of thought and culture, and this became the main character of Chinese people (Kim & Cui 2014: 29). Of course, the Confucian thought largely influenced the formation of Chinese culture as well. Fourthly, the middle path ideology of Confucius pursues harmony and stability, instead of struggle and revolution. As China needs to strengthen the political cohesiveness and to stabilise the order, the middle path ideology is the best choice for China (Kim & Cui 2014: 29). Lastly, by putting up Confucius at the front, the person who emphasised the duty and courtesy of humans, China can emphasise that the kind of diplomacy it pursues is not a supremacy or dominance (Kim & Cui 2014: 29). For these reasons, Confucius was chosen to be the symbol of China's soft power and cultural diplomacy, despite of its short history of mistreatment.

While the Beijing Olympic Games was a temporary effort of promoting Chinese culture, the Chinese government has also made a progress in promoting its culture in the long term. The Chinese Ministry of Education planned to establish an institution teaching Chinese language to foreigners abroad since 2002, cooperating with the Study Group for Teaching Chinese to Foreigners (Nogayeva 2015: 595). The institution is called Confucius Institute,

and the first Confucius Institute was established in Seoul, South Korea, in November 2004.

Education is regarded as a common tool of public diplomacy (Kwan 2013: 111). Language expresses national ideology, and language is an effective means of understanding culture. Moreover, language forms bond of sympathy between members of society, and it enables assimilation in terms of politics and culture with foreign countries (Kim & Cui 2014: 31). Thus, developed countries have been teaching their languages to foreigners and disseminating their culture. China, through expanding Confucius Institute, has been achieving its ambition of making Chinese language as the world's standard language or of establishing China standard (Byun 2011b: 17).

Additionally, based on the macroscopic viewpoint, there are five reasons why Chinese government has been promoting Confucius Institute. First, the importance of diplomatic relations and the strong interests that China has in different areas are reflected in the distribution pattern of the Institute. The area where many Confucius Institutes are located indicates that China has many interest in that area and China hopes to build a favourable relationship. Second, China is to articulate Chinese identity and to brand it in the world

through developing the Institute. Thus, Confucius Institute provides language courses and cultural experience opportunities. Third, China aims to promote positive image. Fourth, Confucius Institute can facilitate business activities, by promoting trade and foreign direct investment, for instance (Zhou & Luk 2016: 636). Fifth, the establishment of the Institute is encouraged as a means of promoting One China policy (Zhou & Luk 2016: 637). However from the micro-level perspective, the limitation of Confucius Institute is revealed. As the Institute is necessarily operated based on the use of hard power, such as financial support and various resources, the inclusion of payment, inducements and bribes, this goes against the nature of soft power (Zhou & Luk 2016: 639).

In sum, Confucius Institutes are considered as “important windows showing educational exchange and operation between China and the world” (Liu 2010: 3; Pan 2013: 29). Along with this, it is expected that “China will stick to the path of peaceful development and adopt the opening-door strategy for mutual-benefit in a win-win situation” (Liu 2010: 3; Pan 2013: 29). For last several years, many Confucius Institutes were established all over the world. The Institutes have been teaching Chinese language and promoting

Chinese culture to foreigners. China has been proud of itself expanding its soft power at such a rapid pace. However, some Confucius Institutes have been closed down for the last few years. Confucius Institute has been criticised as being a Trojan horse. In the next section, the management method and the current state of Confucius Institute all over the world, especially focusing on the ones in South Korea, will be introduced.

### **III. Confucius Institute**

#### **1. Benchmarked Institutions**

It seems that the Chinese government benchmarked cultural institutions of Western countries. Alliance Française of France and Goethe-Institut of Germany are representative cultural promotion institutions in the world. France and Germany have long experiences in promoting their languages and culture in general, but they do not operate their cultural institutions at higher educational institutions, while many Confucius Institutes cooperate with and operate at universities. By looking at the history, current status and management method in brief, it would be able to discover the parts what Confucius Institute have imitated.

##### **1-1. *France – Alliance Française***

France is the first country among Western countries who began to implement cultural diplomacy. In 1883, some people with sense of duty made a suggestion about combining France and diverse ethnic groups all over the

world (AF Corée n.d.). Then Alliance Française (hereafter AF) was established in order to introduce French language in more educational way and to make French language more beloved language by many people. There are more than 900 AFs in 136 countries, and approximately 500,000 students are enrolled in AF (AF Corée n.d.). The three main missions of AF are: (1) to offer French language course to all in France and throughout the world; (2) to introduce a broad range of culture of France and Francophone countries; and (3) to inspire cultural diversity which grants precious values in every culture (AF Corée n.d.).

France has been aware of its cultural superiority, while it has adhered to cultural independence within globalisation. Moreover, it has continuously emphasised the cultural role of France towards international society. France and China, from the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, have implemented cultural exchange programme, and it has influenced future political leaders. For instance, Deng Xiaoping, in his early years, was the beneficiary of “Diligent Work – Frugal Study Movement” programme which was carried out between France and China in the early 1900s (Pan *et al.* 2011: 104). Later, when he became the paramount leader of the PRC, he led the economic

reform. As France being the front-runner of government level cultural diplomacy, China has learnt diverse cultural diplomacy experiences from France.

## **1-2.           *Germany – Goethe-Institut***

Goethe-Institut (hereafter GI) is a cultural institution of the Federal Republic of Germany. GI has acted as the first window to people who find Germany for more than six decades (GI Korea n.d.). GI basically provides information regarding to German culture, society, and political situations. It widely spreads knowledge on German language overseas, and it presents a comprehensive German view in order to promote international cultural cooperation undertaking (GI Korea n.d.). The culture-education program of GI has promoted communication between diverse cultures and has enabled cultural exchange (GI Korea n.d.). Furthermore, it has established continuous trust about Germany through smooth cooperation with renowned institutions and public figures in more than 90 countries (GI Korea n.d.).

Interestingly, GI is a “stand-alone institute” abroad (Hartig 2015a: 2) which means that GI has an autonomy in terms of implementing cultural

projects. It is one of the most important intermediaries between Federal Foreign Office and Federal Agencies and Offices (Park 2010: 111), and the intermediaries including GI can independently establish and implement programs within guidelines stipulated by the Federal Government (Park 2010: 116). Later, GI and Confucius Institute decided to carry out exchanges and cooperation, with respect to training teachers, compiling teaching materials together and maintaining high-quality language materials, on a regular basis (Hanban 2010). As the first GI was established five decades earlier than Confucius Institute, GI has more experience, thus it can provide useful information to Confucius Institute in terms of managing the institution.

**Table 1.** Comparison between AF and GI

<i>Cultural Institute</i>	<b>Alliance Française</b>	<b>Goethe-Institut</b>
<i>Country of Origin</i>	France	Germany
<i>Created Year</i>	1883	1951
<i>First Established Location</i>	Paris, France	Bad Reichenhall, Germany
<i>Headquarter</i>	AF Paris Ile de France	GI Head Office in Munich
<i>Operating System</i>	Franchise	Stand-alone institute

## **2. Management Method**

Like AF, Confucius Institute has asserted offering Chinese language course to all, and introducing a broad range of Chinese culture. Additionally, Confucius Institute has learnt from GI how to manage cultural institutions. But unlike AF, Confucius Institute did not inspire cultural diversity, and unlike GI, Confucius Institute is organised as joint ventures between Chinese and international partners. This implies that Confucius Institute gets funding partially from the Chinese government. The management department of Confucius Institute is Council of Confucius Institute Headquarters, and this Council is directly controlled by Hanban. Hanban is under Chinese Ministry of Education, and it directs public relations, dissemination, and administration of Chinese language and culture overseas (Kang, Kim & Chi 2012: 423). The Headquarter of Confucius Institute is located in Beijing and it is officially established in April, 2007 (Kang *et al.* 2012: 424).

All Confucius Institutes located overseas are established as branch offices, and they are managed and guided by the Headquarter. Yet each Confucius Institute should establish a Board of Directors, consisting of members from both Chinese and overseas partners (Hanban 2014b). The Board

of Directors should be responsible for assessing and approving the development plans, annual plans, annual reports, project implementation schemes, budget proposals, and final financial accounts of Confucius Institute (Hanban 2014b). Additionally, the Board should be well aware of Chinese current national issues as well as local conditions, and the Board also should have ability in promoting public affiliation and market potential (Hanban 2014b). Moreover, an individual Confucius Institute should report its plans for annual projects, budget proposals, as well as working schedules to the Headquarter for examination and approval (Hanban 2014b). Each Confucius Institute, especially with regard to final financial summary, should submit it to the Headquarter before January 15<sup>th</sup> of the following year, and should pay special attention to numbers and statistics (Hanban 2014c).

An individual Confucius Institute cannot make a decision by itself, but it should get a confirmation from Hanban. The decision-making process indicates that Hanban has a high status and a great authority. Its main duty can be arranged in six categories (Kang *et al.* 2012: 423).

1. Hanban establishes the course of dissemination and the program of policy and development. It also supports Chinese language education in

diverse educational institutions.

2. Hanban establishes Confucius Institute all over the world, and it legislates and evaluates overseas Chinese language education.

3. Hanban develops and supplies Chinese language textbooks for foreigners.

4. Hanban sets criteria for qualified Chinese language teachers and trains them. It also selects teachers and applicants, and assigns them.

5. Hanban carries out Chinese language ability certification targeting foreigners.

6. Hanban sets establishment criteria for making overseas Chinese language education network, and provides information which constructs network platform.

But the interesting point in the management of Confucius Institute is that the foreign institutes which requested the foundation of Confucius Institute become the main agent, while the Chinese side actively cooperates (Kang *et al.* 2012: 427). Confucius Institute takes external cooperation, being provided

educational infrastructure, such as land and building (Kang *et al.* 2012: 427). The flexible and localised means have enabled the rapid expansion of Confucius Institute.

The use of funds is also flexible, as long as it is used in educational purpose. Income drawn from operation should be used for teaching activities and in improving teaching and service conditions (Hanban 2014b). The accumulated income should be used for sustainable development of Confucius Institute, and it may not be used for other purposes (Hanban 2014b). Interestingly, the budget of Hanban is not subordinated to the Ministry of Education. It is discovered that the budget is consisted of the financial aid from Chinese Ministry of Finance as well as the earnings from affiliated business departments, and about 30% of total budget is used to support Confucius Institute (Kang *et al.* 2012: 428). During the early stage of establishment, Hanban provides more funds, but later, Hanban and the foreign cooperation institute make the payment at a one-to-one ratio (Hanban 2014c). Since the operation becomes stable, the foreign cooperation institute increases its investment ratio. In managing Confucius Institute in developed countries, Hanban sets the foreign investment ratio at 60% to 70% (Kang *et al.* 2012:

428).

The extent of Confucius Institute is not limited to physical space anymore, but it has been utilising diverse media channels. For example, the Headquarter invested a large amount of money in opening official websites, and the online website provides translated page in 46 languages, including English, Korean, French, Japanese and Russian (Kang *et al.* 2012: 425). Moreover, Confucius Institute has been expanding its extent to radio broadcasting and television broadcast. In December 2007, the first radio Confucius Institute was established in China, and after a year, television Confucius Institute was established (Kang *et al.* 2012: 425). Both AF and GI provide online language courses, because there must be people who are interested in learning foreign language, but physically not accessible or under time constraints. Therefore, cultural institutions should provide virtual space for learning language. If Confucius Institute kept staying within physical space, it would have lost popularity.

### **3. Current Situation**

China has been establishing Confucius Institute in foreign countries, all

over the world, and this has become China's main effort in promoting its soft power. China benchmarked the foreign cultural institutions above. Confucius Institute is not a profit-making institution (Hanban 2014b), but it has seven main functions, introduced by Hanban (2014a).

1. To make development plans and set down establishment and evaluation criterion for Confucius Institutes.
2. To examine, approve and establish Confucius Institutes.
3. To examine and approve annual project proposals, budgets and financial statements of Confucius Institutes worldwide.
4. To guide and evaluate the teaching activities and to control the quality of the operation of Confucius Institutes.
5. To provide Confucius Institutes around the world with the support and services of teaching resources.
6. To select and dispatch Chinese directors and teaching staff to Confucius Institutes, to offer training programs for the management teams and teachers of Confucius Institutes.
7. To organise annual Confucius Institute conferences.

The first Confucius Institute was established in Seoul, South Korea, in 2004. For five years since 2004, 396 Confucius Institutes were founded in 87 countries and regions (Cho 2010: 52). By the end of 2014, it was discovered that there were around 500 Confucius Institutes in more than 120 countries and regions (Zhou & Luk 2016: 631). Within a decade, 500 Confucius Institutes were established and this could be interpreted as a huge success of Confucius Institute.

While about a thousand of AIs were established in 137 countries for 120 years, and while more than a hundred GIs were established in 83 countries in 50 years, the speed of establishing Confucius Institute is very rapid (Kang *et al.* 2012: 424). By the end of December 2017, there were 511 Confucius Institutes in total: 115 in Asia, 48 in Africa, 170 in America, 160 in Europe, and 18 in Oceania (Hanban n.d.). Additionally, on April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2018, there held a grand plaque unveiling ceremony at University of Macau, celebrating the establishment of a new Confucius Institute, and this is the most recently established Institute (Hanban 2018b).

**Table 2.** Number of Confucius Institutes (December 2017)

<i>Continent</i>	<b>Asia</b>	<b>Africa</b>	<b>America</b>	<b>Europe</b>	<b>Oceania</b>
<i>Number</i>	115	48	170	160	18
<i>Country</i>	<b>South Korea</b>	<b>South Africa</b>	<b>United States</b>	<b>United Kingdom</b>	<b>Australia</b>
<i>Number</i>	23	5	110	29	14

In America, the United States has the most Confucius Institutes. It accounts about 65% of Confucius Institutes on the American Continent, and accounts about 20% of total Confucius Institutes located all over the world. The United Kingdom has the second most Confucius Institutes in the world. On the Asian Continent, South Korea has the most Confucius Institutes. It constitutes 20% of Confucius Institutes in Asia, while it accounts for approximately 4.5% of total Confucius Institutes. The numerical value is not so big, but in relation to the size of the country, Confucius Institutes are concentrated in South Korea.

According to the number of Confucius Institutes in each country, it is able to discover that on which country China has been concentrating its effort in spreading soft power. If China is not interested in a certain country, or if it is not willing to improve the relationship with the country, China would not

have to establish Confucius Institute by investing time and cost.

**Table 3.** Confucius Institutes in South Korea

<i>Institution Name</i>	<b>City</b>	<b>Start Running</b>
<i>Confucius Institute in Seoul</i>	Seoul	2004.11.24
<i>Confucius Institute at Chungbuk National Univ.</i>	Cheongju	2006.09.28
<i>Confucius Institute of Dong-A Univ.</i>	Busan	2006.11.20
<i>Confucius Institute at Honam Univ.</i>	Gwangju	2006.12.19
<i>Confucius Institute at Dongseo Univ.</i>	Busan	2007.04.03
<i>Confucius Institute at Kangwon National Univ.</i>	Chuncheon	2007.04.24
<i>Confucius Institute at Chungnam National Univ.</i>	Daejeon	2007.04.26
<i>Confucius Institute at Woosong Univ.</i>	Daejeon	2007.04.30
<i>Confucius Institute at Keimyung Univ.</i>	Daegu	2007.09.01
<i>Confucius Institute at Soon Chun Hyang Univ.</i>	Asan	2007.09.28
<i>Confucius Institute at Daebul Univ.</i>	Mokpo	2007.11.14
<i>Confucius Institute at Daejin Univ.</i>	Pocheon	2008.03.01
<i>Confucius Institute at Woosuk Univ.</i>	Chonju	2009.02.01
<i>Confucius Institute at Cheju Halla College</i>	Jeju	2009.04.04

<i>Confucius Institute at the Univ. of Incheon</i>	Incheon	2009.08.28
<i>Confucius Institute at Hankuk Univ. of Foreign Studies</i>	Seoul	2009.10.31
<i>Confucius Institute at Kyung Hee Univ.</i>	Yongin	2011.04.06
<i>Confucius Institute at Andong National Univ.</i>	Andong	2012.09.20
<i>Confucius Institute at Yonsei Univ.</i>	Seoul	2013.09
<i>Confucius Institute at Wonkwang Univ.</i>	Iksan	2014.09.24
<i>Confucius Institute at Semyung Univ.</i>	Jecheon	2015.03.18
<i>Confucius Institute at Hanyang Univ.</i>	Seoul	2015.11
<i>Business Confucius Institute at Jeju National Univ.</i>	Jeju	2017.03.24

The table above shows the name of Confucius Institutes in South Korea, the location, and the day they started. According to the table, it is evident that private universities with weak financial foundation located outside Seoul tended to host Confucius Institutes in the beginning (Lee 2011: 139). But recently, well-known universities in Seoul and near the capital city have taken action to establish Confucius Institutes. This is to use Confucius Institute in promoting their universities, in attracting more students, and in attracting surrounding area residents to their schools (Lee 2011: 139). It is interesting that almost half of the total Confucius Institutes in Korea is located in smaller

cities.

The newest Confucius Institute in South Korea is established in Jeju. There are two Confucius Institutes in Jeju, while there are four Institutes in Seoul. When comparing the population of Jeju and Seoul, the number of Confucius Institute in Seoul is unduly few. There are two Institutes in Busan, which is the second largest city in South Korea, and also two in Daejeon. There is one Confucius Institute in Daegu, in Incheon and in Gwangju each. Seoul, Jeju, Busan, Daejeon, Daegu, Incheon and Gwangju are large cities in Korea. In sum, there are 13 Confucius Institutes in big cities, and the rest of Institutes are located in smaller cities.

The most recently established Confucius Institute in Jeju is the only Business Confucius Institute in South Korea. Jeju is the most appropriate location to establish Business Confucius Institute, because there have been many Chinese tourists and businesses flowing into Jeju Island over the past several years. But the huge influx of China money has been interrupted due to political issues between China and South Korea. Nevertheless, the residents in Jeju still have high opportunity of being engaged in a business associated with China, and the relationship with China will be improved some time. Thus,

it is highly suggested to prepare for prospective business with China.

It is said that Business Confucius Institute provides more practical education. The Confucius Institute provides Chinese business lectures and consultations in order to enhance the in-depth knowledge of students in economic field, and to help finding a job (H.S. Lee 2017). Moreover, the Institute educates students to become experts in economy, trade, tourism, and commerce. Linked with the Department of Chinese Language and Literature at Jeju National University, the Institute provides scholarship to students who are willing to get a master's degree or a doctor's degree in Chinese studies (H.S. Lee 2017). Business Confucius Institute not only ensures heightening students' knowledge on Chinese business, but also guarantees students' future career.

It can be argued that both China and South Korea are eager to be connected in terms of culture and education. The table above shows that 15 Confucius Institutes were established between 2006 and 2009. Within four years of time, it can be explained that the relationship between China and South Korea was very cordial. In addition to this, it is discovered that each university promoted the establishment of Confucius Institute by cooperating

with sister schools in China especially in 2006 and in 2007 (Kim & Cui 2014: 34). By collaborating with sister schools in China, both sides of universities can be benefited, in terms of attracting more international students and providing higher quality education. It may contribute to vitalising local economy as well, since the sister schools are mostly located outside big cities in China.

Apparently, the establishment of Confucius Institute is beneficial for both hosting countries and China. It is clear that the operation of Confucius Institute is economically beneficial. Confucius Institutes are devoted to deepening friendly relationships with other countries, by promoting the development of multi-culturalism and constructing a harmonious world (Lahtinen 2015: 211). In sum, Confucius Institutes are connected to the global engagement and internationalisation of China as the platform for collaboration and exchange projecting its soft power (Lahtinen 2015: 211).

## **IV. Survey Result Analysis**

### **1. Level of Awareness and Reason of Not Choosing Confucius Institute**

An online questionnaire was randomly distributed through social networking services to Korean people who have an experience in studying Chinese. Hard copies of questionnaire were also specifically distributed to Korean people who have studied at Confucius Institute. 308 people without distinction of sex or age responded to the survey. Among 308 respondents, it is found out that 215 people have experience in studying Chinese language, but have no experience in studying at Confucius Institute.

One of the questions asked to those respondents without experience at Confucius Institute was whether they know the existence of Confucius Institute. Almost half of them responded that they are not aware of Confucius Institute, while 109 respondents answered that they are aware of Confucius Institute. By this result, it can be said that Confucius Institute has not been well-promoted, as 106 respondents did not know the existence of Confucius Institute even though they have learnt Chinese language.

Then the 109 respondents were asked that why they did not choose to study at Confucius Institute even though they are aware of its existence. Several options were provided and the respondents were allowed to pick more than one option. The most popular response was that they did not choose to study at Confucius Institute because there was not enough information about Confucius Institute. Next, as the respondents had low accessibility to Confucius Institute, they did not choose to study there.

Additionally, about 20% of respondents answered that they thought private language institute would be better than Confucius Institute, and 18 respondents preferred studying alone. 14 respondents considered the language curriculum at school was enough, and 15 respondents was not aware of the curriculum at Confucius Institute, and this is possibly due to lack of promotion. Six respondents thought online courses would be better than the curriculum at Confucius Institute, and another six respondents considered that Confucius Institute lacked credibility. Five respondents felt the tuition fee was expensive, and few people answered that they simply did not have an opportunity to study at Confucius Institute.

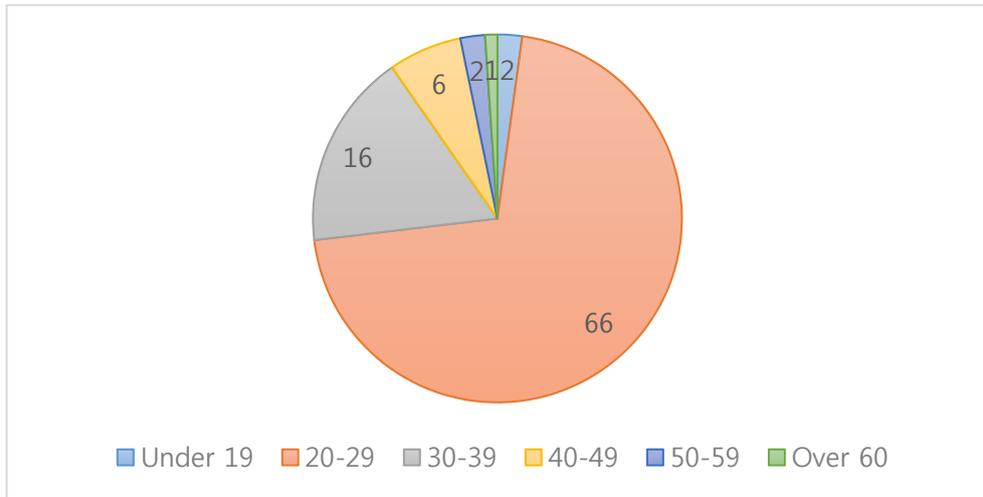
To sum up, it seems clear that Confucius Institute has not been actively

promoting itself. When considering the behaviour of foreign language learners, it is natural for them to look for a way to learn and a place to learn. But the fact that a large number of Chinese language learners is not aware of Confucius Institute indicates Confucius Institute lacks promotion. This also means that non-Chinese language learners would have no idea of what Confucius Institute is. Even though Chinese government has focused on Confucius Institute as means of promoting its soft power, it can be said that the extent of influence has been very limited.

## **2. Route and Reason of Choosing Confucius Institute**

Among 308 respondents, it is discovered that 93 people, about 30.2% of the whole respondents, have experience in studying Chinese language at Confucius Institute. Among 93 people who have studied at Confucius Institute, two people are aged under 19, 66 people are aged between 20 and 29, six people are aged between 30 and 39, five people are aged between 40 and 49, two people are aged between 50 and 59, and only one person is aged over 60. It is discovered that Confucius Institute has been most popular to people aged between 20 and 29, while it is less popular to older people (Figure 1).

**Figure 1. Age Distribution**



39 respondents got to know Confucius Institute through the promotion by hosting schools. This can explain the high proportion of people aged between 20 and 29. It is reasonable to think the people who can access to the promotion by hosting schools should be university students, and to think that university students are mostly in their twenties. In addition to this, 19 respondents got to know Confucius Institute by searching on the internet, and the same number of respondents answered that they knew Confucius Institute by the recommendation of acquaintances. Moreover, it is discovered that 10 respondents chose to study at Confucius Institute by seeing the promotion by

Confucius Institute itself. It is relatively a small number compared to the other routes, and this again proves the inactive publicity activities of Confucius Institute. However, it can be said that it is beneficial to Confucius Institute, because the Institute does not have to eager for self-promotion, as cooperating institutions do promotion on behalf of Confucius Institute.

**Table 4.** Survey Respondents with Experience at Confucius Institute

<i>No.</i>	<b>Response#</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Confucius Institute</b>	<b>Private Inst.</b>
<i>1</i>	1	20-29	Keimyung Univ.	Y
<i>2</i>	2	20-29	Yonsei Univ.	N
<i>3</i>	3	20-29	Dong-A Univ.	Y
<i>4</i>	4	20-29	Wonkwang Univ.	Y
<i>5</i>	13	20-29	Yonsei Univ.	N
<i>6</i>	16	20-29	(not specified)	N
<i>7</i>	22	20-29	Dongseo Univ.	Y
<i>8</i>	23	20-29	Kyung Hee Univ.	N
<i>9</i>	24	30-39	(not specified)	N

<b>10</b>	27	30-39	(not specified)	Y
<b>11</b>	30	20-29	In Korea (not specified)	N
<b>12</b>	39	20-29	In Daegu (not specified)	Y
<b>13</b>	64	20-29	In Daegu (not specified)	Y
<b>14</b>	66	20-29	(not specified)	Y
<b>15</b>	67	20-29	Chungbuk National Univ.	Y
<b>16</b>	73	20-29	(not specified)	N
<b>17</b>	74	20-29	(not specified)	N
<b>18</b>	95	20-29	Hankuk Univ. of Foreign Studies	Y
<b>19</b>	96	30-39	Confucius Institute in Seoul	Y
<b>20</b>	101	40-49	Jeju National Univ.	Y
<b>21</b>	104	20-29	Hankuk Univ. of Foreign Studies	N
<b>22</b>	114	20-29	Confucius Institute in Seoul	Y
<b>23</b>	128	20-29	In Seoul (not specified)	N
<b>24</b>	130	20-29	Confucius Institute in Seoul	N
<b>25</b>	132	20-29	Confucius Institute in Seoul	Y
<b>26</b>	139	Under19	In Busan (not specified)	Y

27	144	20-29	The Univ. of Incheon	Y
28	170	30-39	In Korea (not specified)	Y
29	173	20-29	Kyung Hee Univ.	Y
30	182	20-29	Confucius Institute in Seoul	N
31	183	20-29	Wonkwang Univ.	Y
32	193	Under19	Confucius Institute in Seoul	Y
33	201	20-29	Honam Univ.	Y
34	225	30-39	In Seoul (not specified)	Y
35	226	20-29	Hankuk Univ. of Foreign Studies	Y
36	248	20-29	Yonsei Univ.	Y
37	252	20-29	Hankuk Univ. of Foreign Studies	N
38	253	20-29	Hankuk Univ. of Foreign Studies	N
39	254	20-29	Hankuk Univ. of Foreign Studies	N
40	255	20-29	Hankuk Univ. of Foreign Studies	Y
41	256	40-49	Hankuk Univ. of Foreign Studies	N
42	257	30-39	In Korea (not specified)	Y
43	258	20-29	Yonsei Univ.	Y

<b>44</b>	259	30-39	In Seoul (not specified)	Y
<b>45</b>	260	20-29	Yonsei Univ.	Y
<b>46</b>	261	20-29	Hankuk Univ. of Foreign Studies	N
<b>47</b>	262	20-29	Hankuk Univ. of Foreign Studies	N
<b>48</b>	263	50-59	In Seoul (not specified)	Y
<b>49</b>	264	20-29	Yonsei Univ.	N
<b>50</b>	265	20-29	Hankuk Univ. of Foreign Studies	N
<b>51</b>	266	20-29	Yonsei Univ.	N
<b>52</b>	267	30-39	Hanyang Univ.	N
<b>53</b>	268	30-39	Hanyang Univ.	Y
<b>54</b>	269	20-29	Hanyang Univ.	Y
<b>55</b>	270	20-29	Confucius Institute in Seoul	Y
<b>56</b>	271	30-39	Hanyang Univ.	Y
<b>57</b>	272	20-29	Hanyang Univ.	N
<b>58</b>	273	20-29	Hankuk Univ. of Foreign Studies	N
<b>59</b>	274	30-39	Hanyang Univ.	Y
<b>60</b>	275	20-29	Hanyang Univ.	Y

<b>61</b>	276	20-29	Hankuk Univ. of Foreign Studies	Y
<b>62</b>	277	20-29	In Seoul (not specified)	Y
<b>63</b>	278	20-29	Confucius Institute in Seoul	N
<b>64</b>	279	20-29	Yonsei Univ.	Y
<b>65</b>	280	30-39	Yonsei Univ.	N
<b>66</b>	281	40-49	Hankuk Univ. of Foreign Studies	Y
<b>67</b>	282	20-29	Hankuk Univ. of Foreign Studies	N
<b>68</b>	283	20-29	Hankuk Univ. of Foreign Studies	N
<b>69</b>	284	40-49	Yonsei Univ.	N
<b>70</b>	285	Over 60	Hanyang Univ.	Y
<b>71</b>	286	20-29	Hankuk Univ. of Foreign Studies	Y
<b>72</b>	offline	40-49	In Seoul (not specified)	N
<b>73</b>	offline	20-29	In Seoul (not specified)	N
<b>74</b>	offline	30-39	Yonsei Univ.	N
<b>75</b>	offline	40-49	Yonsei Univ.	N
<b>76</b>	offline	30-39	In Korea (not specified)	Y
<b>77</b>	offline	20-29	In Seoul (not specified)	Y

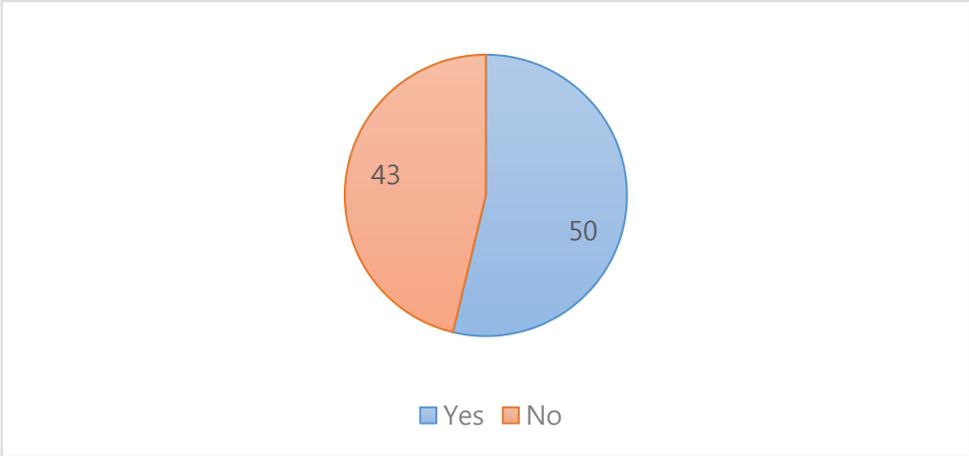
<b>78</b>	offline	30-39	In Seoul (not specified)	N
<b>79</b>	offline	30-39	Yonsei Univ.	N
<b>80</b>	offline	20-29	Yonsei Univ.	N
<b>81</b>	offline	50-59	Jeju National Univ.	Y
<b>82</b>	offline	20-29	Jeju National Univ.	N
<b>83</b>	offline	20-29	Jeju National Univ.	Y
<b>84</b>	offline	20-29	Jeju National Univ.	Y
<b>85</b>	offline	20-29	Jeju National Univ.	N
<b>86</b>	offline	20-29	Jeju National Univ.	Y
<b>87</b>	offline	20-29	Jeju National Univ.	N
<b>88</b>	offline	20-29	Jeju National Univ.	N
<b>89</b>	offline	20-29	Jeju National Univ.	N
<b>90</b>	offline	20-29	Jeju National Univ.	Y
<b>91</b>	offline	20-29	Jeju National Univ.	N
<b>92</b>	offline	20-29	Jeju National Univ.	N
<b>93</b>	offline	20-29	Jeju National Univ.	Y

One multiple-choice question was asked why the 93 respondents decided to study at Confucius Institute instead of private language institute. It is discovered that the cheap tuition fee was the most attractive factor for the respondents when choosing to study at Confucius Institute. Along with this, various expectations on Confucius Institute were applied to their decision. Many respondents expected that the education quality of Confucius Institute would be good, and that they could get information about studying abroad in China. Along with this, there were 22 respondents who expected Confucius Institute to be credible and reliable. Moreover, it is also found out that 11 respondents were affected by the recommendation of their acquaintances, and nine respondents expected diverse cultural experiences at Confucius Institute. Furthermore, few respondents had no choice but to study at Confucius Institute in order to receive financial benefits or to win scholarship. In fact, about 20,000 scholarships are offered to foreign students annually by the China Scholarship Council (Shambaugh 2015: 104).

### **3. Experience at Private Language Institute and Comparison with Confucius Institute**

While private language institute is a profit-making organisation, Confucius Institute is a non-profit educational institution (Hanban 2014b). Among 93 respondents who studied Chinese language at Confucius Institute, 50 respondents also had experience of studying Chinese language at private language institute (Figure 2).

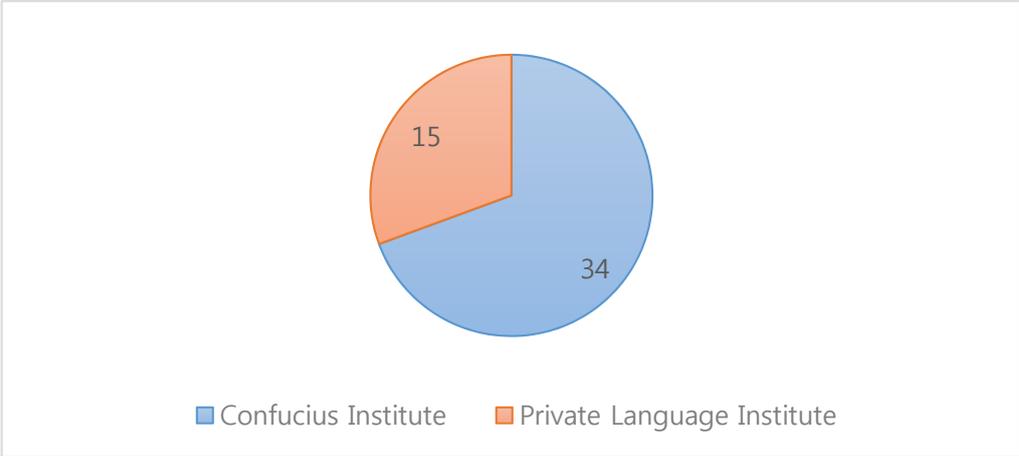
**Figure 2.** Learning Experience at Private Language Institute



The 50 respondents were asked whether they had more positive experience in general, but one person did not respond to the question. 34 respondents answered that they had more positive experience at Confucius

Institute, while the other 15 respondents thought that they had more positive experience at private institute (Figure 3). This reveals that Confucius Institute has been quite successful in providing positive experience to its students, but it is not indicated that what aspect of Confucius Institute made the respondents to think they had positive experience.

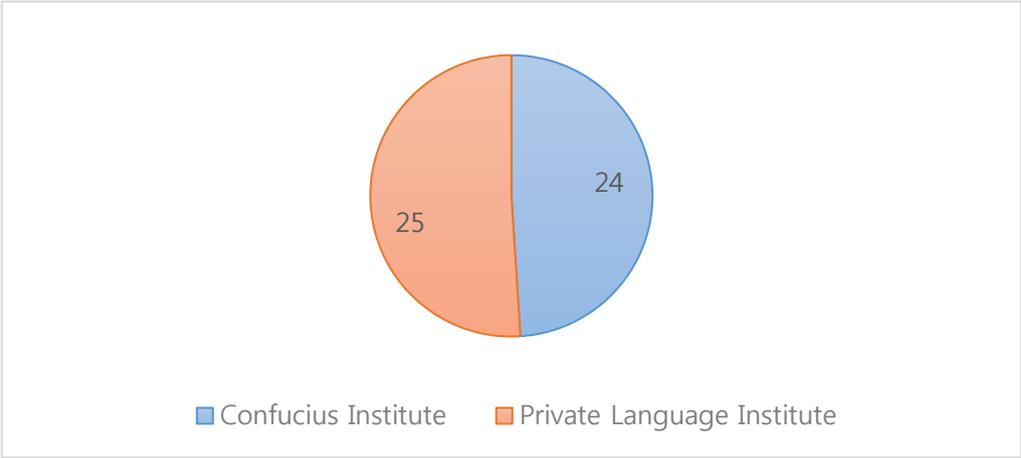
**Figure 3.** More Positive Experience in General



However, even though Confucius Institute provided quite positive experience to some of its students, a bit more than half of its students considered private institute was more effective than Confucius Institute in

teaching Chinese language. Thus 24 respondents found Confucius Institute was better teaching Chinese language compared to private institute (Figure 4). This result reveals that the teaching skills of Confucius Institute need to be improved, in order to compete with a lot of private language institutes within a perfect competitive market of South Korea. As there are hundreds of private institutes teaching Chinese language, they compete and fall out among themselves. The private language institutes do not be frugal with spending money, by investing in recruiting skilful teachers and in promoting, in order to attract more and more students.

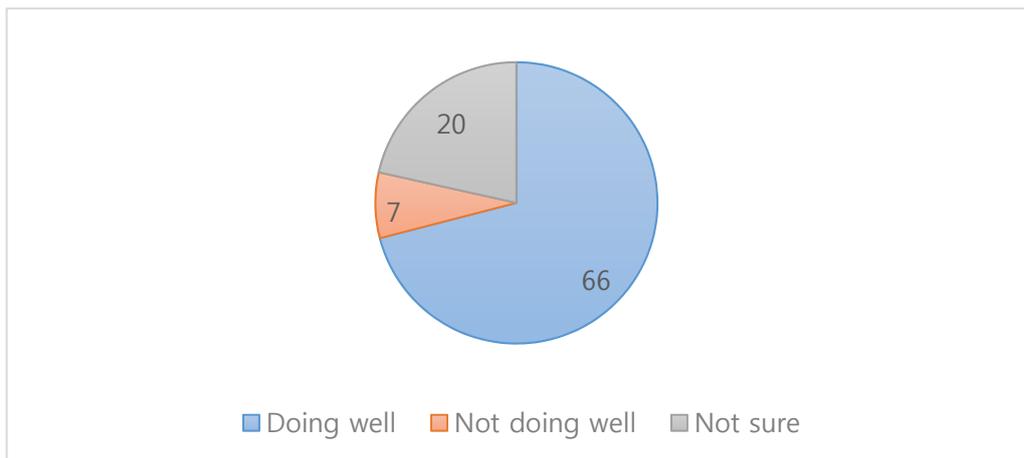
**Figure 4.** More Effective in Teaching Chinese Language



#### 4. Influence of Confucius Institute on China

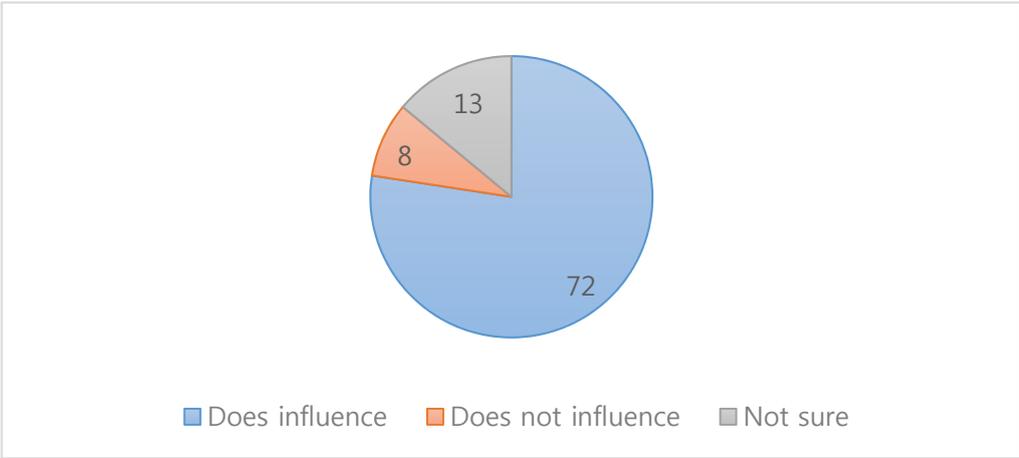
In the similar context, when the 93 respondents were asked whether Confucius Institute is doing well in terms of spreading Chinese language, seven respondents said Confucius Institute was not doing well, while 20 respondents said they were not sure. Additionally, 66 respondents answered that Confucius Institute is doing well in spreading Chinese language. That is, about 71% of the respondents regarded Confucius Institute as an effective institute spreading Chinese language (Figure 5).

**Figure 5.** Capability of Confucius Institute in Spreading Chinese Language



In addition to this, 72 respondents did think that Confucius Institute exerts a strong influence on the formation of China's national image. On the other hand, eight respondents thought the formation of national image is not affected by Confucius Institute (Figure 6). However, the important point is that it is not certain whether positive national image or negative national image is formed by Confucius Institute.

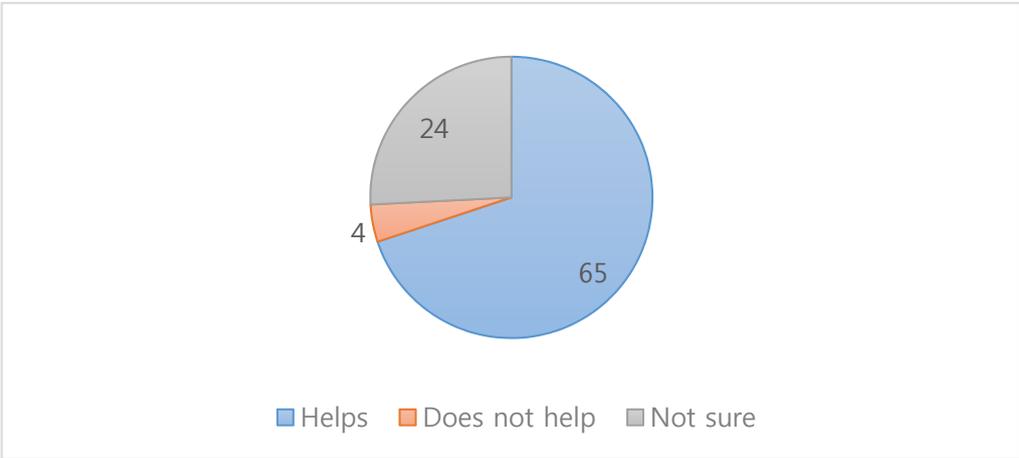
**Figure 6.** Influence of Confucius Institute on China's National Image



Furthermore, 65 respondents answered that Confucius Institute helps enhancing China's soft power, while four respondents did not agree. 24

respondents were doubtful whether Confucius Institute helps enhancing China's soft power or not (Figure 7). By these results, it is proved that Confucius Institute does give influence on the formation of China's national image, regardless of positivity or negativity. But at the same time, it is proved that Confucius Institute does enhance China's soft power.

**Figure 7.** Capability of Confucius Institute in Enhancing China's Soft Power

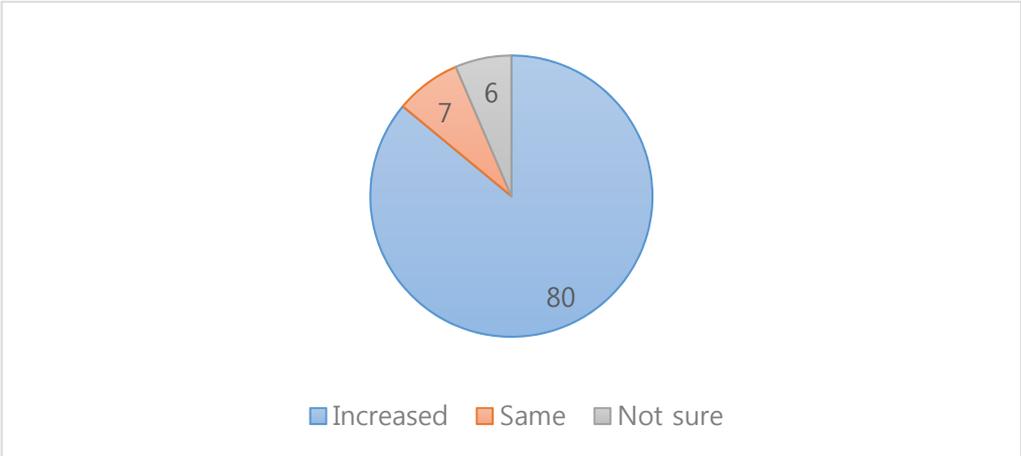


**5. Influence of Confucius Institute on Individual**

Positive response was dominant with regard to the level of understanding in Chinese language. 80 respondents said their understanding in Chinese

language improved after studying at Confucius Institute. Still, seven respondents said their understanding maintained the same even after studying Chinese language at Confucius Institute, while six respondents were not sure if there was any change in their understanding before and after (Figure 8). As the result shows, it can be interpreted that Confucius Institute has been devoted to its role of teaching and spreading Chinese language to foreigners, at least in South Korea, in spite of doubt about teaching skills.

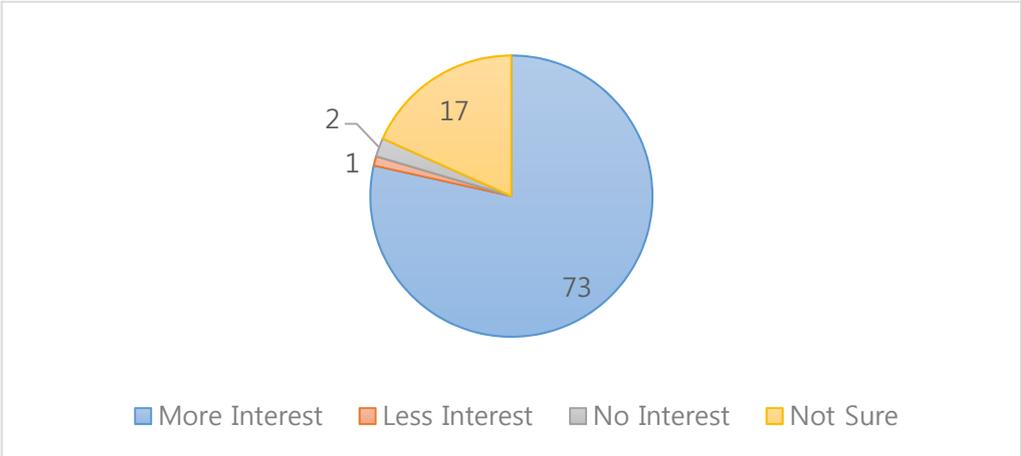
**Figure 8.** Change in the Level of Chinese Language Understanding



Regarding to the change in the level of interest towards China,

approximately 80% of 93 respondents said the level of interest increased, while another single respondent answered the interest rather decreased. Interestingly, as many as 17 respondents answered they were not sure about it. This can be interpreted as learning Chinese language does not directly mean that the learners are interested in China. In addition to this, two respondents said they have no interest towards China even after taking a course at Confucius Institute (Figure 9).

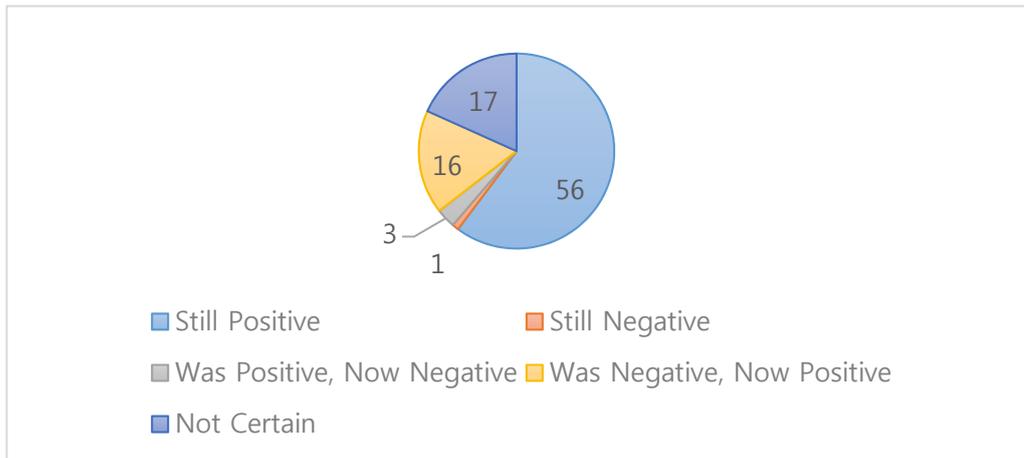
**Figure 9.** Change in the Level of Interest towards China



Regarding to the change in the perspective on China, more than half of

the respondents said their point of view is still positive after taking a course at Confucius Institute. 16 respondents answered that their perspective on China was negative before, but positively changed after going to Confucius Institute. In this respect, it can be said that Confucius Institute is persuasive in terms of promoting positive national image. However, few respondents were favourable to China before, but negatively changed after their experience at Confucius Institute. One respondent maintained his or her negative perspective towards China before and after. The other 17 respondents were not certain (Figure 10). This result suggests that Confucius Institute needs to be improved in terms of managing the students' perspective on China. It is acceptable that the viewpoint remains the same, either positive or negative, but it is unacceptable that positive perspective turning into negative point of view. Even though it is a small number, it should not be overlooked because negativity tends to have greater ripple effect than positivity.

**Figure 10.** Change in the Perspective on China



## **6. Strengths and Weaknesses of Confucius Institute**

There was a variety of opinions on the most satisfactory part of Confucius Institute. The respondents were asked to choose only one response, and the most popular response was the cheap tuition fee. As many as 26 respondents chose the tuition fee as the most satisfactory factor. The students were also very satisfied with the teaching ability of the teachers at Confucius Institute that 25 respondents chose teaching ability as the most satisfactory part. It is also discovered that the students were able to have diverse cultural experiences at Confucius Institute. Along with the diverse cultural experiences, the students were satisfied with the curriculum as well.

Additionally, seven respondents regarded the management method as the most satisfactory factor, and two respondents answered that they could pass the Chinese language exam quickly by studying at Confucius Institute. However, regardless of several strong points, there were six respondents who answered that there was not a single strength.

In a similar context, diverse opinions on the limitations of Confucius Institute were discovered. The most popular response was that the respondents felt the management method of Confucius Institute is poor. For instance, some said that the managers at Confucius Institute are unkind and irresponsible. Although some students thought that they could have diverse cultural experiences at Confucius Institute, 21 respondents answered that they were not able to experience diverse Chinese culture. Next, many pointed out that the textbooks at Confucius Institute lack practicality. One student specifically mentioned that the textbooks being used are published more than 10 years ago. Thus it is impossible to learn some words which are made and frequently used these days.

Moreover, contrary to the positive response above, 11 students indicated that teachers lack teaching ability. One respondent explained that the teaching

ability differs from teacher to teacher, since the teachers are dispatched teachers, not professional ones. The respondent added that they do not teach intensely compared to the ones at private institute. He or she assumed that this is because Confucius Institute is not concerned with its sales. Furthermore, while seven respondents were dissatisfied with the education which is irrelevant to language exam such as HSK (Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi) Chinese Proficiency Test, five respondents answered that Confucius Institute too much focuses on language exam. Lastly, as Confucius Institute does not promote itself actively, and as it does not keep up to date with its online homepage, some respondents had difficulty finding information about the Institute.

The thoughts on Confucius Institute are found out to be very diverse, and there were opposite opinions even on the same aspect. According to Table 3, more than ten hosting universities are mentioned, and more than half of the respondents have experience at private institute. Depending on the experience of each individual, the thoughts and opinions must differ. In order to gather more in-depth opinions, 93 respondents were given an opportunity to make various responses freely in regard to what needs to be improved at Confucius Institute. Some respondents did not put any comment suggesting further

improvement.

It was able to sort into several categories. Firstly, there were comments on the courses of Confucius Institute. One respondent suggested to open more courses during the semester, as the time is restricted especially during the semester. It is also suggested to open more conversation courses in order to learn how to speak in Chinese language in diverse situations. Secondly, some pointed out the necessity of improving textbooks. The students thought the textbooks are not practical and cannot be applied to the situation of hosting country. As the textbooks are not made targeting the hosting country, the students felt unfamiliar.

Thirdly, there were several comments on promotion and online homepage. It is said that even students enrolled in Confucius Institute do not know whether Confucius Institute belongs to Chinese government. Thus, the online homepage should be properly administered and improved, as the online homepage is the main route to promotion. It is very important to promote appropriately, as many classes have been closed down due to insufficient number of students enrolled. One respondent even revealed deplorableness towards the obscurity of Confucius Institute as this respondent was very

satisfied with the experience at Confucius Institute, especially with the scholarship program. Fourthly, the poor management of Confucius Institute was pointed out. It is argued that Confucius Institute has complicated administrative procedures and the procedures are slow, thus it is suggested that the process should be systemised. The respondent also wanted Confucius Institute to be managed transparently.

Fifth, the low accessibility of Confucius Institute was indicated. As Confucius Institutes are located in few certain cities, it is argued that there is not enough opportunity for majority of people. Sixth, there were many comments on scholarship program of Confucius Institute. It is said that the managers at Confucius Institute focus on sending students to study abroad in China, but they are not concerned to do follow-up management. Along with this, another respondent sharply criticised that Confucius Institute in Seoul is still small in size, although it is the first established Confucius Institute in the world. It is said that the majority of students at Confucius Institute in Seoul is enrolled to satisfy scholarship standard, which means that the students are not truly interested in studying Chinese language at Confucius Institute but interested in financial aid. Thus most students must be temporary students.

Seventh, it is suggested that Confucius Institute should provide more information about studying in China, and provide more diverse cultural experience programs. Eighth, there were complaints about expensive tuition fee, less enthusiastic teachers, and test-unrelated curriculum. Lastly, one respondent left a critical comment. The respondent claimed that Confucius Institute teaches Chinese language superficially, but it is a place where cultivates pro-Chinese individuals internally.

It seemed that respondents who filled out the questionnaire online felt more comfortable with speaking out their honest thoughts on Confucius Institute. In fact, most respondents who filled out the questionnaire offline did not write down any further comment. They might have felt pressure of being watched and were concerned about the persons at Confucius Institute reading their comments.

## **V. Confucius Institute and Future of China's Soft Power**

### **1. Closure of Confucius Institute and the Rationale Behind**

For now, few Confucius Institutes were closed down. Seven hosting tertiary education institutions – McMaster University, the University of Sherbrooke, Toronto District School Board, the University of Lyon, the University of Chicago, Pennsylvania State University, and Stockholm University – cancelled their contracts with Confucius Institutes. The hosting schools decided to close down the Institutes, interestingly, not because of practical problems of the Institutes which are mentioned above, but because of political and ideological problems. As it has been assumed that Confucius Institutes are “propaganda arm of the CCP or are undermining the academic freedom of their host universities” all over the world (Hartig 2015a: 2-3). In the same context, China's activities of promoting soft power are described as “external propaganda” (Shambaugh 2015: 101). However, it is insisted that the term “propaganda” is not accepted critically in China, because CCP has been managing and controlling information inside and outside for several decades (Shambaugh 2015: 101). Although the annual budget for the external

propaganda is not opened to the public, it is estimated to be approximately \$10 billion every year, while the United States Department of State spent \$666 million on public diplomacy in fiscal year 2014 (Shambaugh 2015: 101).

According to the table below, three Confucius Institutes in Canada, two in the United States, and one in France and Sweden were closed. In 2014, it was planned to establish two Confucius Institutes in Germany, but before they were fully established, the plans foundered in June, 2015. Both Stuttgart Media University and the University of Hohenheim cancelled their plan due to pressures from activist groups (Han 2015). The countries where Confucius Institutes had been closed are all Western countries so far. It is expected that more and more Confucius Institutes which are located in Western countries will be gradually closed down, whereas Eastern countries, geographically close to China, would not close down Confucius Institute, because they would be afraid of China's political retaliation.

**Table 5.** Closure of Confucius Institutes

<i>Hosting Univ.</i>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Opening Year</b>	<b>Closure Date</b>
<i>McMaster Univ.</i>	Canada		2013.02.07
<i>Univ. of Lyon</i>	France	2009	2013.09.24
<i>Univ. of Sherbrooke</i>	Canada		2013.12.31
<i>Univ. of Chicago</i>	United States	2010	2014.09.25
<i>Pennsylvania State Univ.</i>	United States		2014.10.01
<i>Toronto District School Board</i>	Canada		2014.10.30
<i>Stockholm Univ.</i>	Sweden		2014.12.20
<i>Stuttgart Media Univ.</i>	Germany	Planned	Foundered
<i>Univ. of Hohenheim</i>	Germany	Planned	Foundered

McMaster University in Ontario, Canada closed its Confucius Institute in 2013 as a front-runner, since a teacher lodged a complaint arguing that McMaster University justified a discriminatory act against a certain activity. The teacher, due to the contract with the Confucius Institute, was prohibited to do spiritual practice at Falun Gong, which is a banned organisation in China (Wong 2017). As Falun Gong assumes an anti-qigong and anti-religious

character, Chinese government has defined Falun Gong as a pseudo religion and has oppressed its activity.

Particularly in the United States, there have been criticism of Confucius Institute even before 2010, and the criticism has been focused on two aspects. One aspect has been about academic freedom being threatened, and the other has been about Confucius Institute being a platform for propaganda to “win hearts and minds [of the American public] for political purposes” (Paradise 2009: 236; Lueck, Pippy & Lin 2014: 325). Thus, in the same context, more than 100 faculty members at the University of Chicago signed a petition that Confucius Institute endangers academic freedom, thus it must be closed down (Wong 2017). The University of Chicago stated that the decision of closing its Confucius Institute “is guided by its core values and faculty leadership in all matters of academic importance” (Martina & Wee 2014). Towards the decision, Hanban vice director Hu Zhiping stated the University made the decision “before ascertaining the facts and the truth” (Martina & Wee 2014).

The spokesperson for Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, Hua Chunying, also expressed her regret for the continuous closures, and especially towards the closure of Confucius Institute at the University of

Chicago. Hua emphasised that the teachers, teaching materials and other support are provided by Confucius Institutes, and the support is based on the voluntary request of the United States' side (Martina & Wee 2014). This means that they are never forced upon people. Therefore, in other words, it is insisted that the argument saying Confucius Institute threatens academic freedom or integrity is an incoherent claim. However, a month after the closure at the University of Chicago, Pennsylvania State University also closed its Confucius Institute, by saying the Institute lacks transparency and academic freedom (Volodzko 2015).

While Stockholm University in Sweden was the first university to host Confucius Institute in Europe, it decided not to extend the agreement in 2015 (Zhou 2015). The vice chancellor at Stockholm University said that the establishment of an institute – not only Confucius Institute, but also other institutes funded by another nation – is questionable within the framework of a university (Zhou 2015). Moreover, it is added that the partnership became unnecessary, as academic exchanges between China and Sweden in alternative ways have developed (Zhou 2015). Despite of the elucidations by the vice chancellor, it is assumed that the closure might be due to negative experiences,

such as discriminatory hiring practices and restrictions on academic freedom as in Canada and in the United States (Cook 2015). Canada and the United States have actively urged to cancel or renegotiate agreements with China.

However, unlike countries mentioned above, the United Kingdom has shown different standpoint towards Confucius Institute. There have been such pressures from activist groups also in the United Kingdom, but it is observed that Confucius Institutes in the United Kingdom have been rather flourishing. In fact, the United Kingdom has the most Confucius Institutes in European region. In 2013, British Prime Minister David Cameron encouraged Britons to learn Chinese language, instead of French and German languages (Han 2015). Even though French and German languages have been the major second foreign languages for Britons, the Prime Minister has made an unconventional suggestion. The change of traditional language education shows how much the United Kingdom has been eager to maintain a positive and intimate relationship with China.

In the same context, according to a 2014 survey, it was discovered that the United Kingdom was the only European Union nation which had a favourable view on China in general (Han 2015). China and the United

Kingdom have cooperated in education sector in order to complement their cooperation in economic sector, since the United Kingdom has been chosen to be the centrepiece in Europe for China's RMB internationalisation (Han 2015). In addition to this, the two nations have decided to consider forming China-U.K. infrastructure alliance as a part of One Belt, One Road initiative (Han 2015). Thus, Confucius Institute has been utilised not only as an educational cooperation but also as an economic bridge between the countries.

For example, in the first stage, many universities in South Korea have hastened to establish partnerships with China, because China has a huge educational market. But hosting universities have faced a dilemma whether they will be forced to sacrifice academic freedom or not, which is derived from China's tight government control over the Institute. Nevertheless, there has not been any huge controversy over the maintenance or abolition of Confucius Institute in South Korea, like in the Western countries. However, there still remains a concern over Confucius Institute, regardless of the possibilities of educational and economic cooperation between China and foreign countries. It has become quite evident that China's soft power is not always soft, subtle or broad-minded. Representatively, Confucius Institute has

forbidden mentioning three keywords beginning with ‘T’, which are Taiwan, Tibet and Tiananmen. These three T-words have been vulnerable and critical points of China.

Taiwan is one of exceptional cases with regard to China’s peaceful development. Since mid-1990s, Chinese government began to isolate Taiwan by rewarding countries that intended to sever diplomatic relations with Taiwan (Kurlantzick 2007: 42). As soon as democracy spread across Taiwan in the 1990s, Taiwanese government advanced its relations with Southeast Asian countries and improved its economy (Kurlantzick 2007: 42). China wanted to take the gains produced by Taiwan, thus it strongly restricted and impeded the growth of Taiwan. Moreover, Confucius Institute has denied what happened at Tiananmen Square in 1989, as well as the discussions on the independence of Tibet has been prohibited. Instead, it is assumed that CCP ideology has been promoted at Confucius Institute (Volodzko 2015), and in fact, one respondent from the survey above expressed dissatisfaction towards Confucius Institute promoting CCP ideology and ideal image of China. For these reasons, Confucius Institute is described as a “Trojan horse with Chinese characteristics” (Mosher 2012; Hartig 2015b: 252), and thus, some

universities and countries are trying to block the introduction of China's Trojan horse.

In sum, the closure of some Confucius Institutes indicates that Confucius Institute, China's soft power, and cultural diplomacy involve critical limitations. Especially in the West, Confucius Institutes are seen with suspicion, because of the affiliation with the Chinese government. Confucius Institute is criticised as being the proactive agent of the Chinese government, by exporting politically "correct" views about China, facilitating economic expansion, cultivating a benign national image and ultimately extending China's influence globally (Yuan, Guo & Zhu 2016: 337). Therefore, it would be risky for the Chinese government to continue relying on Confucius Institute in terms of promoting Chinese language and culture. Instead, it would be safer to revise its current strategies of promoting China's soft power and devise an alternative method which is more effective and sustainable.

## **2. Limitations of Confucius Institute as Cultural Diplomacy for China's Soft Power**

It is argued that fundamental limitations in the rise of China have a big

impact on China's weak soft power. The rise of China has three limitations. Firstly, China has been rising as an "uneven" world power (Cho 2010: 53). In this context, "uneven" means that there is an imbalance between economic power and military and soft powers. While the economic level of China is as high as that of the world power, the military power and soft power of China are inferior to the economic power. It is argued that the levels of military power and soft power are expected to remain at the regional level for the next two decades (Cho 2010: 53). However, unlike China, the United States have strong economy, military and soft power, which make the United States the even world power.

Secondly, China has been emerging as a "regional" world power (Cho 2010: 53). China may become a world power in the future, but its interest and region of activity would be mainly focused on itself and Asian region. As China has been going through several disputes over territory and territorial waters with Taiwan, Japan and India, it is expected that China has no choice but to concentrate on China itself and Asia. Thus it is assumed that China will take the responsibility selectively and limitedly (Cho 2010: 54). But China to become a real world power and to be recognised, it also should be responsible

for global issues, such as global warming, environmental protection, energy crisis, and human rights protection.

Thirdly, China has been emerging as a “fragile” world power (Cho 2010: 53). As mentioned above, China will become a world power someday, but the status and role of China will be restricted and fragile, due to several issues such as the democratisation of politics, ethnic minorities, Taiwan, the gap between the rich and the poor, and the environment (Cho 2010: 54). For these reasons, some argue that China will heighten the political legitimacy of CCP and actively utilise nationalism in order to divert domestic dissatisfaction to the outside world (Cho 2010: 54). For the reasons explained above, it seems quite reasonable that the credibility of Confucius Institute is being questioned. It is also argued that the credibility of China’s soft power is undermined by the political and social issues of China.

Moreover, there is a wide gap between how China wants to be seen and how the others see China. The principal problem derives from the character of a narrative. It is said that a “narrative must appear consistent with events as they are known by the narrative’s audience [and] any disjuncture between narrative claims about how the world is, and direct experience of the world ...

can lead to charges of hypocrisy being levelled against the narrator” (Miskisimmon, O’Loughlin & Roselle 2013: 114; Hartig 2015b: 254). As a consequence, it is expected that the narrator’s credibility and trustworthiness would be reduced, and audiences would less likely to be engaged with them in the future (Hartig 2015b: 254). In this sense, there exists a clear perception gap in the case of China and Confucius Institute. The narrative of a peacefully developing country as well as the narrative of constructing a harmonious world have been diligently projected by China. However, unfortunately, the global audience has perceived China as a country bullying the weaker countries in East Asia. Thus, the behaviour of China is even described as “belligerent” (Christensen 2011; Hartig 2015b: 255) and “assertive” (Swaine 2010; Hartig 2015b: 255).

Furthermore, with respect to Confucius Institute, there are practical problems which Hanban needs to deal with. One of the problems is that there lack teachers sent over from China. As the number of Confucius Institute is increasing, more and more teachers are needed. The shortage of teacher is not a problem in countries such as Germany or Australia, because Chinese people are fond of European countries and countries with many tourist attractions.

However, countries with harsh living conditions, such as the countries in Africa, suffer from the shortage of staff members (Hartig 2015b: 252). Another problem is that there lack teachers who are proficient in local languages (Hartig 2015b: 252). It would not be a serious issue in English-speaking countries, but non-English-speaking countries are highly concerned by this matter. The lack of proficiency in local language is related to the poor teaching quality. It is pointed out that the teaching quality and the teaching methods and models are controversial (Hartig 2015b: 252). For example, due to the difference in culture, teaching method which is considered appropriate in China may not be appropriate in hosting countries.

There are some limitations regarding to Confucius Institute in South Korea in particular. According to the survey result, it is discovered that a lot of the respondents were not aware of the existence of Confucius Institute. Due to the name of the Institute, Korean people have a stereotype that Confucius Institute is an institution teaching the Analects of Confucius (Kim & Cui 2014: 36), and may consider the Institute as an old-fashioned educational institution. Additionally, Confucius Institute in South Korea has to compete with a lot of private language institutes. As there are many private institutes where

teaching Chinese language, there is a large variety of choice for individuals. As the education conditions and all sorts of facilities are well structured at private institute, there is not much place for Confucius Institute to consolidate its foundation. Furthermore, it is argued that textbooks used at Confucius Institute lack reality and practicality. But the textbooks used at private institutes well reflect the reality and they are updated on a regular basis.

In March 2018, Chen Baosheng, Chinese Minister of Education, visited Confucius Institute in Seoul in order to propose the development course and future direction (Hanban 2018a). Chen suggested five functions of Confucius Institute in Seoul: the exploratory function, the discovery function, the valuation function, the alignment function, and the innovation function (Hanban 2018a). Chen suggested the Institute in Seoul should act as a pioneer in exploring the experience of developing Confucius Institutes in the world, should discover its value and needs considering the local conditions, should make the most of its brand value and become an exemplar, should satisfy the needs of local people, and lastly, should search for new ways to satisfy new demands (Hanban 2018a). Then it is suggested that all Confucius Institutes in the world should be functioned properly, by emulating the one in Seoul

(Hanban 2018a).

Based on the comments from survey respondents, the teaching quality and language program of Confucius Institute have to be improved, in order to become sustainable. But most importantly, China has to recognise that political intentions should be excluded in managing Confucius Institute. If China continues interfering or exerts its influence to the hosting country or hosting university, Confucius Institute will become very difficult to maintain its role as China's representative cultural diplomacy implementation.

### **3. Conclusion**

There has been a conventional wisdom among Chinese officials: "Although the United States wants to realise a single-polar world ... the trend of multi-polarisation will continue to develop" (Xia 1999; Kurlantzick 2007: 43). Away from the sphere of the United States, it is expected that China would create its own sphere of influence. Based on what Chinese leaders insisted, China would not use aggressive measures or interfere others in order to achieve its ultimate goal, peaceful development. It is clear that China has embraced soft power, but indeed, the concept of soft power has been "filtered

through the perceived agencies of an authoritarian state faced with the prospect of explaining itself to a discerning and informed global audience” (Kalathil 2011; Craig 2012: 172). Unlike the expectation, China has been selectively accepting and applying soft power, and it also has been utilising military measures and interfering others in order to achieve its primary objective.

The rise of China has been possible due to rapid economic growth. The world economy has been heavily relying on China and China has been placed at a status of making important statements. Not just because China accounts for a great part of world economy, but also because the development model of China is still very impressive to developing countries that pursue a great extent of development. In fact, as a result of its economic achievement and foreign aid, China has become able to exercise a considerable influence over many developing countries. At the same time, due to the United States’ failures in terms of energy, economic, and Iraq policies, the hegemonic status of the United States has been in crisis (Haass 2008; Shin 2009: 58). Besides, since China strongly opposes to the intervention of the West and protects its national sovereignty, there has been an expectation that China could bring more

horizontal and diversified composition of the world, which is different from the Western development model (Jang 2011: 108). For these reasons, China has recognised its development model as the factor of soft power, and it has argued for the diversification of development model, and further, it has been shaking the pre-existing dollar-based system (Jang 2011: 108).

However, the problem is that the developing countries that China has been supporting have unfavourable domestic conditions. For example, China has supported Myanmar, where the violation of human rights has been practised regularly by means of military and economic assistance (Lee 2011: 135). This implies that China has a decisive effect on the maintenance of military regime there. In addition to this, China has overlooked genocide in Sudan in order to import crude oil from Sudan (Lee 2011: 135). China opposed to the United Nations Security Council's sanctions on the Darfur genocide, and established an oil refinery in the capital city, Khartoum (Lee 2011: 135). Moreover, China has extensively supported Angola, whose central government suffers from chronic corruption, as Angola is the biggest oil importing country of China (Lee 2011: 135). Furthermore, China has also supported the authoritarian government of Zimbabwe and sheltered Zimbabwe

from the sanctions of the United Nations, as Zimbabwe is the world's biggest platinum producer (Lee 2011: 135). At the same time, China has been inviting students and public officials as students studying abroad at government expense, and extending its capacity. China also founded an international radio station in Kenya and spreading the development phase and culture of China in Chinese language (Lee 2011: 135).

Until now, China has argued that it respects the sovereignty of others and pursues non-intervention, while expanding its national interests and influence by separating politics from economy. The conduct of China is similar to how the Western powers developed their strength throughout the history. The Western powers secured resources by founding colonies in places such as China, India, Southeast Asia and South America, and strengthened its power. Even though China officially denied the connection between hard power and soft power, it has been successful in connecting hard power, particularly referring to economic power, with soft power to some extent. In this aspect, the development model of China has already become "China model as a strategy," and in this context, China model gets to assume ideological and political characteristics (Jang 2011: 108).

The principle of non-intervention, one of the features of Beijing Consensus, helps maintaining authoritarian regime, but to the general public, the principle rather gives negative impact (Byun 2011b: 23). Regardless of the components of Chinese values and vision, it is suggested that China has to overcome critical obstacles such as the authoritarian political system, extensive political corruption and weak human rights consciousness (Cho & Jeong 2008: 472). It is argued that the neighbouring countries could be unwilling to accept China's soft power due to these obstacles. If China maintains one-party dictatorship system while holding political liberalisation and human rights issues, it would be difficult to maintain its status as a world power unless China establishes a universal value system. Therefore, China would gradually expand its soft power in international society, by emphasising international norm, putting emphasis on multilateralism, expanding the sphere of cultural influence, and improving the relationship with neighbouring countries (Shin 2009: 59).

It is widely predicted that culture would be in the middle of international conflict in a new world order, instead of ideology or geopolitics (Huntington 1996; Lahtinen 2015: 201). Thus, it is concerned that China's soft power

strategy could become more aggressive and could expand in all directions. In fact, while China has been promoting its soft power to other countries, it has contained soft power of other countries for political reasons. For example, when there was an active debate between South Korea and the United States on THAAD deployment in 2016, China blocked the inflow of Korean cultural products and did not allow Korean celebrities doing economic activities in China. In addition to this, in 2017, China even banned travel agencies in China from developing package tours and from sending Chinese tourists to South Korea in order to give huge negative economic impact on Korea. The participation and intervention of government are inevitable in the process of soft power development, and there is no room for dissent that the government takes an important role (K.L. Chun 2010: 526). It is also argued that the empowerment and participation of private sector are also necessary (K.L. Chun 2010: 526). But in case of China, the development and dissemination of soft power are all managed by the CCP.

As China has emerged as a world power, international conflicts between China and other countries are rather increasing. Shambaugh argues that soft power “cannot be bought,” but “it must be earned” (2015: 107). In sum, China

is endeavouring to enhance its soft power in its style. But as China is being rigid towards foreign soft power and being self-centred in political issues, foreigners would get to have a deep antipathy towards China's soft power. If China wants to persuade the others utilising its own soft power, China, above all, should overcome self-centred nationalism and should be broad-minded.

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## 국문 초록

개혁개방의 성공과 더불어 중국은 소프트파워 증진을 위한 문화외교 정책을 강화하고 있는데, 가장 대표적인 사례 중 하나가 공자학원의 설립이다. 2004년부터 설립된 공자학원은 현재 500개가 넘게 설립되었으며, 2017년 12월을 기준으로 한국에만 총 23개의 공자학원이 설립되어 있다. 그러나 2013년부터 유럽 국가에 설립된 공자학원이 교육적, 정치적인 이유들로 인해 폐쇄됨에 따라 공자학원 설립을 중심으로 한 중국 소프트파워 전략에 대한 의문이 제기되었다.

이 논문에서는 중국의 소프트파워 인식과 문화외교 정책 구상에 대한 이해를 바탕으로 문화외교 정책의 대표적인 예인 공자학원에 대한 사례연구를 제공하고 있다. 특히 한국인을 대상으로 한 설문조사를 통해 한국에 설립된 공자학원을 중심으로, 중국 공자학원 운영, 관리, 효과 등을 분석함으로써, 중국의 문화외교 전략 및 소프트 파워 전략의 현황과 한계점을 제시하고 있다.

**주요어:** 중국, 소프트파워, 문화외교, 공자학원

**학 번:** 2016-29442