The Northern Train on the Southern Track: China’s Confucius Institutes in Australian Universities

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Abstract:
The establishment of the Confucius Institutes at Australian universities has contributed to the promotion of Chinese language teaching, which has opened an alternative path for the people in wider local communities to understand Chinese culture. At the same time, some controversial issues of cultural and political concerns have raised in terms of relationship between the host Australian universities and the associated Confucius Institutes in relation to pedagogy and curriculum. This paper reports on a case study of two Australian universities as a pilot study, leading a further debate on the role of the Confucius Institutes in Australian universities. Keywords: Confucius Institutes, Culture, Australian universities

Introduction:
• In spite of whatever intentions the CIs have, the CIs have been subjected to western criticism for several reasons (Karlanstich, 2007; Gil, 2008).
• A number of universities in USA and in EU decided to cease their contracts with the Headquarter in Beijing in 2014.
• Western critics have worried about China’s soft power and CIs might jeopardize the integrity and academic freedom of those universities.
• The CIs are located in different cultural contexts: Western English-speaking cultural circle European non-English-speaking cultural circle Confucius heritage cultural circle Islamic cultural circle Colonized territory cultural circle Other

Research questions:
• In the level of the institutional organization, the former is funded by the Australian government while the latter is supported by the Chinese government. There is a political concern about the institutional autonomy and the roles of CIs on Australian university campuses.
• In the pedagogical level, the language teaching methods employed by the Australian academics and the teaching instructors invited by CIs from China are not the same, which may cause cultural conflicts between teaching staff if they are involved in collaboration of Chinese teaching and learning.

Method
The study is based on a qualitative approach appropriate to answer the research question defined in the above introduction. Through a qualitative investigation a comprehensive and holistic overview of operations of Confucius Institutes could be obtained. The semi-structured interview was employed because it allowed flexibility for the researchers to encourage participants to express their opinions freely. The interview duration and direction were monitored by the researchers who could make judgement if the interview should be extended or shortened. Questions could be also reordered to suit the flow of the interview. Probes were used to obtain more clarity and additional information. The interview questions are attached in appendix.

The case study was conducted in two Australian universities. University A is located in an urban area with a large community of ethnic Chinese population while University B is located in a regional area with mainly an English speaking Anglo-Saxon population. The subjects were 2 administrators (Australian director and deputy director from China), 5 teachers, and 10 students at each university, 34 participants in total. All interviews were digitally recorded with the consent of the interviewees and verbatim transcribed. All interviews were face-to-face and one-on-one from 30 to 60 minutes, allowing the researcher control over the process and the interviewee the freedom to express his or her thoughts (O’Leary, 2004). Apart from the interviews, any “critical incidents” discovered during the interviews or reported by the two universities were described for further analysis. In other words, the researchers also used narrative inquiry as an additional research method to reveal any problems.

Findings:

Case Study One: University A in Victoria
1. CI is located in the university’s research center of Chinese Studies
2. CI has organized Chinese language courses and cultural activities
3. CI has also involved other academic activities including translation and categorization of existing academic books
   - The number of students enrolled in Chinese programs of the university has decreased since CI started its Chinese language teaching.
   - The directors from the Australian university and the Chinese partner university have different views of how CI should operate. Conflicts have affected the cooperation.
   - Chinese teachers from China have been asked to do additional work which is not related to the mission of CI.

Case Study Two: University B in NSW
1. CI is located in a special building as an independent unit from the university faculties
2. CI has organized lunch time Chinese language courses for university students and cultural activities for local schools
3. CI has established Chinese programs for the local schools because the great shortage of Chinese teachers and resources
4. CI has involved in all activities in relation to academic exchange between Australian host university and Chinese partner universities. CI becomes a service agent for mutual visits
   - Staff members from CI have taken over of Chinese language teaching in the Faculty at the University
   - The director from the Chinese partner university have been directed by the director of Australian university in how CI operates
   - Chinese teachers from China have been asked to help local schools in developing Chinese programs
   - Consistent support seems unclear

Conclusion
All in all, in spite of a limited single case study conducted in two Australian universities, there are at least three important conclusions which can be reached. Firstly, the initial results of this pilot study have confirmed an urgent need of a comprehensive and interdisciplinary research to investigate the performance of existing Confucius Institutes in the whole nation. Secondly, the contradictory findings amply demonstrate that academics are deeply divided on Confucius Institutes and the political concerns about their existence should be properly addressed on the basis of their educational activities. Finally, a systematic analytical framework should be elaborated to investigate the Confucius Institutes’ linguistic, pedagogical, organizational, political and economic impact although they are inter-related with each other. The findings of the large scale of team work will thus be of significance for Australia’s long-term national interest.
Introduction: Exploring the experiences of ethnic minority students in Counselor Education and Supervision (CES) doctoral programs in the U.S. is imperative in understanding their underrepresentation in CES. Findings will be presented from a qualitative study about Mexican American women and how their experiences within CES doctoral programs shaped their identities.

Abstract: Due to the underrepresentation of ethnic minorities as doctoral students and faculty in Counselor Education and Supervision (CES), the focus of this study was on the identities of Mexican American women as they pursued CES doctoral degrees in the United States. Anzaldúa's Borderlands theory implements metaphor and Mexican histories to highlight the complexity of cultural ambiguity and was used to foster a multicultural framework of identity. Narratives Inquiry was used to explore both narrative content and narrative style of each participant. Therefore, data analysis included two phases: exploring stylistic features of narratives (i.e., contradictions and turning points) and searching across different fields of experience within narratives (i.e., intrapersonal interactions, interpersonal interactions, and language use). Findings demonstrate that Mexican American women in CES doctoral programs grapple with conflicting cultural expectations as well as a sense of isolation during their doctoral programs. Participants also expressed a strong desire to give back to their communities and often used their research to forge a connection between their academic identities and their ethnic identities. Implications for promoting multiculturalism in higher education include developing culturally empowering mentorship and professional development opportunities that enable Mexican American women students to feel more connected during their doctoral programs.

Background: Several researchers have examined experiences that CES doctoral students encountered during their programs providing implications for research and practice. Yet, few focus on ethnic minority students (Hughes & Kleist, 2005). The current study, however, expands the limited research on minorities by focusing on Mexican American women in CES doctoral programs, in particular. To capture the distinctive experiences of Mexican American women CES doctoral students, I used a unique research design in which Anzaldúa's (1999) Borderlands Theory shaped the research focus. Four concepts from this theory were used: nepantla, coacticue, coyolxauhqui, and la conciencia de la mestiza.

Research Question: How Counselor Education and Supervision doctoral programs impact the identities of Mexican American women students?

Methodology:

Narrative Research

Narrative research was defined here as the study of stories (Polkinghorne, 2007). This strategy combines both the method and phenomena of the study (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007). The constructivist approach used examined the content and stylistic features of stories, such as story structure (i.e., starting point, plot) and the story-telling styles of participants. Exploring both the content and stylistic features of stories allowed emergence of the meaning participants attribute to their experiences and the fluid connections they forge between past, present, and future (Polkinghorne, 2007). My goal was to attain in-depth understanding about how participants comprehend their experiences, not to verify the factuality of the reported life events.

Data Collection

Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with each participant and digitally recorded. An interview guide was used to facilitate participants' narrative beginning with a broad open-ended question to encourage detailed storytelling. Interviews lasted between one and two-hours. One interview was conducted over the phone and one was conducted over Skype. Three interviews were conducted in-person at locations preferable to participants. Additionally, a researcher's journal was kept to note thoughts and feelings about the interviews and the research process overall. The journal housed such specific as the interview setting, body language of interviewer and participants, emotions sparked throughout the process, and other pertinent experiences that were used during the data analysis phase.

Two-Phase Data Analysis conducted with each Participant's Individual Narrative

(1) Exploring stylistic features of narratives (i.e., contradictions and turning points)
(2) Searching across different fields of experience within narratives (i.e., intrapersonal interactions, interpersonal interactions, and language use).

Participants: Purposeful criterion sampling and snowball sampling were used to gain participants for exploring the lived experiences of a particular group of individuals (Patton, 2002). Inclusion criteria were ethnicity (Mexican American), gender (female), education level (Ph.D. program), and type of doctoral program (UCR/UCR-CES).

Representation of participants included five women who ranged in age from 27 to 37 and self-identified as Latina (n=1), Chicana (n=1), Hispanic (n=1), and Mexican American (n=2). Participant relationships status included: two married, one engaged, one in a relationship and one who did not discuss relationships. Parental status included: one with two children and all others with no children. Program status included: one first-year doctoral student, one second-year (one preparing for comprehensive exams), participant preparing to write her dissertation pre-proposal, and one sixth-year who was writing her dissertation pre-proposal.

Findings: Findings demonstrate that Mexican American women in CES doctoral programs grapple with conflicting cultural expectations as well as a sense of isolation during their doctoral programs. This finding aligns with Anzaldúa's (1999) concept of Nepantla in which participants demonstrated a sense of living in the borders and learning how to cope with conflicting messages and feelings of isolation.

Participant Quote related to Mexican Culture and Higher Education: “My culture does not embrace or understand [higher education]. I think my grandparents only ever attended kindergarden in Mexico.”

Participant quote related to Mexican Culture and comments from students and faculty in her doctoral program in which they stated that she did not “look Latina.” These comments prompted her to question her own ethnic identity.

“Am I supposed to leave my culture behind when I'm in [the counseling clinic] and then if I chose to acknowledge it outside of my doctoral programs, that's my choice?”

Participants also expressed a strong desire to give back to their communities and often used their research to forge a connection between their academic identities and their ethnic identities. For example, three participants were writing dissertations in which they were studying the Mexican American community. Additionally, when possible, participants conducted counseling sessions in Spanish as a way of supporting the Mexican American community as well. These actions aligned with Anzaldúa’s (1991) concept of Coyolxauhqui in which participants demonstrated attempts to integrate their academic identities with their Mexican American ethnic identities.

Conclusion: Research findings align with previous research that suggests Latina/o graduate students are finding ways to merge their academic interests with their ethnic identities (González, 2006). In addition to providing scholarly mentorship, culturally empowering professional experiences are needed. Overall, implementing efforts to increase Mexican American women's role in counselor education can promote more diversified and culturally appropriate training that Mexican American and other students of color so desperately need.

Principal components analysis vs. Implicative statistical analysis in validity evaluation of a language certificate: The case of Greek state certificate of English language proficiency

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Introduction

In this paper the data were collected after conducting the English language A level KPG (Kratikó Pistoilitiko Glosamathias- National Foreign Language Exam System) test of May 2012 on 141 candidates. The test assesses the knowledge and skills leading to A1 Beginner level and A2 Elementary level of language. According to the KPG framework (Dendrinos & Karavas, 2013), in A1 level the candidate is expected to understand expressions which serve to satisfy communicative needs of everyday life. In level A2 testees are asked to understand expressions and sentences used very often as well as signs used in everyday practices.

Methodology: Principal Components Analysis (PCA) and Implicative Statistical Analysis

Principal Components Analysis (PCA) is a symmetric method, which means that it is based on metric distances and thus the relations between the variables are essentially symmetric. The results of a PCA are usually discussed in terms of component scores and loadings. (Hair et al., 2005). Implicative Statistical Analysis is a data analysis devoted to the extraction and the structuration of quasi-implications and was originally developed by Gras (Gras &Kuntz, 2008).

Purpose, Sample

The study evaluates the validity of this particular test via two different statistical methods which are the Principal Components Analysis and Implicative Statistical Analysis. These two methods are compared and the extent of validity of the exam is demonstrated. The sample is composed of 141 Primary and Secondary School pupils of this language level who were asked to fill in the A level test during the academic year 2012–13. 101 out of 141 were Greek-speaking children and 40 were Turkish-speaking children of the Muslim minority of Greece.

Results

4.1. PCA results

Activity 1: Sampling adequacy index KMO=0.614 and the Bartlett's test x2=335,030, df=10, sign=0.001 showed that Principal components analysis was suitable. According to this analysis, 1 factor results from data analysis, and it interprets 51.796% of total inertia. All the items' loadings are over 0.40, a fact that confirms the quality of the test. The same holds for the other two activities.

4.2. Implicative Statistical Analysis Results

The similarities in the 1st Activity are significant. Their level of significance is 99%. Based on the specific diagram we can observe the following: In the similarity diagram two distinct similarity subgroups are distinguished. The first subgroup A refers to similarity relations among variables R1.1, R1.2, R1.4 (Subgroup A), which deal with the matching of a statement with the right picture. This similarity of the variables of the first group shows that students handle the statements of R1.1, R1.2, R1.4 about Tina, Helga and Liz in the same way. In the hierarchical diagram we can see the direction of the hierarchic relations among variables. The implications are significant in a level of importance of 99%. The first hierarchical group refers to R1.1 and R1.2 (cohesion: 0.634). Particularly, in hierarchy R1.2 – R1.1 (cohesion: 0.634) the answer in item R1.2 implies the answer in R1.1. At this point it is worth mentioning that the hierarchy of R1.2 and R1.1 (cohesion: 0.634) is important.

Conclusion

The implementation of both methods demonstrated the validity of the test concerning activities 1, 2, 3. Comparing the two, PCA and Implicative Statistical Analysis we realize that we had the same grouping of the items of the three activities. Both methods confirmed the validity of the test.

References


Inside-Out Program Proposal to RRU & WHI

**Objective:** Offer a course from the BAJS program at RRU to inside and outside students at WHI, a federal minimum security institution operated by CSC.

- **Inmates (unaccredited men)**
- **Outside students (RRU students in BAJS program)**

**Statement of intent approved by RRU and WHI in Fall 2017**

**Course delivered in Spring, 2018 as a pilot project**

Inside-Out Program Proposal to WHI & RRU

**Contact:**
- **Financial overhead associated with inside student attendance**
  - (host university absorbs costs)
  - Administrative onboarding to enroll inside students

**Benefits**
- Engages a model of community-based education
- Fosters collaboration between institutions
- Demonstrates institutional willingness to promote social change
  - Has a feel-good element... breaking down barriers

Inside-Out Prison Education: Foundational Aspects and Philosophy

**Program: Social Justice Focus**
- **Mix of inmates (inside students) and regular university (outside students)**
- **In a course held inside a correctional facility (prison)**
- **Predicated on the notion that collaborative dialogue has the capacity to overcome social barriers and produce social change**

Non-traditional pedagogy including learning circles, and other unique I-O tools, and an emphasis on collaborative learning

- **Model established in mid-1990s at Temple University (USA)**

Research Context

**Purposeful selection of students**
- 13 inside and 13 outside students
  - Recruited by presentation (RRU) and advertisement (WHI)
  - All attended individual interviews with instructor and WHI contact (Manager of Programs)

**Focuses on security and fit with ideology guiding program**
- **Students dropping before course start replaced**

Course delivery

**Curriculum: Comparative Global Legal Approaches and Philosophies**
- 4th year undergraduate course
  - Delivered over 12 weeks (3 hours a week)
  - 3 credits
  - Includes the study of Common law, Civil law, Islamic law, Mixed legal systems, Socialist law and Indigenous law
  - Level playing field: All students have equal access to resources (no digital technology)

**Evaluation**
- Exams, presentations, group/individual participation
  - Delivered inside Indigenous-centred building with learning circles, and specific I-O pedagogy

Research objectives

**Purpose**
- Assesses the course’s effect to reduce the barriers between inside and outside students and to produce the social change promoted by inside-out philosophy

**Question**
- Can education in prison create global legal and cultural awareness for non-incarcerated students participating in a course with incarcerated students?

Selected relevant literature

**Impact of structure**
- Structure improves understanding of content (Alfred, 2009)

**De-stigmatization**
- Alteration of self-image toward activist ethos for outside instructor trainees after participation in program (Conti, Morrison & Pantaleo, 2013)

**Change in perception of correction**
- Outside students more critical of conventional justice practice (Hilinski-Rosnick & Blackmer, 2014)

**Self-efficacy**
- Improvements for inside students but no change for outside students (Alfred, Harrison & O’Connell, 2013)

Methodology – 1

**Qualitative research approach**
- Focus groups held with two groups of students
  - Inside focus group with 11 students (50 minutes)
  - Outside focus group with 5 students (35 minutes)

**Classical content analysis of focus group data**

Semistructured questions

1 **primary framing question**
- Can you please tell me what, if any, differences the Inside-Out model made in your learning experiences compared to the traditional model of university education used in the program?

Methodology – 2

5 **sub-questions**

- What features of the Inside-Out model stand out to you?
- How did the mixing of inside and outside students influence your learning?
- What were the strengths and weaknesses of the course in the learning context?
- How do you feel that the Inside-Out model influenced your understanding of the global legal traditions and philosophies?
- Would you recommend that other students in your program take a course based on the Inside-Out model of prison education?

**Themes:**

**primary question:**
- Engaging where “we are”
  - Prison context, pedagogy and course curriculum all fit together

**Sub question:**
- IS: “…the scope of the learning dynamic with the other students, inmates and outside students gave me different perspectives... and challenged me in different ways by having to listen and participate in different group sessions which I found really fascinating.”
- OS: “…one of the most valuable aspects of the Inside-Out program was a varied perspective... brought in a valuable perspective and another side to subject matter that we otherwise wouldn’t have received.”

**Theme:**
- Prison context, pedagogy and course curriculum all fit together

**Sub question:**
- IS: “…this course is much more collaborative and interactive with other individuals as well.”
- OS: “…this really helped me move out of my comfort zone… to sort of step out and be willing to take more risks in my interactions with other people and getting to know people.”

**Sub question:**
- OS: “…even though it brought us altogether as equal students, it made me aware of intersectionality in a very different way and the impact of my voice and the impact of my thoughts.”

**Sub question:**
- What features of I-O model stand out to you?
  - IS: Variety in delivery approaches (e.g. fish bowl)
  - OS: No technology (personal devices) means improved learning
  - IS: Group presentations
  - OS: Instructor involvement

**Sub question:**
- “…at most times it even seemed like you were in a facilitator role rather than a mentor role guiding us and even being a part of the conversation rather than directing the conversation.”

**Sub question:**
- Influence of format on learning?
  - OS: “…the circle and the discussion-based model was very valuable and different from the standard course structure, that an emphasis was placed on small group discussion and large group discussion... was really valuable.”
  - IS: “the group presentation from the inside and outside students having a limited amount of time but being able to come up with presentations... was a pretty unique thing”

**Sub question:**
- Project: …a team effort between inside and outside students... good way to build on trust... to have a measure of respect and trust among the teams.”

**Conclusion**
- ID model delivered at WHI lived up to the expectation of transformational learning
- Reduced social barriers (YES)
- Improved understanding of content (MAYBE)
- No comparison group

**Significant uptake on content**
- Reduced stigmatization for not I-O students (YES)
- Improved self-efficacy for some (YES for IS)

Change in perception in legal system (YES)

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO READ THIS POSTER!

**Abbreviations**

- I-O: Inside Out Prison Education
- RRU: Royal Roads University
- BAJS: Bachelor of Arts Justice Studies
- WHI: William Head Institution
- CSC: Correctional Service Canada
- IS: inside student
- OS: Outside student

**Future offerings of I-O by RRU**

- Will be considered given recent positive experience
- Will require further relationship building between RRU and Correctional Service Canada