

THE ROLE OF CONFUCIUS INSTITUTE IN INDONESIAN HIGHER EDUCATION: A FEW GLIMPSES OF FUTURE SUCCESS

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Abstract

Confucius Institute (CI) has been almost a decade in Indonesia. During this time span, there should be positive trends and challenges. This paper aims to see the role of CI in Indonesia, particularly in Unesa. The addressed issues are: the role of CI in Indonesian Higher Education; CI and the State University of Surabaya (Unesa); glimpses of success in spreading Chinese language and culture; and breakthroughs in enhancing CI's reputation. It is found that introducing and expanding Chinese language and culture through universities are just right plan. Academics are of help in spreading Chinese language and culture through their expertise in teaching and researching. Living in harmony is labelled for Unesa and CI at the present time. These two institutions can prove that being different is not always matter. Yet, it brings more advantages for both sides in the form of material and non-material. CI has been successful in approaching Islamic and non-Islamic organizations which are considered to be prominent parties. The fundamental successes of the CI and its counterparts are: shifting Indonesian's mind setting to be more positive towards China and creating acculturation between China and Indonesia. Nonetheless, some breakthroughs related to education are needed to increase CI's reputation. When all positive trends are evaluated and maintained to avoid conflict, it is predicted that in the long run Chinese language and culture become part of young generation.

Keywords: *Confucius Institute, Chinese culture, Mandarin language, acculturation*

1. Introduction

China as a neighboring country known as the world's giant country besides America, has a big influence in almost all sectors. Especially with the opening of Asian trade or better known as free trade, it increasingly shows the important role of China and Mandarin Language. Seeing this opportunity, Indonesian young people today show their great enthusiasm learning Mandarin since the establishment of CI a decade ago. In the past, wanting to learn Mandarin was a problem. Beside there is no "formal" institution that catered place to learn, it was a sensitive issue for the government.

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Nowadays, people are aware that mastering Mandarin can take them to more open chances to get success in their career. This view is reasonable that the compass of Indonesia and other countries in the world directing to China. World can avoid the role of China in their discourse of trading. As a matter of fact, almost all appliances that people need to perform their daily activities are made of China.

As recognized to be a great country, China, like a tit for tat, is now introducing and popularizing the founding of Kong Zi Xue Yuan / Confucius Institute in various countries. Kong Zi Xue Yuan's goal was to introduce Chinese culture through language. Same as the goal of the British Council of the United Kingdom, the Dutch Erasmus Huis, the German Goethe Institute, the French Alliance Francaise and so on. With the target to establish 100 Confucius Institute on various continents, the Confucius Institute project is a state and Chinese government project to play a role in the world. Now dozens of Confucius institutes have been established in various countries such as America, Australia, Korea, Japan and even third countries such as Bangladesh³.

In Indonesia alone, there are 6 CIs which were established almost at the same time, around 2010. The State University of Surabaya (Unesa) is one of universities that has built partnership with CI since 2011. Why universities are the target as gate opener for spreading Chinese culture and language? This paper tries to address the issues around CI and its role in Indonesian higher education which cover: 1) The role of Confucius Institute in Indonesian Higher Education; 2) Confucius Institute and the State University of Surabaya (Unesa); 3) Glimpses of success in spreading Chinese language and culture; and 4) Some suggested breakthroughs in enhancing Confucius Institute's reputation.

2. Discussion

2.1 Role of Confucius Institute in Indonesian Higher Education

There are at least two roles played by Indonesian Higher Education in supporting the development of the Indonesian nation towards an advanced and civilized nation. Both roles are: 1) Higher Education as a change agent (agent of change) and 2) University as the creator and supporter of new ideas. The role of universities in developing Indonesia's human resources is very large, especially as a producer of change agents who is capable of designing, pushing and

³ Budi Wijaya Yao Pingbo: Kong Zi Xue Yuan / Confucius Institute

pioneering care. Higher education is the creator and supporter of new ideas, and universities have provided a large contribution to the intellectual and social progress of society. Higher education as a driver of intellectual and social progress of society has a very strategic position in building this nation through the education.⁴

The strategic role of university is further explained by Bambang Soesatyo⁵ in the Graduation Ceremony of National University, Jakarta. He said that as affirmed in the regulation on Higher Education, the function and role of this institution are as a forum for learning students and communities, a forum for education for future leaders of the nation, a center for scientific development, a center of moral strength, and as a center for the development of national civilization.

In the history of the human civilization man, the academic world always plays a central role, whether as conservator dominant values are applies or as a source of values new to community dynamics. There is the time the academic world was made a conservator certain values of a system power or manipulated by a system power. There is also the time of the world academic becomes a spring of change social. Of the two situations implied the essence that the academic world is the existence of freedom or openness think. If in the first situation the academic world is deliberately silenced and consciously used to suppress independence thinking, then deep the situation of both academic worlds plays its original role is as source of ideas for improving life and meaning of human life.

Lately there has been a desire some of our higher education institutions are in the direction of "research universities". This idea has a basis. Higher education institutions in today's globalization process the competition is getting sharper and the quality of production including the production of higher education institutions is increasingly becoming a demand, indeed in the future the existence of higher education institutions will be determined by the ability of research.

What is the role of Confucius Institute (CI) in higher education in Indonesia? The first, the coming of Confucius Institute (CI) in Indonesia function as a trigger. The fact that CI rose some debate and rejection in the early time. However, this time CI is well accepted by all parties. This situation is partly the contribution of university in which students and academics are open

⁴ <https://www.scribd.com/doc/31598187/Peran-Strategis-Perguruan-Tinggi-Dalam-Pembangunan-Bangsa>. Retrieved on 29 November 2018.

⁵ <https://kumparan.com/bambang-soesatyo/peran-perguruan-tinggi-dalam-pembangunan-indonesia>. March 4, 2018. Retrieved 29 November 2018.

minded and are aware of the fact that it is now the global era has come. They are aware that *civitas academica* function as agent of change that can accept all new things as long as they support the advancement of the nation.

The second, CI is a bank of data for Indonesian Higher Education. As many Indonesian universities proclaim to be what so called ‘research university’, CI can be the object for researches on relevant topics. Universities that have Mandarin Department even get more advantages. Their students can get topics related to Mandarin language and CI. This can be continuously done in the future. Some researches on this issue, to name of few, are done by Amelia & Adriani (2016), Lan (2017), Ansori (2017), and Theo & Leung (2018).

Ability to see the facts and reality of social symptoms is a difficult task for most of universities. This capability can only be improved if the minimum requirements of a university have been fulfilled, among others, adequate campus infrastructure, laboratory equipment, a functioning library, and a fleet of lecturers who are ready for combat, meaning those who have dedication with high professional ability. Closely related to increasing the willingness and ability of higher education institutions to see social facts is the growth of a campus culture also requires changes in the image of the community and students about academic life. Academic life requires certain intellectual abilities, namely analytical, critical and constructive power. See Section 2.3 for further discussion.

Open campus culture demands abilities that function as a process of globalization of human life and the democratization of life today. Supporting capacity of universities for the development that will take place will be determined by the institution's ability to provide appropriate answers to the social facts of future industrial communities.

2.2 Confucius Institute and the State University of Surabaya (Unesa)

1) The CI Building

The important milestone of the existence of Confucius Institute in the State university of Surabaya is marked by the inauguration of the Kongzi Xueyuan building, another name of Confucius Institute. This event was carried out by the Chinese Consul General in Surabaya, Wang Huagen. The diplomat who was familiarly called Mr. Wang was asked to cut the ribbon with the Rector of Unesa Mr. Muchlas Samani. Mr. Wang said he was very happy because Mandarin was increasingly in demand in Indonesia. In China too, according to him, the Indonesian language began to be in

demand by the public. The evident is that there are many universities open Indonesian language study programs in China. "We will also support Indonesian students who are sent to China both to learn Mandarin and cultural exchange," said Mr. Wang.



Figure 1. The inauguration of the Confucius Institute by Mr. Wang Huagen (Chinese Consul General in Surabaya) and Mr. Muchlas Samani (Rector of Unesa)⁶



Figure 2. CI Building in the State University of Surabaya

⁶ <http://surabaya.china-consulate.org/indo/lgdt/t995360.htm>

Meanwhile, Rector of Unesa, Muchlas Samani, as the host suggested that the Xueyuan Kongzi building not only be a place to learn Mandarin, but also as a forum for Indonesian-Chinese cultural exchange. By learning language and culture, according to him, there will be mutual understanding between the two parties. Further detail of this matter is addressed in later part.



Figure 3. Dr. Ali Mustofa and Dr. Xiao Renfei

Confucius Institutes

Pusat Bahasa Mandarin at
Universitas Negeri Surabaya

City	Surabaya
Institutions	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> Foreign Institution: Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Indonesia. Chinese Institution: Central China Normal University </div>
Timeline	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> Start running: 2011/5/18 </div>
Contact	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> Director of Institute: XIAO Renfei Address: B-817 Apartment Puncak Poma, Jln Raya Darmo 3 Surabaya, East Java, Indonesia. Tel: +62 31 5154888881 Fax: +62 31 7502000 E-mail: 80261532@qq.com </div>
Website	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> http://www.unesa.ac.id/ </div>

Figure 4. Detail Information of Confucius Institute in Unesa⁷

⁷ http://english.hanban.org/node_13643.htm

The operation of CI in Unesa cannot be separated from the great effort of Dr. Ali Mustofa (Figure 3). He was the first person who got mandate from the Rector to execute the process of negotiation until the establishment of CI. He has been keen on the success of CI in Unesa. He is an important agent who is able to bridge between Unesa and CI also between Indonesia and China. Another key person who has been working hard to develop CI in Unesa is Dr. Xiao Renfei (Figure 3). He is not only a very dedicated and hardworking person but also a professional one.

2) The Establishment of Mandarin Study Program

As the initiation of the establishment of CI in Unesa was followed by the preparation of Mandarin Study Program establishment. This new study program is under the Faculty of Languages and Arts. The submission of the establishment of the Mandarin Language Education Study Program was approved by the Higher Education in July 2010. Then six months later, on January 12, 2011, the operational permit was issued. It was a very short period of time process. This made the faculty members get injection to strive for developing the study program.

The Mandarin Language Education Study Program aims are:

- (1) Fulfilling the needs of Mandarin teaching staff professional and competent;
- (2) Fulfilling the needs of a productive and creative workforce for creating own employment;
- (3) Fulfilling community needs for information about Mandarin education
- (4) Creating a center for the development of Mandarin language education

For the student wise, this new program had got great attention from society. The intake students grows greater every year. The figures in Table x is the evidence. This also the indicator that society puts their trust to this study program and they see that Mandarin language may bring promising career not only for being teachers but also for other professions including trading.

Academic Year								
2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
17	63	78	59	75	77	74	41	78
The management meeting decided to accept limited number of students due to the lecturer's resignation.								

Table 1. Student cohort since the opening of Mandarin Department

Thus, Mandarin Language is said

by Alim Markus as a means of communicating the community, especially in the economic field. Indonesian is the language of the motherland. English is the international language. "If you want to trade, your business is successful, learning Mandarin is a must because economic language is Mandarin," said the owner of this Maspion Group.

2.3 Glimpses of success in spreading Chinese language and culture

From the establishment of CI in Indonesia in 2008, it has been successful in building relationship with Indonesian people and institutions in many places. It was in 2010, the 60th anniversary of Indonesia–China diplomatic relations, that the two governments jointly announced to establish the CIs at six Indonesian universities. They are Maranatha Christian University in Bandung (West Java, Indonesia), State University of Malang (East Java, Indonesia), Al-Azhar University in Jakarta, Tanjungpura University in Pontianak Sustainability (West Kalimantan, Indonesia), State University of Surabaya (East Java, Indonesia) and Hasanuddin University in Makassar (South Sulawesi, Indonesia). The valid date of establishment of CI in these universities can be seen in Table 2 below.

Nama Institusi	Waktu Peresmian	Kota	Kampus China
PBM Universitas Al Azhar Indonesia	2010.11.9	Jakarta	Fujian Normal University
PBM Universitas Maranatha	2011.2.9	Bandung	Hebei Normal University
PBM Universitas Hasanudin	2011.2.22	Makasar	Nanchang University
PBM Universitas Malang	2011.3.14	Malang	Guangxi Normal University
PBM Universitas Negeri Surabaya	2011.5.19	Surabaya	Central China Normal University
PBM Universitas Tanjungpura	2011.11.26	Pontianak	Guangxi Minzu University

Table 2. Date of University Partner establishment between Indonesia and China

In East Java, the success of introducing Chinese culture to society is much broader. The role of CI supported by Chinese Consul General in Surabaya. In 2015 and 2016 alone, for instance, Mrs. Yu Hong, Chinese Consul General in Surabaya were often captured by mass media. She

actively involved in many activities which has connection Islam. During the fasting month (Ramadhan), she participated in fund raising activity in Masjid Agung (Great Mosque) and Ramadhan Charity Event, visiting SD Muhammadiyah 7, and many more. More activities in promoting Chinese language and culture is presented in Table 3.

Related News:
▪ Consul General Yu Hong Visited Solo (2015-05-25)
▪ Consul General Yu Hong Met Members of IVRI Visiting China Group (2016-05-04)
▪ Consul-General Yu Hong Attended Ramadan Charity Event (2015-07-15)
▪ Delegation of Jiangxi Province Visited East Java (2015-07-15)
▪ Consul General Yu Hong Attending Fundraising Ifar in Masjid Agung (2015-07-08)
▪ Consul General Yu Hong Met with Secretary General of Mojokerto (2015-07-08)
▪ All the Diplomats Had Ifar Dinner with the Indonesian Employees (2015-06-30)
▪ Consul General Yu Hong visited SD MUI AMMADIYAI 17 primary school (2015-08-10)

Table 3. Some activities done by Consul General to as efforts to approach communities



Figure 5. On July 7th, 2015, Consul General Yu Hong, leading some of diplomats from the Consulate General of PRC in Surabaya, went to Masjid Agung attending fundraising iftar (fasting break) and gave donations to some poor families and orphans.⁸

⁸ http://surabaya.china-consulate.org/eng/zlgxw_1/t1279647.htm



Figure 6. On June 10th, 2015, Consul General Yu Hong visited SD MUHAMMADIYAH 17 Primary School and donated dictionaries to the students over there.⁹



Figure 7. Consul-General Yu Hong attended a Ramadan Charity Event held at Surabaya's Zhenghe Mosque on July 15, 2015 and donated food bags to about 500 orphans.

The State University of Surabaya (Unesa) has got more attention from CI and Consul General in Surabaya because this university has Mandarin Study Program which was operated in 2010. Every year, students and lecturers hold many activities; among others are Mandarin speech contest, reading, writing, and dancing which are under the umbrella of Chinese Culture Week. CI and Mandarin Department also collaborate to hold annual activity to celebrate CI anniversary.

⁹ http://surabaya.china-consulate.org/eng/zlgxw_1/t1274209.htm



Figure 8. Mrs. Yu Hong, Chinese Consul General in Surabaya, participated in the 5th Anniversary celebration of CI in the State University of Surabaya, Indonesia.¹⁰ May 27, 2016.

The effort to socialize and to build partnership between China and Indonesia seems to be successful is when China through CI can approach Islamic institution. One of them is Muhammadiyah. This is the second biggest Islamic organization in the country. Muhammadiyah organizes hundreds of universities across the country. Therefore, the rector of CI in China said, "We know Muhammadiyah as an organization that is experienced in managing hundreds of universities. We are very happy, if some of the Muhammadiyah colleges can work with us. Especially now, we have opened a Mandarin study network in 150 locations. Perhaps, Muhammadiyah can send its students or we are ready to send teaching staff to Indonesia to study Mandarin."

Many Indonesian organization leaders including Muhammadiyah consider that strengthening the partnership with Indonesian is important to face globalization era. The Chairman of the Muhammadiyah Central Executive, Dr. Haedar Nashir said, "At present, it is very important that universities in Asian countries partner with each other in developing Human Resources. In the future, we will become countries that are taken into account in the global arena." To respond Mr Nashir's view, Chancellor of Tsinghua University, Prof. Yang Bin, who was accompanied by several campus leaders, expressed his gratitude for the visit of Mr. Nashir and the group. According to Mr. Yang Bin, Indonesia is a country full of good impressions so far.

¹⁰ surabaya.china-consulate.org/eng/zlgxw_1/t1367143.htm



Figure 9. The Delegate of Muhammadiyah Leaders held a meeting with the leaders of Confucius Institute in China

The universities under Muhammadiyah organization which have built partnership with CI are Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang, Universitas Ahmad Dahlan (UAD) Yogyakarta, Universitas Muhammadiyah Prof Dr Hamka (Uhamka) Jakarta. This is going to be followed by other Muhammadiyah universities. Note to be made that the strategic Partnership University of Muhammadiyah Malang (UMM) with Confucius Institute China entered an increasingly intense phase. In addition to lecturer and student exchanges, UMM is also active in performing Chinese cultural performances in collaboration with the Confucius Institute. Another Islamic University is Al-Azhar University which has been the pioneer of partnership initiation with CI since 2010.



Figure 10. Sunday (04/10/2015) UMM in collaboration with Confucius Institute held a Chinese Culture show ¹¹

¹¹ <http://www.umm.ac.id/id/berita/umm-confucius-institute-cina-perkuat-kemitraan-strategis.html>

At the Auditorium Hall of the FBS T2 Building in Unesa was filled with all students of the Mandarin Unesa Study Program to commemorate the 10th anniversary of Confucius Institute. Confucius Institute is a Chinese language institution that aims to facilitate people in learning Mandarin and Chinese culture. In the celebration of Confucius Institute's birthday, there were also several performances by Unesa Mandarin Study students, such as singing Mandarin songs, dancing Xin Cheng dances, and Wushu martial arts performances which are Chinese cultures. Mandarin students who have just returned from China also showed off by displaying Saman Dance from Aceh. Although it was very short, this event had a special impression for every Mandarin student.



Figure 11. Mandarin students performing 这个舞蹈名字是：缅桂花开朵朵香 (Mian gui hua kai duo duo xiang) on Parenting Meeting in Unesa

The last two activities from UMM and Unesa may indicate another evidence of hidden success of spreading Chinese culture to Indonesian young people: “acculturation”. This means a combination of two cultures that produce a new culture without losing the original elements in the culture. They are open minded and tolerant to Chinese culture yet they do not give up what they have as Indonesian and Moslem. An example for this phenomena is Indonesian Mandarin students were performing Chinese arts, dancing 缅桂花开朵朵香 (mian gui hua kai duoduo xiang)

“fragrance from miangui flowers”, but they wore Muslim outfit: wearing clothes that cover their body and veil that cover their hair, as seen in Figure 11.



Figure 12. Confucius Institute's Anniversary¹²



Figure 13. Head of Mandarin Department with students of Mandarin

¹² <http://kucingkuningkesayangan.blogspot.com/2014/09/mahasiswa-prodi-mandarin-unesa.html>

2.4 Some suggested breakthroughs in enhancing Confucius Institute's reputation

This section covers two parts which directly impact to Unesa: executed programs and expected programs in conjunction to spreading Chines culture. Even though these represent Unesa in particular, they may be well applied for other universities and communities.

CI Surabaya was established in conjunction with the opening of the UNESA Mandarin study program in 2010. CI in Surabaya has direct ties with Central China Normal University (CCNU) of China. The presence of CI in Surabaya in collaboration with UNESA has many advantages, including:

- (1) Delivering assistance in the form of Native lecturers directly from China, this year there are 12 native lecturers in CI Surabaya, with several native lecturers, students' mandarin skills are getting better, not only in terms of language skills, but also in terms of Chinese culture such as Chinese traditional dance, Chinese calligraphy (shufa), etc. This is evidenced by the various achievements of UNESA students, not only in language skills, but also in Chinese culture.
- (2) Sending UNESA students to study in China, either for 1 semester, 1 year or postgraduate level education. This begins in 2013 as many as 20 students sent to CCNU to study for 1 year with a full scholarship from CI. So far More than 50 students have had the opportunity to learn directly into the Mandarin speaking country.



Figure 14. Summer Camp students in China

- (3) Performing Chinese culture is routinely held at UNESA which was initiated by CI in collaboration with the Mandarin Language Department as well as holding competitions on Chinese language and Chinese culture.
- (4) Visiting lecturers from various Chinese universities to UNESA.
- (5) Organizing Summer Camp.

But in addition to some of the advantages above, presumably some aspects still need to be improved, such as:

- (1) Providing books and other reading resources. This is vital as students and lectures need them badly for their assignments and final projects.
- (2) Providing free access for UNESA lecturers and students to access CNKI as the largest site that provides theses and journals in China, so that they are expected to have better output, especially in education and culture.
- (3) Providing an opportunity for the Indonesian people to introduce Indonesian culture to China, so that not only Indonesian people know China, but also the Chinese Community becomes more familiar with Indonesian culture which actually has a direct connection with Chinese culture.
- (4) Providing opportunities for Chinese teachers at the high school level to have the opportunity to see the magnitude of the Chinese country and its rich culture. By so doing, they are more enthusiastic in teaching and motivating their students. Besides, it will bring benefits that the Chinese language education and teaching are more structured and the spread of language Mandarin is more evenly distributed in Indonesia.
- (5) Providing opportunities for lecturers and students to conduct study visits to each of the Confucius Institute offices in Indonesia, so that the relationship between CIs in Indonesia becomes even tighter, and coordination between CIs and Universities related also better interwoven.
- (6) Providing building for Mandarin Department and Mandarin Language Center on Lidah Wetan Campus of Unesa. At present when students and people want to learn Mandarin language, they have to go to CI Building in Jl. Moestopo that is 15 kilometers from Lidah Wetan Campus. This far distance makes students and people who live in West Surabaya area is reluctant. Besides, the lecturer's office of mandarin department is far from the representative. The classroom also need to be improved. At present, the Mandarin Building is shared with the other

four Departments: English, Indonesian, Javanese, and German. It is ideal that CI and Mandarin have one shared building with Chinese architecture.

These suggestions have hopes that the spirit to learn Mandarin and its culture will increase in order that the spread of mandarin language in Indonesia is increasingly widespread, making Mandarin language better known, besides increasing the human resources of the Indonesian people through the younger generation. These may contribute to bilateral relations between Indonesia and China become the better, given the various collaborations that the Indonesian government has made with the Chinese government in various fields.

3. Conclusion

Introducing and expanding Chinese language and culture which are identical with Confucius Institute through universities are just right path taken. The main parties in university are open minded and they put forward rationality rather than emotion. The coming of CI is considered mega data that can be explored. Thus, many works on this issue produced by academics. Furthermore, the graduates from university, Unesa particularly, will become Mandarin teachers for primary and secondary schools. The spread of Mandarin to young Indonesian generation is unimaginable fast, massive, and structured. This is in line with linguists who believe that the effective way of implanting language planning is through education.

CI and Unesa are now like two bodies but one soul. They are supporting each other. From the initiation, establishment, and development phases these two institutions are hand in hand to reach their planned goal. The great support given by CI to Unesa is assisting Mandarin Department in providing Mandarin native speakers. With CI, Unesa can build partnership with other universities that have CI in their campus. This also means that CI ignites student's, lecturer's, department's, faculty's, even university's networking. On the other side, CI automatically gets many advantages in both material and non-material.

CI has been almost a decade now. At glance, the establishment of CI in Indonesia with the mission of promoting Chinese language and culture is astonishingly successful. Mandarin is enthusiastically welcome and well accepted by all level of communities. More surprisingly, CI has been successful in penetrating some influencing Islamic organizations and universities. The fundamental successes of the CI and its counterparts are: being able to shift Indonesian's mind

setting to be more positive trend towards China and being able to create acculturation between China and Indonesia.

Despite the various successful programs offered by China through CI, Some suggestions are still made to enhance CI's reputation in the future. Almost of suggestions are related to education. It is expected to have more references related to China and Mandarin, to get wider access to go to China particularly secondary school teachers, to provide teaching-learning media, to provide more scholarship, to create partnership, to set up an new-integrated CI and Mandarin building, etc.

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