

**Cultural Activity Holding Principles and Strategies in Facilitating the Sustainable Development of the Confucius Institute**

**(Perspective of Leisure Time Activities)**

## **Abstract:**

In the recent years, as China's economy and exchanges with the world have seen rapid growth, there has been a sharp increase in the world's demands for Chinese language learning and understanding Chinese culture. In response to this proper time and condition, the Confucius Institute came into being in 2004. More years since the establishment of the Confucius Institute, it has been growing rapidly. By the end of 2016, 512 Confucius Institutes and 1073 Confucius Classrooms have been set up among 140 countries (regions) in the world.

However, together with the development, attendant problems have also gradually emerged, such as difficulties in activities promotion, a low level of participation, lack of new ideas and so on. Besides, from some scholars' perspective, cultural differences and lack of cultural identity have also to a certain extent become a bottleneck of the development process. Whether cultural activities can be successfully organized is closely related to the sustainable development of the Confucius Institute. Various cultural activities organized by the Confucius Institute are important ways of cultural transmission. Admittedly, they are a way of cultural diplomacy which can show the world a general image of China and help other countries understand Chinese culture, but they also allow the local people to participate in person, to enhance their cultural awareness and cultural competence, and ultimately to enrich their leisure time.

The current academic researches about Confucius Institute are mainly focused on the macroscopic role it plays in strengthening China's cultural soft power or some simple introductions, while researches through faithful records and objective analysis are basically blank, which means that the overall research lacks the significance of practical guidance.

In this paper, I mainly use case study method, and collect data through documentations, archival records, web site resources and private working files. Under the concepts and research results of leisure theory, I conduct an analysis about the correspondence between leisure time activities and cultural activities of the Confucius Institute from the perspective of leisure areas and leisure benefits. Further, I choose the Confucius Institute at Palacky University in Olomouc as the subject of study, through investigating the chronicle of cultural events, curricula schedules and statistical data, activity schemes and budgeting from 2012 to 2016, together with the Institute's two Five-year Development Plans and Annual Report of Confucius Institutes, combining individual 3-year working experience in participating and organizing cultural activities, and with a self-reflection about the leisure motivation and

leisure programming theories, I try to give an interpretation of the strategies and principles of how to efficiently design, promote and deliver meaningful and valuable cultural activities with a higher level of active involvement, in order that the sustainable development of the Confucius Institute could be better facilitated.

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## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 The Developing Status of the Confucius Institute**

In the recent years, as China's economy and exchanges with the world have seen rapid growth, there has been a sharp increase in the world's demands for Chinese language learning and understanding Chinese culture. In response to this proper time and condition, the concept of “Confucius Institute” was put forward.

Confucius Institute is a non-profit educational institution established by Chinese university in cooperation with foreign university. It is committed to adapting to the needs of learning Chinese of people all around the world, to enhancing the understanding of Chinese culture among people from different countries and regions, to strengthening the educational and cultural exchange and cooperation, and to developing friendship between China and foreign countries, to promoting the world’s multi-cultural development, as well as to building a harmonious world. Confucius Institute carries out Chinese teaching, exchanges and cooperation in Chinese and foreign education, culture and other aspects. The services provided include: Chinese teaching and training, conducting Chinese proficiency examinations and qualification, providing consultation in Chinese education, culture and other areas, and organizing language and cultural activities.

The first Confucius Institute in the world was established in Seoul, Korea on November 21, 2014. According to the statistics of Confucius Institute Headquarters/Hanban, by the end of 2016, 512 Confucius Institutes and 1073 Confucius Classrooms have been set up among 140 countries (regions) in the world. It’s undoubtedly developing in a very high speed.

### **1.2 The Important Role Cultural Activities Plays in the Sustainable Development of the Confucius Institute**

#### **1.2.1 The Definition of “Sustainable Development”**

“Sustainable development” was defined in the Brundtland Report published by the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987. It means “development that meets the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. In contemporary society, the focus of sustainable development is far broader than just the environment. It's also about “ensuring a strong, healthy and just society”,

which means “meeting the diverse needs of all people in existing and future communities, promoting personal wellbeing, social cohesion and inclusion, and creating equal opportunity” (Sustainable Development Commission).

The “sustainable development” we discuss here refers to the fact that the service organizations seek and implement scientific and strategic methods, in order to improve their management and better satisfy the needs of their target customers, to enjoy a good popularity and ultimately improve their sustainability in the future.

### **1.2.2 The Important Role Cultural Activities Plays in the Sustainable Development of the Confucius Institute**

As “sustainable development” has become a worldwide prevalent topic, we cannot but to have such a question: if the current development of the Confucius Institute is really sustainable?

In fact, together with the development, the Confucius Institute is also faced with gradually emerging problems and challenges, and some Confucius Institutes have been misunderstood and hindered. For example, in some Southeast Asian countries, the Confucius Institute is seen by the exclusive forces as a religion that has to be resisted, while some Western countries regard it as a political dependency and intentionally complicate simple academic issues. As the Chinese director of University of Duisburg-Essen Yuan Xiaohong says, it’s a long way to go for the Confucius Institute to be integrated into the local community. Besides the cultural identity issue, the Confucius Institute is also confronting other problems, such as inefficiency of activities promotion, a low level of participation, lack of creative ideas and so on. As the fact that various cultural activities account for a large part of the Confucius Institute’s work content, whether cultural activities can be successfully organized, or in other word whether the Confucius Institute can provide cultural activities best meeting the needs of local people is of prime importance to the sustainable development of the Confucius Institute.

China is an ancient civilization of the world. With a long history and profound cultural heritage, it has been continuously making remarkable contributions to the progress of human civilization. Today, globalization is developing firmly and rapidly, while cultural diversity has become a hallmark and an important driving force of human society. The world needs to understand China, and China also wants to introduce itself to the other countries.

Confucius Institutes around the world are all trying to show the charm of Chinese language and culture through a wide variety of methods. Recalling the development of the Confucius Institute, organizing cultural activities is almost the most common and major way during the process of cultural transmission. Successful cultural activities can not only show the world a general image of China and help other countries understand Chinese culture, but also allows the local people to participate and experience in person, to enhance their cultural awareness and cultural competence, and ultimately to enrich their life content.

After analyzing the Work Report of the Confucius Institute Headquarters from 2009 to 2016, I worked out the following *Table 1* with corresponding data.

**Table 1: General Data of the Confucius Institute from 2009 to 2016**

Year	No. of Confucius Institutes	No. of Confucius Classrooms	No. of Chinese teaching classes	No. of registered students	No. of cultural activities	No. of participants of cultural activities
2009	282	272	9 000	0.26 million	7 500	3 million
2010	322	369	-	0.36 million	10 000	5 million
2011	358	500	24 000	0.5 million	13 000	7.22 million
2012	400	535	34 000	0.655 million	16 000	9.48 million
2013	440	646	40 000	0.85 million	20 000	9.2 million
2014	475	851	64 000	1.11 million	-	-
2015	500	1 000	72 000	1.394 million	36 000	-
2016	511	1 073	-	1.55 million	41 000	13 million

As can be seen from the above table, the number of Confucius Institutes and Confucius Classrooms has been increasing since 2009, and the number of registered students has been growing steadily in accordance with the number of Chinese teaching classes of various kinds, so as the number of participants of cultural activities with the number of cultural events of all types at different levels. The Confucius Institute has become one of the most extensive, inclusive and influential global language and cultural communities, while it can be easily noticed that cultural activities are enjoying a comparatively absolute advantage in audience.

### 1.2.3 Methodology and Research Significance

The current academic researches about Confucius Institute are mainly focused on the macroscopic role it plays in strengthening China's cultural soft power or some simple introductions, while researches through faithful records and objective analysis, aiming to improve the Institute's future sustainability are basically blank, which means that the overall research lacks the significance of practical guidance. Besides, analyzing the relationship

between cultural activities and the sustainable development of the Confucius Institute from the perspective of leisure time activities has never been done yet.

### **Objective**

Generally, the aim of this research is to analyze the relationship between cultural activities and the sustainable development of the Confucius Institute from the perspective of Leisure Time Activities, and to give an interpretation of the strategies and principles of how to efficiently design, promote and deliver meaningful and valuable cultural activities with a higher level of active involvement, in order that the sustainable development of the Confucius Institute could be better facilitated.

Specifically, the aims of this research are as follows:

1. To get an understanding on the relationship between leisure and culture through analyzing the conception about and definition of leisure and culture and the role culture plays in leisure.
2. To find out the correspondence and interrelatedness between leisure time activity areas and cultural activity types of the Confucius Institute, and to further analysis the participants' motivation when choosing cultural activities of the Confucius Institute.
3. To give an interpretation of the strategies and principles of how to efficiently design, promote and deliver meaningful and valuable cultural activities of the Confucius Institute by investigating the developing status of Confucius Institute at Palacky University.

### **The Method of Research and the Research Design**

The study is to analysis the relationship between cultural activities and the sustainable development of the Confucius Institute, so the aim itself has the descriptive, explanatory and analytical characteristics. In the process of generalizing the strategies and principles of cultural activity programming, the researcher is making the “theory”, which will play a guiding function in future cultural activity anticipation, design, promotion and implementation. Besides, in view of the original intention of this research, which emphasizes on the practicability and expects to remedy and improve the current situation with its heuristic research results, it should be considered within the context—certain Confucius Institute, and more specifically the procedure of cultural activity organization. Therefore, the researcher



chooses qualitative case study as the method of research, because it is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, it “affords researchers opportunities to explore or describe a phenomenon in context using a variety of data sources ... which allows for multiple facets of the phenomenon to be revealed and understood” (Pamela Baxter, Susan Jack. 2008. *Qualitative Case Study Methodology*), and “recognizes the importance of the subjective human creation of meaning, but doesn’t reject outright some notion of objectivity” (Miller & Crabtree, 1999, p. 10). Moreover, given that we are going to seek for strategies and principles of cultural activity programming, “qualitative research is best suited to address a research problem in which you do not know the variables and need to explore” (John W. Creswell. 2012. *Educational Research*. 4. Ed. p. 16).

#### **a. Subject of the Study**

The step going first in the process of qualitative data collection is to identify participants and sites to be studied and to engage in a sampling strategy that will best help us understand our central phenomenon and the research question we are asking. As the fact that “in qualitative inquiry, the intent is not to generalize to a population, but to develop an in-depth exploration of a central phenomenon, thus, to best understand this phenomenon, the qualitative researcher purposefully or intentionally selects individuals and sites”, therefore “in qualitative research, we identify our participants and sites on purposeful sampling, based on places and people that can best help us understand our central phenomenon.” (John W. Creswell. 2012. *Educational Research*. 4. Ed. p. 205) With the guiding standard—whether the chosen individuals, organizations or sites are “information rich” (Patton, 1990, p. 169), the researcher chooses Confucius Institute at Palacky University in Olomouc as the subject of the study. It was officially set up on 26 September 2007 by Palacky University in cooperation with Beijing Foreign Studies University and belongs to the first established group of Confucius Institutes, and is the only Confucius Institute in the Czech Republic, which means that its developing process has great representativeness and a significant influence and there will be more detailed information for the researcher to collect and analysis.

The research is focused on three parts of cultural activities that Confucius Institute at Palacky University implements: Chinese teaching courses, Chinese culture courses/workshops and other cultural activities. Chinese teaching courses include compulsory and selective courses through the university, individual, dual and group courses for the public, after-school

interest classes for middle school and primary school students, but the Chinese Teaching Courses we discuss here are all leisure time courses, not including compulsory or selective courses through the university; Chinese culture courses/workshops are sequential and systematic courses/workshops based on Chinese traditional cultural elements; Other cultural activities are activities, programs and events other than Chinese teaching courses and Chinese culture courses/workshops, and they are conducted either independently by the Confucius Institute, or jointly held in cooperation with other organizations.

This research will be held for about 10 months from June 2017 until April 2018, including searching for relevant literature, identifying potential data sources, filtering, categorizing, analyzing, and interpreting collected data and information, and in the end reporting the research result, so that a complex phenomenon can be converted into a format that is readily understood by the reader and will generate future referential value.

#### **b. The Source of Data**

The second phase in qualitative data collection is to gain access to these individuals, organizations or sites by obtaining permissions, because qualitative data collection requires all-round and in-depth information and consists of lengthy periods of gathering data directly involving the research subject. The key point is to gain the support and to win the trust of the “gatekeeper”—“an individual who has an official or unofficial role at the site, provides entrance to a site, helps researchers locate people, and assists in the identification of places to study” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995), while the researchers usually need to explain them the issues such as “why their sites were chosen for the study”, “how much time the researchers will spend at the site”, “how the researchers will use and report the results”, “what the sites will gain from the study” and etc. (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998).

The researcher has been working at the Confucius Institute at Palacky University for more than 3 years and this case study is going to serve as an academic project thesis, while the general objective is to better facilitate the sustainable development of Confucius Institute in the future. So the researcher will directly contact the “gatekeeper” of the chosen Institute—the Chinese Director prof. HUANG Xiaoming in person, to explain the objective, procedure and meaning of this research in details, in order to win his permission and support in getting access to some important document and files, so that qualitative data could be collected.

After getting the permission of the “gatekeeper”, as the third step in qualitative data collection, the researchers have to identify the types of data that will address their research questions. The types of qualitative data can be placed basically into four categories— observations, interviews and questionnaires, documents and audiovisual materials, while “it is important to become familiar with your questions and topics and to review them prior to deciding upon the types of qualitative data that you will collect”. (John W. Creswell. 2012. *Educational Research*. 4. Ed. p. 212) As mentioned above, the general aim of this research is “to analyze the relationship between cultural activities and the sustainable development of the Confucius Institute from the perspective of Leisure Time Activities, and to give an interpretation of the strategies and principles of how to efficiently design, promote and deliver meaningful and valuable cultural activities with a higher level of active involvement, in order that the sustainable development of the Confucius Institute could be better facilitated”. From this sense, the “documents” can in general best suit the research topics. Documents, as a valuable qualitative data collection method, enjoy its own irreplaceable advantages: “Documents represent a good source for text (word) data for a qualitative study. They provide the advantage of being in the language and words of the participants, who have usually given thoughtful attention to them. They are also ready for analysis without the necessary transcription that is required with observational or interview data.” (John W. Creswell. 2012. *Educational Research*. 4. Ed. p. 223) The researcher will take the outlines suggested by American educator John W. Creswell for collecting documents in qualitative:

- a. Identify the types of documents that can provide useful information to answer your qualitative research questions.
- b. Consider both public (e.g., school board minutes) and private documents (e.g., personal diaries) as sources of information for your research.
- c. Once the documents are located, seek permission to use them from the appropriate individuals in charge of the materials.
- d. Once you have permission to use documents, examine them for accuracy, completeness, and usefulness in answering the research questions in your study.
- e. Record information from the documents. (John W. Creswell. 2012. *Educational Research*. 4. Ed. p. 223)

The qualitative data researchers obtain about a site or participants in a study consists of public and private resources, which provide valuable information in helping researchers understand the central phenomena. Minutes from meetings, official memos, records in the public domain, and archival material in libraries can all be examples of public documents, while private documents include personal journals and diaries, letters, personal notes, jottings individuals write to themselves and etc. Moreover, it is worth mentioning that “materials such as e-mail comments and Web site data illustrate both public and private documents, and they represent a growing data source for qualitative researchers.” (John W. Creswell. 2012. *Educational Research*. 4. Ed. p. 223) From this point of view, to get an overall understanding of the general content and forms of cultural activities held by Confucius Institutes all over the world, the researcher will statistically analyze the reports of the “Cultural Activities” column of the Confucius Institute Headquarters News Center website in the recent 2 years. To analyze the cultural activities in the Confucius Institute at Palacky University, we need to figure out their main types and their design, promoting and delivering situation, as well as their influence. “A hallmark of case study research is the use of multiple data sources, a strategy which also enhances data credibility”. (Patton, 1990; Yin, 2003) Under the guidance of above listed qualitative data resources, the researcher decides to collect data through investigating the Chronicle of Cultural Events, Curricula Schedules and Statistical Data, Activity Schemes and Budgeting from 2012 to 2016, together with the Institute’s two Five-year Development Plans and Annual Report of Confucius Institutes, and through retrospectively individual 3-year working notes and reports and self-reflection about participating in and organizing cultural activities, so that more actual data can be collected and presented in this case.

### **c. The Data Collection**

Recording data is an essential process in qualitative research, consisting of recording information through research protocols and administering data collection. In the case of qualitative data collection through documents, the researcher serves as the document reader, collector, sorter and recorder to administer data collection. Once the permission to use documents has been obtained, the researcher starts to examine them for accuracy, completeness, and usefulness in answering the research questions in the study. Although reading is more to do with literature review, reading of documents is also an important instrument for qualitative case study. The process of recording the documents can take several forms, “including taking notes about the documents or, if possible, optically scanning them so

a text (or word) file is created for each document.” (John W. Creswell. 2012. *Educational Research*. 4. Ed. p. 223)

The potential limitation in this data collection approach is that the documents may sometimes be difficult to locate and obtain and information may not be available to the public. After personal consultation with the Chinese director of the Confucius Institute at Palacky University, the access to investigating and collecting documentation, archival records, activity pictures or videos, and news report may hopefully be available. What’s more, the relevant publications and network resource can also serve as a meaningful reference. As to the personal documents part, the researcher’s previous work files, such as activity design, field notes, and self-reflection work summary will be gathered, and new information and data will also be generated from ongoing work.

The two main aims of this research are to find out the correspondence and interrelatedness between leisure time activity areas and cultural activity types of the Confucius Institute and to further analysis the participants’ motivation when choosing cultural activities of the Confucius Institute, as well as to give an interpretation of the strategies and principles of how to efficiently design, promote and deliver meaningful and valuable cultural activities of the Confucius Institute by investigating the developing status of Confucius Institute at Palacky University. Therefore firstly, we need to accordingly get an overall understanding of the general content and forms of cultural activities held by Confucius Institutes all over the world, and then to detailedly analyze the cultural activities in the Confucius Institute at Palacky University.

As the fact that there’re more than 500 Confucius Institutes around the world, which makes it impossible to go through their cultural activity types one by one. So the data collection of this part will be focused mainly on the reports of the “Cultural Activities” column of the Confucius Institute Headquarters News Center website, while the survey range will be set for the recent two years, namely 2015 and 2016. Because the cultural activities can be conducted in a variety of ways and forms, it’s more desirable to classify them into several categories, and moreover, it’s easier to incorporate these cultural activity types into the corresponding leisure time activity areas and to further understand the participants’ motivation.

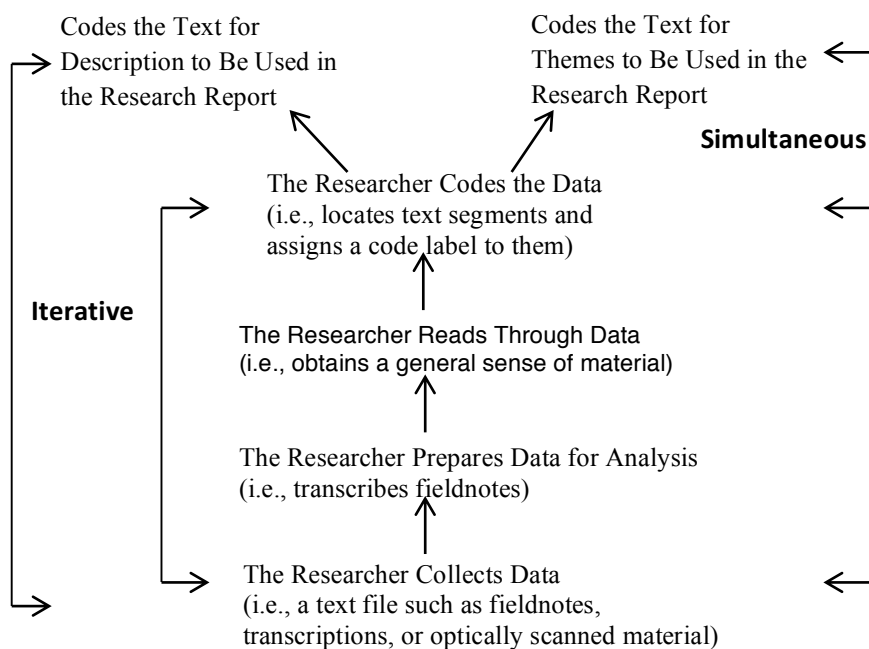
Then, when collecting the data and information about cultural activity designing, promoting, delivering and evaluating situation in the Confucius Institute at Palacky University,

because this is the main subject of our research, we need to extend the survey range into the recent 5 years, i.e. from 2012 to 2016. With the access to the archival library, data sharing disk, the Chronicle of Cultural Events, Curricula Schedules and Statistical Data, Activity Schemes and Budgeting from 2012 to 2016 will be gathered to be our supporting documents, while the Institute’s two Five-year Development Plans, Annual Report of Confucius Institutes, together with the researcher’s 3-year work files, such as activity design, field notes, and self-reflection work summary are to serve as supplementary documents.

#### d. The Procedure of Data Analysis

During the process of data analysis, researchers need to usually bear the following facts in mind. Analyzing qualitative data requires understanding how to make sense of the collected text to form answers to the research questions. The qualitative process of data analysis is inductive in form, going from the particular or the detailed data to the broad themes or categories. The data analysis activity can be conducted simultaneously when collecting data, while the researcher may cycle back and forth between data collection and analysis, and read the obtained information several times to develop a deeper understanding. The procedure of data analysis in this research will be guided by the “bottom-up” structure given by John W. Creswell, as shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: The Qualitative Process of Data Analysis**



*Adopted from: John W. Creswell. 2012. Educational Research. 4. Ed. p. 223*

Initial preparation of the data for analysis requires organizing the vast amount of information. The researcher chooses “documents” as the main qualitative data collection method and most of the collected data are already available for analysis without the necessary transcription, while the information provided is relatively more deliberate. The data analysis will be in line with the following procedure.

- Firstly, during the process of collecting data through the above mentioned resources, the researcher will simultaneously carefully copy, scan and download the acquired documents and organize them into file folders and computer files for future data analysis use, such as the folders of the Chronicle of Cultural Events, Curricula Schedules and Statistical Data, Activity Schemes and Budgeting, the Institute’s Five-year Development Plans, Annual Report of Confucius Institutes, the individual work files and etc.

- Secondly, with the anticipation that there’s not going to be a large database, the researcher prefers to use hand analysis instead of some qualitative computer programs, but the use of a computer cannot be left out. The researcher will initially read through data to explore the general sense of the data, mark it with color and notes or memos, which can be short phrases, ideas, concepts that occur into the mind. Then coding the data comes as a further process of analyzing text. “Coding is the process of segmenting and labeling text to form descriptions and broad themes in the data.” (Tesch, 1990) “The object of the coding process is to make sense out of text data, divide it into text or image segments, label the segments with codes, examine codes for overlap and redundancy, and collapse these codes into broad themes. Thus, this is an inductive process of narrowing data into a few themes.” (John W. Creswell. 2012. *Educational Research*. 4. Ed. p. 223)

After the researcher obtains research data copies from the archival library and data sharing disk of Confucius Institute at Palacky University, all the useful information should be first filtrated out, and the researcher will in the meantime generate reflection and mark on the copies, such as what cultural activity types certain activity belongs to, yearly holding times, the number and types of participants, activity organizational forms, merits or demerits and so on.

- Thirdly, in the next step, we need to analyze the data to form an in-depth understanding of the central phenomenon and to generate answers to the research questions, involving examining the data in detail to describe what we’ve learned, and developing themes or broad categories of ideas from the data.

So with the types of cultural activities Confucius Institute at Palacky University held from 2012 to 2016, we need to further classify activity types into several more highly summarized categories and to make different tables which are much clearer and more convenient for future statistical analysis, so that we could have a basic understanding of the activity forms, and give an interpretation about which kinds of activities are organized more often and enjoy greater popularity.

- Fourthly, during the procedure of reporting findings, a narrative discussion, which is “a written passage in a qualitative study in which authors summarize, in detail, the findings from their data analysis” (John W. Creswell. 2012. *Educational Research*. 4. Ed. p. 254), will be chosen as a primary form, while the finding interpretation section will include: A review of the major findings and how the research questions were answered; Personal reflections of the researcher about the meaning of the data; Personal views compared or contrasted with the literature; Limitations of the study; Suggestions for future research, as suggested by Creswell.

Therefore, on the basis of the collected documents about activity proposals, records, and reports, together with the personal work files in participating in, organizing and observing the activities from 2014 to 2016, the researcher will give a description and generalization about the characteristics of cultural activity holding situation and an evaluation about the successes and failures of different years in a yearly sequence. In the meanwhile, the researcher will also analyze how the cultural activity holding experience in the previous years provides guidance to the following years, and compare the different holding situations of same or similar activities in different years, then we will be able to figure out how the planning schemes of same activities get adjusted or modified, in order to achieve a better holding effect, and what elements are playing important roles throughout successful cultural activity programming in the Confucius Institute.

Then in the end, with the knowledge of literature about leisure programming philosophy and strategies, together with our case study achievement, we will be able to give an interpretation of the strategies and principles of how to efficiently design, promote and deliver meaningful and valuable cultural activities of the Confucius Institute, so that their sustainable development can be facilitated. Thus, hopefully the research questions can be basically answered, the research results can enjoy great significance in guiding future cultural activity organization, while the limitation of this research and future research suggestions will also be reflected.



## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 The Developing Status of Leisure Conception**

With the continuous progress of science and technology, the rapid development of the world economy, as well as the ever-increasing improvement of people's living standards, the 21. Century has seen an upsurge of interest in leisure time activities, and increasingly great importance is being attached to leisure time, because of the fact that leisure has been consistently linked to wellbeing for its many potential benefits for over decades. How to spend the leisure time joyfully and meaningfully has become one of the most prevailing topics discussed in people's daily life. "Leisure is a central component to our society and intertwines with most facets of daily life. From affecting social cohesion to enhancing mental and physical health, leisure is directly connected with a person's overall quality of life across the world." (Downward & Rasciute, 2011; Mannell, 2007; Stubbe, De Moor; Boomsma & De Geus, 2007) "Leisure expressions are becoming common universal features and are regarded as desirable and essential for the development of both the individual and society" throughout the world. (World Leisure Organization, 2011, par. 3)

Accordingly, influenced by the changing social lifestyles and perceptions towards leisure, more and more international, state and municipal leisure organizations and facilities have been set up, in order to meet the ever-increasing leisure demands all around the world. For example, the World Leisure Organization, a worldwide, non-governmental voluntary organization was incorporated in 1956, believing that "leisure is vital in enhancing the human condition". With the vision "everyone will have easy access to park and recreation opportunities in sustainable communities", the American National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) was formed in 1965, endeavoring to "advance parks, recreation and environmental conservation efforts that enhance the quality of life for all people". In the meanwhile, leisure education is being gradually integrated into the educational process, aiming to "assist children, youth and adults, to reach the good life and the best usage of leisure through the cultivation of their personal intellectual, emotional, physical and social development" (defined by the "World Leisure Commission on Education"). More and more people tend to gain an appreciation for leisure and come to realize how it affects and benefits their lifelong wellbeing and quality of life.

Besides, as the Canadian Index of Wellbeing (CIW) reports, leisure and culture has become one of the eight headline indicators included in the index of wellbeing, while the

other seven indicators are community vitality, democratic engagement, education, environment, healthy populations, living standards, and time use, which are all more or less associated with leisure. Leisure is an important factor that should be taken into consideration by the facilitating organizations or agencies, whose main goal is to satisfy people's needs of realizing a sense of satisfaction and self-improvement, and to help them extend the degree and scope of life content, because only in this way can the organizations acquire an inexhaustible motive force and achieve a sustainable development. Just like the World Leisure Organization Annual Report 2013 says, they are "dedicated to discovering and fostering those conditions which permit leisure to serve as a force to optimize collective and individual well-being in the context of play, recreation, the arts, culture, sport, festivals and celebrations, health and fitness, travel and tourism".

## **2.2 The Relationship between Leisure and Culture**

### **2.2.1 Defining Leisure**

To begin, a review is provided of how leisure has been understood and defined in the past and how to conceptualize leisure by utilizing a holistic definition. In this thesis, we discuss leisure from a comprehensive perspective.

"The definition of leisure has been a consistent discussion among scholars. The definitions vary from depicting leisure as freedom, a state of mind, non-work, free-time activity, consumption, and relaxation." (Goodale & Godbey, 1988; Rojek, 2010; Searle & Brayley, 1999; Schor, 2007) An early and influential definition was offered by Dumazedier (1974) who summarized leisure in this way:

"Leisure is activity – apart from the obligations of work, family, and society – to which the individual turns at will, for either relaxation, diversion, or broadening his [sic] knowledge and spontaneous social participation, the free exercise of creative capacity." (p. 133)

About the same time, a definition of leisure that focuses primarily on its properties as a state of mind was provided by Kelly (1972) who stated that:

"Leisure is the quality of activity defined by relative freedom and intrinsic satisfaction." (p. 23)

One definition provided by Parker (1976) emphasizes primarily on free time and all of the activities and properties it embraces:

“Leisure is time free from work and other obligations, it also encompasses activities which are characterized by a feeling of comparative freedom.” (p. 48)

Cushman and Laidler’s (1990) definition builds on these earlier perspectives and we see a number of the properties of leisure manifested as a state of mind – and therefore not necessarily the antithesis of work – that leads to certain anticipated outcomes:

“Leisure is considered primarily as a condition, sometimes referred to as a state of being, an attitude of mind or a quality of experience. It is distinguished by the individual’s perceived freedom to act and distinguished from conditions imposed by necessity. It is assumed to be pleasurable and, although it may appeal because of certain anticipated benefits, it is intrinsically motivated: it is an end in itself and valuable for its own sake.” (p. 1)

While today, it also tends to utilize a holistic leisure definition which perceives that:

“Leisure is a combination of some of the previously mentioned definitions of leisure, with particular emphasis on the individual’s perceived freedom in relation to the activity and role of leisure in helping the individual achieve self-actualization.” (Christopher R. Edginton, Susan D. Hudson, Rodney B. Dieser, and Susan R. Edginton. 2004. *Leisure Programming 4. Ed.* p. 6)

### **2.2.2 The Role Leisure Plays in facilitating people’s wellbeing**

When interpreting the role leisure plays in facilitating people’s wellbeing, we usually need to take the definition given by the World Leisure and Recreation Association’s International Charter for Leisure Education for reference. It defines that “Leisure refers to a specific area of human experience with its own benefits including freedom of choice, creativity, satisfaction, enjoyment and increased pleasure and happiness. It embraces comprehensive forms of expression or activity whose elements are as often physical in nature as they are intellectual, social, artistic or spiritual.” Leisure fosters positive overall health and well-being by offering a variety of opportunities to enable individuals and groups to select activities and experiences which suit their own needs, interests and preferences. People achieve their fullest leisure potential when they are involved in the decision that determines the conditions of their leisure.

The choice of being involved into leisure time activities is based on participants' free will and expectation of experiencing a meaningful and beneficial leisure time through various activities without any undesired intervention or affect, so as to achieve self-improvement in knowledge, skills, attitude, values or psychosomatic well-being and ultimately realize a sense of self-realization and life content. Table 2, adapted from the academic work of Driver and Bruns (1999), summarizes the multiple benefits of recreation and leisure experiences.

**TABLE 2: Benefits of Recreation and Leisure Experiences**

<p>1. Personal benefits</p> <p>(1) Psychological</p> <p>a. Better mental health and health maintenance – wellness, stress management, catharsis, prevention of or reduced depression, anxiety, and anger, positive change in moods and emotions.</p> <p>b. Personal development – self-confidence, improved cognitive and academic performance, sense of control, autonomy and independence, leadership.</p> <p>c. Personal appreciation and satisfaction – sense of freedom, self-actualization, creative expression, spirituality, appreciation of nature.</p> <p>(2) Psychophysiological</p> <p>a. Cardiovascular benefits</p> <p>b. Reduce or prevent hypertension</p> <p>c. Decrease body fat and obesity</p> <p>d. Increase muscular strength</p> <p>e. Reduced consumption of alcohol and tobacco</p> <p>f. Reduced serum cholesterol and triglycerides</p> <p>g. Improved bone mass</p> <p>h. Improved functioning of immune system</p> <p>i. Respiratory benefits</p> <p>j. Increased life expectancy</p>	<p>2. Social and cultural benefits</p> <p>(1) Community satisfaction</p> <p>(2) Cultural and historical awareness</p> <p>(3) Ethnic identity</p> <p>(4) Family bonding</p> <p>(5) Understanding and tolerance for others</p> <p>(6) Reduced social alienation</p> <p>(7) Pride in the communication and nation</p> <p>(8) Social support</p> <p>(9) Enhanced worldview</p> <p>(10) Prevention of social problems by youth at risk</p> <p>3. Economic benefits</p> <p>(1) Reduced health care costs</p> <p>(2) Increased productivity at work</p> <p>(3) Decreased job turnover</p> <p>(4) Local and regional economic growth</p> <p>(5) Contribution to national economic development</p> <p>4. Environmental benefits</p> <p>(1) Maintenance of physical facilities</p> <p>(2) Husbandry and improved relationships with natural world</p> <p>(3) Understanding human dependency on the natural world</p> <p>(4) Development of an environmental ethic</p> <p>(5) Environmental protection of biodiversity and ecosystem</p>
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*Adapted from: Driver B.L., & Bruns, D.H. (1999). Concepts and uses of the benefits approach to leisure.*

### 2.2.3 Defining Culture

Researchers have discussed that culture is socially constructed and is related to a person or group's racial and ethnic characteristics (Chick, 2009; Tsai, 2010; Walker, 2007). More succinctly, culture is a particular way of life (Juniu & Henderson, 2001; Wearing, 1998). While specifically, as in Tylor's (1871) much cited definition, "*culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capability and habits acquired by man as a member of society*" (as cited in Smedley & Smedley, 2005, p. 17).

In its most recent effort to define the meaning of culture, UNESCO (2009) asserts the definition of culture as being:

“...the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of a society or a social group that encompasses not only art and literature, but lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions, and beliefs.” (p. 1)

In a more practical way, culture is most often defined in the context of a variety of activities in which people engage during leisure time. As Walker, Scott-Melnyk, and Sherwood (2002) suggested that

“Cultural participation includes creating, witnessing, preserving, and supporting artistic and cultural expression.”(p. 7)

The definition typically includes both primary and secondary participation in these activities. Primary participation represents the active engagement of the individual in the activity – as artist, creator, or performer. Secondary participation means being engaged in the fine and performing arts as a spectator; in other words, as an audience member for the performing arts and/or as a visitor to arts-related venues such as museums, galleries, libraries, theatres, and other cultural sites and facilities.

#### **2.2.4 Cultural Diversity, Cultural Competence and Leisure Motivation**

While a variety of links have been established between leisure and wellbeing, culture has “recently become a consideration when investigating leisure and wellbeing” (Iwasaki, 2007), as cultural diversity continues to grow in the process of globalization.

Leisure motivation can be defined as “a need, reason, or satisfaction that stimulates involvement in a leisure activity” (Chen, Pang. 2012). And the leisure motivation theories have been a topic of discussion among scholars for decades. Ragheb and Beard (1983) summarized these theories by illustrating that leisure motivation is defined by psychological and social reasons for participating in leisure, and can be measured by four dimensions: intellectual, social, competence-mastery needs, and stimulus avoidance, while Driver and Bruns (1999) suggested that there are three types of leisure motivation: seeking for an improved condition for an individual, a group, or another entity, aiming to prevent a worse condition through maintenance of a desired condition, and pursuing the realization of a specific, satisfying physical and psychological outcome. From demographic perspective, the

motivation can be modified by many factors, such as age, gender, race and national identity, education and occupation, etc.

As is shown above, “culture is socially constructed and is related to a person or group’s racial and ethnic characteristics”. Preservation of cultural heritage can be a strong influence on leisure choices made by individuals. Previous opportunities and experiences by groups of people in the general society will affect the leisure attitudes and behaviors demonstrated by those individuals. “People from different cultures bring with them different values, norms, and customs” (Weston, 1996).

With the accelerating pace of globalization and as our society has become and will continue to become more culturally diverse, the cultivation and enhancement of cultural competence seems to be especially important in this day and age. The desire of leisure activity participants to promote multiculturalism is reflected in the delivery of leisure services all around the world. According to Fearn and Jarvi (1992), the recreation and park profession or other leisure facilities should “maintain an all-inclusive attitude about program development [and] ... increase our understanding of other cultures”, in order to improve the cultural competence of their clients.

Denboba (1993) defined cultural competence as “a set of values, behaviors, attitudes, and practices within a system, organization, program, or among individuals that enables them to work effectively cross-culturally”. Cultural competence also refers to the ability to honor and respect the beliefs, language, interpersonal styles, and behaviors of individuals. Cultural competence recognizes, affirms, fosters, and values the strengths of individuals, families, and communities and protects and preserves the worth and dignity of each. Striving to achieve cultural competence is a dynamic, ongoing, developmental process that requires a long-term commitment. (AAPAR. Leisure Education in the Schools. 2011) The provision of cultural activities in a cross-cultural organization can undoubtedly serve as an ideal and excellent avenue to facilitate such a long-term commitment, and help students immerse themselves in culturally different leisure interests and activities, in order to broaden their leisure horizons and consequently become well-rounded with multicultural attitudes, interests, motivations, habits, knowledge, appreciation, and skills that will be useful throughout their lives.

### **3. Leisure Time Activity Areas and Cultural Activity Types of the Confucius Institute**

#### **3.1 Leisure Time Activity Areas**

There are a variety of ways in which leisure service activities may be classified. Activities may be classified on the basis of the customer's age or gender; according to physical, mental, and social contexts (i.e., high risk or low risk, structured or unstructured, planned or self-directed, individual or group); within facility or setting (e.g., courses, recreation centers, studios, parks, and camps), or general environment in which the activity takes place (i.e., indoor or outdoor, seasonal—spring, summer, fall, or winter). Depending on the goal structure of the individual involved, activities can be classified as competitive, individualistic, or cooperative. Some typologies also focus on benefits or outcomes, or the reasons that people are motivated to participate in such activities. As MacKay and Crompton (1988) note, terms such as relaxation, achievement, intimacy, power, or socialization define clusters of activities.

Another of the methods of classifying activities is based on types of activities. A number of authors have identified activity areas. For example, Russell (1982) has identified activity areas as follows: sport and games, hobbies, music, outdoor recreation, mental and literary recreation, social recreation, arts and crafts, dance, and drama. Farrell and Lundegren (1991:172) offer the suggestion that program areas include: arts, crafts, dance, drama, environmental activities, music, sports and games, social recreation, and volunteerism. More recently, Chase (1996:123) classifies eight activity areas including: 1) adventure challenge; 2) community/social/environment; 3) crafts; 4) fitness/health/wellness; 5) hobbies; 6) lifelong learning (fine arts, reading, writing, etc.); 7) outdoor living/outdoor skills/camping; and 8) sports/games.

In this paper, I adopt a more specific and comprehensive way of classification by Christopher R. Edginton, Susan D. Hudson, Rodney B. Dieser, and Susan R. Edginton (2014) for the following discussion. From their perspective, activity areas consist of: 1) the arts, including performing arts (music, dance, drama), visual arts (including decorative arts, crafts), and new arts (using technological apparatus); 2) literary activities; 3) self-improvement/education; 4) sports, games, and athletics; 5) aquatics; 6) outdoor recreation; 7) wellness activities; 8) hobbies; 9) social recreation; 10) volunteer services; 11) travel and tourism; and 12) immersing areas—youth and family.

### **3.2 An Overview of the Cultural Activities held by the Confucius Institute around the World**

In order to have an overall understanding of the general content and forms of cultural activities held by Confucius Institutes all over the world, and to further integrate these activities into leisure time activity areas and effectively conduct the comparison between them, this paper statistically analyzed the reports of the “Cultural Activities” column of the Confucius Institute Headquarters News Center website, and it’s found that the cultural activities carried out by Confucius Institutes globally are mainly in the following forms:

- a. Courses on special cultural topics, mainly give lectures about traditional Chinese ideology, traditional virtues and etiquette of China, Chinese traditional festivals and folk customs, ancient Chinese literature and art, ancient Chinese architecture, life of the Chinese people, etc.
- b. Trainings and workshops of Chinese talents and skills, focus on long-term series of courses about Tai Chi and martial arts, folk dances and Chinese songs/Peking Opera, Chinese traditional musical instruments, Chinese arts and crafts (such as calligraphy, traditional Chinese painting, paper-cuts, Chinese knots, etc.), Chinese tea ceremony, Chinese cuisine, traditional Chinese medical science and medicine/acupuncture, Chinese chess/game of Go/mahjong, or Chinese Corner, etc.
- c. Cultural exhibitions, such as Chinese calligraphy and traditional Chinese painting exhibition, photographic exhibition/film panorama, traditional artware (porcelain, fancy lantern, seal cutting, Chi-Pao and traditional Chinese costumes, etc.), history of traditional Chinese medicine, demonstrations and shows of students’ own works, etc.
- d. Artistic performances, including musical instruments, folk dances, Tai Chi and martial arts, acrobatics, songfest (such as pop songs, folk songs, chorus and concert), Peking opera and local operas (such as Sichuan opera, Kunqu opera), drama, costume show, dragon dance and lion dance, etc.
- e. Competitions, such as China’s national condition knowledge contest, keynote speech, poetry recitation, translation and composition, Chinese calligraphy and traditional Chinese painting, Chinese songs, “Chinese Bridge”—Chinese proficiency competition for foreign university or middle school students, etc., or games, such as kicking shuttlecock, playing ping-pong/badminton, playing



Chinese chess/Go/tangram (seven-piece puzzle), chopstick skills, making dumplings etc.

- f. Multimedia programs, for example online Confucius Classroom, distance curriculum, online Spring Festival Gala of Confucius Institutes around the world, communicative Chinese on Facebook, broadcasting program/TV talk show about China and Chinese, etc.
- g. Regular activities, including Confucius Institute Day, Month of Chinese Culture, Three Tours Activities (artistic performance conducted by Chinese national/provincial or municipal/university level art troupes, cultural exhibition sponsored by Chinese cultural organizations, and lectures given by invited Chinese experts), Summer Camp in China for college/middle school students, etc.
- h. Chinese teaching courses for the public, such as comprehensive practical Chinese, business Chinese, tourism Chinese, Chinese proficiency tests tutoring, individual courses according to personal requirements, interest-oriented after-school class for middle school/primary school students or immersion program in Chinese for kindergarten children, etc.

### **3.3 Cultural Activities of the Confucius Institute and Participants' Motivation, from the Perspective of Leisure Time Functions**

#### **3.3.1 Leisure Time Function Theory**

As Christopher R. Edginton, Susan D. Hudson, Rodney B. Dieser, and Susan R. Edginton (2014) suggested, leisure time activity areas may be classified as: 1) the arts, including performing arts (music, dance, drama), visual arts (including decorative arts, crafts), and new arts (using technological apparatus); 2) literary activities; 3) self-improvement/education; 4) sports, games, and athletics; 5) aquatics; 6) outdoor recreation; 7) wellness activities; 8) hobbies; 9) social recreation; 10) volunteer services; 11) travel and tourism; and 12) immersing areas—youth and family, while cultural activities of the Confucius Institute, which are listed above, can find many counterparts here, therefore it is of great advantage for us, from the perspective of leisure time functions theory, to unscramble participants' motivation of spending their leisure time through the cultural activities held by the Confucius Institute, namely what benefits are they pursuing at that moment, in order that the Institute can get more ideas and inspirations when developing new forms of activities, and in the meanwhile, cultural activities can be further designed, promoted, and organized with more pointed references.

The functions of leisure time resulting from human needs, as determined by Opaschowski, are as *Table 3* describes:

**Table 3: Leisure Time Functions**

<b>Recreation</b>	need of refreshment, recovery from everyday life stress, mental relaxation, sense of liberation from erroneous and excessive demands, rest and sleep, good health condition (“mental health”), feeling good;
<b>Compensation</b>	the need for balancing unilateral load and shortcomings, removing strain (doing nothing, laziness), waiver regulations, rules and constraints, release from the set objectives and purposes, desire of nature, being unencumbered, carelessness and generosity, conscious enjoyment of life;
<b>Education</b>	need for knowledge and new learning experience, stimulating orientation and desire for experience, curiosity in the behavior and conduct of the tests, exchanging roles and learning to act in roles, the need to uphold and reaffirm oneself, the art of developing strong self and personality change, need of learning and activating one's own possibilities of action, cooperative life;
<b>Contemplation</b>	need for knowledge and new learning experience, stimulating orientation and desire for experience, curiosity in the behavior and conduct of the tests, exchanging roles and learning to act in roles, the need to uphold and reaffirm oneself, the art of developing strong self and personality change, need of learning and activating one's own possibilities of action, cooperative life;
<b>Communication</b>	need for communication, contact and sociability, wishing diverse social relations, intensification of quality leisure time spent with others (community), discovery of time for other things, increased perception of feelings and intentions, empathy, love, tenderness, sexual contacts;
<b>Integration</b>	need for society, collective respect, inclusion, sense of belonging to a group, common experience, need for support and group atmosphere, search for emotional security, social security and stability, sense of connection with others and interaction, work and play with others, recognition, consciousness, family relationships, group feelings, positive social commitment (readiness to help, respect, tolerance), social learning in a group and with the group;
<b>Participation</b>	need for participation, involvement and social self-esteem, opportunities for self-initiative, engagement, participation and interaction at events, promotion of common goals and implementation of joint projects and aims, joint decision and responsibility, readiness for cooperation and solidarity, shaping environment by social events;
<b>Enculturation</b>	need for creative development, productive application and participation in cultural life, need for independent growth of personal abilities and talents, promoting one's own ideas and different solutions to problems, desire to one's own creative application, ability of expression, imagination, spontaneity, developing and expanding aesthetic feelings and abundance of ideas, self-motivated and committed performance, game productivity, cultural activities and initiatives, active participation and contribution;

*Adopted from: Vážanský, Směkal, 1995, pp. 30-31*

### **3.3.2 The Interrelatedness between Cultural Activities and Desired Benefits of the Participants**

#### **Arts Activities**

Expression of natural and social culture is highly visible through the arts. Today, as the arts are flourishing and are becoming one of the society’s primary leisure activities, individuals, corporations/organizations, cities, and towns are increasingly deciding their fate under the influence of the images, personalities, and lifestyles of the arts. “From the United

States and Europe to the Pacific Rim, wherever the affluent information economy has spread, the need to reexamine the meaning of life through the arts has followed.” (Naisbett & Aburdene, 1990) It’s apparent that the arts are likely to play an increasing role in the lives of modern people and the work of leisure service professionals.

Basically, the arts can be divided into 3 categories—the performing arts, in which the participant is the mode of artistic expression, including music, dance, drama, literature, poetry, and writing; the visual arts, which can also be called fine arts, include painting, sculpture, architecture, engraving/cutting, printing, and crafts; the new arts, which use a technological medium as the form of expression, include photography, television, radio, films or cinema, and recordings. Among them, music, dance and craft are three main aspects, usually holding an important position in Confucius Institute’s cultural activities.

Music is a direct means of self-expression or emotional release, conveying feelings such as joy, sorrow, exciting, enthusiasm, and also a way of communication, helping to express love, to create friendships or a sense of unity. It’s universally accepted as a highly desirable activity enjoyed alone or in a group, appealing to all ages. Music as a leisure activity, compared with it in other settings, is less formal. As Danford and Shirley’s words saying, that “the overall aim” for music in the leisure program area “is to show how much better and richer life can be through the influence of music rather than to produce polished musicians.” (1970:236) However, this never precludes skill development, which also contributes to a developing sense of personal adequacy by providing reassuring experiences of success.

Numerous music activities can be offered through leisure service programs. Farrell and Lundegren (1991:201) suggest that music experiences can be classified in five ways—appreciation, instrumental, mechanical, vocal, and concomitant activities. Leisure experiences in music can be carried out individually or in groups. There can be opportunities for individual lessons as well as performances, in group or solo.

Another means of arts, which usually comes along with music, is dance. It can be thought of as a manifestation of the human need to move. Dance is also usually associated with ritualistic activities, with acts of celebration or ceremony or sometimes provides a way to transmit culture from one generation to the next, as in the teaching of folk dances. Dance as a cultural or leisure activity has many values for the individual participant, because it can sufficiently contribute to physical fitness, and actively release tension. As Tillman (1973) suggests that dance may enable the individual to develop an appreciation for beauty and grace,

recognize and understand culture, relax and escape, develop rhythm and coordination, and have an opportunity for a new experience, such as social interaction.

Communication is also one of the primary values of crafts. Through the development of craft objects, a person can communicate with others and the environment and express his or her personality and the culture that has contributed to the development of that personality. One fact we have to notice is that, the specific piece or production that is the outcome of the art experience is not as important as the satisfaction that the individual achieves through the creating experience. As Christopher (2004) figures out, that crafts have gained prominence and increased participation as a result of the “culture explosion” in our society. Another reason is many people’s desire to “get back to the basics”. People choose to make craft items as utilitarian or decorative products—pottery, weaving/knitting, mounting one’s own calligraphy or paintings—rather than consume mass-produced items. It reflects the need to personalize one’s unique lifestyle.

### **Literary Activities and Self-Improvement/Education Activities**

A large number of cultural activities can be included within the area of literary activities. These activities can be broadly grouped into 3 categories, including writing; reading, communication and discussion groups; and foreign studies.

Writing activities include the original writing of plays, poetry, short stories, or novels. Book clubs, great books seminars and discussions on some certain topics or reading exchanges are some of the reading activities. Communication activities can take the form of public speaking, debate, broadcasting, group discussions, storytelling and other activities. Foreign studies might involve the study of language, culture, economics, and the social history of countries throughout the world.

“Of emerging importance in the leisure services field is a growing array of personal self-improvement activities and programs. Many of these literary, mental, and linguistic activities—which result in personal development and individual or group improvement—are generic to this category.” (Christopher R. Edginton, Susan D. Hudson, Rodney B. Dieser, and Susan R. Edginton. 2004. *Leisure Programming 4*. Ed. p. 223) Individuals engage in self-improvement activities are primarily for the purpose of developing either cognitive, communicative, affective skills.

The individuals participating into Confucius Institute's activities are all either aimed at realizing self-improvement in cultural knowledge and language skills or looking forward to spending a more meaningful, recreational and effectively used leisure time. Learning a foreign language can be at their own whim or interest, or with the desire of higher competitiveness, for example they are fond of learning language or getting to know a different culture, or they just simply want to learn some basic Chinese before their trip to China, or their own career or business are closely related to China and Chinese, but no matter which reason it is, they get strongly self-motivated. Besides, through these educating or cultural activities, they could also gain new forms of attitudes or values.

Experiencing meaningful and efficient leisure time in language courses and culture activities, they can not only achieve desirable and approving results, such as cognitive and psychosomatic development and well-being, but also realize skills and competence acquisition and improvement, emotional satisfaction and ultimately life content. For example, during the practice of Chinese calligraphy and traditional painting, or tea ceremony, they can train their nature, mold temperament, develop aesthetic judgment, foster good appreciation of the elegant, perfect moral quality and learn Chinese harmonious way of getting along with others. During the process of performing folk dance or playing tai-chi and martial arts, their pressure and stress get relieved and psychosomatic health is improved.

### **Games and Sports**

There is a tremendous potential for positive physical, social, and psychological growth as a result of participation in games and sports. As Christopher (2004) suggests, games—whether they involve children or adults—can initiate various kinds of behavior, self-reflection, and outcomes. “Involvement in a game situation may enable a person to learn to take turns, to accept and follow directions and rules, to experience both winning and losing, to learn new skills, to develop abilities for decision making, to practice fair play and consideration of others, and to feel the spirit of cooperation. The leader's role in the organization of games is to involve all participants as successfully as possible, to implement complementary group structures, and to encourage the participant to realize that the process of playing the game is more important than winning or losing.”

While sports, which demands more physical skill, endurance, alertness, purpose, and enthusiasm, contribute to the individual's health and physical well-being, as well as help develop feelings of self-confidence, self-esteem, happiness, and personal satisfaction.

“Participation in sports enables the individual to function as a member of a group or team—fostering feelings of acceptance, camaraderie, and cooperation. Participants in sports learn to follow rules and to accept authority, the decisions of others, and shared opinions.”

### **Wellness**

The leisure area wellness has taken on increasing importance over the past several decades, paralleling the rising interest in health, fitness, and well-being. As suggested by Girdano (1986:5-6), wellness is “any combination of health, education, and related organizational, economic, or political interventions designed to facilitate behavioral and environmental changes conducive to health.”

In 1996, the U.S. Surgeon General released a report, pointing out that individual can obtain significant health benefits with a moderate amount of physical activity that can prevent premature death, illness, and disability. Physical activity greatly reduces the risk for illness or death from the heart disease, diabetes, colon cancer, and high blood pressure in this sedentary era. Further, regular physical activity can reduce depression and anxiety. So in general, it contributes to overall well-being throughout the life span, whether children and adolescents, or adults and the elders. Through wellness programs, the youth get physical health and intellectual performance improved, while the middle and old age people may prevent or delay chronic diseases, maintain or even enhance cognitive functioning, and get access to important social networks.

In order to follow this trend, Confucius Institutes timely set up Tai Chi/martial arts workshops and organize lectures or groups about preserving health through traditional Chinese medical science or TCM dietary therapy. Tai Chi has become one of the most beloved daily physical exercise methods around the world, because of its positive effect on body building, disease prevention and treatment. A large number of studies have shown that regular practicing of Tai Chi has advantageous physical and psychological effects on people at all ages, for its gentle and not strenuous character and benefits to cardiovascular and nervous system, bone mineral density, as well as the triggering of positive thinking and emotion, and the resistant effect on depression, anxiety, confusion or other negative emotional state.

Traditional Chinese medicine, built on a foundation of more than 2500 years of Chinese medical practice that includes various forms of herbal medicine, acupuncture,

massage/*tui na*, exercise/*qi gong*, and dietary therapy, is nowadays widely introduced to and becoming increasingly available in foreign countries, especially Europe and North America. It takes human body as an integrated system with different but interrelated parts, and from the perspective of health care, it aims to invigorate health effectively, so that diseases may be prevented. It is generally believed that food is an edible substance that provides the nutrient essential for growth and development, and healthy body, which means that the food plays an important nutritional role, while Chinese medical science has recognized the therapeutic efficiency, which has basically no side effects since several thousand years ago.

### **Volunteer Services**

“One of the highest forms of recreation is to use part of one’s leisure to do something for someone else.” (Recreation program book, 1963:316) A volunteer performs various services, accomplishes specific tasks, and carries out numerous responsibilities without remuneration, or with only basic subsidy. It is said that, a form of volunteerism that is increasingly offered within leisure services organizations is that of “service learning” for youth, which offers youth opportunity to serve others and at the same time gain new skills and knowledge. Volunteers function in three general areas: administrative, program-related, and service-oriented. Confucius Institutes all over the world usually recruit local university students, most of which have Chinese as their major or are interested in China, as volunteers. According to their talent, intention, or preference, they can play different roles—language teachers, office administrative secretaries, project managers, or poster designers.

Volunteering helps build social connections with others, increases social and personal responsibility, intrinsic work values, enjoyment of contributing, as well as perceived importance. Through the volunteering services, participants’ organizing and coordinate ability, and social adaptability get trained and improved, which ideally prepares the youth for the future career. Besides, voluntary service has value not only for the individual who volunteers, but also for the organization. The value volunteers perceive can add enthusiasm to organizational plans and programs, and can contribute specialized skills, knowledge, and fresh ideas to enhance existing activities. Volunteers also offer additional human resources to carry out existing programs or to enlarge and extend services, and it’s also a good way of promotion and a showing of the sense of social responsibility.

### **Emerging Areas of Program Importance—Youth and Family Programming**

It is suggested that youth have a great deal of time available outside of school, and much of their discretionary time is spent without any adult supervision. “Further, concerns regarding violence, crime, delinquency, sexual activity, and lower rates of achievement have made youth a focus.” (Christopher R. Edginton, Susan D. Hudson, Rodney B. Dieser, and Susan R. Edginton. 2004. *Leisure Programming* 4. Ed. p. 267) The value and the necessity for creating successful experiences for school-age or youth, where they could be managed by providing them with fun, engaging activities, has been on the agenda for decades. On this occasion, Edginton and de Oliveira (1999) have suggested a program framework for youth development, which includes academic knowledge base or skill enrichment, instrumental/developmental/entertainment-focused leisure services, leadership development, life skill building, health promotion, vocational/career/employment assistance, clubs/special interest groups, etc.

Family dynamics have changed dramatically since the last century. Researchers such as Sabo and Ward (2006) and Kraus (2000) remind us that the prevalence of divorce and separation, unmarried single parents, and an economy where multiple sources of income are needed to maintain a family have resulted in “latchkey children”, which means children from families with two working parents and being left home alone in school release times and holidays. Family life is in an ever-changing and less stable stage, which calls for a promotion of quality time among family members during their leisure time. There is no universally acknowledged program framework, because almost every life activity possesses opportunities for family members to be engaged with one another in meaningful ways, such as family life skills and development, family hobbies, family collections, family cultural/literary activities, family trips and tours, family physical activities, family arts and crafts, family social service activities, etc.

Confucius Institutes provide parent-child language courses and workshops, and parents can also participate in the summer camps to learn and play together with their children. All these activities, conducted in a supportive, caring, relaxing and loving atmosphere, can to a large extent contribute to a harmonious family relationship. Through the learning and games or simply the time spent together, they can reinforce affective interaction, better improve mutual trust and understanding, and benefit children’s intellectual, physical and psychological development, as well as social adaptive capacity. What’s more, children’s potential can be better inspired with parents’ company, while parents can also get refreshed from work stress and tiredness, and enjoy the happiness of family life.



The cultural activities listed and discussed above are not excluded from one another, but can be interwoven and overlapped with each other, in order to achieve synergistic effects and multiple benefits. Taking the “Chinese-Bridge” Summer Camp for example, which usually combines language learning, cultural workshops experiencing, games and sports playing, and sightseeing together, students often get developed in many aspects:

- In the language learning aspect, the Summer Camp serves as a reagent to help students consolidate and expand their knowledge. Compared with traditional classroom teaching, experiential education, learning through games, and intuitional instruction, such as pictures and videos enable them understand and memorize words and phrases more quickly, apply what they've learnt into practice more easily, and form the interest and love of learning Chinese.

- Learning and playing together with their peers under a relatively free and supportive circumstance, practices students' interpersonal communication competence to a large extent. They make friends, establish and develop their friendship, analyze, deal with and solve the problems on their own choice and decision, which helps improve their organizing and coordinating skills as well as leadership and forms a sense of responsibility. They compete, cooperate, discuss and share opinions with each other, and gradually improve their creative and divergent thinking.

- The summer camp proceeds in a loving and caring atmosphere, which also creates a good relationship between teachers and students and this kind of “friendship” hopefully will sustain in the further classroom teaching, so in this way the efficiency of teaching as well as learning both get increased.

- Experiencing a different culture broadens students' horizons and enhances their receptivity and adaptability, and develops their ability to consider a problem from multiple perspectives.

- Compared with randomly staying at home, watching TV and playing computer games, the students use their time much more effectively in the camp and realize intellectually and physically practiced. They acquire praise, awards, sense of accomplishment and satisfaction, which trigger their learning interest and enthusiasm, and are perfect reinforces strengthening their confidence and persistence in study.

## **4. An Overview of the Cultural Activities Held by Confucius Institute at Palacky University**

### **4.1 Main Types of the Cultural Activities Held by Confucius Institute at Palacky University**

As has been discussed before, Confucius Institute is a non-profit educational institution established by Chinese university in cooperation with foreign university. It is committed to adapting to the needs of learning Chinese of people all around the world, to enhancing the understanding of Chinese culture among people from different countries and regions, to strengthening the educational and cultural exchange and cooperation, and to developing friendship between China and foreign countries, to promoting the world's multi-cultural development, as well as to building a harmonious world. Confucius Institute carries out Chinese teaching, exchanges and cooperation in Chinese and foreign education, culture and other aspects. The services provided include: Chinese teaching and training, conducting Chinese proficiency examinations and qualification, providing consultation in Chinese education, culture and other areas, and organizing language and cultural activities.

Confucius Institute at Palacky University in Olomouc was officially established on 26 September 2007 by Palacky University in cooperation with Beijing Foreign Studies University, and it began to form a certain scale in 2012. The activities it implements compose three parts: Chinese teaching courses, Chinese culture courses/workshops and other cultural activities. Chinese teaching courses include compulsory and selective courses through the university, individual, dual and group courses for the public, after-school interest classes for middle school and primary school students, but the Chinese Teaching Courses we discuss here are all leisure time courses, not including compulsory or selective courses through the university. Chinese culture courses/workshops are sequential and systematic courses/workshops based on Chinese traditional cultural elements. Other cultural activities are activities, programs and events other than Chinese teaching courses and Chinese culture courses/workshops, and they are conducted either independently by the Confucius Institute, or jointly held in cooperation with other organizations.

After looking up the Chronicle of Cultural Events, curricula schedules and statistical data of Confucius Institute at Palacky University from 2012 to 2016, I classified the cultural activities it held into the following categories (as shown in *Table 4*), so that we can have a basic understanding of the activity forms, and give an interpretation about which kinds of

activities are organized more often and enjoy greater popularity. Further, on the basis of the collected documents about activity proposals, records, and reports, combining my personal experience in participating in and organizing the activities from 2014 to 2016, a more detailed analysis of the cultural activities' holding situation will also be given in the next section.

**Table 4: Cultural Activities Held by Confucius Institute at Palacky University**

Categories	Types of cultural activities	Annual holding times					
		2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Sum
<b>Chinese Teaching Courses</b>	a. Courses for the public, such as comprehensive practical Chinese, business Chinese, tourism Chinese, Chinese proficiency tests tutoring, and individual courses according to personal interests, etc.	-	3	16	41	44	104
	b. After-school interest classes for middle school and primary school students in Olomouc, Zlín, Ostrava, Prostějov, etc.	-	5	10	10	9	34
	c. Experimental classes for middle school students	-	-	-	4	5	9
<b>Chinese Culture Courses</b>	a. Chinese calligraphy and traditional painting	-	1	1	1	7	10
	b. Tea ceremony	-	1	-	-	2	3
	c. Chinese cuisine	-	1	1	2	2	6
	d. Chinese folk arts, such as paper cutting, Chinese knots, seal cutting	-	1	-	-	-	1
	e. Chinese folk dance	-	2	3	-	-	5
	f. Tai-chi and Chinese martial arts	-	1	5	15	8	29
	g. Traditional Chinese music instruments—Erhu (Chinese violin)	-	1	2	2	-	5
	h. Traditional Chinese medicine theories/acupuncture/regimen	-	-	1	-	5	6
	i. Chinese chess and Mahjong	-	2	-	-	-	2
	j. Chinese classical civilization	-	-	-	-	1	1
<b>Other Cultural Activities</b>	a. One-week free Chinese course for the public during summer holiday	-	2	2	4	3	11
	b. Summer camp in China for university and middle school students	3	3	2	1	3	12
	c. “Chinese Bridge” -- Chinese Proficiency Competition for Foreign College Students	-	-	1	1	1	3
	d. “Confucius Institute” summer camp for experimental class students in Olomouc	-	-	-	-	1	1
	e. Confucius Institute Day	-	-	1	-	-	1
	f. Chinese Culture Month	1	1	1	1	1	5
	g. Three Tours activities -- artistic performance, cultural exhibition and lecture	-	1	3	2	1	7
	h. Chinese New Year Songfest (jointly host)	-	1	3	4	1	9
	i. Independently hosting Chinese language, Chinese culture/literature lecture/seminar/exhibition	6	-	4	2	8	20
	j. Workshops organized through school and city activities (such as Science Day, Majáles, Flora exhibition, International Language Day and city culture festivals—Library/Kite/Dragon boat festival, etc.)	6	6	5	6	4	27
	k. Chinese corner	-	-	-	-	4	4
<b>Sum</b>		16	32	61	96	110	315

*Summarized with reference to the Chronicle of Cultural Events and Curriculum Schedule of Confucius Institute at Palacky University from 2012 to 2016*

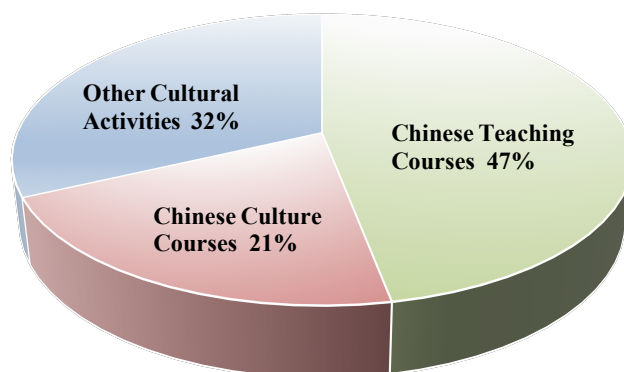
#### **4.2 An analysis of the Cultural Activities Held by Confucius Institute at Palacky University from 2012 to 2016**

From Table 4, many results can be generated, and several points also need to be further explained. Firstly, Confucius Institutes are international organizations of language and culture promotion, so it's not surprising that annual holding times of "Chinese Teaching Courses" category accounts for 47% of the total (as shown in *Figure 2*). Besides, compared with Culture Courses and Other Cultural Activities, language teaching courses are subject to less restrictive factors, such as capital, space, staff, facility, etc., which makes it much easier and more flexible to organize.

Secondly, the Chinese cultural activities "a" to "j" under "Chinese Culture Courses" category can also find their counterparts in the cultural activities held under "Other Cultural Activities" category, because the activities, such as Confucius Institute Day, Chinese Culture Month, Three Tours activities, and especially Workshops through school and city activities all involve relevant culture elements. They can be in the forms of performance, exhibition, first-hand experience or practice, etc. But the "Chinese Culture Courses" are more sequential, systematic and in-depth monthly or semesterly courses. The cultural courses and activities are organized basically by Chinese teachers, who are mainly majored in TCFL (*Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language*) or foreign languages and are abroad for volunteering internship or to work. That's why we can find out from *Table 4* that various Chinese Teaching Courses of different level are opened every year, but not all the kinds of Chinese Culture Courses can be provided, because it largely depends on whether the sent teachers master certain culture skills and whether their skills are professional enough to open sequential "courses", which becomes kind of constraint for the Institute's activity organization.

Thirdly, although as we can see from *Figure 2* below that annual holding times of Other Cultural Activities takes up only 32% of the total, most of them are of larger scale, stronger influence, and enjoy more participants than the other two categories, while of course, also call for more funds and manpower input, more detailed and complicated programming, and bigger propaganda work. They can be conduct independently by the Confucius Institute, or jointly held in cooperation with other organizations.

**Figure 2: Proportion of the Three Categories of Cultural Activities Held by Confucius Institute at Palacky University**



For example, Chinese Culture Month, formerly known as Chinese Culture Festival, which was founded 17 years ago by the students of the Department of Asian Studies at Palacky University, was inherited by Confucius Institute since its establishment in 2007, with more varied program, including organizing exhibitions, concerts, events featuring professional Chinese artists, specialists as well as popular lectures by Czech sinologists, a wide range of workshops on Chinese calligraphy, tea ceremony, Chinese cuisine, folk arts, folk dances, Tai-chi and Chinese martial arts, events especially for kids, etc. Each Chinese Culture Month program focuses on a specific theme, such as *Leisure Time in China* in 2012, *Chinese Folk Songs* in 2013, *A Journey of Chinese Movies* in 2014, *Chinese Traditional Medicine* in 2015, *Chinese Opera—Kunqu* in 2016, etc.

A number of the public cultural activities held by the Confucius Institute came into existence as a result of cooperation with the Chinese Embassy in Prague, Czech-Chinese Society, the Center for Integration of Foreigners, local governments in different cities and towns, and other social facilities, such as libraries, museums, theatres, cinemas, parks, as well as schools, colleges and universities. It actively takes part in local leisure activities, for example *International Women's Day* and *International Children's Day Activities in the Chinese Embassy in Prague*, *Spring Flora Fair in Olomouc*, *Dragon Boat Festival in Přerov*, *"Colorful World" Chinese Folk Arts Exhibition in Kunín Chateau*, *Opening of the Giant Salamander House in Prague Zoo*, *Library Day*, *Majáles* and *Science and Research Fair in UPOL (University Palacky in Olomouc)*, *International Language Day in Gymnázium Zlín* and so on. What's more, it also organizes activities especially for kids, such as *Reading Chinese*

*Fairytales in the Library of the Olomouc Region, China-cashing, Kite Festival, Chinese Summer Camp*, etc. The Confucius Institute at Palacky University also shares close friendship with other faculties in the university. Just like the vice-rector for international relations at Palacky University says, “*Over the last four years, I have been happy to see how the Confucius Institute has become an integral part of the academic life of the university and, more than that, constitutes an integral part of the life of Olomouc.*”

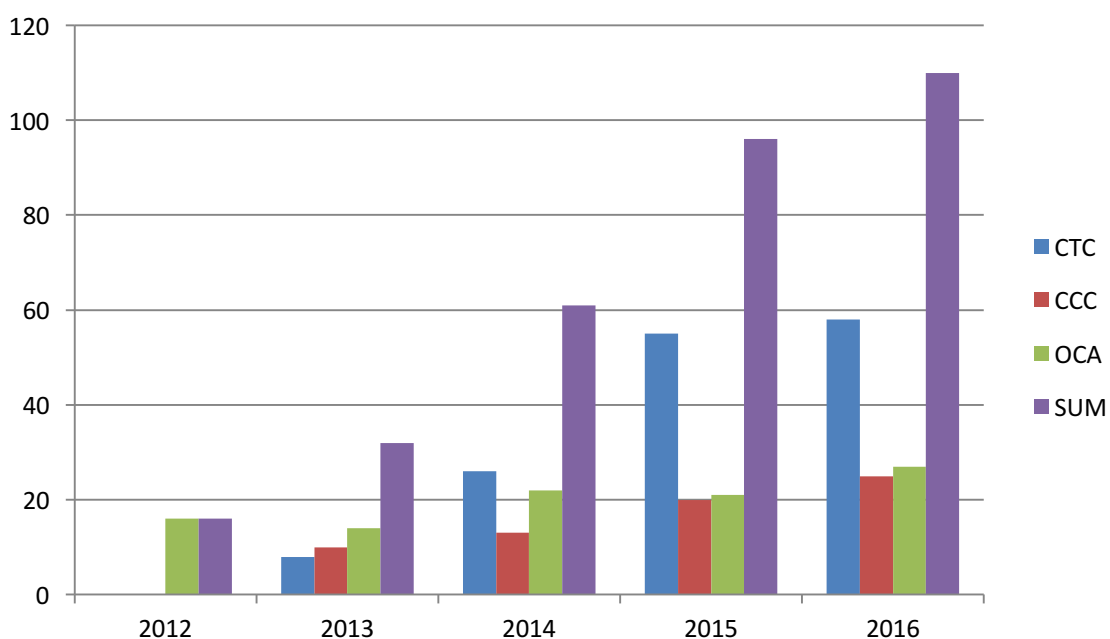
Fourthly, according to *Table 4*, which types of activities are traditionally held almost every year (such as *one-week free Chinese course for the public during summer holiday, summer camp in China for university and middle school students, Chinese Culture Month, Chinese New Year Songfest*, etc.) and which are innovative ones in certain years are clear at a glance. If the given activities are organized continuously, we have reasons to say that they are conducted successfully and meaningfully, and are highly accepted among local people with favorable effects. The activities’ holding situation in different years also shares obvious characteristics.

In 2012, when the Institute started to form a certain scale, *independently hosting Chinese language, Chinese culture/literature lecture/seminar/exhibition and workshops organized through school and city activities* enjoy the same holding times, namely each for 6 times. It’s at the beginning of cultural activities promotion, so both forms waited to be testified. Besides, the Institute had a relatively low popularity, therefore hosting activities in cooperation with local organizations or through local events was of great benefits for the successful delivery of activities.

In 2013, to enrich the cultural activities, according to Chinese traditional festivals and significant events, Confucius Institute Headquarters (Hanban) started to actively coordinate domestic cultural and literary resources, and send outstanding art troupes as well as specialists abroad from time to time, in order to carry out artistic performances, cultural exhibitions and lectures by experts. Since then, “Three Tours” activities have become one of the Institute’s classic programs. Also, in this year, *workshops organized through school and city activities* maintained 6 times, from which we can infer that it has stood the test we mentioned above. Besides, from *Table 4* it can be seen that Chinese New Year Songfest started to be promoted. It was sponsored by Confucius Institute and mainly organized by *songfest.cz*, whose initiator is Chinese Czech musician Song Fengyun, who has been conducting such kind of chamber music festival and enjoying warm praise from customers since 2008.

What’s more, *one-week free Chinese course for the public during summer holiday* was also initiated this year. It was divided into preliminary and intermediate groups, and organized for all people who got the desire to spend their leisure time in learning Chinese language and experiencing Chinese culture, while the benefits were far beyond this. The participants were making friends with people from different professions, sharing ideas and experiences, having fun, challenging themselves in learning an entirely different language, enjoying the sense of self-accomplishment, etc., and thanks to which the total number of participants in 2 weeks reached 70, and participants that successfully graduated from this course can all get a 20% discount coupon for future Chinese language study course, while some of them could also be the potential “customers” of the Institute’s future activities. That’s why from this year on, the *one-week free Chinese course for the public during summer holiday* started to serve as a traditional activity held every year.

**Figure 3: Annual Holding Times Summary of Cultural Activities Held by Confucius Institute at Palacky University**



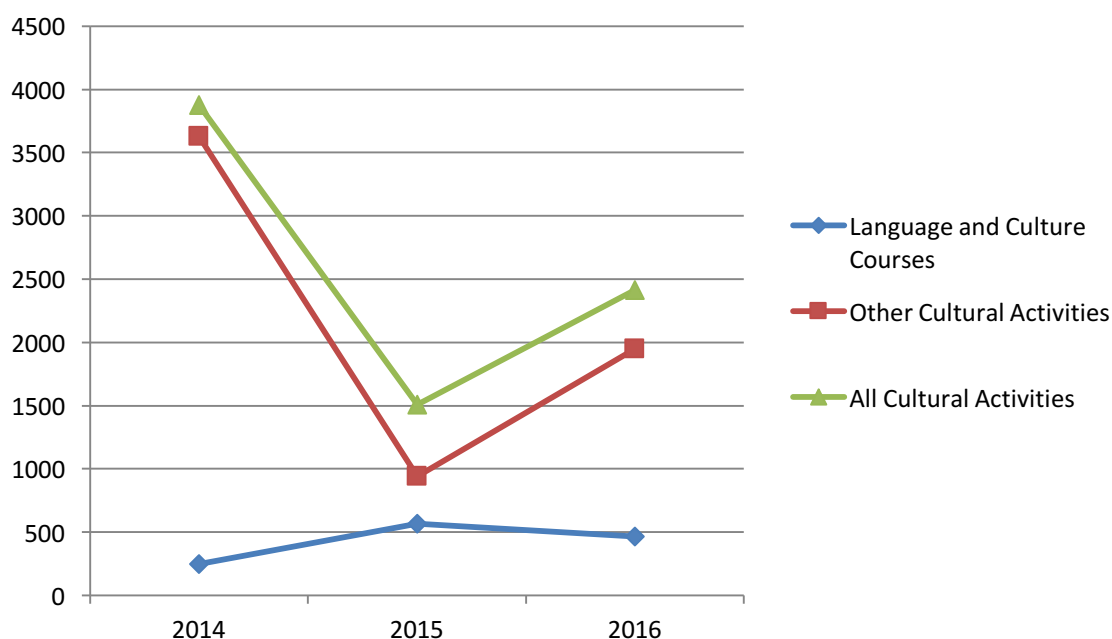
*Note: CTC stands for “Chinese Teaching Courses”; CCC stands for “Chinese Culture Courses”; OCA stands for “Other Cultural Activities”*

In 2014, thanks to the former activities and promotion, the popularity of the Confucius Institute got to a great extent improved, and also because of the increased number of Chinese volunteer teachers, together with the initiative of recruiting more local volunteer students, the number of independently hosting activities, especially large-scale activities was increased. The annual growth rate of the holding times of “Other Cultural Activities” category even hit



as high as 57%, while the total amount of cultural activities almost doubled it of the former year (as shown in *Figure 3*). And also in this year, the Confucius Institute at Palacky University for the first time shared the teacher resource with another European institute — *Confucius Institute for TCM, London south bank University*, in order to organize a one-week TCM Acupuncture courses and workshops for the public, which received overwhelming response. In addition, during the public promotion stage of Chinese Culture Month, the Institute also for the first time cooperated with DPMO (Dopravní podnik města Olomouce) transportation company in Olomouc and got its poster printed on the advertisement area of the tram, which in turn undoubtedly improved the activity’s popularity, contributing more than 300 audience to the year round number of participants, and such method of public promotion also served as a reference for the future cultural activities’ popularization.

**Figure 4: No. of Participants and Audience of Language and Culture Courses, “Other Cultural Activities” Category and All Cultural Activities in 2014, 2015 and 2016.**



Statistical data calculated according to *Curriculum Schedule of Confucius Institute at Palacky University* and *Key Figures of Confucius Institutes in Partnership with BFSU* (Beijing Foreign Studies University) in 2014, 2015 and 2016

In 2015, the Prague Branch of Confucius Institute at Palacky University was officially set up, while permanent Chinese teacher was sent to Zlín, and cooperative relationship was established with more faculties at UPOL, the holding times of Chinese Teaching Courses and Chinese Culture Course saw a sharp upsurge, and the annual growth rate of the holding times of language and culture courses reached 90%, among which the *Tai-chi and Chinese martial*

*arts* courses dominated the advantage and were held 15 times. However, the holding times of Other Culture Activities slightly decreased. Besides, what couldn't be ignored was that from the Chronicle of Cultural Events we can tell that the forms of activities in this year were somewhat fossilized, and lacked of creative ideas and new thoughts, as well as propaganda work, which became a bottleneck for the delivery of cultural activities and resulted in an annually low number of participants (as shown in *Figure 4*). For example, because of the lack of attached importance to promotion, the “Three Tour” activity “Fascinating World of Tea” held in Prague received only 15 audiences, while the same activity with proper promotion, held in cooperation with local museum (Vlastivědné Muzeum) in Olomouc got more than 100 people attending.

In 2016, on the basis of the learned lessons and experiences from last year, the Institute continued to carry out traditional well-known activities and in the meanwhile conducted more new and innovative cultural activities in various forms, such as more *Chinese calligraphy and traditional painting courses*, “*Confucius Institute*” *summer camp for experimental class students in Olomouc*, “*Panda Bloček*” *broadcasting program*, Chinese Corner, *Autumn Kite Festival co-organized with Center for Integration of Foreigners for children*, *Chinese traditional local opera Kunqu performance—“Peony Pavilion” art troupe*, etc. Learning from the successful promotion method in And most worthy of mention was that in response to the local interest and need, the Institute applied for two experts specialized in Traditional Chinese Medicine from the Headquarters to provide sequential theoretical and practical courses as well as lectures on “*Traditional Chinese medicine theories/acupuncture/regimen*”, which enjoyed a total amount of more than 200 participants, accounting for 10% of the year round audience number of “Other Cultural Activities” category. Moreover, as to the Chinese New Songfest in 2016, year of Monkey, the Institute prepared the kids from Experimental Class with Chinese drama called “Monkeys Grasp for the Moon” as an opening show, and they gave all the audience a big surprise with their brilliant performance in Chinese lines, which demonstrated the Institute’s professionalism and achievement in providing after-school interest courses for children. The Institute also “borrowed” professional dance teachers from Confucius Institute at Goldsmiths University of London to perform Chinese traditional folk dances, which brought the party to a climax and everyone present got their leisure time enjoyed and relaxed in this exotic cultural feast.

However, we are not saying that all the innovative activities can always be successful, taking the seal engraving activity “*The Boundless Universe on a Tiny Surface Area*” for

instance, which was held by especially invited expert from China but got only less than 10 participants. That's why when choose or design leisure activities, we should take the cultural or social background and actual need of the target audience into full consideration. Seal engraving is surely not as well-known as other Chinese traditional arts, such as paper cutting or Chinese knots. But this by no means indicates that we should refuse the cultural activities, with which the local are unfamiliar. Providing activities they are familiar with is indeed less risky, but if the Institute always get itself protected in the "safe zone", it can never "discover the new world" and realize progress, let alone the "zone" is not always safe, because people get tired with repetitive activities and are fascinated by fresh ideas, which needs us to strike the "average".

In this year, we cannot but also need to mention the *"Chinese Bridge" Summer Camp (in China) for 100 Czech Students*, which was initiated by Chinese government in 2015 and implemented in 2016 in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MŠMT) of Czech, and attained extremely positive and favorable feedback, as was shown below.

*"My son, Vladimir, came home yesterday quite ecstatic. He enjoyed everything, is full of impressions and personal experiences regarding learning the Chinese language first-hand."*

-- Jelena G.

*"No luxurious holiday would have given my daughter so many experiences, new friends and, above all, so much Chinese and English conversation practice."*

-- Iveta K.

*"Here is my article about the best camp in the world! Many thanks to the Confucius Institute and all the great people, thanks to whom I enjoyed it so much and have so many unforgettable memories."*

-- Kamila K.

As a whole, as we can see from *Figure 3*, that since 2012 the annual holding times of cultural activities conducted by Confucius Institute at Palacky University has been presenting a rising trend in general. The year round number of audience of all the activities is however apparently instable, and is to a large degree decided by the cultural activities belonging to "Other Cultural Activities" category, as is shown in *Figure 4*, but it doesn't mean that the

language and culture courses are not influential, because they are the cultural activities, that maintain steady and rapid development and always enjoy a stable popularity. What's more, as they are sequential, and are enriching the participants' cultural awareness and cultural competence through a sustaining and in-depth way, they continuously "cultivate" potential "customers" and transport new flow of audiences for other cultural activities. So the successful implementation of all kinds of cultural activities is meaningful to the Institute's sustainable development.

## 5. The Design Principles and Strategies of Cultural Activities Held by the Confucius Institute

### 5.1 Leisure Programming Philosophy and Strategies

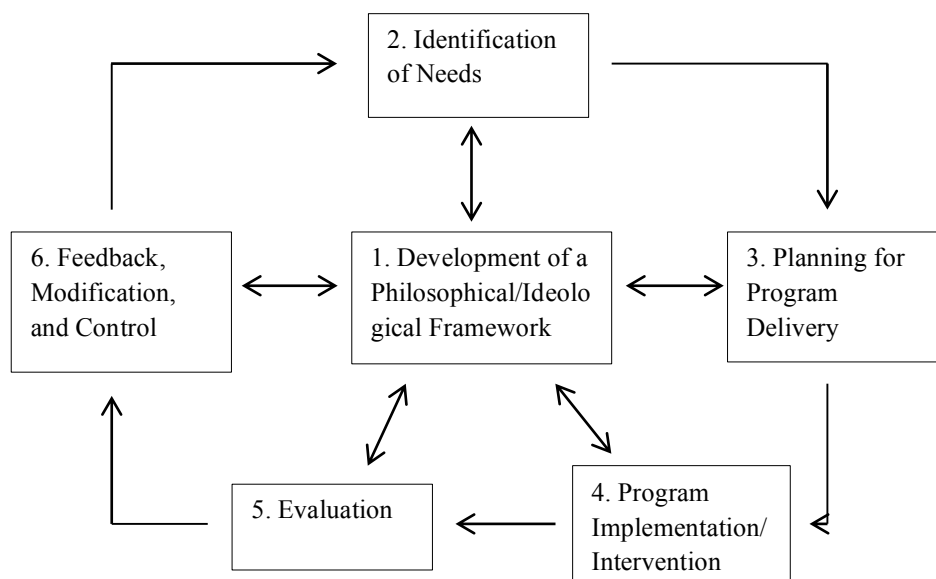
“The major function of the leisure services profession is to provide leisure services.” (Rossman, 1995) It is the responsibilities of the leisure services professional to not only understand, but to anticipate, the leisure needs of the customers, and to accordingly provide quality leisure experiences, that the participants perceive to be beneficial by the organization it serves. In this sense, leisure programs, which can be either vibrant, dynamic, uplifting, or passive, relaxing, quiet, should be thought of as the tools of the leisure services professional—“the vehicle for service delivery”. It is through the provision of programs that the leisure benefits sought by individual customers are achieved. “Programs provide opportunities for customers to develop skills, form values, learn processes, and express themselves creatively, intellectually, socially, and physically.” (Christopher R. Edginton, Susan D. Hudson, Rodney B. Dieser, and Susan R. Edginton. 2004. *Leisure Programming 4. Ed.* p. 32)

Leisure service organizations have employed four major strategies over the past several decades in varying degrees to provide programs and services. They are *Social Planning*, a task-oriented strategy that is directed toward solving problems, *Community Development*, a process-oriented strategy directed toward helping individuals identify their own problems and assisting them with resources necessary to solve them, *Social Marketing*, a strategy directed toward meeting anticipated consumer needs by directing services to them while at the same time meeting organizational goals, *Social Action*, directed toward changing the basic distribution of resources by forcing the existing power structure to change its priorities and policies. A leisure service organization may employ more than one of these strategies at one time. (Christopher R. Edginton, Susan D. Hudson, Rodney B. Dieser, and Susan R. Edginton. 2004. *Leisure Programming 4. Ed.* p. 37)

As we mentioned at the very beginning, the “sustainable development” we discuss here refers to the fact that the service organizations seek and implement scientific and strategic methods, in order to improve their management and better satisfy the needs of their target customers, to enjoy a good popularity and ultimately improve their sustainability in the future, while through efficiently designing, promoting and delivering meaningful and valuable cultural activities with a higher level of active involvement, the sustainable development of the Confucius Institute may realize better facilitated. So in this case, we can say that social

planning and social marketing strategies are most worthy of reference, while *Figure 5* and *Figure 6* best illustrate these two strategies.

**Figure 5: The Process of Social Planning**



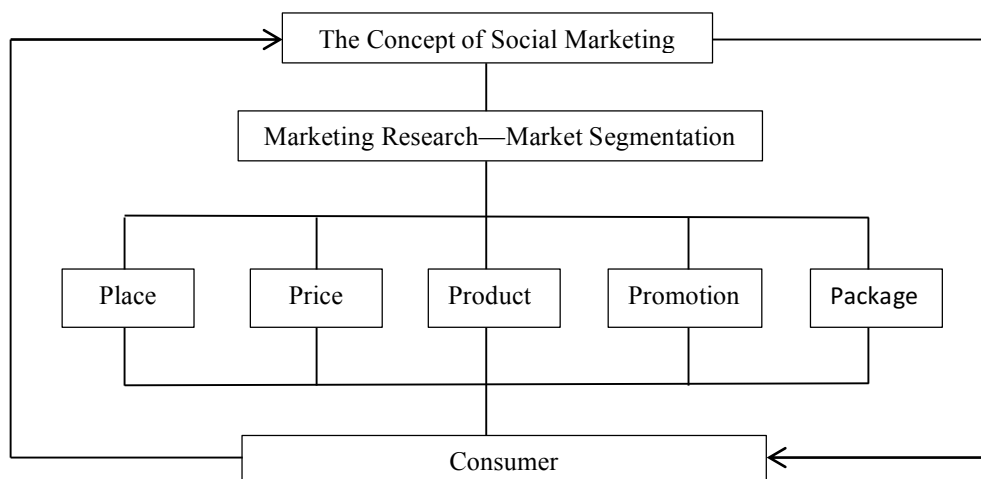
Adopted from Christopher R. Edginton, Susan D. Hudson, Rodney B. Dieser, and Susan R. Edginton. 2004. *Leisure Programming 4. Ed.* p. 39

Generally, most of the planning cases contain four key ingredients: the objective—what is to be achieved, the action program—the specific steps required to achieve the objective, resource requirements—what resources, in the shape of money, people, facilities and time, will be required, impact assessment—determining the impact mad on the organization by achieving the plan (assessed in terms of cost and benefits. (Michael Armstrong. 2009. *Armstrong’s Handbook of Management and Leadership. 2. Ed.* p. 44.) Social planning is a task-oriented process, which means that the analysis of collected pertinent information and data provides information to planners in decision-making roles, as is shown in *Figure 5*. The need of customers can be better anticipated, and behavior of customers can be better understood with this given strategy, so that the services can be delivered with pointed references and timely modified by evaluating feedback and organizers’ self-reflection. We should bear in mind that numerous factors influence the objects served by a leisure service organization. Values, motives, lifestyle, and personality are all individual characteristics. Further, social influences, such as family, reference group, and the community can also have a dramatic impact on the decision-making behavior of an individual.

Marketing principles and strategies being applied to programming is the most apparent feature of modern era. “Social marketing is a philosophical strategy directed toward meeting customer needs. This strategy involves integrating five components—the product, the place,

the price, the promotion, and the packaging (as is shown in *Figure 6* below).” (Christopher R. Edginton, Susan D. Hudson, Rodney B. Dieser, and Susan R. Edginton. 2004. *Leisure Programming 4. Ed.* p. 56) The products in view of leisure time activities are mostly intangible experiences, which makes it almost impossible for the customer to sample the product before purchasing or makes it difficult to experience before actual consumption. Therefore, the promotion becomes particularly important. It is through the “communication” in promotion that the customers get to know what activities and services are being offered by a leisure service delivery system, how the quality of life can be improved via choosing certain leisure organization, where and how much does it cost to realize their needs. Program promotion is a key element in effective activity planning.

**Figure 6: Social Marketing Mix**



Adopted from Christopher R. Edginton, Susan D. Hudson, Rodney B. Dieser, and Susan R. Edginton. 2004. *Leisure Programming 4. Ed.* p. 46

## 5.2 The Design Principles and Strategies of Cultural Activities Held by the Confucius Institute

As we discussed in the first part, during the process of Confucius Institute’s development, because of cultural differences and cultural identity issue, some of them have been misunderstood and hindered. Besides, the inefficiency of activity promotion, a low level of participation, as well as the lack of creative ideas and activity patterns are all factors restricting the Institute moving forward. After research we notice that various cultural activities account for a big part of its work content and enjoy a large scale of the total participants. Whether cultural activities can be successfully organized, or in other word whether the Confucius Institute can provide cultural activities best meeting the needs of local people is of prime importance to its sustainable development.

Under the theoretical direction of leisure and leisure time activity organization, through investigating the chronicle of cultural events, curricula schedules and statistical data, activity schemes and budgeting from 2012 to 2016 of Confucius Institute at Palacky University, together with the Institute's two Five-year Development Plans, combining my personal 3-year working experience in participating and organizing cultural activities, faithful record and detailed analysis were provided in the fourth part of this paper. After comparing the general holding situation of various activities by year, and same activities in different years with different effects, as well as evaluating the strengths and weaknesses in activity delivering, the design principles and reflections of cultural activities are to be generated in this part.

- Firstly, talking about cultural activities, we have to regard "culture" as the breakthrough point. Quoting the definition from UNESCO, culture, which can be almost all-encompassing, is "the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of a society or a social group that encompasses not only art and literature, but lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions, and beliefs." (2009. p. 1) And China, one of the four ancient civilizations, with a long history, undoubtedly has a profound cultural heritage and a rich cultural content that can be introduced to the world. When holding cultural activities, Confucius Institutes around the world tend to choose the activities listed in the third part, it is because these cultural phenomena have been known through film, television, internet and other media. When these Chinese cultural forms are presented in front of local people, certain psychological resonance will be produced.

During 10 years development, the cultural activities held worldwide are mostly simple cultural symbols of Chinese culture. We should notice that only when cultural connotation is perceived and acknowledged, can cultural symbols and cultural diversities be better understood and experienced. Sequentially, the participants' well-rounded cultural competence, with multicultural attitudes, interests, motivations, habits, knowledge, appreciation, and skills that will be useful throughout their lives can be gradually fostered. The cultural activity organizer at the Institute should keep this point in mind and also convey it to general public, and provide more meaningful and culturally in-depth activities in the future.

- Secondly, promotion is a key element and an important guarantee of successful activity planning and organization. If the public are not made aware of what the organization is offering, where and when it is being offered, and most significantly what benefits—physical, mental, intellectual or communicational are being expected, there is very little chance that the activity will succeed. There're approximately 5 promotional channels—



advertising, publicity, sales promotion, personal selling, and public relations, while numerous tools, such as newspapers, brochures, fliers, radio and television, social network sites, etc. are usually adopted. The contributions proper promotion makes to the activity influence and holding effect are obvious, as is analyzed above. What's more, not only before the activities, but also during and after the activities should promotion be applied to launch a full range of social media information spreading, in order to expand the influence and popularity of the current and future cultural activities.

- Thirdly, as Confucius Institutes are all set up in foreign countries, the organizers should adjust measures to local conditions, seek cooperation with local organizations and community facilities, as well as endeavor to expand the scope of services and realize localization. When holding cultural activities, the local situation, such as number of Chinese people, understanding level of Chinese culture, the public's general attitude towards China, has to be taken into full consideration. For example, regions with relatively less Chinese people and lower understanding of Chinese culture, presentative and experiential activities, which can preliminarily show the charm of Chinese culture and cultivate the public's interests, can be considered to deliver, while Confucius Institutes in regions with better Chinese culture identification can organize more relative competition activities about Chinese culture. Besides, the Institutes can rely on local manners and customs, and the location advantages, such as to organize Chinese traditional music instruments performance in "music cities", to provide traditional Chinese medicine workshops through "medical science universities", and to open language courses in places sharing close economic cooperation with China, etc.

Some of the cultural activities can be organized on the occasion of local national festivals, or as accompanying activities through other local big events, which are all advantageous factors contributing to an easier promotion, higher attendance, and better holding effect. What's more, the organizers should choose appropriate cooperative partners, such as local governments and organizations, win support and assistance from universities, establishing friendly cooperative relationship with local Chinese enterprises, in order to work together in respects of activity planning, fund and personnel sharing, as well as promotion, and to maximize the Institute's local influence and audience. For example, to cooperate with cultural institutions in exhibitions and lectures, with local martial arts clubs in Tai-chi and martial arts activities, with local theatres in opera or song and dance performances, with teahouse in tea ceremonies, with local restaurants in Chinese cuisine workshops, etc., which are all kind of win-win situations.

- Fourthly, as we mentioned above, the organizers of most cultural activities—Chinese language and culture courses and other cultural activities are Chinese teachers, who are mainly majored in TCFL (Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language) or foreign languages and are abroad for volunteering internship or to work, which leads to the fact that not all the kinds of Chinese culture courses can be provided, because it largely depends on whether the sent volunteer teachers master certain culture skills and whether their skills are professional enough to open sequential “courses”, which becomes kind of constraint for the Institute’s activity organization. That’s why “neighboring” Institutes have to keep “optimizing allocation of resources” in mind, share materials and manpower, in order to make their respective advantages complementary to each other.

- Fifthly, in the process of development, the forms of activities are to some degree fossilized and lack of creative ideas and new thoughts. Traditional and mature activities are admittedly important, providing activities the local people are familiar with is indeed less risky, but if the Institutes always get itself protected in the “safe zone”, it can never “discover the new world” and realize progress, let alone the “zone” is not always safe, because people get tired with repetitive activities and are fascinated by fresh ideas.

Therefore, when organizing activities, the Confucius Institute should take the cultural or social background and actual need of the target audience into full consideration, adjust measures to local conditions, choose appropriate cooperative partners, optimize the allocation of materials, capital and manpower, use successful cultural activity cases from other Institutes for reference, well design, promote and deliver the activities, timely modify the current and future activities according to self-reflection and collected feedbacks, continuously replenish their cultural activities with classical, representative, exclusive, and creative ones, in order to ultimately facilitate their sustainable development.

## **6. Epilogue**

This paper is based on the direction of scientific theories and systemic knowledge about leisure concepts, motivations, areas and benefits, as well as leisure time activities programming strategies and principles, and is supported by detailed and adequate files and documents related to the study subject. It is the first time that the relationship between cultural activities and the sustainable development of the Confucius Institute is studied from the perspective of leisure time activities. The research is conducted under faithful records, objective data analysis, and the author's 3-year relative working experience. The design principles and reflections about cultural activities of the Confucius Institute are interpreted in accordance with the preceding case study, which enjoy a high degree of credibility and transferability, and are of great significance and guiding function in future cultural activity anticipation, design, promotion and implementation.

However, in view of the particularity of the study subject, not all the research achievement can be popularized to other Confucius Institutes. It is to some degree of subjective decision-making tendency. Besides, although the records and data are collected through abundant sources, we still lack of certain information, such as accurate statistics on the audience of individual activity and sufficient tracking feedbacks. So in the future research, the comparison about cultural activity holding situation among Confucius Institutes in different countries or regions, and the timely follow-up statistics after each activity, as well as questionnaires focused on the public's leisure desires and their expectations from the Confucius Institute's cultural activities are in need.

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**Acknowledgement:**

First of all, I'm great honored here to express my warmest gratitude to my mentor Doc. Chudý from the Institute of Education and Social Studies, who made instructive suggestions and recommendations on the research direction of my dissertation, gave timely guidance when I encountered difficulties and always provided me with conducive comments for improvement during my writing of this thesis. Besides, my thankfulness also belongs to all my subject lecturers in the Faculty of Education, who devoted plenty of time and energy during my two-year study on the major of Leisure Time Activities Counselling and Management, especially my friend and teacher Ms. Peng Danping.

Further, I want to extend my special thanks to the Chinese director of Confucius Institute at Palacky University Prof. Huang Xiaoming, who gave me a lot of help and support during my more than 3-year working in the Institute and through the process of data collection of this research. Moreover, I need to thank the authors in the references for their research articles which rendered me with a great deal of inspirations.

Last but not least, I would like to sincerely thank my dear family, friends and colleagues. It's their love, care, encourage and support that accompanied me in completing this dissertation successfully.