



Current Scenario and Perspective of Teaching Chinese at Confucius Institutes in Pakistan

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received: May 14, 2023

Revised: June 27, 2023

Accepted: June 28, 2023

Available Online: June 29, 2023

Keywords:

Confucius Institutes

Education

Languages

Teaching Chinese

Pakistan

Funding:

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

ABSTRACT

Due to the progressive economic development and open-up policy along with the "one belt one road" initiative, the trend of learning Chinese is increasing throughout the developing world. The long-lasting China-Pakistan friendship and the initiation of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor illuminated the future job market for Chinese-Urdu translators. This scenario urged Pakistani youth to learn the Chinese language at large. This increasing thrust for Chinese learning was contented with the establishment of various Confucius Institutes (CI) and Confucius classrooms in several universities. Confucius Institute at the National University of Modern Languages (NUML) is the pioneer institute which was established in 2005 followed by many others. Currently, 5 Confucius institutes have been established at the University of Punjab, Agricultural University Faisalabad, Karachi University, and Sargodha University besides NUML. In addition, various short courses have also been started in various vocational training institutes (VTI) established under technical and vocational training authorities to serve as secondary-level Chinese teaching centers. Currently, 94 centers are being operated all over Pakistan to provide better opportunities for Chinese language learning in remote areas. In this article, we have concisely compiled the data of major Confucius institutes, and their potential to provide Chinese learning opportunities with statistical analyses of Chinese learners for HSK, HSKK, and YCT programs with critical trend discussion. Results elucidated that the trend of Chinese learning was continuously increasing till 2018 then declined. The reasons for this decline, their possible solutions, and the future of teaching Chinese in Pakistan has been discussed which will help with scenario analyses and perspectives.

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1. Introduction

Continuous economic growth patterns and expansion of mutual exchange are urging communities to get familiar with the Chinese language and culture for better understanding (Asif et al., 2019). Although the Chinese language is one of the hard languages in the world, the number of people with Chinese proficiency and culture empathetic is swiftly increasing worldwide which is expanding the cross-cultural exchange between China and other countries (Liang, 2021). Pakistan-China has a historical tie of long-lasting relationship which is increasing day by day. This perspective urged Pakistani citizens to learn the Chinese language in order to increase their comparative strength. The historical relationship between China and Pakistan has fostered the exchange of knowledge and cultures (Ammar, Naveen, Fawad, & Qasim, 2015). Pakistan-China economic cooperation boosted the job perspectives for Urdu-Chinese interpreters which was further boosted after 2014 when the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) was signed. The CPEC is an integral part of the Chinese international economic initiative "Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)" (Mustafa, Ali, Raza, Chaudhary, & Ashiq, 2017). This initiative attracts the local people to learn Chinese in order to seize potential job opportunities. Although Urdu is the national language of Pakistan, still English is the major official language of the country equally in all provinces (Peng

Luqian, 2021). Pakistan is a country with relatively obvious cultural integration and a multi-lingual culture (M. F. Khan et al., 2023). Besides Urdu and English, regional and provincial languages with diverse dialects are also common communication media in Pakistan. However, Urdu is being spoken with a similar dialect principally all over the country. Almost every Pakistani without differences in age, race, region, and mother language can speak the Urdu language fluently (Ali & David, 2022). Therefore, the interpretation between Urdu and Chinese has the advantage that it can help to communicate all over the country in Pakistan and Kashmir as well. Additionally, China is one of the favorite education destinations of Pakistani students (Xiaoyu., 2012). There were more than 27,000 Pakistani students in 2020 who were distributed in various universities all over China. Because of these, the attraction toward Chinese learning is continuously growing among Pakistanis, especially the youth.

The Confucius Institute is a non-profit educational institution established by Sino-foreign cooperation, which is dedicated to providing resources for Chinese learning around the world asif. So far, there are 541 Confucius Institutes and 1172 Confucius Classrooms in 162 countries. Of which there are 39 countries (regions) in Asia, 135 Confucius Institutes, and 115 Confucius Classrooms (Xinhua, 2017). Accordingly, the number of people learning Chinese in the world has reached 30 million in recent years. These Chinese initiatives are struggling to develop cultural cooperation between China and other countries along with providing the facility for teaching Chinese to locals of respective countries (Qiao, 2018).

The evaluation of the impact of Chinese economic growth on the spread of the Chinese language in Pakistan has been performed for a long. Various authors have investigated the correlation between economic growth and language learning scenarios from different perspectives. Haiying Qiao evaluated the impact of education exchange on the Chinese language learning environment for Pakistani nationals (Qiao, 2018). The impact of CPEC on Pakistani culture and language using CIs as the case study was thoroughly evaluated (Asif, 2022). This study highlighted the China-Pakistan bilateral relations and the development of cultural enterprises and language centers in both countries. M. A. Khan, Zaki, and Memon (2022) focus on the bilateral relations and expansion of the Chinese language in Pakistan. The authors discussed the impact of various educational advantages such as scholarships and student exchange programs on the expansion of the Chinese language. They reveal the aims of policy artifacts match the stakeholders' interpretations of the policy aims, and how the student's motivations and level of learning are affected by changes in policy, the medium of instruction, and class size. A similar study was performed by Ali and David (2022). However, the scope of this study was only limited to Sindh province. The problems faced by teachers in Pakistani higher institutes in teacher Chinese and their probable solution was addressed by Ilyas, Tahir, and Tagga (2021) which was further elaborated by Azeem, Naveed, and Jabbar (2022). Both authors agreed that the teaching of Chinese language in English dominating environment needs huge efforts and human investment. The authors have discussed the Chinese teaching scenario, problems, and prospects focusing on higher education institutes. However, the impact of CPEC and CIs on the Chinese learning environment and expansion still needs thorough investigation. This research gap is the major objective of this study.

This article was designed to evaluate the current scenario of teaching Chinese in Pakistan, the development scenario, and prospects especially focusing on the Confucius institutes. The statistics of different examinations of Chinese language proficiency such as HSK, HSKK, and YCT are analyzed. In addition, scenario analyses of major obstacles in teaching Chinese in Pakistan are analyzed and recommendations have been made based on the study output. Hence, this article can be considered a future policy guide with a wide range of reading interests.

2. Data Collection and Study Limitations

The data for this study were collected from all the Confucius institutes through a survey during the second half of 2022. All the collected data was used truly only for this study without any bias. No proper data was available for short courses. Therefore, short courses (1-6 months) are not included. Additionally, a learner who has not appeared in any evaluation system or examination are also excluded because their Chinese proficiency assessment was unreliable due to self-declaration.

2.1. Current status of Chinese language teaching in Pakistan

Teaching Chinese in Pakistan has started much earlier compared to other emerging countries. Firstly, it was starting at the National Institute of Modern Languages in June 1970, currently known as the National Institute of Modern Languages Islamabad (Tiejun & Z., 2012). After that, with the development of mutual cooperation, various other institutes and departments were developed focusing on Chinese language teaching and cultural cooperation between China and Pakistan. Sustaining the foster role in Chinese teaching, the first Confucius Institute was established at the National University of Modern Languages (NUML) Islamabad in 2005.

The gradual growth of China's economic strength and continuous improvement of comprehensive international expansion increased the adoption of Chinese as a second international language and communication language between Chinese and Pakistanis as well. Resultantly, the establishment of teaching Chinese institutes and classrooms is flourishing in the country (Mandarin, 2022). Currently, there are 94 institutions in Pakistan offering Teaching Chinese courses of various levels. Of these, there is 6 Confucius institute principally established for the promotion of Chinese language and culture in the country (Hadid & Sattar, 2018). These institutes are offering various Chinese learning courses of various levels and duration.

2.2. Confucius Institutes and classrooms in Pakistan

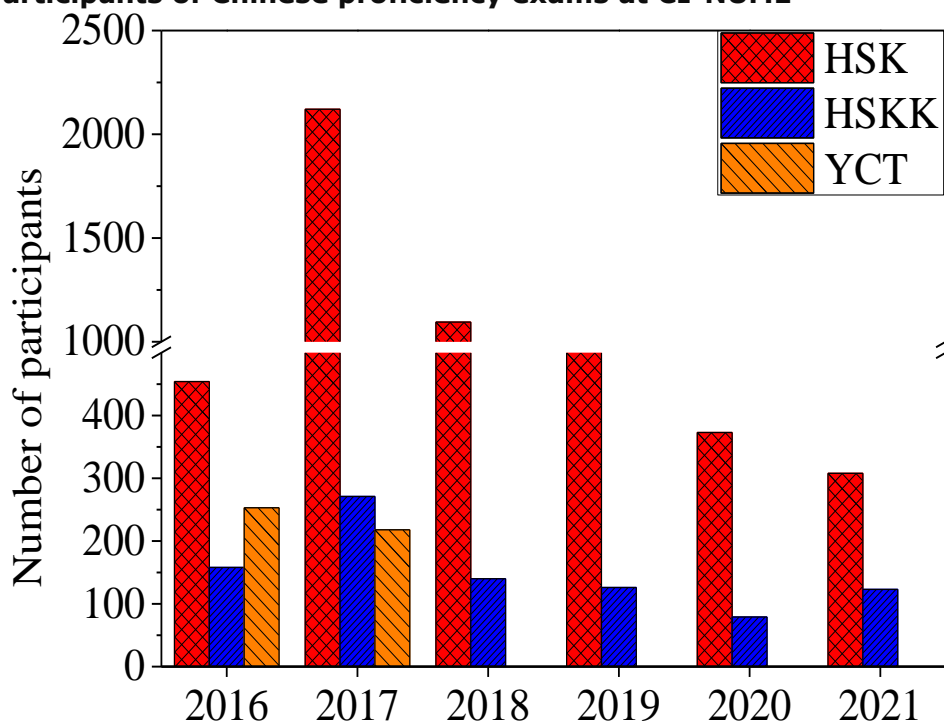
Due to the everlasting friendship between the two nations, the exchange of economic, trade, education, health, and culture is increasing continuously. This mutual exchange has promoted the understanding of the Chinese language and traditional Chinese culture in Pakistan. In order to meet the needs for Chinese language learning, the establishment of Confucius Institutes was one of the best and most selective solutions. During the last 50 years, the number of Chinese institutes increased to 94 with 6 Confucius Institutes due to the increasing demand for Chinese learning. Besides these, many Confucius classrooms (sub-institutes) have been established in various universities/degree awarding institutes all over Pakistan (Asif et al., 2019). Additionally, various short courses have also been established in many vocational and technical colleges in Pakistan to support the teaching requirements (Rasheed, 2016).

2.3. Confucius Institute NUML

The very first Confucius Institute was established in April 2005 under the umbrella of Hanban of China with the help of Beijing Language and Culture University (BLCU), Beijing China at NUML Islamabad. This inaugural CI was officially started on April 9, 2007. CI-NUML has played a leading role in the development of CIs in Pakistan which further raised the cooperation and exchanges between Pakistan and China in all aspects (Xiaoyu., 2012). The CI-NUML is also honored as the first Confucius Institute of any Muslim state. Initially, this institute was established with all Chinese teachers and volunteers that was exceptionally impactful to boost the Chinese learning environment and organize cross-cultural activity (Hadid & Sattar, 2018). This center also provided liaison activities for Pakistani students and arranged scholarship facilities for Chinese learning in Chinese universities with the help of Confucius's head office Hanban. After that in 2016, CI-NUML established 14 Chinese classrooms in various locations all over the country.

In September 2013, two Chinese teaching sites were developed in Islamabad and Rawalpindi with the support of CI-NUML. Teaching faculty was provided by CI Hanban headquarters in China. Since its start, CI-NUML offered different courses for Chinese learners and provided the facility for Chinese proficiency examinations. In 2015, 314 students applied for HSK exams at CI-NUML. Gradually, the Chinese learning environment spread throughout the country, and the expansion of Chinese learning facilities through Chinese classes in 2016 further amplified the number of aspirants. The CI-NUML mainly focuses on the management and promotion of HSK examinations in the country. In 2016, with the establishment of various classes, the participant in HSK examinations increased to 1350. As of the end of December 2016, there were more than 50 institutes/centers in Pakistan that offered Chinese short courses of 1 to 6 months. Overall, in 2016, there were 35 teaching centers supported by CI-NUML in selective universities, schools, and language training institutions with a total enrollment of 8,700 students. There are more than 30 Chinese teachers in various Pakistani universities and more than 50 teachers in primary and secondary schools (Mandarin, 2022). The participant in the Chinese proficiency examination (HSK, HSKK, and YCT) appeared from CI-NUML since 2016 are shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Participants of Chinese proficiency exams at CI-NUML



The total number of participants who appeared in the Chinese language test was 865 in 2016. An exceptional increase was witnessed in 2017 and the total number increased to 2610. This massive increase is attributed partially to the commencement of work activities of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and partially to the expansion of Chinese classes in various parts of the country in 2016. These activities resulted in a total increase of 66.9% in participants as compared to 2016. However, thereafter recorded gradual declines of 52.7%, 11.3%, and 55.1% in 2018, 2019, and 2020, respectively were noted. This is most likely due to the establishment of Confucius Institutes and Chinese language testing centers in other universities in Pakistan. It is worth mentioning that compared with HSKK and YCT, the number of people who appeared in the HSK examination every year is the largest. The sharp decline in 2020 is entirely due to the serious emergence of COVID-19. Although the number of test takers increased in 2021, there were 431 test takers in the first semester of 2021 due to the partial opening of educational institutions.

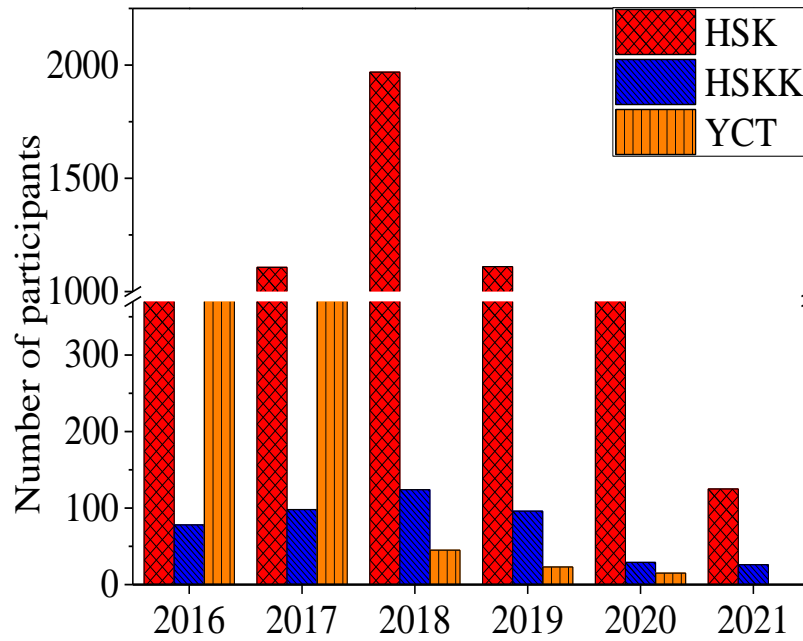
It was noted that common students and the general public did not show any interest in Chinese learning till 2010. From 1970 to 2010, most classes were arranged twice a year with 20 students, most of them were government officials. After the establishment of CI; the number of students gradually increased to 500 for regular classes. Considering the increased interest, afternoon and evening classes have been started to facilitate the students of the working cadre and to manage the increased number of Chinese learners. Currently, there are 40 teachers and two Chinese volunteer teachers provided by the Chinese Embassy, Pakistan (Hadid & Sattar, 2018). In order to meet the learning support and to provide teaching aid, a separate library in CI with a variety of translated literature and helping material in addition to the central library was established at the NUML campus. Currently, there are more than 1,000 hardcover books in these libraries about Chinese customs, culture, history, etc along with a handsome amount of digital literature. All these activities and struggles have flourished Chinese learning in the Pakistan during past few years.

2.4. Confucius Institute, University of Karachi

Further expansion of the teaching of Chinese was started with the development of CI at the University of Karachi (KU) on May 22, 2013, in collaboration with Hanban and Sichuan Normal University, China. Karachi being the first capital of Pakistan is the largest city and is now the financial hub of Pakistan. It has the highest active seaport which also serves as the water gateway to various other countries along with Pakistan and Afghanistan.

The formal classroom activities were started on November 29, 2013, under the supervision of Professor Dr. Huang Guiping who was appointed as the first director of CI-KU. Two other Chinese teachers (Tang Miao and Li Fuchao) also joined the institute on the same dates with Prof. Guiping. Initially, there were only 125 students enrolled for Chinese learning in 2013 which increased gradually (Yang, 2020). With the expansion of the Chinese learning atmosphere, various cultural and informative activities were launched at CI-KU by the China Friendship Association. Chinese learning was further expanded with various promotional activities in connection with CPEC development in the region. The detail of participants in HSK, HSKK, and YCT tests at the CI-KU is provided below in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Participants of Chinese proficiency exams at CI-KU.



Students' participation increased gradually with the establishment of CI-KU. Most of the students from Baluchistan and Sindh selected CI-KU as the preferred institute due to its geographical location. In 2016, the total number of participants in HSK was 891, and an increase of 44.5% and 24.9% was recorded in 2017 and 2018, respectively. However, a decrease of 73.4% and 64.0% was noted in 2019 and 2020, respectively and only 442 participants appeared in the HSK examination in 2020. Survey data elucidated that there were two principal causes for this decline; the opening of CI classrooms at the Petaro Military Academy in Jamshoro District and the suspension of campus classes due to the new coronavirus (COVID-19) (Cheema & Rao, 2021). It is worth mentioning that in comparison to HSKK and YCT, the number of participants for the HSK examination is much higher as depicted in Figure 2. In 2021 institutes were partially opened for in-campus classes and 151 students appeared in the HSK examination during the first semester. This shows the returned high tendency of Chinese learners and a high number of learners can be expected in the academic year 2021-22.

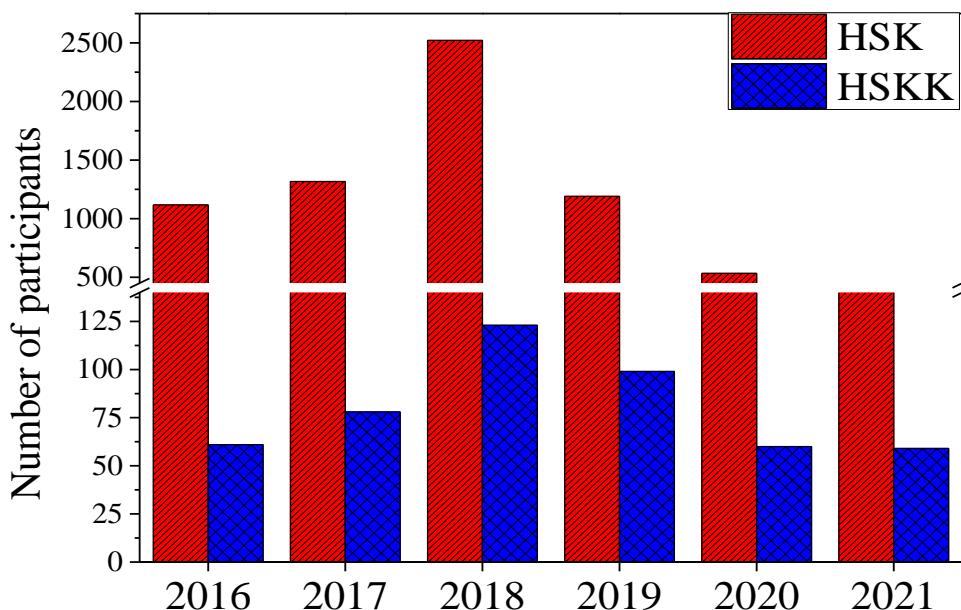
2.5. Confucius Institute, University of Agricultural Faisalabad

The 3rd CI was established on February 9, 2014, at the University of Agricultural Faisalabad (UAF) with the cooperation of Xinjiang Agricultural University (XAU), China. Since its development, this CI served extensively for the development of the Chinese learning environment in various locations in Pakistan. They performed several promotional activities to promote the Chinese language and Chinese culture in Pakistan. The data from 2016 onward is shown in Figure 3.

The total number of HSK test participants at the CI-FAU was 1178 in 2016, an increase of 15.6% and 47.2% were noticed in 2017 and 2018, respectively. CI-FAU was the only examination center till 2019 in the Punjab province of Pakistan. However, the 4th CI was established in 2019 at the University of the Punjab (PU), Lahore, the capital and the largest city of the Punjab province. This establishment provided the learner with a second choice in the Punjab province. Hence a heavy decline of 51.2% was observed at CI-FAU during the year 2019 and only 1289 students appeared for the HSK examination. During 2020, a decrease of 54.0%

was principally due to the COVID-19 restriction and campus closer, similar to other CIs. However, with the reopening of on-campus educational activities in 2021, 491 students appeared for HSK examinations during the first semester, hence an increase in students can be estimated.

Figure 3: Participants of Chinese proficiency exams at CI-FAU



With the concept of extension of Chinese learning environment throughout Pakistan, especially to the far area. CI-UAF served as the base and established Chinese teaching centers in different areas of Pakistan. On October 19, 2016, the CI-UAF established its first Chinese language teaching site at Karakoram International University (KIU) Gilgit, Northern Pakistan with the help of two young Chinese teachers(KIU, 2022). Latterly, Dr. Yang, director of CI-UAF who was the founder of this concept permanently joined the Chinese learning center at KIU. Soon after the formal working, the student’s enrollment increased and there were more than 100 participants in very first examination of HSK-1 which was conducted just after the two months of its inauguration. Urged by these results of KIU, the second Chinese teaching center was established in Hunza on June 9, 2017, by CI-FAU. These centers are now working successfully under the formal supervision of CI-UAF with a future plan of independent Confucius institutes. This concept was further reciprocated with the establishment of Chinese teaching centers at the University of Engineering and Technology (UET) Lahore, Government College Women University, and City School Faisalabad(UAF, 2023).

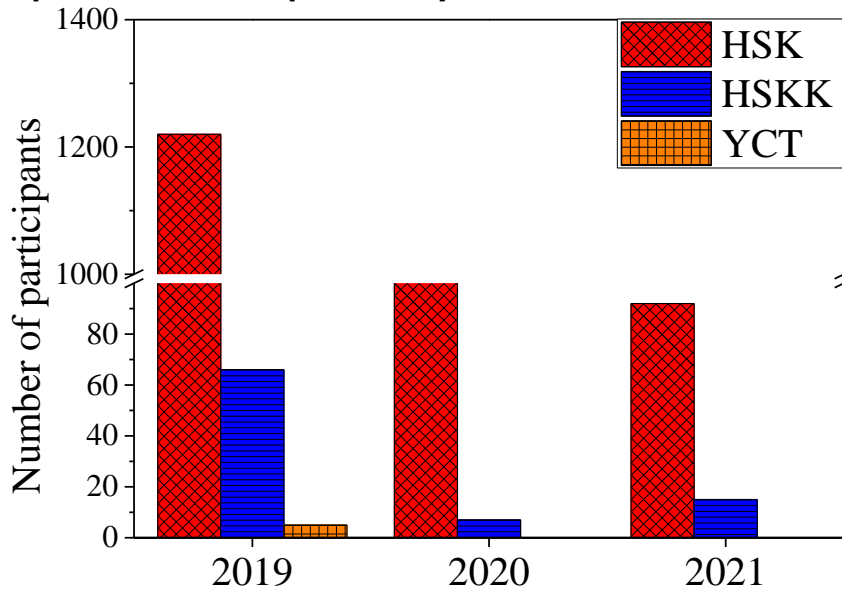
2.6. Confucius Institute at the University of the Punjab

University of the Punjab (PU) Lahore is the first university of the Punjab which was established in 1882 and still is the largest university in Punjab province. Oriental College was established in 1870 and after the establishment of PU, oriental college was dedicated to languages only. The Institute of Languages (IOL) was established in 2010 at the Quaid-e-Azam campus of PU under the administration of the oriental college. A one-year diploma course for the Chinese language was started at IOL along with Arabic, French, Russian, German, Turkish, Italian, Portuguese, Sindhi, Pushto, and various other regional languages. In addition to IOL, CI-PU was established on July 2, 2015, to promote the Chinese language and culture as the second CI of Punjab and the fourth CI of Pakistan(PU, 2022). CI-PU was established as the joint venture of PU and Jiangxi University of Science and Technology, China. With the development of CI-PU, various Chinese training centers were also established in various universities in Lahore in collaboration with CI-PU. Gradually, the CI-PU becomes the choice of many Chinese learners as the learning center as well as the examination center. By the first half of 2020, the number of participants who appeared in different Chinese proficiency tests at CI-PU surpassed 1,500. Detailed information on various proficiency examinations is shown in Figure 4.

The total number of participants in all HSK examinations that appeared at CI-PU in 2019 was 1,291 but it abruptly decreased to 136 during 2020. This was due to the severe COVID-19

pandemic in Lahore which resulted in the closure of all academic activities in the provincial capital for a whole year (Cheema & Rao, 2021). Only a few students appeared for YCT in 2019 and no one participated in YCT in 2020 and 2021. On-campus educational activities resumed during 2021 and 107 students appeared for HSK and 21 for HSKK during the first semester. Now the activities are in full swing in Pakistan with moderate COVID measures. A big number of students are now enrolled in various Chinese learning courses at CI-PU and eventually, a gradually higher number would be observed in the coming years.

Figure 4: Participants in Chinese proficiency exams at CI-PU



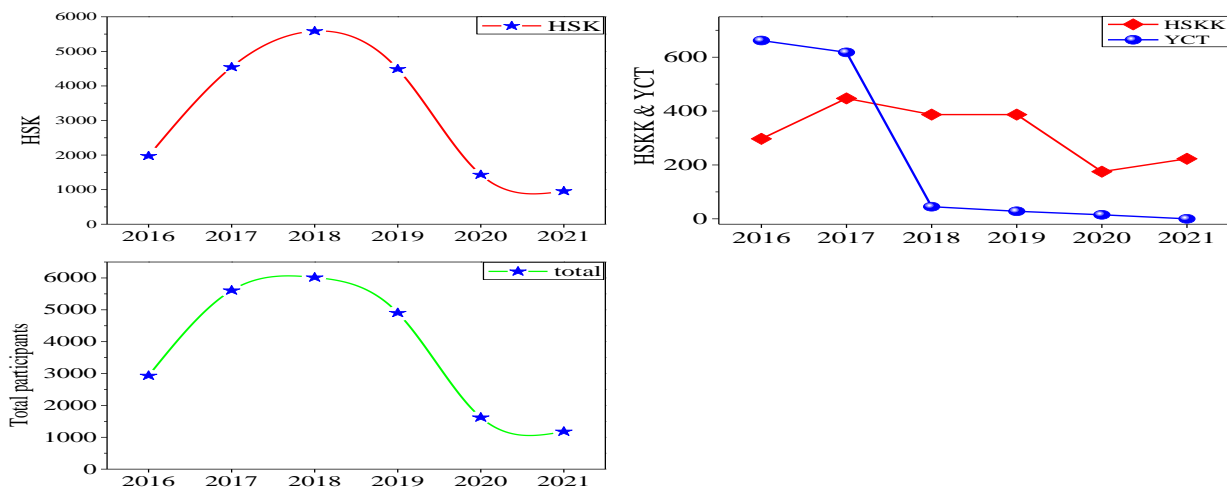
2.7. Confucius Institute, University of Sargodha

The 5th CI was established in October 2019 at Sargodha University (SU) with the collaboration of Henan Normal University, China (Shu, 2020). A MOU was signed by both universities on July 13, 2019, to establish the CI-SU namely the Pakistan Institute of China Studies with a vision of expansion of Chinese learning facilities in Pakistan under CPEC. Formal classes were started in October 2019 but all classes were suspended in 2020 due to the COVID-19 situation in the country (Tongzeng, 2020). Later in March 2020, the study resumed adopting online classes. As the 5th CI in Pakistan, the CI-SU continues to spread its enthusiasm for Chinese language teaching and Sino-Chinese cultural communication in the area (Wang, 2020).

Since the establishment of CIs in Pakistan, the trend of Chinese learning increased continuously. However, COVID-19 was a destructive break and compelled to suspend all educational activities all over the world generally and in Pakistan, particularly during the year 2020. A similar impact can be witnessed in the Chinese learning scenario as shown in Figure 5. Results elucidated a mixed trend throughout the study period (2016-21) in HSKK whereas a heavy decline in YCT was shown in Figure 5B. The overall number of participants in the Chinese proficiency examinations showed an upward trend until 2018 followed by a declining trend. The increasing trend is attributed to the increasing number of CIs and other Chinese learning opportunities in Pakistan as well as to high market demand and job opportunities due to additional Chinese speaking skills. With the gradual development of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), many Chinese entrepreneurs start their businesses in Pakistan along with heavy development activities in civil and energy projects (Sun, Pitafi, Ghani, & Islam, 2020).

Chinese management prefers to hire Pakistani engineers and other workers with a certain level of spoken Chinese. Resultantly, many Pakistani native engineers and other technical experts are eager to learn Chinese in order to increase their resume value. Additionally, scholarship opportunities from Chinese universities also stimulate Pakistani students to learn Chinese (Peng Luqian, 2021). Because Chinese proficiency will not only increase their chance of scholarship but also help them in a better life in China. Furthermore, Chinese speaking proficiency is an added value that helps most of the students to find a good job in China after graduation (Xiaoyu., 2012). All these factors are contributing to an urging factor for Pakistani students to learn Chinese.

Figure 5: Scenario of Chinese learning in Pakistan (A) HSK, (B) HSKK and YCT, and (C) total Chinese proficiency tests



The downward trend after 2018 was partially due to the migration of Pakistani students to China for learning Chinese (Yang, 2020). Because a program was launched by the Government of Punjab in 2016 under the CPEC to facilitate 500 students learning Chinese at different universities in China. Additionally, NUML facilitated the learning program of the South Asia Scholarship scheme for Pakistan, and nearly 500 students were selected for the Chinese learning program. These students were admitted in 1-year Chinese diploma and 4 years of undergraduate programs in Chinese major at BLCU Beijing. This scholarship program was launched to facilitate the Chinese learner in South Asia such as Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, and India; however, Pakistani students were the major beneficiary. One-year diploma students and students from the Punjab government scholarship scheme were graduates in 2018 and returned to Pakistan. This return creates a level of saturation of Chinese translators/interpreters in the Pakistani job market; hence, the trend of Chinese learning decreased (Peng Luqian, 2021; Yang, 2020). All of these factors are forcing local students to search for other alternatives and transferable skills to increase their job options and work opportunities.

The global pandemic (COVID-19) compelled a country-level lockdown in Pakistan in 2020 (Cheema & Rao, 2021). As a result, all development opportunities and educational institutions were suspended. This situation prevailed till 2021 with the partial resuming of educational as well as development activities during various phases of pandemic flares. Language learning is a science of interaction that needs individual participation in classroom activities and practice (Asif et al., 2019). Chinese language learners preferred offline learning and hesitate to adopt an online education system. Additionally, inadequate network availability and poor network quality especially in rural areas of Pakistan are also major obstacles to the online education system in Pakistan. As a result, a still decreasing trend in learning Chinese can be observed in Pakistan. The real scenario will be articulated after normal life returns at the end of the global pandemic.

2.8. Chinese Language Promotion and Cultural Activities

Chinese language learning is promoted by various cultural activities in Pakistan. Several competitions and cultural events have been arranged by CIs and Chinese training centers (CTCs). These events have not only attracted the participants to the Chinese language and culture but also help them to understand various terms truly. Major events include the "Chinese Language and Chinese Culture" competition, the "Chinese Bridge" competition, and the programs of Chinese Radio International (CRI).

In 2016 CI-NUML organized a knowledge contest under the theme of "Chinese Language and Chinese Culture" for school students (CI-NUML, 2019). This event was braced by more than 200 primary and secondary school students of the Islamabad region. The contents mainly focused on the interesting events of Chinese culture such as "chopsticks clip table tennis" and "tai chi performances". In addition, a competition between Chinese, Urdu, and mixed songs was also performed. This event was reciprocated repeatedly creating a soft image of Chinese culture and China-Pakistan friendship and cultural exchange. In addition to this, the "Chinese Bridge" competition is also held every year since 2016. The first event was held on May 27, 2016, at CI-NUML in which six contestants were awarded excellence. On March 6, 2020, the 19th world

university Chinese Bridge Competition was held at CI-NUML and 30 students participated from all CIs in Pakistan. The competition was divided into three parts; a Chinese speech, a talent show, and a QA session, and the winners were decorated with medals and other prizes. In these events, participants were always enthusiastic about Chinese culture. These events helped to promote the Chinese language and Chinese culture in Pakistan. Therefore, now while wandering in the streets you can hear some Chinese words too in common chit chat which was not observed before.

3. Problems and challenges faced by CIs in Pakistan

In the establishment and development of CIs around the world, various problems have ascended in practical teaching and management. Similarly, various obstacles are also present in the Chinese learning environment in Pakistan. These problems and their possible solutions focusing on the Pakistani perspective are discussed below.

3.1. Insufficient Teaching Staff

Although Hanban always struggles to develop excellent faculty for teaching Chinese in CIs all over the world. In Pakistan, most of the CIs have 2-3 Chinese volunteers as the teaching faculty with 1-2 members of required teaching qualification and experience of which one is always engaged in administrative activities as the director of the institute. Volunteers are generally Master's graduate or final year students who joined this volunteer activity in order to accomplish the teaching practice, the essential degree requirement (Xiaoyu., 2012). Therefore, the CIs in Pakistan generally lacks in experienced faculty with required teaching qualification. Language teaching required special teaching skills with a command of language phenetic and grammar of both languages. Volunteers who are currently major teaching staff are not well trained and have insufficient knowledge of Urdu grammar (Ilyas et al., 2021). This problem is now partially solved with the induction of Pakistani faculty with high Chinese language skills and education. However, still, there are only two Pakistani with Ph.D. in Chinese language who are serving at CI-NUML. All other CIs don't have any Pakistani teachers with Ph.D. in the Chinese language. Pakistani teachers of the Chinese language generally have only HSK level proficiency and have not achieved the required qualification and teaching practice. These teachers lack in Chinese vocabulary as well as grammar understanding. Most schools mainly focus on the teacher's ability to speak Chinese as the only way of Chinese qualifications. Teachers with insufficient vocabulary and grammar knowledge cannot serve the purpose well in accordance with language requirements. It is highly recommended to adopt either Chinese with Ph.D. in Urdu language or Pakistani with Ph.D. in the Chinese language as the faculty to strengthen the teaching faculty, at least 1 teacher in every CIs in Pakistan. It will attract more language learners as well as help to develop Chinese-Urdu interphase vocabulary.

3.2. Insufficient Teaching Materials

Teaching materials are the prerequisite for any learning process (Yue, 2017). Unfortunately, there are insufficient materials that can be recommended as the course book or helping material to Urdu native Chinese learners. Only a few books are available which can help Urdu natives to learn basic Chinese. Therefore, the course which is being taught in CIs in Pakistan is all which was principally designed for English-Chinese learners. Some teachers have designed courses and have developed some materials to facilitate their students but these are not the standard books. These materials do not cover the basic curriculum requirements and have not been properly approved by any language institution in Pakistan or China. Prof. Kong Julian, who has served at the Urdu department of Peking University, Beijing China has developed some literature and course books for Urdu learning for Chinese students. These books can be used as helping material for Urdu native Chinese learners. She has also developed an Urdu-Chinese dictionary which can further help to understand various Chinese terms. At the same time, homogenized curriculum material must be developed by these CIs in Pakistan along with required textbooks and helping books for Urdu natives. It will be more helpful if a study board is designed with 2-3 Ph.D. from each language to design the curriculum and textbooks for Urdu native Chinese learners. It will surely help to nurture the learning environment in a better way with extended interests. Continuous monitoring and development of required literature should be the responsibility of this board.

3.3. Teaching Methodology

Along with teaching material, teaching methodology is the key factor in second language acquisition (Zhang et al., 2015). In language learning, generally, students preferred to get themselves taught by qualified native speakers. Chinese volunteers are qualified but not trained

well for second language teaching (Paul, Nuesser, & Zheng, 2023). Due to different educational environments and methodologies, there is a mismatch in teaching methodologies of language teaching between Chinese teachers and Pakistani teachers. Pakistani teachers principally focus on listening and speaking skills and somehow neglect reading and writing. In this way, students lack Chinese writing and failed to understand the strokes and stroke orders of Chinese characters. Therefore, it is recommended to develop a uniform teacher training program and every teacher, either Chinese or Pakistani, must go through it. These refresher courses should design focusing on all the aspects of language teaching such as speaking, listening, reading, and writing training (Liu & Misbah, 2016). Teachers should learn to use audio-video teaching aids to help the students with language learning. As currently there are few activities outside the classrooms, and it needs to be revised, and learning through activities must provide a due space.

All these activities can help Pakistani students to learn the Chinese language more efficiency and interestingly. The degree of localization of these CIs, the ability to disseminate local languages and cultures, and the construction of connotations determine whether they are sustainable or not. Concerning Pakistan, it can be seen that the teaching programs of CIs are still developing. Promoting the Chinese language and culture is the original intention of the CIs, and promoting Sino-foreign educational cooperation and cultural exchanges is the essence which will ultimately help in achieving the goal of enhancing the soft power of Chinese culture in the world. The core elements of international Chinese language exchanges and the sustainable development of CIs lie in expanding the vitality and internal motivation of Chinese language exchanges in host countries.

4. Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

Economic growth and China's open-up policy have developed China as an education, trade, and tour place for most nations. The existence of rich Chinese culture and preserving history and historical places also evolved China into a tourist destination. Furthermore, relatively cheapness and high food variety also attract Asian tourists to visit China. All these factors impacted the trend of Chinese learning in the world as well as in Pakistan. The government of China developed the CIs in Pakistan to flourish Chinese learning in Pakistan and the first institute was developed in the capital territory as CI-NUML in 2005. Till today 5 CIs have been developed in well-reputed universities in Pakistan namely CI-NUML, CI-UAF, CI-KU, CI-PU, and CI-US. Along with these CIs many Chinese classrooms and training centers are also working under the umbrella of these CIs to facilitate the local Chinese learners in various parts of the country.

Classes for various short courses in the Chinese language, HSK, HSKK, and YCT are currently offered in these CIs and training centers. But still, undergraduate and master's in the Chinese language are only offered in CI-NUML. Generally teaching faculty is composed of Pakistani and Chinese teachers and most of native Chinese teachers are volunteers instead of professional teachers, hence, these Chinese teachers are neither fluent in Urdu nor English. Therefore, teaching primary-level Chinese learners is a major obstacle. In addition, the lack of teaching material, the heterogeneous curriculum in different CIs, and the teaching methodology are key challenges. Following measures and policy decisions can help to solve these problems majorly;

- The hiring of qualified faculty and the development of refresher courses for working faculty can solve the issue of capacity limitation of teaching faculty. It is recommended to hire at least one Ph.D. in each language (Urdu and Chinese) at every institute. It is further recommended that the teaching faculty should be trained through proper teaching courses.
- The establishment of a curriculum development board with 2-3 PhDs of each language with objectives of development of unified curriculum and textbooks for various courses for Urdu native Chinese learners will help to curb the problem of insufficient literature.
- Adoption of artificial intelligence-based teaching aids will help the learners to understand the phonetics and vocal sound of Chinese characters. The use of an animated speech delivery method is also recommended which will help to understand and practice the dialogue delivery.
- Development of co-curricular and extracurricular activities with meaningful Chinese language and culture adoption can help students to understand the theme of Chinese terminologies and cultural aspects.
- The establishment of focused group discussions and the development of study groups with Chinese natives will help to promote Chinese culture as well as language learning.

- Last but not least, affirmed commitment, dedication, and motivation can lead to develop a progressive environment which will help learners by increasing their interest and motivation.

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