

***THE IMPLEMENTATION ON PRACTICE POLICY OF CHINESE  
DIPLOMACY THROUGH CONFUCIUS INSTITUTE (CI) IN THAILAND***

**M. Habib Rosyidi<sup>\*1</sup>, Ario Bimo Utomo<sup>\*2</sup>**

<sup>1 2</sup> Department of International Relations, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences,  
Universitas Pembangunan Nasional “Veteran” Jawa Timur  
e-mail: <sup>\*1</sup> mh.rosyidi26@gmail.com, <sup>\*2</sup> ariobimo.hi@upnjatim.ac.id

*Received: 3 Oct 2021, Revised: 20 Oct 2021, Accepted: 25 Oct 2021*

**ABSTRACT**

*This research discuss the The Implementation On Practice Policy Of Chinese Diplomacy Through Confucius Institute (Ci) In Thailand relations. The impact of the migration of Chinese people in the past has had an impact on the cultural closeness between the Chinese and Thai people. China's economic development and the close trade relations with Thailand have influenced the significance of Mandarin for Thai people. The Chinese government then responded to the need for Chinese language skills. This research is descriptive qualitative with secondary data. At the end of this paper, the author concludes that CI has played an active role as a manifestation of China's cultural diplomacy in Thailand through its cultural programs which indicate a good two-way communication between China and Thailand. In addition, the presence of CI in Thailand allows for public understanding of the diversity and hybridity of other individuals in Thailand.*

*Keywords: Cultural Diplomacy, Confucius Institute, Mandarin, China, Thailand*

**ABSTRACT**

Penelitian ini mengkaji Implementasi Kebijakan Praktik Diplomasi Tiongkok Melalui Confucius Institute (Ci) Dalam Hubungan Thailand. Dampak migrasi orang Tionghoa di masa lalu berdampak pada kedekatan budaya antara orang Tionghoa dan Thailand. Perkembangan ekonomi China dan hubungan perdagangan yang erat dengan Thailand telah mempengaruhi pentingnya bahasa Mandarin bagi masyarakat Thailand. Pemerintah China kemudian menanggapi kebutuhan akan kemampuan berbahasa China. Penelitian ini bersifat deskriptif kualitatif dengan data sekunder. Di akhir tulisan ini, penulis menyimpulkan bahwa CI telah berperan aktif sebagai wujud diplomasi budaya Tiongkok di Thailand melalui program-program kebudayaannya yang menunjukkan komunikasi dua arah yang baik antara Tiongkok dan Thailand. Selain itu, kehadiran CI di Thailand memungkinkan pemahaman publik tentang keragaman dan hibriditas individu lain di Thailand.

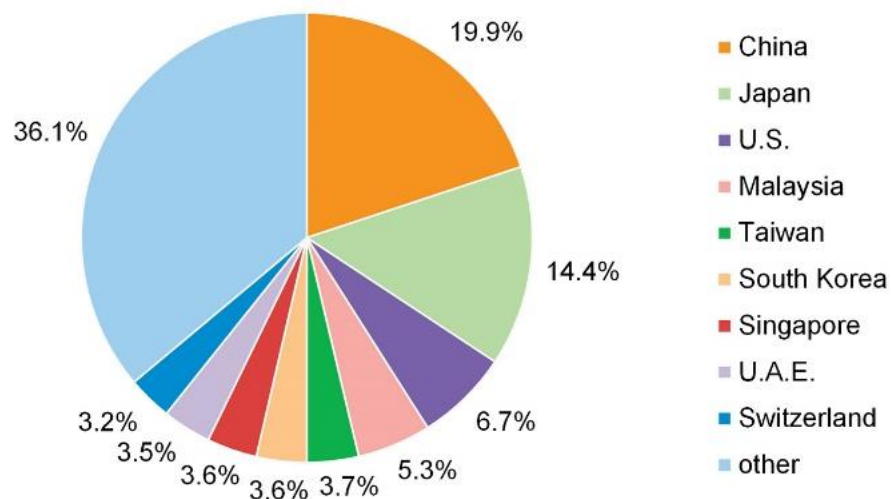
Kata kunci: Diplomasi Budaya, Institut Konfusius, Mandarin, Cina, Thailand

## INTRODUCTION

After China's reform by Deng Xiaoping, China has ambitions to increase its cultural diplomacy, where China attaches great importance to the role of cultural exchange in foreign relations (Y. Zhou, 2020). This ambition is evidenced by the existence of large-scale cultural exchange activities around the world which have an impact on the increase of interest of countries and community in Chinese cultural values, Chinese language, and learning the Chinese language (Y. Zhou, 2020). Cultural diplomacy is an important component of China's diplomacy as a whole and becomes a new diplomatic growth point to create a favorable external environment for China, show a good image of China, and increase soft power to achieve China's national interests (Xiangyi, 2018).

As Thailand's second-largest trading partner (Lau & Lee, 2016), China has a close relationship with Thailand. In the mid-19th century, many Chinese immigrants came to Thailand. Chinese immigrants are transforming into a significant minority operating commercial enterprises in Thailand (Hafner, Keyes, & Keyes, 2021). This condition affects the important role of the Chinese language for Thailand, so the Thai Government requested support from Beijing to train more Mandarin teachers, send native speakers to Thai schools, and provide free teaching materials (Schmidt, 2008).

**Figure 1 Main Source Countries for Thailand's Imports**



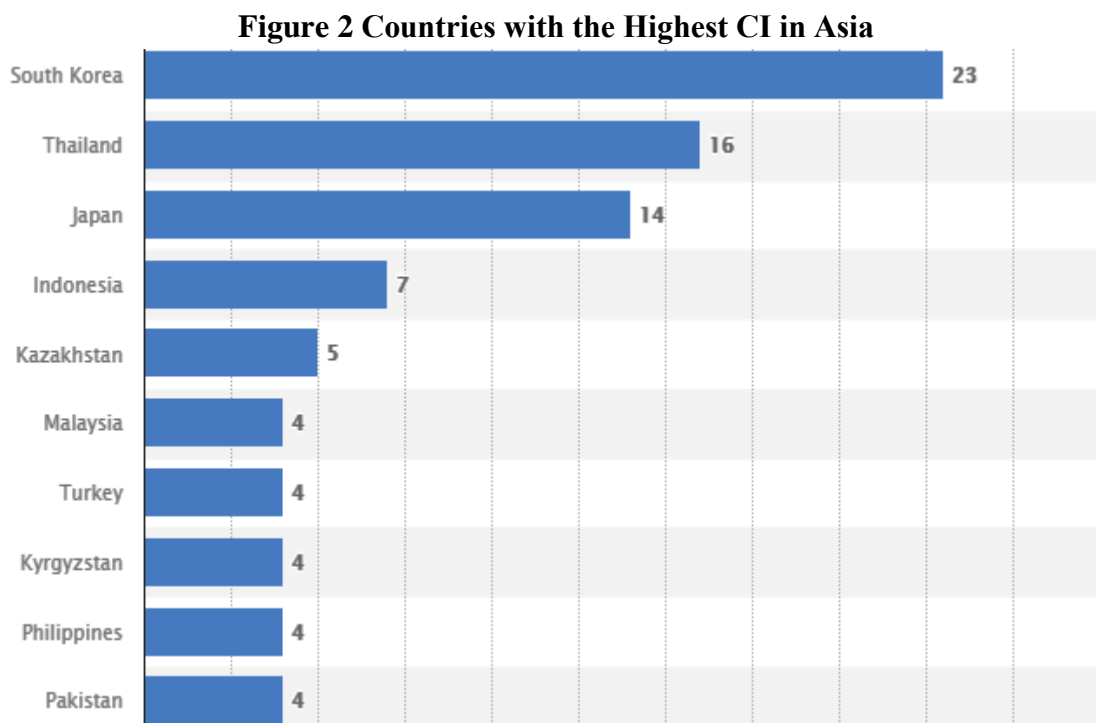
Source: (*Encyclopedia Britannica, n.d.*)

In 2006, the Chinese government responded to the need for Chinese language teaching in Thailand by establishing the Confucius Institute (CI). CI is a non-profit organization founded in 2004 and affiliated with the Chinese Ministry of Education and supervised by the Hanban (International Chinese Language

Council) to promote the teaching of language, culture, and aspects of knowledge about China in the global community, and facilitate cultural exchange (T. Zhou, 2021). In addition, CI is also focused on bridging China with world economic trends as stated on the following Hanban website:

*“...many Confucius Institutes now train students in business, tourism, and trade as well as language, martial arts, and calligraphy. As China opens itself more to the world, the Confucius Institute will become a link in the chain connecting China with world economic development”* (Ferdiansyah, 2019).

CI was first established in Thailand on August 03, 2006, at Khon Kaen University and has grown to a total of 16 institutions in 2018. In the Southeast Asian region, Thailand is the country with the most CI institutions as well as the Southeast Asian country that sends the most local students to China with a total of 21,296 students in 2015 (*Institute of International Education (IIE), 2015*).



*Source: (Statista, 2021)*

Although currently Chinese language teaching institutions, as represented by CI, have developed rapidly in Thailand, in previous years Chinese education has experienced oppression. This is due to negative sentiments in Chinese society which are identified with communism and can dominate Thailand's important sector. The Thai Ministry of Education stated that in 1920 there were only 30

Chinese schools, then increased to 188 in 1928 and 300 schools in 1937. However, in 1938-1944 and 1948-1954, Chinese language education was again under pressure in the Phibun era due to policies of nationalism and Thailand's assimilation policy, and concerns over the spread of communism in Chinese schools (Wang, 2019).

In the 21st century, the Chinese language education re-experiencing rising. The Hanban office stated that from 2003 to 2018 China had sent more than 10,000 local Chinese teachers to more than 1000 schools and universities in Thailand, making Thailand the largest recipient country for Chinese volunteers in the world (Manomaiviboon, 2004) and one of the four ASEAN countries, namely Singapore, Laos, Cambodia which is the center of Chinese culture (Shuto, 2018). Therefore, based on the background made by the author, the researcher seeks to dig deeper into how China's cultural diplomacy practices through the Confucius Institute (CI) in Thailand in 2006-2018. In this paper, the author attempts to explain how these educational and cultural institutions are involved in the process of Chinese cultural diplomacy to Thailand.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Cultural Diplomacy**

Diplomacy is part of public diplomacy which is categorized by Gilboa (2008) as an effort to build the intention of relations between countries in the long term (Hartig, 2016; Gilboa, 2008). Milton C. Cummings (2003) defines cultural diplomacy as the exchange of ideas, information. Aguilar (1996) mentions cultural diplomacy as a government effort in presenting their country to the people of other countries to help achieve foreign policy goals through cultural artifacts, such as through exhibition activities or language teaching (Hartig, 2016). In Hartig (2016), learning a foreign language can be used to show interest in other countries and their people through organizations that promote a country's language, such as Confucius Institutes, British Council, Goethe Institutes which have an impact on economic ripple-effects (Hartig, 2016).

To provide an overview of cultural diplomacy programs, Wyszomirski et al (2003) requires the following activities (Morrison et al., 2017): (1) Individual exchange for educational and cultural purposes, (2) Exhibitions and shows abroad, (3) Sponsoring seminars and conferences both at home and abroad involving international participants, (4) Support for language study programs and institutions, (5) Infrastructure support in the form of cultural institutions/centers/forums abroad, (6) Support for country study programs, (7) International cooperation in cultural programs and projects, (8) Activities related to trade in cultural products and services. To maximize the impact of cultural

diplomacy, Schneider (2006) provides tips for the success of cultural diplomacy as follows (Schneider, 2006): (1) Cultural diplomacy operates in two directions, (2) Long-term in nature, (3) Cultural diplomacy only facilitates popular policies, (4) Cultural diplomacy brings what is interesting to the recipient, (5) Cultural diplomacy cannot be measured effectively and only gives qualitative differences in relations between nations and communities, (6) Cultural diplomacy is carried out to meet the interests of the host country or region, (7) Diplomacy is creative, flexible, and opportunistic.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

The type of research used in this topic is descriptive. According to Hossein (2015), descriptive research aims to describe an event and its characteristics (Nassaji, 2015). Here, the researcher tries to comprehensively explain the practice of Chinese cultural diplomacy through the Confucius Institute (CI) in Thailand from 2006-2018. In data collection techniques, the author uses qualitative methods from literature studies (Iskandar, 2008). Researchers collect data through literature study which is part of secondary data.

## **RESULT**

### **Confucius Institutes (CI's)**

Confucius Institute (CI) was established to realize China's vision of introducing their local cultural values to the world community, as did the British Council, Frances' Alliance Francaise, and Germany's Goethe who introduced the language and culture of their country of origin (Flew & Hartig, 2014). CI itself is part of a series of programs by the Chinese government to increase its influence on the global stage in linguistic standards, which is called the "Chinese Bridge" (Ma, 2018). In 2004, the first CI was successfully established in Seoul, South Korea, which became the beginning of the spread of CI and the teaching of the Chinese language and culture around the world (Jiangyu, 2020). China's commitment has driven more than 900 CIs to be established in 108 countries. Making China the third largest country after Britain and France in terms of national cultural institutions operating in other countries (Flew & Hartig, 2014). In Asian region, especially South Korea, Thailand, and Japan became the most prominent countries in CI's cooperation commitments (Starr, 2009).

By Delisle (2010), the Confucius Institute (CI) is called the most prominent instrument in the manifestation of China's soft power agenda (Becard & Filho, 2019). Confucius Institute is a place where the international community can learn how to speak Chinese, study modern China, exchange ideas about education, culture, economy, and trade. CI in each country has its uniqueness in their

learning model that is adapted to the conditions of the local community (Dongping, 2009). According to Hanban, the main purpose of establishing CI is to facilitate the needs of people from various countries who want to learn Chinese, increase the understanding of the indigenous Chinese language and culture, create educational relations and cultural cooperation, and help promote a harmonious world (Sari, 2017), as written in the General Principles of the Constitution and By-Laws of the Confucius Institutes :

*“Confucius Institutes devote themselves to satisfying the demands of people from different countries and regions in the world who learn the Chinese language, to enhancing understanding of the Chinese language and culture by these peoples, to strengthening educational and cultural exchange and cooperation between China and other countries, to deepening friendly relationships with other nations, to promoting the development of multiculturalism, and to construct a harmonious world”* (Flew & Hartig, 2014).

Gil (2017) adds that there are three entities involved in CI: Hanban as CI's headquarters, Chinese institutions (universities), and foreign institutions (universities) (Becard & Filho, 2019). In this case, the state acts as a sponsor or advocate, while the existing university acts as a CI pioneer.

### **Management, Establishment Procedure, and Network of Confucius Institute**

CI is directly run by Hanban. Hanban is a non-profit public organization under the supervision of representatives from the Chinese ministries consisting of the State Council, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Ministry of Culture (Zhouxiang & Herrmann, 2016). In carrying out CI, Hanban is tasked with: (1) Making policies and development plans to promote Mandarin internationally; (2) Supporting Mandarin language programs in various types of educational institutions and levels in other countries; (3) Designing standards for comprehensively teaching Mandarin internationally, developing, and promote Chinese language teaching materials. While the method of establishing CI uses a joint venture model by involving Chinese universities in cooperation with foreign institutions (usually universities) (Sari, 2017). The rules for establishing CI (The Maritime Silk Road Confucius Institute, n.d.), include: (1) Organizations or universities that apply to establish CI must be legal entities and are teaching and learning institutions, (2) Domicile of organizations or universities that wish to establish CI must have a strong desire to learn the Chinese language and culture, (3) The organization or university applying for the establishment of CI must provide personnel, premises, and equipment following CI's requirements, (4)

Have sufficient funds and a stable budget. The process of establishing a CI can be officially carried out when a foreign party submits an application letter for the establishment of a CI to Hanban (Sari, 2017).

On average, CI stands at a university that has a relationship with a Chinese university or has a Chinese study program. This preference is a strategic choice in the success of the collaboration to establish CI (Starr, 2009). When the CI establishment application is approved, the teaching staff, teacher salaries, and course materials will be provided by China, while the administrative staff, facilities, and other funding will be borne by the host country or university (Starr, 2009). According to Wang Juei-chi, two characteristics distinguish CI from others. First, CI is funded by the Chinese government and operates under the rules of the Beijing headquarters. Second, CI is affiliated with higher education institutions operating in the host country on a partnership basis with financing from Hanban and the host institution (Taipei Times, 2012). Compared to similar institutions, CI's uniqueness lies in how CI is involved in the arrangement of cooperation between Chinese and international partner organizations. The process of active involvement between the two elements supporting the establishment of CI is considered important for the development of China's public diplomacy network. It is not surprising that CI itself is described as a public diplomacy initiative that has a very wide network and has its characteristics compared to European cultural institutions which tend to stand alone and can only communicate with the head office (Sari, 2017).

### **Confucius Institutes in Thailand**

Yan Wanqin, said that Thailand was very welcoming of China's arrival and saw it as an opportunity to learn Chinese as well as strengthen relations with China (Siriphon, 2015). In addition, the determination of the Thai government in education cooperation with China has created a good climate for the establishment of CI. In contrast to Vietnam, which tends to be on the defensive against China, it causes sluggish CI growth in the country (Ma, 2018). As a result of the economic acceleration carried out by China, the Thai government intends to support trade and investment, promote wider economic, social, cultural, and academic cooperation with China (Bureau of International Cooperation Ministry of Education, Thailand, 2009).

The Thai Ministry of Education recognizes the importance of teaching Mandarin to its people. Since 2006, the Thai government has included Chinese studies as an educational curriculum and within five years about 30% of students at the Thai high school level have had the opportunity to learn the Chinese language and culture (Dongping, 2009). China and Thailand seemed to enjoy

The Implementation On Practice Policy Of Chinese Diplomacy Through Confucius Institute (Ci) In Thailand

cooperation in establishing CI and tended to be more massive, as evidenced by the establishment of CI and the rising position of Thailand in second place after South Korea in the list of countries with the highest number of CIs (Jiangyu, 2020). And in 2015, the number of CI students in Thailand reached 121,454, or 6.4% of the total CI students worldwide (Mhunpiew & Liu, 2020).

The high number of CIs in Thailand is thought to have relevance to the arrival of Chinese immigrants in the past. Both China and Thailand then take advantage of what the authors term the "relic of identity" of China. Thailand considers CI an important part of business operations, while China uses CI as a tool to cultivate Chinese nationality (Jiangyu, 2020). However, the teaching practices carried out by CI teachers do not lead to the manifestation of Chinese ideology top-down. On the other hand, CI teachers engage in adaptive and situational practices. The adjustment was made by the CI teacher by localizing Chinese culture so that it was accepted and understood by the Thai people.

**Table 1 List of Confucius Institutes in Thailand**

No	Confucius Institute in Thailand	Collaboration of Chinese Universities	Established
1.	Confucius Institute at Khon Kaen University	Southwest University	August 03, 2006
2.	Confucius Institute at Kasetsart University	Huaqiao University	October 01, 2006
3.	Confucius Institute at Mae Fah Luang University	Xiamen University	04 November 2006
4.	Confucius Institute at Chiang Mai University	Yunnan Normal University	18 December 2006
5.	Confucius Institute at Bansomdejchaopraya Rajabhat University	Tianjin Normal University	19 December 2006
6.	Confucius Institute at Mahasarakham University	Guangxi University for nationalities	20 December 2006
7.	Confucius Institute in Phuket, Prince of Songkla University	Shanghai University	December 24, 2006
8.	Confucius Institute at Suan Dusit University in Suphanburi	Guangxi University	December 27, 2006
9.	Confucius Institute of Betong Municipality	Chongqing University	December 28, 2006
10.	Confucius Institute at Prince of Songkla University	Guangxi Normal University	December 29, 2006
11.	Confucius Institute at Chulalongkorn University	Peking University	March 26, 2007
12.	Confucius Institute at Burapha University	Wenzhou University, Wenzhou Medical University	September 15, 2009
13.	Maritime Silk Road Confucius Institute at Dhurakij Pundit University	Tianjin Normal University	28 April 2015
14.	Confucius Institute at Assumption University	Tianjin University of Science & Technology	September 12, 2015
15.	Confucius Institute for Traditional Chinese Medicine at Huachiew Chalermprakiet University	Tianjin University of Traditional Chinese Medicine	October 20, 2016
16.	Confucius Institute at Pra Nakhon Rajabhat	Dali University	12 June 2018



The high number of CIs in Thailand is relevance to the arrival of Chinese immigrants in the past. Both China and Thailand then take advantage of what the authors term the "relic of identity" of China. Thailand considers CI an important part of business operations, while China uses CI as a tool to cultivate Chinese nationality (Jiangyu, 2020). However, the teaching practices carried out by CI teachers do not lead to the manifestation of Chinese ideology top-down. On the other hand, CI teachers engage in adaptive and situational practices. The adjustment was made by the CI teacher by localizing Chinese culture so that it was accepted and understood by the Thai people.

According to Ma (2018), the presence of CI Thailand is more symbolic than pedagogical at the university. Generally, CI organizes activities cultural and teaches non-degree language courses for the community, especially for local government officials. The presence of CI as a symbol is not without reason considering that before the establishment of CI, universities had become academic institutions for Chinese studies in Thailand (Ma, 2018). Thai students who join CI are consumers or connoisseurs of the facilities and works exhibited in CI. At the same time, Thai students also act as producers for the China-Thai brotherhood (Jiangyu, 2020). Through the participation of Thai students who join CI, it shows the growing awareness of Thai students on the importance of understanding aspects of Chinese culture against the backdrop of the Chinese-Thai brotherhood. They consciously understand that Mandarin can be a means for them to increase their future career opportunities and to have the opportunity to travel to China, through camp programs and increase *Hanyǔ Shuǐpíng Kǎoshì scores* (HSK) or Chinese Proficiency Test higher (Jiangyu, 2020).

### **Confucius Institute Activities in Thailand**

In carrying out its activities in the host country, the operation of CI must comply with the program regulations set by Hanban (The Maritime Silk Road Confucius Institute, n.d.), specifically: (1) Teaching Chinese, (2) Training language teachers mandarin and sending teachers to learn Mandarin, (3) Organizing HSK, (4) Providing consulting services about studying in China, (5) Organizing Chinese-Thai language and cultural exchange activities. In practice, each CI has the authority to make adjustment programs that in general do not violate the regulations set by Hanban. Furthermore, in Mhunpiew and Liu (2020), the cultural communication activities carried out by the Confucius Institute (CI) Thailand, consist of four aspects (Mhunpiew & Liu, 2020) : (1) Mandarin language competition, (2) Cultural activities, ( 3) Culture class, (4) Chinese festival celebration. The various programs offered by CI aim to introduce, provide understanding, and experience Chinese culture to the Thai people.

Liu (2016) in Mhunpiew and Liu (2020) added that Thai universities, such as Prince of Songkla University held various activities in the form of singing, dancing, cultural classes, and Chinese festival celebrations as part of the cultural experience (Mhunpiew & Liu, 2020). Various celebrations of Chinese cultural festivals and contests, such as the Spring Festival Gala, Mid Autumn Festival, Chinese Song Contest, Sino-Thai Food Contest, and Confucius Institute Speaking were also held by CI in Thailand, such as those conducted by Confucius Institute Phra Nakhon Rajabhat University (Hanban Thai, n.d.). After the success of the Chinese government in holding the 11th "Chinese Bridge Chinese Proficiency Competition for Foreign College Student" and the 5th Chinese Bridge Chinese Proficiency Competition for International Student, several countries then created a Chinese Bridge program or a similar Chinese language competition program intended for students in universities, secondary schools, and elementary schools. For example, the Confucius Institute in Phuket held the second Chinese Character Input held at Surat Thani Campus, Prince of Songkla University, Thailand in 2012. CI at Mahasarakham University also held a Chinese Characters Dictation Competition which was attended by 5 universities such as Chiang Mai University and 30 high schools from 8 provinces to participate in the competition (Hanban Thai, n.d.). In addition, Confucius Institute also has a program Chinese singing competition, such as those held by the Confucius Classroom at Srinakorn School in Southern Thailand (Yuming & Li, 2019) and the Confucius Institute at Suriyan University (Auethavornpipat & Rudnyckyj, 2013).

CI also held a Chinese camp program. In 2012, the Confucius Institute at Kasetsart University joined forces with the Chinese department of 4 universities in Thailand to organize a camp program for students with the theme "graduation exchange" (Yuming & Li, 2019). Confucius Institute also holds several Chinese culture courses, such as the Confucius Classroom at Traimit Wittayalai High School which hosted "The 6<sup>th</sup> Chinese culture course 2012" which aims to equip students with the experience of Chinese culture (Yuming & Li, 2019). In 2017, CI Maritime Silk Road in collaboration with Tianjin Normal University held a two-week winter camp in China which was attended by 19 students from the Chinese Department of Economics and Business from Boren University and the School of International Studies with several activities such as Chinese calligraphy, Tai Chi, the art of paper cutting, participated in the "Chinese Language and Culture Practice Ability Demonstration New Years' Eve Gala", and visited the Forbidden City in Beijing, the Yangliuqing Graphic Arts Exhibition Hall, Ancient Culture Street, and Italian Style Street.

To spread and teach Chinese widely in Thailand, Chinese universities use CI as a platform to play an active role in partnerships. This can be seen from the

collaboration carried out by South China University of Science and Technology with several schools in Thailand, such as holding Chinese language camps, teacher training, and others to support the development of Chinese education in Southern Thailand (Yuming & Li, 2019). And every CI in Thailand already has partner partners with Chinese institutions and has cultural programs and activities for the community, officials, businessmen, and others. For example, CI at Suan Dusit Rajabhat University offers Mandarin classes to students in other majors, such as tourism (China Daily, 2014).

Hanban also held a scholarship program to certify the quality of Chinese language teachers and student scholarships. In September 2008, China and Thailand collaborated to launch a language and cultural development program and committed to increasing the number of local Chinese teachers. The Thai Ministry of Education then sent 122 of its students to study at major Chinese universities for education that year (Yuming & Li, 2014). Every year, many Thai students apply for scholarships to the China Scholarship Council (CSC) through CI Thailand to be able to study in China (Tungkeunkunt, 2016).

In the dynamics of CI in Thailand, CI seems consistent with its programs that focus on educational and cultural aspects. The cultural activities carried out by each CI in Thailand, can be said to have programs with relatively similar content although with different names or activity models. This shows that CI has the same commitment as well as being flexible and adaptive in promoting the Chinese language and culture in Thailand. This condition can encourage the acceleration and development of cooperation between Thailand and China in the framework of cooperation in the fields of tourism, education, and socio-culture that contribute positively to the economic development of the two countries.

### **The Significance of the Confucius Institute to China-Thailand Tourism**

The sector is an industry that accounts for one-fifth of the country's economic income (Tanatkatrakul, 2017). The report of the World Travel and Tourism Council (2016) in Rodyu and Wetprasit (2018), in 2016 the Thai tourism has contributed 20% of Thailand's GDP (Rodyu & Wetprasit, 2020). Thailand itself is one of the destination countries for Chinese tourists. Mentioned by Boonying (2018), Chinese tourists made Thailand the number one destination in Asia which made it the top ten destinations international travel for Chinese tourists in 2016 alongside the United States, Japan, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Australia, South Korea, France, Italy, and UK (Boonying, 2018).

Thailand's tourism promotion towards China is focused on food, beaches, and cultural institutions to encourage international travel (Walsh, 2007). In line with Boonying (2018), the majority of Chinese tourists prefer tourist destinations

that have historical values and culture as well as natural tourism rather than adventure tourism (Boonying, 2018). Thailand was chosen because it has a similar time zone, short flight time, and the same historical and cultural background as China due to the migration of Chinese people in the past (Choibamroong, 2017).

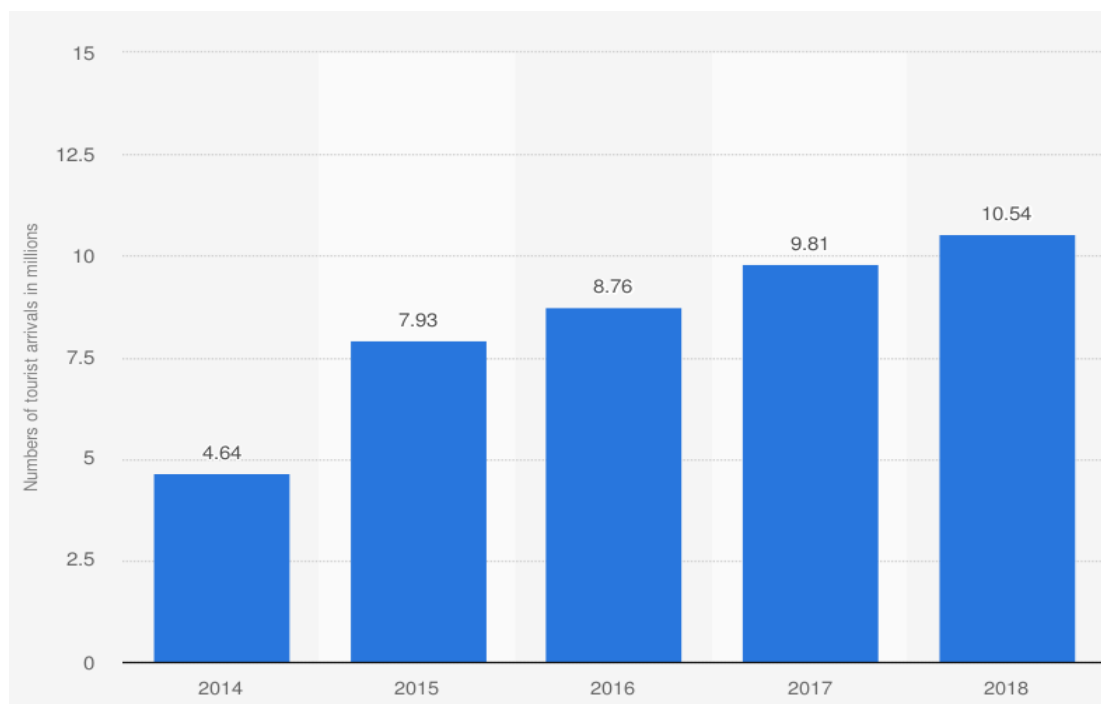
**Table 2 Destinations of Chinese Tourists in Thailand**

Tourism Destination	Percent
Historical and Culture	36 %
Nature	37%
Adventure	27%

*Sumber: (Boonying, 2018)*

Along with the increase in Chinese tourists and the development of the Chinese state, Mandarin is increasingly popular in Thailand (Xinhua, 2017). However, Choibamroong's (2017) findings show that Chinese tourists have difficulty accessing tourist attractions, such as finding transportation and understanding road signs (Choibamroong, 2017). Therefore, the Confucius Institute (CI) has an essential role in creating a Thai tourism climate that can be understood by Chinese tourists by educating the local community.

**Figure 3 Visits of Chinese Tourists to Thailand 2014 -2018 (in million)**



*Source: (Statista, 2021)*

With the existence of CI, it can attract Chinese tourists to visit Thailand because of the ease of communication in Mandarin, such as the Confucius Institute Prince of Songkla University in Phuket which utilizes Phuket's tourism resources to develop Chinese tourism courses (Wang, 2019) or the Confucius Institute Suan Dusit Suphanburi who held a Mandarin language training program for tourist police to have Chinese language skills and an understanding of Chinese tourists (Siamrath Online, 2019). In this study, the authors encountered problems in the form of lack of access and the unavailability of quantitative data which showed the causality of the increase in the number of Chinese tourists to Thailand after the establishment of the Confucius Institute, so that the authors were only able to present statistical data on the number of Chinese tourists to Thailand in general in Figure 5.

### **Thai government's Education Policies**

The establishment of CI in Thailand shows the open access to learning the Chinese language and culture for Thai people. The existence of CI has been manifesting a model of the Thai education system that is more aware *of* things that were previously considered foreign. This condition is considering the Thai government's policies towards Chinese schools in the past which fluctuated and tended to curb the existence of Chinese schools in the past.

Since its establishment in 2006, CI in Thailand has performed its role as a bridge and a platform to promote collaboration, communication, and Chinese cultural education for the local community (Buddhasri, 2018). Confucius Institute is also committed to providing professional teachers in teaching Chinese and compiling teaching materials for students in host countries so that teaching and understanding of China can be facilitated by local governments (Yang & Hsiao, 2012). In the seminar, "Strategies Engagement of the Confucius Institute in Thailand under Thailand 4.0" held by Mae Fah Luang University (MFU) and the Thai Minister of Foreign Affairs on March 3, 2018, the President of MFU, Prof. Dr. Vanchai Sirichana, said that the presence of CI in Thailand has clarified the systematic relationship between China and Thailand as well as deepened friendly relations where CI is located (Buddhasri, 2018). Thus, the existence of CI can encourage the interest of Thai students to continue their studies in China and open up more opportunities for students establishment of schools that teach Chinese studies for local economic development and improvement of the quality of human resources in Thailand. The table below shows the number of international students who study in China where Thailand ranks second after South Korea as illustrated in Table 3 (Ministry of Education The People's Republic of China, 2019). Also

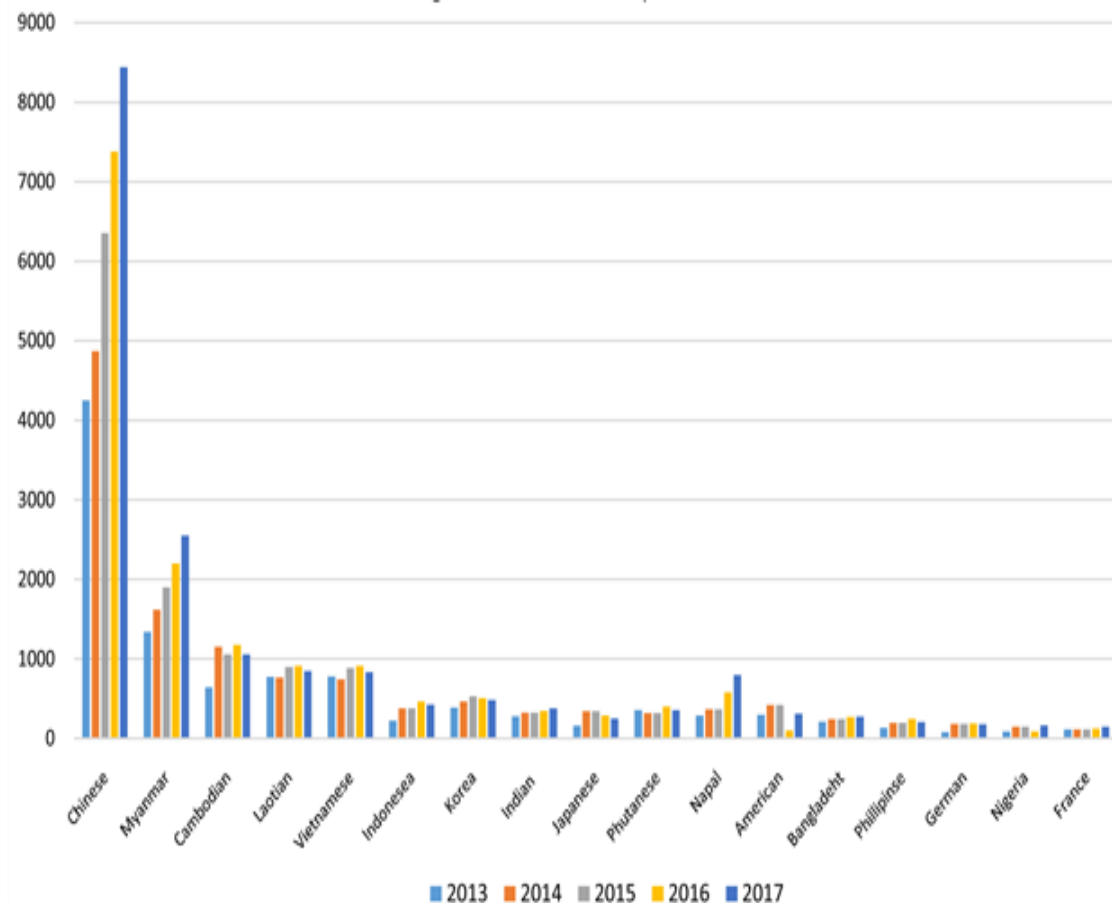
Higher Education Information Center (2018) mentioned that Thailand is one of the educational destinations for Chinese people who want to continue their education as illustrated in Figure 6.

**Table 3 Number of International Students in China 2018**

Ranking	Country	Total
1	South Korea	50.600
2	Thailand	28.608
3	Pakistan	28.023
4	India	23.198
5	USA	20.996
6	Rusia	19.239
7	Indonesia	15.050

*Source: (Ministry of Education The People's Republic of China, 2019)*

**Figure 4 Foreign Students in Thailand 2012-2017**



*Source: (Chemsripong, 2019)*

In 21 Century, the Chinese language has become a linguistic standard accepted and recognized by the Thai government authorities (Ma, 2018). The nuances of Chinese culture in Thailand can still be felt through art forms, the use of multiple languages, public service signs, the existence of a Chinese language and culture center, and others. With the presence of CI in Thailand, Chinese culture is increasingly being disseminated to the country. This of course affects the social and sociolinguistic life of the local Thai community, which has been side by side with Chinese culture as a foreign culture. At Thai airports, the use of the Chinese language is displayed in information signs posted, perhaps because the majority of tourists coming to Thailand are from China. Furthermore, the Chinese in Thailand is widely used for the business, tourism, and education sectors (Guo et al., 2020).

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on what the author has explained, Thailand's Confucius Institute has carried out its role as an instrument of Chinese cultural diplomacy. This is evidenced by the various cultural programs organized by CI to attract Thai people's interest in the Chinese language and culture. CI in Thailand teaches allows Thai people to understand the diversity and hybridity of other individuals, in this case, the language and culture of the Chinese community which is spread throughout the world. With the various cultural programs held and the support from the Thailand government in establishing CI, it is sufficient to prove that this instrument of Chinese cultural diplomacy has been a great success for the development of good relations between China and Thailand. On the other hand, the presence of CI in Thailand also has a positive impact on various social, cultural, economic, and political aspects of Thailand in the context of bilateral relations with China.

## REFERENCES

- Auethavornpipat, R., & Rudnycky, D. (2013). *Supervisory Committee Revealing China's Hegemonic Project in Thailand: How the Confucius Institute Furthers the Chinese State's International Ambitions Departmental Member*. Thesis, University of Victoria.
- Becard, D. S. R., & Filho, P. M. (2019). Chinese cultural diplomacy: Instruments in china's strategy for international insertion in the 21st century. *Revista Brasileira de Politica Internacional*, 62(1). <https://doi.org/10.1590/0034-7329201900105>
- Boonying, J. (2018). Demands and problems faced by Chinese tourists travelling in Thailand. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 7(3), 1–8.
- Buddhasri, P. (2018, 03 08). *The Strategies Engagement of the Confucius Institutes in Thailand under Thailand 4.0 Policy*. Retrieved from <https://en.mfu.ac.th/en-news/en-news-detail/detail/News/1577.html>
- Bureau of International Cooperation Ministry of Education, Thailand. (2009). *Education Cooperation with the People's Republic of China*. Retrieved from <https://www.bic.moe.go.th/index.php/component/k2/item/1989-2013-10-14-23-01-02>
- Chemsripong, S. (2019). The Determinants of International Student Movement into Thailand: Push and Pull Factors. *Theoretical Economics Letters*, 09(08), 2785–2799. <https://doi.org/10.4236/tel.2019.98175>
- China Daily. (2014, 10 03). *Confucius institute Extend Reach*. Retrieved from <https://www.chinadailyasia.com/asia-weekly/article-3358.html>
- Chinese Confucius Research Institute. (2018). *Confucius Institute at Chiang Mai University Assists China P*. Retrieved from <https://47.104.26.175/plus/view.php?aid=2265>
- China Daily. (2014, 10 03). *Confucius institute Extend Reach*. Retrieved from <https://www.chinadailyasia.com/asia-weekly/article-3358.html>
- Chinese Confucius Research Institute. (2018). *Confucius Institute at Chiang Mai University Assists China P*. Retrieved from <https://47.104.26.175/plus/view.php?aid=2265>
- Choibamroong, T. (2017). Expectations and satisfaction of Chinese tourists toward Thailand tourism management. *Asia-Pacific Social Science Review*, 16(3), 30–45.
- Dongping, Y. (2009). *The China Educational Development Yearbook Volume 1*. Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press.



- Duke Language School. (n.d.). *Chinese Influence in Thailand*. Retrieved from <https://dukelanguage.com/2014/02/chinese-influence/>
- Encyclopedia Britannica. (n.d.). *Thailand: Major import sources*. Retrieved from: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Thailand/Trade#/media/1/589625/210811>
- Ferdiansyah, F. F. (2019). Faktor Pendorong Perkembangan Confucius Institute di Amerika Serikat. *Jurnal Hubungan Internasional*, Tahun XII, No.1, 135-166.
- Flew, T., & Hartig, F. (2014). Confucius Institutes and the Network: Communication Approach to Public Diplomacy. *IAFOR Journal of Asian Studies*, 1(1), 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.22492/ijas.1.1.02>
- Gilboa, E. (2008). Searching for Theory of Public Diplomacy. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 616:55, 73.
- Guo, S., Shin, H., & Shen, Q. (2020). The commodification of chinese in thailand's linguistic market: A case study of how language education promotes social sustainability. *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, 12(18). <https://doi.org/10.3390/SU12187344>
- Hafner, J. A., Keyes, C. F., & Keyes, E. J. (2021, September 05). *Thailand*. Retrieved from Encyclopedia Britannica: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Thailand>
- Hanban Thai. (n.d.). *Maritime Silk Road Confucius Institute at Phra Nakhan Rajabhat University*. Retrieved from Hanban Thai: <http://www.hanbanthai.org/kongzixueyuan/hspnk/>
- Hartig, F. (2016). *Chinese Public Diplomacy: The Rise of the Confucius Institute*. New York: Routledge.
- Iskandar. (2008). *Metode Penelitian Pendidikan dan Sosial (Kuantitatif dan Kualitatif)*. Jakarta: GP Press.
- Institute of International Education (IIE). (2015). *2015 Project Atlas Infographics*. Retrieved from Institute of International Education (IIE): <https://www.iie.org/Research-and-Insights/Project-Atlas/Explore-Data/Infographics/2015-Project-Atlas-Infographics>
- Jiangyu, L. (2020). Expanding or Accepting: Nation-Work of International Chinese Teachers in a Confucius Institute in Thailand. *Asian Journal of Social Science*, 48(1–2), 69–91. <https://doi.org/10.1163/15685314-04801005>
- Lau, C. Y., & Lee, J. W. C. (2016). The Kra Isthmus Canal: A New Strategic Solution for China's Energy Consumption Scenario? *Environmental Management*, 57(1), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00267-015-0591-0>
- Ma, S. (2018). *Building the "Chinese bridge": dynamics of transnational engagement through confucius institutes in Southeast Asia*. Doctoral thesis, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

- Manomaiviboon, P. (2004). Chinese Language Teaching in Thailand. *MANUSYA: Journal of Humanities*, Issue No. 7, 15.
- Mhunpiew, N., & Liu, J. (2020). The Model of Cultural Communication in Confucius Institutes in Thailand. *Rangsit Journal of Educational Studies*, 7(1). <https://doi.org/10.14456/rjes.2020.10>
- Ministry of Education The People's Republic of China. (2019). *Statistical Report on International Students in China for 2018*. Retrieved from [http://en.moe.gov.cn/documents/reports/201904/t20190418\\_378692.html](http://en.moe.gov.cn/documents/reports/201904/t20190418_378692.html)
- Morrison, E., Thomas, I., & Arthurs, K. (2017). *Arts, Cultural Relations and Soft Power: Developing an Evidence Base Interim report*. University of the West of Scotland and British Council.
- Nassaji, H. (2015). Qualitative and Descriptive Research: Data Type Versus Data Analysis. *Language Teaching Research*, 19 (2).
- Ptáčková, J., Klimeš, O., & Rawnsley, G. (2021). *Transnational Sites of China's Cultural Diplomacy*. Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan
- Rodyu, S., & Wetprasit, P. (2020). *An Analysis of the Comparative Advantage of Thai Tourism with Chinese Tourists Compared to Other ASEAN + 6 Countries*. 10(21), 160–182.
- Sari, M. (2017). *The Confucius Institute at Suez Canal University: A Tool in China's Public Diplomacy*. <http://lup.lub.lu.se/student-papers/record/8924607>
- Schmidt, J. D. (2008). China's Soft Power Diplomacy in Southeast Asia. *The Copenhagen Journal of Asian Studies*, 26(1), 22–49. <https://doi.org/10.22439/cjas.v26i1.1231>
- Schneider, C. P. (2006). *Cultural Diplomacy: Hard to Define, but You'd Know It If You Saw It*. *The Brown Journal of World Affairs*, Vol XIII, Issue 1, 96
- Shuto, M. (2018). Patterns and views of China's public diplomacy in ASEAN countries: focusing on Confucius Institutes. *Journal of Contemporary East Asia Studies*, 7(2), 124–148. <https://doi.org/10.1080/24761028.2018.1553227>
- Siamrath Online. (2019). *Confucius Institute*. <https://siamrath.co.th/n/68552>
- Siriphon, A. (2015). *Confucius Institute: China and the Spread of Cultural Influence*. <https://www.bangkokbiznews.com/blog/detail/635479>
- Starr, D. (2009). *Chinese Language Education in Europe: the Confucius Institutes*. *European Journal of Education*, Vol. 44, No. 1, Part I, 74.
- Statista. (2021). *Number of tourist arrivals from China to Thailand 2014-2019*. Retrieved from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1048386/thailand-tourist-arrivals-from-china/>

- Statista. (2021). *Number of Confucius Institutes in Asia as of December 2018, by country*. Retrieved from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/879176/china-confucius-institutes-in-asian-countries/>
- Taipei Times. (2012). *Feature: Academic Study Role of Confucius Institute*. <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2012/12/10/2003549802>
- Tanatkatrakul, C. (2017). *Taking Thailand's Tourism to the Next Level*. Retrieved from <https://www.rolandberger.com/en/Insights/Publications/Taking-Thailand's-tourism-to-the-next-level.html>
- Thaiest. (2020, 03 08). *Thailand Immigration Control Procedure for Foreigners*. Retrieved from <https://thaiest.com/blog/thailand-immigration-control-procedure-for-foreigners>
- The Maritime Silk Road Confucius Institute. (n.d.). *Confucius Institute in Thailand*. Retrieved from <https://www.dpu.ac.th/msrci/about.php>
- TTR Weekly. (2020). *Fit to fly certificate fine for Bangkok transit*. Retrieved from <https://www.ttrweekly.com/site/2020/03/fit-to-fly-is-fine-for-bangkok-transit/>
- Tungkeunkunt, K. (2016). China's Soft Power in Thailand Culture and Commerce: China's Soft Power in Thailand Culture and Commerce: China's Soft Power in Thailand. In *Article in International Journal of China Studies* (Vol. 7, Issue 2). <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/326080395>
- Walsh, J. (2007). Chinese Tourism in Thailand: Experiences and Satisfaction. In *ASEAN Journal on Hospitality and Tourism* (Vol. 6).
- Wang, Y. (2019). *Confucius Institutes in Thailand: Revealing the Multi-dimensionality of China's Public Diplomacy*.
- Xiangyi, H. (2018). *The Contribution of China's Cultural Diplomacy to Thailand (2012-2017)*. Cikarang: President University.
- Xinhua. (2017, 04 12). *Confucius Institute in Thailand helps train teachers to meet growing demand for learning Mandarin*. Retrieved from [https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/culture/2017-04/12/content\\_28896307.htm](https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/culture/2017-04/12/content_28896307.htm)
- Yang, A. H., & Hsiao, H. . M. (2012). Confucius Institutes and the question of China's Soft Power Diplomacy. *China Brief, a Journal of Analysis and Information*, XII(13), 10–13.
- Yuming, L., & Li, W. (2014). *The Language Situation in China Volume 2 2008-2009*. Beijing: Walter de Gruyter.
- Yuming, L., & Li, W. (2019). *The Language Situation in China Volume 4 2012-2013*. Beijing: Walter de Gruyter.
- Zhou, T. (2021). *Soft Power and the Chinese Civilization. January 2014*, 141–155.

[https://link.springer.com/10.1007/978-981-16-2293-9\\_9](https://link.springer.com/10.1007/978-981-16-2293-9_9)

Zhou, Y. (2020). Chinese Cultural Diplomacy towards Thailand (1990-2018): A Case Study of Confucius Institute. In *International Journal of Management and Applied Science* (Issue 6). <http://iraj.in>

Zhouxiang, L., & Herrmann, P. (2016). *Conflict and Communication: A Changing Asia in a Globalizing World*. UK: Nova Science Publisher Inc.