



# PHILOSOPHICAL INTROSPECTION ON EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL INHERITANCE IN STRATEGY FORMULATION OF OVERSEAS CHINESE SCHOOLS IN THE POST-PANDEMIC ERA

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**Abstract:** It is upheld that overseas Chinese language schools (CLSs) are crucial in providing Chinese heritage language education to overseas Chinese children. In this study, we used case studies to examine the strategy development of CLSs from the perspective of the philosophy of education, especially in fulfilling the social responsibility of CLSs by focusing on their education and cultural heritage and continuing to realize the significance of Chinese cultural heritage of appreciation. It was found that CLSs could have a SWOT analysis from market, organization and teaching factors. This approach aided in decision-making and helped them adjust to evolving circumstances while effectively meeting the Chinese diaspora community's needs. It was also found that a mixed teaching mode was favored by most teachers and students, indicating the need for flexible educational strategies post-pandemic. CLS managerial policies regarding students' learning scaffolding, teachers' professional responsibilities, and collaboration and bonus policies were prioritized in strategy formulation. In this process, CLSs contributed to a more inclusive and harmonious society through academic excellence, identity formation and nurturing global citizenship. These findings show the importance of continuous strategy formulation and advancement for over 20,000 CLSs worldwide in educational and cultural inheritance.

**Keywords:** Philosophical Introspection. Chinese Schools. Strategy. Cultural Inheritance. Post-Pandemic.

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**Resumo:** As escolas de língua chinesa no exterior (CLSs) são cruciais para oferecer o ensino da língua de herança chinesa às crianças chinesas, no exterior. Neste estudo, utilizam-se estudos de caso para examinar o desenvolvimento da estratégia das CLSs, sob a perspectiva da filosofia da educação, especialmente no cumprimento da responsabilidade social das CLSs, concentrando-se em sua educação e herança cultural, e continuando a perceber a importância da valorização da herança cultural chinesa. Descobriu-se que os CLSs poderiam fazer uma análise SWOT dos fatores de mercado, organização e ensino. Essa abordagem auxiliou na tomada de decisões e os ajudou a se ajustarem às circunstâncias em evolução, ao mesmo tempo que atendiam com eficácia às necessidades da comunidade da diáspora chinesa. Também foi constatado que a maioria dos professores e alunos preferia um modo de ensino misto, o que indica a necessidade de estratégias educacionais flexíveis, após a pandemia. As políticas gerenciais dos CLSs, em relação aos andaimes de aprendizagem dos alunos, às responsabilidades profissionais dos professores e às políticas de colaboração e bônus, foram priorizadas na formulação da estratégia. Nesse processo, os CLSs contribuíram para uma sociedade mais inclusiva e harmoniosa, por meio da excelência acadêmica, da formação de identidade e da promoção da cidadania global. Essas descobertas mostram a importância da formulação e do avanço contínuos da estratégia, para mais de 20.000 CLSs, em todo o mundo, na herança educacional e cultural.

**Palavras-chave:** Introspecção filosófica. Escolas chinesas. Estratégia. Herança cultural. Pós-pandemia.

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**Abstract:** It is upheld that overseas Chinese language schools (CLSs) are crucial in providing Chinese heritage language education to overseas Chinese children. In this study, we used case studies to examine the strategy development of CLSs from the perspective of the philosophy of education, especially in fulfilling the social responsibility of CLSs by focusing on their education and cultural heritage and continuing to realize the significance of Chinese cultural heritage of appreciation. It was found that CLSs could have a SWOT analysis from market, organization and teaching factors. This approach aided in decision-making and helped them adjust to evolving circumstances while effectively meeting the Chinese diaspora community's needs. It was also found that a mixed teaching mode was favored by most teachers and students, indicating the need for flexible educational strategies post-pandemic. CLS managerial policies regarding students' learning scaffolding, teachers' professional responsibilities, and collaboration and bonus policies were prioritized in strategy formulation. In this process, CLSs contributed to a more inclusive and harmonious society through academic excellence, identity formation and nurturing global citizenship. These findings show the importance of continuous strategy formulation and advancement for over 20,000 CLSs worldwide in educational and cultural inheritance.

**Keywords:** Philosophical Introspection. Chinese Schools. Strategy. Cultural Inheritance. Post-Pandemic.

## INTRODUCTION

Recognizing and respecting cultural differences, as well as acknowledging the value of various cultural identities, are not only a political matter of recognition, but also a matter of tolerating cultural diversity. For multicultural citizenship with cultural contexts and pluralism, multiculturalism provides an approach to managing cultural diversity within different communities. This approach contributes to social cohesion and individual freedom (Kymlicka, 2002). Diasporic migration substantially drives and results in the multiculturalization of nationhood, especially in monoethnic countries (Fittante, 2023). Identity formation is the continuity and discontinuity intertwined to hold society together, which is never fixed and never final, and swerve between freedom and security (Bauman, 2011, p. 425). Therefore,

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cultural differences and historical legacies present significant challenges in contemporary global dynamics (Ferguson, 2011, p. 177). Clashes among different civilizations are inevitable within the same society, often driven by deep-rooted cultural differences and distinctively shaped identities. These circumstances call for cooperation and dialogue among civilizations.

Educational philosophy embodies our values through different statements, establishing connections with shared values within the broader communities and guiding our instructional approaches in the classroom (Beatty *et al.*, 2009, p. 108). Overseas Chinese language schools (CLSs) – educational institutions for learners navigating multiculturalism and the clashes of different cultures – play a critical role in preserving Chinese heritage language and cultural inheritance among overseas Chinese communities. CLSs address identity and culture issues, often articulated in reified terms (Francis *et al.*, 2010, p. 101).

Learners from the CLSs, usually Chinese diaspora descendants, exhibit a strong desire for integration and blending with broader society with the preservation of their cultural heritage. They perpetuate their Chinese mother tongue not only as a tool for communication, but also as an integral part of their identity (Francis *et al.*, 2009, p. 519). As Sun *et al.* (2023, p. 477) emphasizes, “It is imperative for parents, educators, and policymakers to identify and implement strategies to bolster language management and practices within the home and school environments”.

Furthermore, the multifaceted role of CLSs in continuing cultural legacy education, during the post-pandemic recovery, warrants examination. To provide a comprehensive understanding of the strategic development of CLSs in multicultural contexts, this paper will conduct a specific case study to discuss the coherence of the social responsibility of CLSs in the aftermath of the pandemic.

## 1 LITERATURE REVIEW

### 1.1 CLSs AND OCLE

Language is considered a cultural heritage that carries history and traditions, bearing marks for culture and national identity (Xiao; Wen, 2016, p. 7). Heritage language accompanies immigration, serving as a connection between individual migrants and their ethnic groups. However, having lived in their respective overseas countries for an extended period, descendants of the Chinese diaspora have relatively little access to Chinese culture. Many of them are born and raised in a multicultural environment and have assimilated into their residential countries (Thomason, 2001, p. 20). Therefore, children’s parents, who have a strong bond in heritage language and ethnical identity, usually send their children to nearby CLSs to maintain the literacy of their heritage language, known as Overseas Chinese Language Education (OCLE) (Guo, 2020, p. 16).

Statistics show that there are over 20,000 CLSs serving millions of students, with about 700 CLSs in Europe (Tan, 2021). Globally, those CLSs offer Chinese language learning along with extra classes, such as calligraphy, arts and crafts, and martial arts (Zhang, 2003, p. 21). Typically, the classes are conducted face-to-face after the children finish their public school classes, lasting for several hours as extracurricular activities. Some CLSs operate on weekends, allowing overseas Chinese children to be immersed in the heritage language environment throughout the day (Geng, 2009, p. 116). CLSs provide a structured learning environment where children can develop and enhance their language skills, thereby reinforcing their connection to their cultural heritage (Luo; Wiseman, 2000, p. 307).

## **1.2 MULTICULTURALISM AND CLASHES OF CIVILIZATIONS IN OLCE**

Multiculturalism promotes the idea that different cultural groups should be able to maintain and express their distinctive identities, practices and languages. The necessity of adopting a language perspective in understanding cultural identities underscores the importance of overseas CLSs (Lee, 2009, p. 87). Study shows that a multicultural position has more potential to empower a multicultural school culture, particularly due to the school demography (Harjatanaya; Hoon, 2020, p. 18). OLCE typically serves as a means for Chinese diaspora communities to maintain their cultural heritage and language skills in multicultural international settings. The overseas Chinese children's multicultural education, along with the promotion of cultural diversity, benefits cultural diversity and intercultural understanding (Wang *et al.*, 2009, p. 31). This can lead to the allocation of support and resources for learners' cultural diversity, ultimately enhancing their ability to preserve the Chinese language and culture while expressing their cultural identities. Multiculturalism lays the basis for the transmission of Chinese language and culture across generations.

However, some societies may not accept or implement multiculturalism or may even prioritize assimilation over cultural preservation, depending on specific political and social contexts. As Chinese individuals mingle and live among native communities, their unique civilizations and individuality continue to be preserved and maintained within open-minded and accepting social structures (Yacho, 2018, p. 155). In some cases, the promotion of multiculturalism in CLSs may lead to clashes of civilizations, particularly as it pertains to language instruction. This is especially relevant when integrating OCLE within broader educational frameworks and cultural preservation.

## **1.3 OCLE CHALLENGES AND PRACTICES POST-PANDEMIC**

Multicultural discourse is essential for promoting harmony and social justice within a society, which is crucial for creating an integrated environment (Budirahuya; Saud, 2020,

p. 141). However, as globalization spreads and cultures mix, it becomes increasingly difficult to maintain the community's unique traditions and practices. CLSs aim at preserving the overseas Chinese communities' cultural heritage while also embracing new ideas and practices.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, CLSs in different regions have diverse regulations. In American Chinese diaspora communities, language policies in CLSs generally include three components: language management, language practices and language beliefs (Wu, 2009). These components interact and are keys to the managerial strategy of CLS, which can guide the reformulation of management strategies during the pandemic. In host countries, such as Singapore, unexpected events, like COVID-19, were considered as a dynamic of language ideologies and practices for transnational children, which provided parameters for Chinese language learning (Crepaldi; Mirvahedi, 2024, p. 1). In European nations, such as Germany, France and the UK, challenges, such as shortages of teaching venues, disparities in teaching quality and incompatibility of teaching materials, represent major impediments for CLSs (Li; Tian, 2024, p. 3). These issues were exacerbated during the pandemic, creating a framework of problems that CLSs had to address. Similarly, challenges for CLSs in Canada necessitated the development of strategies for the post-COVID era, including shortages of teaching staff, losses of students, and a need for suitable teaching modes (Liu; Guo, 2023). Furthermore, unprofessional and insufficient management strategies—especially in some CLSs with local managerial faculty—led to the continuation of routines established before the pandemic, which resulted in declining student numbers or even the closure of CLSs worldwide (Zeng, 2024).

Despite these challenges, CLSs have been striving for continuity of OLCE and made necessary adaptations in the post-pandemic era. Li (2020) even referred to 2020 as “the beginning year” for the transformation of international Chinese language education. Globally, each CLS confronts different managerial problems and prioritizes various guidelines in strategy formulation due to diverse cultural contexts, resulting in varied understandings of multiculturalism and clashes of civilizations.

#### **1.4 STRATEGY FORMULATION IN CLSs UNDER SWOT ANALYSIS**

SWOT analysis, which stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats analysis, is widely used to assess an organization's internal and external environments. This analytical tool is employed across various organizations worldwide for policy review, national governance and identifying relationships (Pernaa, 2022, p. 1190). Quantified SWOT is often demonstrated and analyzed by the Grand Strategy Matrix (GSM) with four different quadrants. In effective strategic management and development, the strategy management process usually includes three key components: strategy formulation, strategy implementation and strategy evaluation (David, 1998). As educational institutions, CLSs strive to contribute to the local community's social fabric through strategic formulation,

particularly in the aftermath of the pandemic. However, CLSs have been confronting and addressing issues related to the teaching mode decision and the enhancement of teaching quality within conventional policies or practices. Unfortunately, these aspects have received insufficient attention in research.

## **2 METHODOLOGY**

The paper utilizes a case study of Florence Chinese Language School (hereinafter referred to as FCLS) in Italy to explore its undertaken responsibilities in the educational and cultural legacy preservation. Additionally, it examines the contributions of FCLS to OCLE as a global model for diaspora education within the contexts of multiculturalism and clashes of civilizations. This analysis is particularly relevant in light of the strategic development in the aftermath of the pandemic to assist other similar CLSs worldwide that share characteristics with overseas Chinese communities.

### **2.1 FACTS ABOUT FCLS**

Established in September 2001, FCLS has a history exceeding 20 years and is recognized as the largest local CLS in Florence, Italy. The school is a large-scale CLS and had approximately 1,100 students, with about 85% being of the Chinese diaspora and 15% from different ethnic backgrounds in 2019 (generally, total student numbers under 200 are considered small-scale CLSs, 200-500 medium-scale, and above 500 large-scale).

In 2011, FCLS earned the prestigious title of Model School of OCLE from the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office of China's State Council. This title, granted by a department of the Chinese government, honors outstanding CLSs worldwide based on specific criteria, including a minimum enrollment of 300 students and the provision of well-equipped facilities. Currently, FCLS operates two campuses: the Paolo Zlo campus, in Florence, and the Santorini campus, in Gambi.

FCLS has established strong partnerships with Italian local governments, with its main campuses located within public schools in Italy. Before the pandemic, extra classes, including Chinese language courses, were conducted in local public school buildings, with additional classes offered on Saturdays. Notably, FCLS was renowned for providing half-day after-school classes, primarily in the afternoon following regular public school hours. Its curriculum included four years of Chinese language learning for primary school students, two years for junior middle school students and two years for senior high school students, by compressing the standard six-year primary school curriculum into four years and the three-year junior and senior middle school curricula into two years each, by an extra mid-year semester during summer.

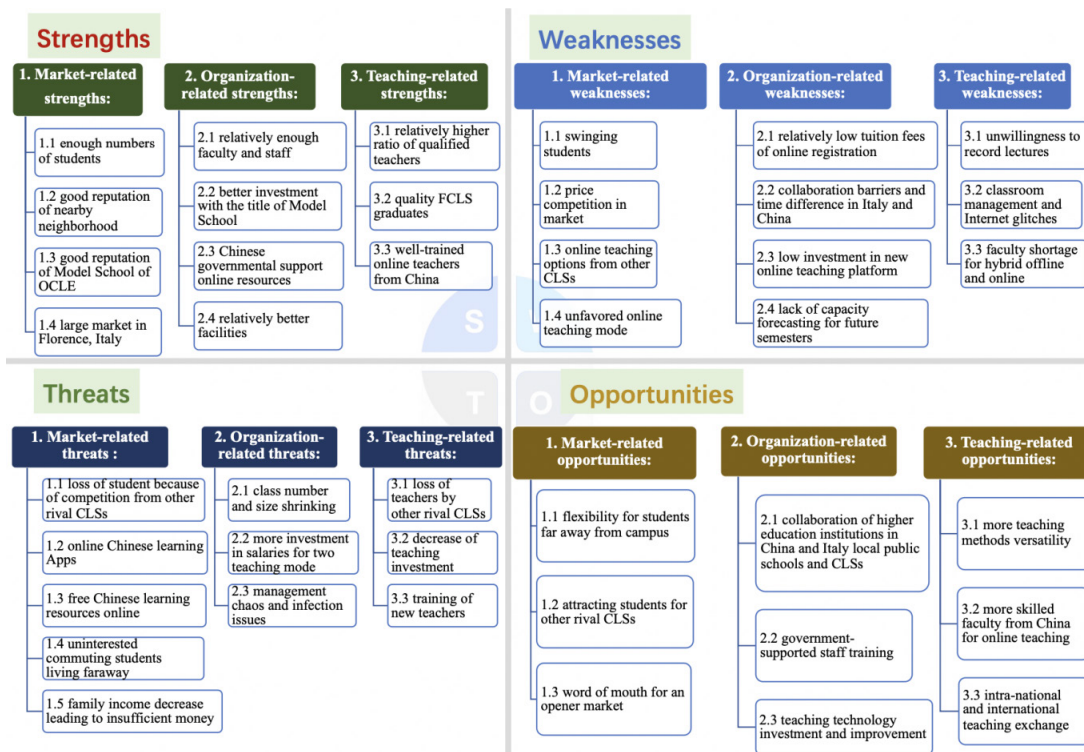


At the startup of FCLS in 2001, a comprehensive management policy, called the “Policy of Regulatory Requirement of Teachers of FCLS”, was formulated with six divisions. This policy detailed teachers’ roles and responsibilities, which comprised six divisions that covered various aspects of students’ learning environment scaffolding and teachers’ professional responsibilities and growth. In 2015, a revised policy, named the “Mark and Evaluation Policy of Teachers of FCLS”, was implemented with two extra divisions: an evaluative marking system for teachers and a bonus system. Notably, FCLS did not establish a new management policy regarding online teaching during the pandemic. Instead, adhering to the previous policy of 2015, four additional guidelines—punctuality, responsibility, negotiability and flexibility—were encouraged from the onset of the pandemic in 2020.

## 2.2 SWOT ANALYSIS OF FCLS FROM THE PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVE

Previous discussions about the challenges and practices of CLSs indicated that no CLS had implemented SWOT analysis in its strategy formulation process post-pandemic. In this study, the four quadrants of strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of FCLS, in the post-pandemic, can be identified through SWOT analysis:

Figure 1 – SWOT analysis of FCLS in the post-Covid 19 era



Source: Based on the author’s fieldwork.

Figure 1 shows the SWOT analysis of FCLS considering the market-related, organizational-related and teacher-related factors from all stakeholders. This analysis partially indicates how FCLS differs from other CLSs worldwide, such as the Chinese expatriate population's unique characteristics in its local communities, its long history since its establishment, competition from rival CLSs, the privilege of being recognized as a Model School of OCLE (which provides support from the Chinese government and higher education institutions) and its collaboration with local public schools. All these factors contribute to strengths and opportunities, as well as threats and weaknesses. To effectively incorporate the principles of educational and Chinese cultural inheritance within both native and overseas Chinese communities' diverse cultures, FCLS has been urged to formulate a new management strategy accordingly. The goal is to provide high-quality teaching and to create a supportive and enriching learning environment for overseas Chinese descendants.

### **2.3 DATA GATHERING AND ANALYSIS**

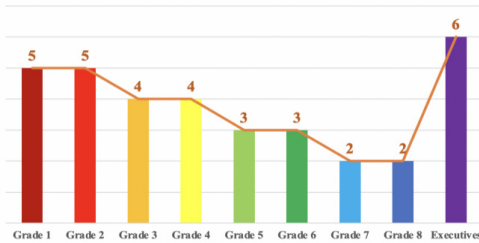
Given the stakeholders' complexity in FCLS, the management strategy development and formulation process consisted of three stages: polling (to assess students' preferences for the teaching mode in the upcoming school year 2021-2022, collected by teachers two weeks before the upcoming semester), online questionnaire survey (conducted by faculty and staff members one week after) and policy review meetings (led by the FCLS board of the school), followed by a trial period. The online questionnaire was administered one week before the beginning of the school year and comprised several close-ended questions (a 5-point Likert scale, with 5 representing the highest rating) and one semi-open-ended question (optional). Data were collected in real-time from 28 teachers (including those teaching Chinese, arts, calligraphy, social studies and programming) and six executives in managerial, financial, academic affairs and logistics positions. The data analysis of the questionnaire responses aimed to reveal the management strategy formulation, taking into consideration the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing FCLS in the context of multiculturalism and clashes of civilizations.



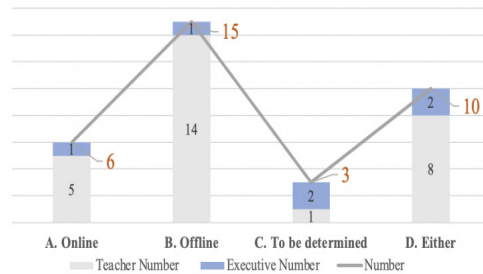
### 3 RESULTS

#### 3.1 TEACHING MODE TO BE DECIDED

**Figure 2** – Number of teachers and executives in FLCS



**Figure 3** – Chosen teaching mode from teachers and executives in FCLS

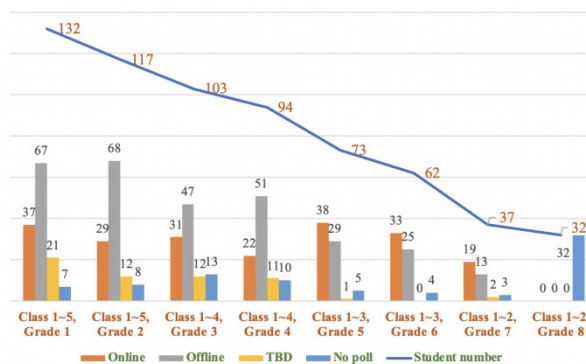


Source: based on the author's fieldwork.

In Figure 2, the distribution of classes across different grades in FCLS is uneven, and the number of classes shrinks further as students progress to higher grades. This allocation of teachers indicates that FCLS has engaged in adapting class sizes to align with local education requirements, ensuring personalized attention and effective instruction.

Among the chosen teaching modes in Figure 3, there is a notable preference for offline teaching. However, the divergence in choices between offline and online teaching modalities necessitates future consideration for the upcoming school year. This variation poses a challenge to the adaptation efforts of FCLS aimed at maintaining educational continuity.

**Figure 4** – Chosen teaching mode from students in FCLS



Source: based on the author's fieldwork.

In Figure 4, 568 students, who participated in the poll, displayed varying preferences. Lower graders expressed a preference for online teaching, while higher graders leaned toward offline teaching. Therefore, FCLS needs to consider students' preferences to provide an educational environment that respects their needs and accommodates variations.

### 3.2 ONLINE TEACHING FACTS

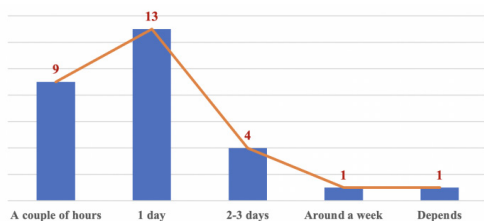
**Figure 5** – Different online teaching software, teaching methods, and audio and vision interaction

| Teaching Software     |                      |                       |                         |
|-----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| WeChat                | Tencent              | Zoom                  | Dingtalk                |
| 0                     | 4                    | 6                     | 18                      |
| Teaching Methods      |                      |                       |                         |
| Livestreaming         | Recorded videos      | Mixed mode of A and B | Text or voices messages |
| 25                    | 0                    | 3                     | 0                       |
| Microphone and Camera |                      |                       |                         |
| Both open             | Only microphone open | Not mandatory         | Neither open            |
| 24                    | 3                    | 1                     | 0                       |

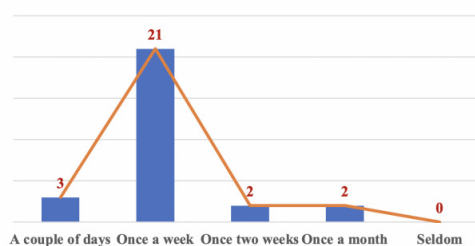
Source: Based on the author's fieldwork.

Figure 5 shows the number of different online teaching software, teaching methods, and requirements for opening microphones and cameras in FCLS. This highlights the need for adaptability to ensure a more structured and focused learning environment, emphasizing the commitment to utilizing platforms specifically designed for educational purposes.

**Figure 6** – Interval for reviewing and feedback on students' homework in FCLS



**Figure 7** – Frequency of teaching progress checking with peers in FCLS

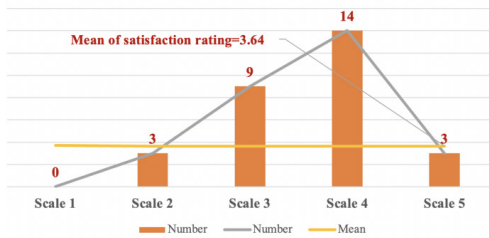


Source: Based on the author's fieldwork.

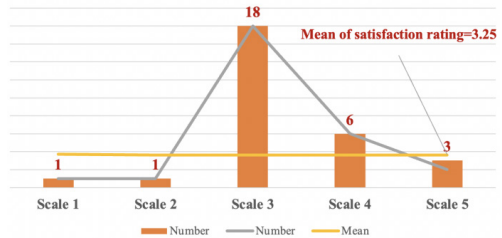
Figure 6 examines the interval for reviewing and providing feedback on students' homework in FCLS. 96% of teachers were able to give feedback within a week, demonstrating their commitment to supervision to enhance students' learning experiences.

Figure 7 illustrates the frequency of teaching progress checks among peers. FCLS teachers are expected to review and provide feedback within a reasonable timeframe, demonstrating their dedication to maintaining educational standards and ensuring that students receive valuable feedback to enhance their academic development.

**Figure 8** – Satisfaction rating of students' homework in FCLS



**Figure 9** – Satisfaction rating of online teaching in FCLS

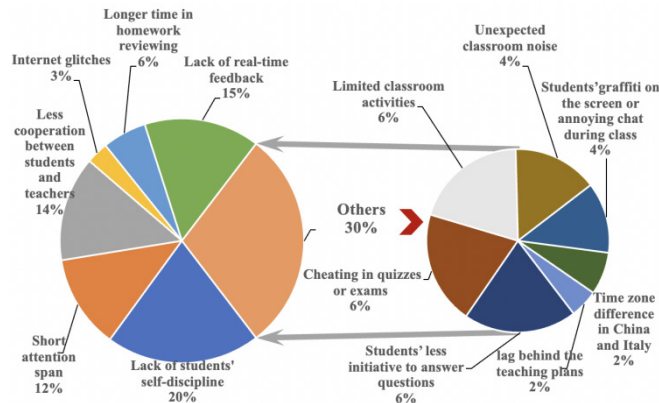


Source: Based on the author's fieldwork.

Figure 8 shows the rating of satisfaction of students' homework (M=3.64). By providing constructive feedback, teachers at FCLS are supposed to contribute to the growth and improvement of students' learning outcomes, as it ensures students receive guidance rooted in the traditions and values of Chinese education.

Figure 9 presents teachers' satisfaction rating of online teaching in FCLS (M=3.25). This rating corresponds with the results shown in Figure 5, indicating that online teaching is not highly desirable. A detailed analysis will be provided in Figure 12.

**Figure 10** – Difficulties in handling online teaching in FCLS

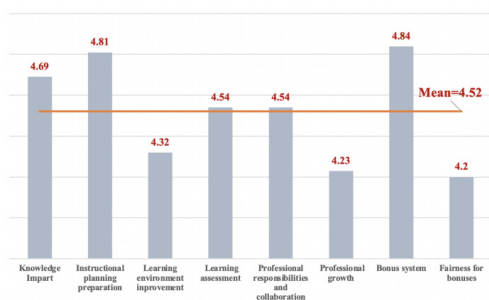


Source: based on the author's fieldwork.

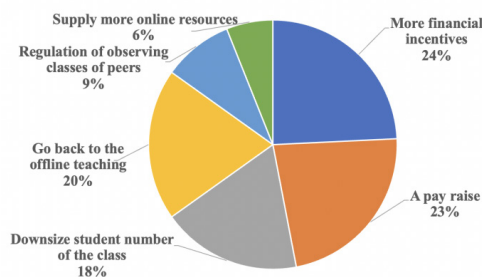
In Figure 10, the difficulties encountered in handling online teaching at FCLS can be categorized. Most of these difficulties pertain to students' classroom behaviors and teaching quality. Major challenges, such as a lack of student self-discipline (20%), a lack of real-time feedback (15%) and other minor reasons (30% in total), are related to overcoming these challenges and providing a supportive and effective online learning environment and need to be considered in strategy formulation.

### 3.3 EXISTING POLICY REVIEW

**Figure 11 – Rating of the existing policy**



**Figure 12 – Suggestions for online teaching**



Source: Based on the author's fieldwork.

According to Figure 11, FCLS received a positive rating for each division in the currently employed policy nine years ago. This reflects that the existing policy has effectively supported and empowered the vitality of FCLS with some amendments.

As is shown in Figure 12, 19 teachers provided 66 different responses (with keywords). Most responses were related to professional development and teaching methodologies, teaching quality, class and classroom management, teaching resources and reward systems, which aim to leverage resources and ensure a rich and effective online learning experience for students, as well as an improved teaching experience for educators.

## 4 DISCUSSION

Policy formulation can provide governance and is often affected by the behavior of a variety of individuals in society (Howlett; Rayner, 2007). It helps to better understand the linkages between policy formulation and policy implementation, thereby providing insights into the policy and decision-making process. The strategy formulation in FCLS can be examined multi-dimensionally.

#### 4.1 A MIXED TEACHING MODE

According to Figure 3 and Figure 4, a larger percentage of both teachers and students have preferences for offline teaching despite some opposition. This diversity of opinions presented a challenge for FCLS to balance tradition and innovation in its educational approach with a more effective teaching platform. In the SWOT analysis, several favorable factors for FCLS, such as a large number of students, a good reputation in the local community, the advantages of being a Model School of OCLE and a significant market due to the tens of thousands of overseas Chinese in Florence, compared to other CLSs enable FCLS to regroup teachers effectively.

Considering the potential inability to have offline teaching for all students since September 2021, a mixed online and offline teaching mode has been implemented as a viable solution. At FCLS, students are permitted to switch between dual online and offline classes of the same grade, provided that their learning progress aligns across the two formats. The mixed mode of teaching allows students to choose their learning mode based on their distance to FCLS campuses, their attention spans and their levels of self-discipline.

Furthermore, challenges, such as fluctuating student enrollment between offline and online formats, the availability of online Chinese learning apps, free online resources and the impact of family income on commuting options, hinder the arrangement of class sizes and stability, especially during and after the pandemic. Competition from high-quality online classes or rival CLSs offering lower tuition fees represents another challenge. These issues pose challenges for all educational institutions. In the case of FCLS, being the largest CLS, in local Chinese diaspora communities, allows it to benefit from word-of-mouth promotion, an open market and a large number of quality graduates over the past two decades, which helps mitigate the risk of declining student numbers.

For other CLSs, whether they can survive or thrive under the impact of the pandemic depends on how to deal with those challenges effectively. For smaller CLSs, to merge with other CLSs, to maintain one advantageous teaching mode and to cut some higher grades with few students have been solutions worldwide. Nonetheless, quality teaching and successful learning outcomes remain the cornerstone of any educational organization.

#### 4.2 MANAGEMENT STRATEGY FORMULATION DETAIL

According to Figure 11, all divisions of the existing policy in FCLS show a good satisfaction rating, indicating no need for major revisions to the current policy. However, professional growth and fairness of the bonuses system are two policies with relatively lower ratings, which are consistent with the results of the semi-open-ended questions in Figure 12. Recommendations from Figure 12, such as “more financial incentives” and “a pay raise,” were

shared by most participants. Therefore, it is suggested that FCLS focuses on making minor amendments and adjustments to the existing policy rather than undertaking a complete overhaul. Following the decision-making process by the FCLS board of school and a trial period, several new divisions have been added in response to the SWOT analysis and survey results. Adjustments and amendments were made, such as students' learning scaffolding, teachers' professional responsibilities and collaboration, and the bonus system.

Quality classroom teaching that integrates both language and cultural content has been prioritized at FCLS by scaffolding students' learning. With threats and weaknesses identified in the SWOT analysis, in Figure 1, the new policy includes more detailed guidelines on how to incorporate cultural and traditional activities into language learning through effective classroom management, learning resources, support from the Chinese community, ongoing student assessment, as mentioned in Figure 7, and collaborations with various educational institutions in both Italy and China. This supports its commitment to imparting knowledge and preserving cultural values for the benefit of its students in the digital age. For instance, FCLS teachers are expected to provide timely feedback on assignments and offer separate online and offline art classes. Small group interactions in the classroom are typically organized. Those measures aid, in the digestion and understanding of language content, and facilitate cultural understanding.

At FCLS, teachers of the same grade, both online and offline, are encouraged to engage in discussions and finalize their teaching plans before semesters begin to ensure consistency in teaching content. Regular communication and constant progress checks between offline/online teachers of the same grade ensure students' success in learning mode switching, during which greater collaboration and professional responsibility among teachers can be fostered. This necessitates closer collaboration and monitoring of teaching progress between both online and offline teachers of the same grade to ensure consistent teaching content. This is particularly important in subjects like the Chinese language, where the same textbook is used in both offline and online classes, helping to mitigate inconsistencies in students' learning outcomes.

The survey results in Figure 11 indicate the lowest satisfaction ranking between FCLS faculty and staff regarding the fairness and effectiveness of the bonus policy, which suggests that the current system is not meeting their expectations or needs. A desire for increased financial incentives and pay raises, as noted in Figure 12, reflects the importance of a well-designed bonus system, serving as a powerful tool to motivate staff by directly linking their performance to financial rewards, thereby fulfilling their demands and boosting overall job satisfaction. Therefore, a more comprehensive and transparent evaluation process and criteria are recommended. To address these concerns, FCLS has established a committee composed of administrators, senior teachers and relevant executives to evaluate working



performance through a holistic assessment of the new policy, with consideration of feedback from CLS students and their learning outcomes.

### 4.3 IMPACT AND IMPLICATION OF FCLS STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

The main purpose of CLS strategy development is to enhance the overseas Chinese children's academic excellence by providing high-quality language instruction and educational programs. The SWOT analysis conducted in this research is practical and can serve as a valuable resource for other CLSs confronting similar dilemmas, allowing them to leverage strengths and opportunities while mitigating weaknesses and threats from market, organization and teaching factors. FCLS emphasizes collaboration both in China and Italy, which is essential for maintaining high educational standards amidst multicultural challenges. CLSs can provide ongoing education tailored to the unique challenges faced by teachers in different contexts. For instance, schools in regions with high demand for Chinese language education, but limited resources, could adopt the method of FCLS of allowing students to switch between online and offline classes, based on their circumstances, such as those in North America or Europe, and could particularly benefit from this flexibility. This approach not only increases accessibility, but also accommodates diverse learning styles and schedules, ultimately improving student engagement and retention, as well as fostering the teachers' professional growth (Jung, 2017, p. 303). This aligns with the position of OCLE to support the overseas Chinese expatriates' long-term survival and development.

In the teaching syllables, CLS teachers typically develop joint projects and activities that integrate the Chinese language and culture into the curriculum. These practices in CLSs facilitate interactions among students from different countries in their host countries, including those from various ethnic backgrounds, through classroom activities during the Chinese language and culture teaching process. Such initiatives enhance language proficiency and cultural understanding and foster identity formation for the Chinese diaspora in the context of cultural integration. Achieving good recognition in both their host country and China is essential for a collective enhancement of identity formation disparities. The complex processes of identity formation and cultural transmission among Chinese diaspora populations for Chinese language learners are the primary goals of OLCE for Chinese language learners in diasporic communities (Hancock, 2014, p.63).

CLSs can strengthen their ties with local communities and China to enhance their sustainability, promote a positive perception of OCLE globally, and encourage inclusivity and support for multicultural education settings. This collaboration leverages its reputation and neighborhood support, facilitating resource sharing, curriculum development and the creation of immersive multiculturalism experiences for students. CLS students' learning experiences often involve cultural immersion activities, particularly through the provision of

separate cultural classes. These classes aim to enhance practical language skills and cultural experiences for students, which are crucial for those living in a multicultural environment, especially in regions involved in the Belt and Road Initiative.

## CONCLUSION

CLSs can conduct SWOT analyses to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats specific to their contexts. This guides decision-making, allowing CLSs to adapt to changing environments and better serve their communities. CLSs are advised to implement a mixed offline/online teaching mode in the aftermath of the pandemic. This flexibility not only caters to diverse learning preferences, but also improves accessibility for students in various contexts. CLSs can create multicultural classrooms that include traditional Chinese cultural immersion activities to foster a deeper connection between students and their heritage to enhance language acquisition while promoting identity formation among students. Additionally, CLSs can establish partnerships that enhance their educational offerings and promote cultural exchange, thereby nurturing a sense of global citizenship and ensuring their sustainability. This ensures their continued significance in the global context of multiculturalism and the complexities of civilization clashes.

The case study of FCLS showcased the commitment of CLS to academic excellence, identity formation and nurturing overseas Chinese children as global citizens. OCLE and CLSs strive to adapt effectively to the aftermath of the pandemic by promoting a balanced mix of tradition and innovation, as well as adaptability to changing circumstances in a multicultural world. A holistic approach to OCLE ultimately benefits the Chinese diaspora by preserving the rich Chinese cultural heritage.

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