

Lifelong Learning as a Key to the 21st Century: I Ching Education as an Example

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Abstract

Learning to adapt has become a vital learning capacity for everyone in the face of the problems of the twenty-first century, including rapid technology breakthroughs, an aging population, and fast industrial changes, as well as the influence of the COVID-19 post-epidemic era. The Education 2030 Framework for Action, proposed by UNESCO (2016) emphasizes the integration of life and learning and claims that the best way to respond to future changes is through continual learning and innovation. Additionally, *The book I-Ching*, also known as *The Book of Changes* in English, with "change" as its central theme, is the first Chinese classic to teach the world that "only proper adjustments can result in better survival." Therefore, this study focuses on the significance of lifelong learning based on I Ching which encompasses not only the development track of human civilization from ancient times, but also the basic learning ability and sustainable development of lifelong learning for humans today and in the future. Using I Ching University as an example, this research elaborates the essential concept of I Ching education and its connotation of lifelong learning which fully implements the UNESCO philosophy of lifelong learning. The results of this study are expected to open up cross-disciplinary academic research on the I Ching, revealing the cosmic mystery of why the I Ching has remained unshaken for thousands of years, in addition to serving as a reference for international organizations in developing lifelong learning theories and policies.

Keywords: Lifelong Learning, I Ching Education, Change

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Introduction

The 21st century is an exciting time for lifelong learning. With the proliferation of information and technology, learning opportunities have become more accessible and diverse than ever before. In the 21st century, learning is no longer limited to childhood or early adulthood. Instead, lifelong learning is becoming increasingly important for individuals to stay relevant in the workforce and adapt to new technologies and changing circumstances. People spend their whole life learning because lifelong learning is essential for personal and professional development, as well as for adapting to the ever-changing world around us. Lifelong learning is a key component of personal growth, career success, and social and cultural engagement, and can contribute to a fulfilling and meaningful life.

Lifelong learning has become a trend promoted by international organizations such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and the European Union (EU). UNESCO defines lifelong learning as "the continuous building of skills and knowledge throughout a person's lifetime, with the aim of empowering them to fully participate in their communities and the wider society." This definition emphasizes the idea that learning is not something that only takes place in formal educational settings but is a lifelong process that occurs in both formal and informal contexts, including work, family, and community environment. Non-formal learning refers to structured learning outside of traditional educational institutions, such as vocational training programs, community-based learning, and adult education programs. Informal learning, on the other hand, refers to the learning that occurs through everyday experiences and interactions, such as on-the-job learning, self-directed learning, and learning through hobbies and interests.

The UNESCO published "Learning: The Treasure Within" in 1996, emphasizing the importance of lifelong learning to the development of human society, and further proposing the four pillars of education: learning to live together; learning to know; learning to do; and learning to be. The fifth pillar of learning to change was added in 2003 with the publication of "Developing Treasures: Visions and Strategies 2002-2007". The Education 2030 Framework for Action, proposed by UNESCO (2016) emphasizes the integration of life and learning and claims that the best way to respond to future changes is through continual learning and innovation. Learning to adapt has become a vital learning capacity for everyone in the face of the problems of the twenty-first century, including rapid technology breakthroughs, an aging population, and fast industrial changes, as well as the influence of the COVID-19 post-epidemic era.

The impact of COVID-19 has resulted in widespread job loss and economic uncertainty, which has led many people to seek new job opportunities. In addition, the COVID-19 has had a significant impact on lifelong learning, as it has disrupted traditional learning methods and forced institutions to adapt to new forms of learning. People need to face on lifelong learning for reskilling and upskilling. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on lifelong learning, as it has disrupted traditional learning methods and forced institutions to adapt to new forms of learning. More importantly, people must learn to accept and adapt to the cognitive attitudes brought about by environmental changes. However, there is no core curriculum that teaches us to learn to change in formal education. People are always on the journey of life, learning, understanding and changing bit by bit. Therefore, lifelong learning is an inevitable path for the world in the 21st century. Learning the intangible mental

intelligence in the face of change may be far better than the learning of tangible knowledge and skills on lifelong learning.

I Ching and Lifelong Learning

The book I-Ching, also known as The I Ching in English, with "change" as its central theme, is the first Chinese classic to teach the world that "only proper adjustments can result in better survival." The I Ching, also known as the Book of Changes, is one of the oldest Chinese classics, invented by Fu Xi 7,500 years ago. It is a divination text that uses a set of hexagrams, consisting of six solid or broken lines. This is the main text of the I Ching, consisting of 64 hexagrams and their interpretations. I Ching offer insights into the world and human experience. I Ching has not only influenced Chinese philosophy, religion, and culture for over seven thousand years. As early as the 16th century, the western has a strong interest in Chinese culture.

The western I Ching studies are inseparable from the development of Sinology. Since the 16th century, the sinologists paid the intention and interest to translate and research I Ching by the Society of Jesus. AI, Kuei San (2014) pointed out that Richard Wilhelm (1873–1930) of Germany translated the main classics of Confucianism and Taoism in the pre-Qin period, discovered the special status and philosophical role of the "I Ching", and conducted in-depth research. In 1923, he completed the translation of the first German "I Ching", which was officially published in 1924 as the most accurate translation in the West. Wilhelm attaches great importance to the philosophy of life in "Zhou Yi Xi Ci", and believes that the concept of "poverty leads to change, change leads to success, and continuity leads to durability" is a very high concept in human civilization. He used the principles of the Eight Diagrams and the Sixty-Four Diagrams in the "I Ching" to explore the origin of the universe and various issues in human society, becoming the founder of the "Practical School" of divination and philosophy in the "I".

Wilhelm's translation of the "I Ching" is not only his dialogue with the commentary system of Chinese Confucianism since the Qing Dynasty, but also symbolizes the dialogue process between the Western world and Chinese thought and culture on the basis of its philosophy and religion. In 1950, Hellmut Wilhelm (1905-1990), the son of Richard Wilhelm, and Cary F. Baynes translated and published the English version of Wilhelm's I Ching, and in 1960, Baynes translated Hellmut Wilhelm's "Changes, Eight Lectures on the I Ching" into English. These two English translations gave a direct impetus to the rapid take-off of I Ching studies in the United States and to the development of the "practical" school of I Ching represented by Richard Wilhelm.

The flexibility and changes emphasized in I Ching (The Book of Changes) are closely related to the learning ability and adaptability in lifelong learning. Lifelong learning emphasizes a never-ending learning process, which requires constant adjustment and change of one's learning methods and strategies to adapt to the ever-changing social and economic environment. The concept of yin and yang and the theory of gossip in I Ching can also provide useful inspiration for lifelong learning. The concept of yin and yang emphasizes interdependence and balance, which is related to comprehensive development and multiple intelligences in lifelong learning. Bagua theory emphasizes the relationship between the whole and the part, which is related to the holistic learning and all-round development in lifelong learning. The philosophy and wisdom of I Ching can provide useful guidance and enlightenment for lifelong learning, help people to adapt and cope with the changes and

challenges of modern society, and realize the all-round development and growth of individuals.

In the I Ching, or Book of Changes, there are many hexagrams and lines that can provide guidance on how to approach natural disasters, plagues and so on. The hexagram suggests that the best approach in this situation is to remain flexible and adaptable. It advises us to approach the challenge with a calm and open mind, and to be willing to make changes and adjustments as necessary. In addition, the I Ching emphasizes the importance of seeking guidance from wise and experienced individuals, who can offer insight and perspective on how to navigate difficult times.

Therefore, this study focuses on the significance of lifelong learning based on I Ching which encompasses not only the development track of human civilization from ancient times, but also the basic learning ability and sustainable development of lifelong learning for humans today and in the future. Using I Ching University as an example, this research elaborates the essential concept of I Ching education and its connotation of lifelong learning which fully implements the UNESCO philosophy of lifelong learning.

I Ching Education: I Ching University and Lifelong Learning

Core Philosophy of I Ching University

Hunyuan Chanshi founded I Ching University in Taiwan in 1994. It primarily promotes the orthodox Chinese culture of I Ching Feng Shui and integrates Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism into one system. Hunyuan Chanshi, the founder of I Ching University, stated, "We must widely spread I Ching Chinese culture and orthodox I Ching Feng Shui. I Ching is spirituality, life, wisdom, and thought, Feng Shui is a pure land, a pure land on earth, and everyone's spirituality, wisdom, and life are integrated into one, which is orthodoxy." As a result, I Ching University is a learning institution that emphasizes I Ching education and promotes lifelong learning.

Hunyuan Chanshi indicated that the school emblem of I Ching University resembles a Taiji diagram. The "Qian Gua" on the sunny side is the sky. The "Hexagram Kun" on the negative side represents the earth, and it carries things with virtue, which represents the tangible things of the earth. Kun, the hexagram with a benevolent heart, represents our body and behavior. Continuous self-improvement, virtue, and carrying things are Qian and Kun, yang and yin, thought and behavior, the unity of knowledge and action, that is "Tao", the origin of the Tao, the philosophical foundation of Chinese culture, and the philosophy of the "I Ching."

Lifelong Learning at I Ching University

I Ching University's education includes I Ching, Feng Shui, and religion; lifelong learners enter different programs based on their location, education level, occupation, learning purpose, learning method, and learning development stage. Lifelong learning programs at I Ching University are divided into four categories: professional courses, teacher training courses, practical courses, and academic research. Professional courses are divided into eight stages lasting a total of 24 years. I Ching University welcomed its first students in 1994 and has been in operation for 30 years (since 2023), with approximately 20 lifelong learners remaining.

I Ching University has taken a comprehensive and self-sufficient approach to establishing an institution for lifelong learning. The curriculum of the university was based on Huanyuan Chanshi's teachings, which were then put together into 22,636 volumes of the Taoist Collection of Only the Heart. These included video recordings, edited texts, and published books and videos. In addition to having class sites in every county and city in Taiwan, I Ching University has established television stations and online learning, allowing students to study anywhere, at any time, for the rest of their lives. Online education provided by I Ching University. The University of I Ching has made programs to train teachers. These programs have trained more than 260 professional teachers and helped professional teachers in their first courses. I Ching University has set up a platform for academic research and exchange that allows professional educators to publish the results of their academic research and practice.

Characteristics of Lifelong Learners at I Ching University

I Ching University's lifelong learning students' range in age from 8 to over 90 years old, with an average age of 55. Their educational background includes primary, secondary, and high school, as well as university, master's, and doctoral degrees, with a focus on high and secondary vocational education. The learning location is in Taiwan, and for international students, in addition to Chinese language instruction, English and Spanish instruction are available.

Learning Effectiveness of I Ching University's Lifelong Education System

I Ching University's lifelong education system incorporates the United Nations' five pillars of learning. Because I Ching University's lifelong learning is mixed-age learning, it is also multigenerational learning, which helps learners promote "learning and getting along with others (learning to live together)"; I Ching is evolved from the concepts of heaven-earth and yin-yang, and the eight phenomena of nature. All things are born and restrained by the I Ching, Bagua and Five Elements, which can help learners realize the world (learning to know); In the practical course, learners can understand what is the unity of knowledge and action, and learn to do things (learning to do); Learners of I Ching learn to develop (learning to be) by observing the changes and evolution of the hexagrams and six lines; I Ching is the trajectory of life change. Learners can learn how to adapt to change, and create a harmonious and happy life from the simplicity, variability, and difficulty of the education of I Ching (learning to change).

I Ching Education, a lifelong education system organized by I Ching University, has been in operation since 1994. Can other Western societies replicate the self-sufficient mode of operation and learning effects? Is it acceptable in Western societies?

Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961), Wilhelm's close friend and renowned Swiss psychologist and I Ching enthusiast, encouraged his student Cary F. Baynes to translate the German version into English in the late 1920s. With Jung's great admiration for the I Ching, the English version quickly became the most common "standard" English version of the I Ching in the West today, and was translated into English, French, Spanish, Dutch, Italian, Danish, Swedish, Portuguese, and other languages, and reprinted throughout the world. The I Ching was originally translated by Wilhelm with the intention of introducing the Western world to this profoundly significant Chinese classic, while also emphasizing the I Ching's importance and value on a global and universal scale. Hellmut Wilhelm, Wei Lixian's son, has a family

history of studying the I Ching. He argues that the seemingly mysterious classic of the I Ching attempts to teach individuals how to manage their own destiny rather than being subjected to mysterious wills. As a result, he believed that this book could never be understood as a collection of myths or revelations, but rather as a natural and philosophical view on life and the world.

Conclusions

The results of this study are expected to open up cross-disciplinary academic research on the I Ching, revealing the cosmic mystery of why the I Ching has remained unshaken for thousands of years, in addition to serving as a reference for international organizations in developing lifelong learning theories and policies.

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