

Social Innovation: Towards Community Wellbeing and World Peace, a Case Study of Weixin Shengjiao I Ching University's Lifelong Learning

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Abstract

The global environment is facing natural drastic changes. The rapid changes have eroded our humanistic values. The implementation of humanistic education has become a most concerned issue to all countries, and lifelong learning has also become a good prescription. However, "lifelong learning" has always been a popular slogan. How lifelong learning affects people's heart and human nature has not only brought rich wellbeing to participants, but also increased social value and impact. This study applied "social innovation" and "resource-based view" as the theoretical point of view, and I Ching University promotes religious lifelong learning as a case to explore two questions about the essence of lifelong learning: What to learn? and How to learn?" This study finds five major innovative points: (1) Integrating 7000 years of Chinese culture I-Ching Feng-Shui study and 2500 years of religion to become a driving force for world peace. (2) Applying the wisdom of Chinese culture I-Ching Feng-Shui heart method to solve the problems of poverty, hunger and war. (3) Applying Chinese culture I-Ching Feng-Shui heart method into moral, life, filial piety, culture and environmental education has generated social value and impact. (4) The activities in pray to Buddha classic, group practice and ancestor worship have cultivated people to have altruistic thinking. (5) To deeply go into all towns of Taiwan for lifelong learning promotion have been made the great contribution on the development of community wellbeing and stability, and the promotion of social harmony. Thus, this study proposed the practical and research implications.

Keywords: Social innovation, Lifelong learning, I-Ching Feng-Shui

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Introduction

The global environment is facing natural drastic changes. The human living environment has been seriously threatened by El Nino phenomenon, dust storms, ozone holes, hurricanes, tsunamis, earthquakes, plague, infectious viruses, grain reduction, famine and other natural disasters. Moreover, human issues, such as political struggle, religious consciousness, terrorist attacks, deterioration of depression, financial turmoil, unemployment, labor disputes, government debt crisis and so on, have raise a great deal of difficulties. Therefore, as information technology, genetic engineering, biomedicine, aerospace technology and alternative energy keep developing in the twentieth century, today's human beings face not only a variety of natural disasters and the impact of human persecution, but also more material desires, disparity, economic crisis, cultural destruction, mental stress and so on.

At the same time, the problems arising from the aging population and the declining birth rate have come into being. According to the World Population Ageing report, published by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations (2013), it indicated that the global population continued to decline due to sustained low fertility and increasing life expectancy. On the other hand, the rates of working-age population and the elderly population are increasing. Almost all countries are facing the problem of population aging, and especially in developed countries, the aging rate is the fastest. At present, the proportion of the elderly population over the age of 60 in the world has increased from 9.2% in 1990 to 11.7% in 2013. By 2050, it is expected to climb to 21.1%, more than 2 billion people. Moreover, it is estimated that the global population aged over 60 will exceed the population aged 0~14 years in 2047. Similarly, the fertility rate in Taiwan has continued to decline significantly over the past decade. In June 2016, the people aged 15 to 64 years accounted for 73.72% of the total population (17,333,560 people), senior citizens aged 65 years and over accounted for 12.83% (3,015,491 people), and the population of children aged 0 to 14 years accounted for 13.45% (3,162,311 people). To 2017, the population of people aged over 65 years will exceed that of children aged 0 to 14. The aging index is greater than 100%. And to 2031, it is estimated that people aged 15 to 64 years will account for 63.7% (14,969,500 people) of the total population, people aged over 65 years 24.4% (5,734,000 people), children aged 0 to 14 years 11.9% (2,796,500 people) (Taiwan National Development and Human Resources Development Division, 2016; Taiwan Interior Ministry, 2016).

The implementation of humanistic education has become a most concerned issue to all countries, and lifelong learning has also become a good prescription. However, "lifelong learning" has always been a popular slogan. How lifelong learning affects people's heart and human nature has not only brought rich wellbeing to participants, but also increased social value and impact. During the last decade, social innovation has emerged as an outstanding topic for private sector, public institution, and nonprofit organization. Issue such as poverty, climate change, and inequality can be seen either as a burden or as a source of innovation. This growing interest is due to the necessity of finding alternative ways for solving social problems which address regional differences and pay attention to the expectations of society and also its potential positive effects on well-bring and sustainable development. This study applied "social innovation" and "resource-based view" as the theoretical point of view, and Weixin Shengjiao I Ching University promotes religious lifelong learning as a

case to explore two questions about the essence of lifelong learning: What to learn? and How to learn?" Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore how Weixin Shengjiao I Ching University applied the concept of "social innovation" on the religious lifelong learning to achieve the goal of community wellbeing and world peace.

Literature Review

Resource based view

Wernerfelt (1984) first proposed a shift in analyzing organizations from a focus of product-market to that of a resource position. He defined a resource to be "anything which could be thought of as a strength or weakness of a given firm" (p.172). Resource based view (RBV) is useful in determining whether a firm's strategy will create value and also enables the organization to conceive and implement strategies for improving efficiency and effectiveness (Barney, 1991). Resources are classified as tangible (including financial and physical resources), intangible (including reputation, technology, and organizational resources), or personnel-based (including culture, training, commitment, loyalty and knowledge) (Grant 1991). Recent literature has emphasized on dynamic capabilities, which comprise the capability (1) to sense and shape opportunities and threats, (2) to seize opportunities, and (3) to maintain competitiveness through enhancing, combining, protecting, and, when necessary, reconfiguring the business enterprise's intangible and tangible assets' (Teece, 2007, p. 1319).

Social Innovation

Social innovation is a process initiated by social actors to respond to a desire, a need, to find a solution or to seize an opportunity of action to change social relations, to transform a frame or propose new cultural orientations to improve the quality and community living conditions (Crises, 2014). Social innovations encompass "changes in the cultural, normative or regulative structures of the society which enhance its collective power resources and improve its economic and social performance" (Heiskala, 2007, p. 74). Social innovation can be defined as the "development and implement of new ideas (products, services and models) to meet social needs" (Mulgan, Ali, Halkett, & Sanders, 2007, p. 9, cited by Howadlt & Schwarz, 1010, p. 25); be concerned with generation of social value (Cloutier, 2003; Saucier et al., 2006; Phills, Deigmeier, & Miller, 2008; Assogba, 2010; Herrera, 2015) for social actors and society; and also "create new social relationships or collaborations" (Murray, Caulier-Grice, & Mulgan, 2009, p. 3). At present, it can be stated that social innovations are becoming more and more significant for economic growth (Mulgan et al., 2005). This is partly due to the fact that some of the economic growth barriers such as climatic changes or aging of societies, may be overcome only by implementation of social innovations, which reinforce human relations and well-being instead of straining these. Social innovation is innovation in social relation as well as in meeting human need (MacCallim et al. (eds), 2012). Moulart, Martineli, Swyngedouw, and Gonzalez (2005) identify three main dimensions of social innovation: (1) satisfaction of human needs that are not currently satisfied; (2) changes in social relations, especially with regard to governance, that not only enable the satisfaction of needs, but also increase the level of participation,

especially of deprived groups in society; (3) increasing the socio-political capability and access to resources required to enhance rights to needs' fulfillment and participation.

Lifelong Learning

Since the 1970s, lifelong learning has become significant in the shaping of national and international education policy, linked both with global economic competition and goals of equality and social cohesion (Holford et al., 2008). Within both of these broad agendas, lifelong learning is rooted within a focus on the dynamics of change related to the rise of global capitalism: "the changing nature of technologies, of work and the labor market, of the global markets, and of the demographic composition of organizations" (Rizvi and Engel, 2009, p. 533). In 1996, the UNESCO published a report titled "Learning: The Treasure Within" which emphasized the importance of lifelong learning for the development of human society, it then put forward the four pillars of education: "learning to live together", "learning to know", "learning to do", "learning to be". This opened a new era for lifelong learning (Delors et al., 1996). In 2003, UNESCO Education Research Institute examined the rapid pace of social change, as well as the environmental changes influencing each individual and the importance of their ability to adapt with each passing day. Proposing the idea "learning to change" the proposed "learning to change" idea is regarded as the fifth pillar of lifelong learning. The Ministry of Education of Republic of China working in concert with the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, UNESCO, recommended that 1998 be the year for "Lifelong Learning". Similarly, I Ching University, along with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO actively encourages lifelong learning. In 2000, it actively offered many kinds of classes for students and the community people wishing that by studying the I-Ching, the body and mind of the whole of society can be healthy, fostering knowledgeable mature members of society that are able to cope with changes within their surroundings.

The Case: Weixin Shengjiao I Ching University

The University goes all the way back to when the Republic of China was promoting courses on lifelong education. The I Ching University has been a pioneer in the promotion of lifelong education. In 1994, the President of the Republic of China, Mr. Lee Teng-hui made a clear policy statement on "lifelong education": "The idea of lifelong education is to confirm that everyone has his need for education in every stage of life and aims to establish a learning society". Therefore, the founder of Weixin Shengjiao, Grand Master Hunyuan suggested that everyone deserve a basic right of learning. In the same year, I Ching University was founded and began to offer lifelong learning to carry forward Chinese culture and to advocate I Ching learning. In the history of education in R.O.C., I Ching University is a pioneer promoting lifelong learning with its founding purpose of cultivating talents, revitalizing people's morals, refining ambitions, and creating universal harmony. At present, I Ching University combines I-Ching Feng-Shui of Chinese culture with Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism and the thoughts of Chinese hundred schools and offers three dimensions of lifelong learning, lifelong education, academic education and international education. That implements the core values of Weixin Shengjiao's religious education containing moral education, life education, environmental

education, filial piety education, and cultural education, and reach the ultimate goal of “practicing for nation and praying for people”.

Research Findings

This study applied case study method to explore how I Ching University conduct the concepts of “social innovation” and “resource-based view” to promote the religious lifelong learning for community wellbeing and world peace. This study found five major innovative points:

- (1) Integrating 7000 years of Chinese culture I-Ching Feng-Shui study and 2500 years of religion to become a driving force for world peace.

This study found that Weixin Shengjiao I Ching University adopted religious and cultural inherited pathway of traditional Chinese nation. The pathway can be traced back about 14,500 years ago, when the universe was chaotic, Hong Jun Lao Chu (鴻鈞老祖) disclosed the secret of chaos, which was developed into the Kunlun civilization (崑崙文明). 7,352 years ago, Fuxi (伏羲) founded the Bagua (eight trigrams). The Fuxi civilization is later inherited by Jiutian Xuannu (九天玄女). She developed Tai Chi (太極), a so-called Manifested (later heaven eight guas), synthetic Bagua, in which two polarities give rise to four phenomena and so on. After that, the knowledge was passed down to three ancestors. Inheriting from Fuxi civilization, Yellow Emperor (黃帝) and Yan Emperor (炎帝) developed Lian Shan Gui Zang (連山歸藏). Yellow Emperor invented humanities, clothing, food, housing, transportation so the noble Yellow Emperor is considered as patriarch of humanity. He advocated human closeness, which meant people helped each other. Yan Emperor invented medicine and agriculture so the noble Yan Emperor is considered as the agriculture and medical patriarch. He advocated to raise and cultivate talented people. Emperor Chiyou (蚩尤帝) inherited Jiutian Xuannu and invented the Later Heaven Nine Places and Eight Guas (後天九宮八卦). It is three Yuan Nine Yuan (三元九運) and rule of nine planets movement, which emphasized application. Emperor Chiyou developed metallurgical technology, so Emperor Chiyou is the patriarch of industry. He advocated the idea that the noble should cherish his virtuous subordinates. The knowledge of Yellow Emperor, Yan Emperor and Chiyou Emperor was transferred to Wang Chan Lao Chu (王禪老祖), forming Guigu culture (鬼谷文化). Guigu culture is the future of the world as well as a beacon of peace. It is the cornerstone of Chinese culture. Grand Master Hun Yuan established I Ching University applying Chinese culture and I-Ching Feng-Shui heart method to the present time and made it flourish in Taiwan and overseas. Grand Master Huan-yuan believes that the book of changes (易經) is a beacon of peace for the world. In 1985, Grand Master Huan-yuan while discussing a passage in the I-Ching heart method which clearly points out that in the 5,000 years of Chinese history the most prosperous dynasties were those of the Zhou, Han, Tang and Qing Dynasties which all use the book of changes as a guiding principal to govern the country.

Furthermore, Grand Master Huan-yuan pointed out that the origin of the book of changes in China goes back 7000 years, and has not been abandoned, it will have its essential meaning, in which could not be overturned. It is an indispensable method

still in existence for the good of humanity. We also hope that all human beings are able to recognize that in order to preserve the human race we also need to live in peaceful coexistence and compassion with one another. We also need to realize that constancy and change of conscience of the human race is peace, and only then we will be able to reach eternal constancy. Only the human race has the ability to change or remain constant, and continue to move forward. When each individual's mind is at ease and in balance it will manifest outwardly resulting in a universal brotherhood and an environment of peace around the world.

(2) Applying the wisdom of Chinese culture I-Ching Feng-Shui heart method to solve the problems of poverty, hunger and war.

This study found that I Ching University considers that business management is fundamental to people's livelihood in human economy. If an enterprise has a crisis, the society will become chaotic and have moral related problems. Therefore, I Ching University has established the world Taiwan business services association to serve enterprises. Grand Master Hunyuan claims "if companies which have hundreds of employees' bankrupt, then the hundreds of families will suffer. It will be a helpless situation and cause social disturbances. Furthermore, Grand Master Hunyuan explained "each factory is like a temple; the business operator is like the abbot of the temple; the staff are like the residents. Everyone's heart is a temple. The establishment of the heart temple will make people feel peaceful and lead to the stability of companies and factories". If a company, a factory or a residential place follows the principles of Feng Shui, then the employees will have a secure life and finance, and thus be able to create a peaceful and prosperous society.

On the other hand, I Ching University conducted the power of religious practices in order to solve the crisis, and to prevent further crises. Prayers for all people associated to chant scriptures together, and pray together for ends to natural disasters and plagues and full harvests to abound. Therefore, Grand Master Hunyuan enlightened the World Peace prayer: "The dragon protectors help all living, to allow conflicts to resolve and end wars, prayers for people to love one another and also world peace."

(3) Applying Chinese culture I-Ching Feng-Shui heart method into moral, life, filial piety, culture and environmental education has generated social value and impact.

This study found that the philosophy of *Liji, Liyun Datong* (Book of Rites, Chapter of Great Harmony) is the core value of these five kinds of education. In 2007, Grand Master Hunyuan began to interpret *Liji, Liyun Datong* (Book of Rites, Chapter of Great Harmony) in a meditative way. He pointed out that *Liji, Liyun Datong* (Book of Rites, Chapter of Great Harmony) is Confucius' supreme heart method of ruling country, family and career. It is also a heart method for our inner uneasiness and dissatisfaction. Confucius realized the greatness of *Liyun Datong* (Chapter of Great Harmony); that is why it has been passed down to the present. Then, the Father of Republic of China, Dr. Sun Yat-sen promoted to the whole world. "*Liji, Liyun Datong* is a heaven way, a method of pacifying human mind, which is a truth derived from ancient sages' experience of enlightenment. It is an excellent classic for us to practice, to found a nation, and to fulfill world peace. It brings hopes to Chinese descendants in the future. *Liji, Liyun Datong* is great wisdom which points out the direction for governing a nation, and the method to manage our mind, family, career,

society and nation. If everyone can understand *Liyun Datong*, I believe that the world will be peaceful.” “Modern life and social phenomena are both inseparable from the word *li* (etiquette)”. In *Liyun Datong*, etiquette is the main idea and the first priority. *Li* (etiquette) is applicable to managing our life, changing our destiny, and enhancing the harmony of society. Therefore, to establish everyone’s dignity is the most important for us to carry forward the truth of *Liyun Datong*.

(4) The activities in pray to Buddha classic, group practice and ancestor worship have cultivated people to have altruistic thinking.

This study found that I Ching University conducted the following activities to generate people having altruistic thinking:

Chanting classic scriptures at home: I Ching University believed that chanting scriptures allows us a peace and quiet that is deep in our hearts, making life and work more successful and harmonious, ridding of troubles and bad karma and salvation to our ancestors, and even salvation to all spirits in the realm. This kind of true wish uses chants to benefit oneself and others, firmly believing through chanting scriptures, the merits and returns will be able to repay our ancestors. Prayers for the end of epidemics, end of natural disasters, end of wars, and for people to love each other and to achieve world peace.

Group practice: For the purpose of clarifying human’s heart, Grand Master Hun Yuan conducted a lecture on the scriptures in the main temple of Weixin Shengjiao. Grand Master Hun Yuan uses the angle of I Ching Feng Shui heart method to help all enter the mindset of the sage and emulate their saintly deeds. It departs from the default kind human nature to reach the other side of bright wisdom, seeing clear one’s tendencies once the heart is clear and to develop the brightness of inner self to promote for social stability and peace.

Group ancestor worshipping : I Ching University held the “Chinese Jointed Ancestors Worship Ceremony” to lead the public to express their retrospection, repentance and recollection to their ancestors. The ultimate goals are to help Chinese ancestral spirits return to Nantian Pure Land and be reborn to Western Pure Land, and eventually to achieve universal peace.

(5) To deeply go into all towns of Taiwan for lifelong learning promotion have been made the great contribution on the development of community wellbeing and stability, and the promotion of social harmony.

This study found that I Ching University has 42 learning hubs, 33 learning classrooms in the towns and communities in Taiwan. In addition, overseas classrooms have been set up in Hong Kong, Vietnam, Japan, Spain, Los Angeles and New York in U.S, and Toronto in Canada. Meanwhile, Weixin network TV station has been founded in the Weixin Shengjiao volunteering career system, broadcasting the courses offered by I Ching University 24 hours a day. According to a study which investigated the students of I Ching University who participated in the lifelong learning of religious education, the empirical results indicated that the main motivations of learning were their intention of social contribution and interest of knowledge. Their motivations brought significant improvement on their family and life satisfaction, and the

wellbeing (Chen, Li & Lin, 2015; Chen, Li & Lin, 2015).

Conclusion

Social innovation is an essential process for the evolution of society and search for sustainable alternatives for the collective wellbeing. Therefore, social innovation is not only about social objectives; the usage of term “social” expresses the social means and refers to the development of new social relationships (Marga, 2015). In this study, the I Ching University was found that to commit on carrying forward I-Ching Feng-Shui of Chinese culture all over Taiwan and the world to reach the ultimate goal of community wellbeing and the world peace. Five major social innovative points have been found. The religious education of I Ching University aims to develop human virtue and wisdom to let everyone live, learn, work and grow in a peaceful and safe environment. Finally, the purpose of I Ching University is to nurture talents. Its ultimate goal is to build a polite society as described in Liji, *Liyun Datong* (Book of Rites, Chapter of Great Harmony) which says thus evil scheming is repressed, and robbers, thieves and other lawless elements fail to arise. So that outer doors do not have to be shut. This is called the “Age of Great Harmony”.

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