The Influence of Confucius's Educational Thoughts on China's Educational System

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Abstract

This study aimed at exploring Confucius's thoughts on education and its influence on China's educational system. The primary method for exploring the influence of Confucius's educational thoughts on China's educational system was a systematic review. The study found out that Confucius's educational thoughts have greatly influenced the modern Chinese educational system. Confucius's educational thought and the experience he accumulated in his many years of teaching constitute a valuable Chinese education legacy. Above all, Confucius laid great emphasis on moral education to cultivate an individual as a person. His moral education aimed to improve character and behavior, training people to become completely virtuous. Confucianism has greatly influenced the Chinese purpose of education, method of education, subject matter, and moral values. This study recommends that more studies should be carried out on how Confucius's educational thoughts have contributed to school leadership and management in China.

Subject Areas

Philosophy, Leadership and Management, Teacher Education, Curriculum

Keywords

Confucius's Educational Thought, China's Educational System,
Chinese Philosophy, Confucianism, Confucius's Thought on Moral Education,
China

1. Introduction

Looking back at the development of ancient Chinese education, one may say that many of the essential educational ideas that greatly influenced later generations can be traced back to Confucius (Yuhan & Chen, 2013 [1]; Zhao, 2017 [2]; Tan,

2017 [3]; Kajawo, 2019 [4]). The six classics introduced by Confucius influence present-day Chinese education and culture and, to a large extent, China's socio-political atmosphere (Zhao, 2013 [5]; Mutschle, 2019 [6]). Today, the Confucius Institute has been established in many countries, and the main objective is to teach the Chinese language and culture. This shows the influential nature of Confucius. Confucius also influences ancient Chinese agriculture. His educational activities, ideas, experience, and contribution to the development of ancient Chinese education were remarkable; they include; firstly, he established a private educational institution, which helped enlarge the circle of people to be educated and spread culture downward (Qijia, 2009 [7]; Zhifa, *et al.*, 2020 [8]). Secondly, he greatly stressed the importance of education and gave full attention to education's positive role in society and cultivating capable people (Ng, 2009 [9]; Zhao, 2013 [5]). Thirdly, he edited classic literary works and documents, help preserve China's ancient cultural heritage, and established a series of curricula, covering; the book of songs, the book of history, the book of rites, the book of music, the book of change and the spring and autumn annals (Ni, 2017 [9]; Tan, 2018 [10]). Also**,** he pointed out the importance of moral education and emphasized the need to cultivate moral qualities, such as persistence in oneself through self-control and introspection (Ng 2009 [11]; Yuhan & Chen, 2013 [1]). Furthermore, he laid down teaching and learning principles and greatly stressed the importance of students taking the initiative in their studies. Moreover, it advocated a relationship of mutual love and respect between teachers and students and set out an ideal teacher's requirements (Qijia, 2009) [7].

This study is structured as follows; the main purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, literature review, method, findings, and Conclusion. The findings are presented as follows: Confucius thought on the purpose of education and its influence on the present Chinese educational system; Confucius thoughts on the method of teaching and its influence on the present Chinese educational system; Confucius thought on the subject matter and how it influences the present Chinese educational system; Confucius Thoughts on moral education and its influence on the Chinese educational system and Confucius theoretical bases on education and how it has influenced the present Chinese educational system.

1.1. Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to explore Confucius educational thoughts and its influence on the present china's educational system.

1.2. Objectives of the Study

1) To analyze Confucius thoughts on what the purpose of education should be and how it has influenced the present Chinese educational system.

2) To examine Confucius method of teaching and how it has influenced the present Chinese educational system.

3) To analyze Confucius thoughts on the subject matter and how it has influenced the present Chinese educational system.

4) To find out how Confucius thoughts on moral education have influenced the present Chinese educational system.

5) To examine Confucius theoretical bases on education and how it has influenced the present Chinese educational system.

1.3. Research Questions

1.3.1. The Main Research Question
What are the influences of Confucius's educational thoughts on the present china's educational system?

1.3.2. Specific Research Questions
1) What are the various ways in which Confucius's thoughts on the purpose of education have influenced the present Chinese educational system?

2) How has Confucius's method of teaching influence the present Chinese educational system?

3) What are the influences of Confucius's thoughts on subject matter on the present Chinese educational system?

4) How have Confucius's thoughts on moral education influence the present Chinese educational system?

5) How has Confucius's theoretical base on education influence the present Chinese educational system?

2. Literature Review

Confucius (551 - 479 BC), known as Kongfuzi, fuzi means respect for a teacher (Qijia, 2009) [7]. His father named him Qiu. He was a native of Quyi in Lu, which is now known as Qufu city in Shandong province. Confucius is one of the most famous and influential philosophers and teachers in ancient China; His teachings have greatly shaped China's educational system and the political, social, and cultural development of China (Zhao, 2017 [2]; Tan, 2018 [10]). Confucius is seen as one of the most representative figures of Chinese civilization (Mutschle, 2019 [6]; Kajawo, 2019 [4]). His contribution to education and culture may boil down to two main points: sorting out and preserving ancient classics, initiating private and independent teaching, accumulating abundant educational experience, and establishing a complete systematic education theory. Confucius established schools, composed books, and developed education theories, contributing much to Chinese culture and education (Chan, 2000 [12]; Tan, 2007 [13]). He was respected as the father of Confucianism, Confucianism was considered to be helpful to the rulers, and Confucius was held in high esteem; due to his influence in the state of Lu, he was promoted to the post of "Sikou" (minister of justice). At this time, he was 50. He occupied this post for only three months due to Lu's chaotic situation (Qijia, 2009 [7]; Ni, 2017 [9]). This chaotic situation made him flee his native land to spend 14 years in exile. After he flees

from his native land, he moves from state to state because he failed to get his political ideas endorsed by these states' rulers. Doing this time, he could not even find a place to settle down (Jones, & Culliney, 1998 [14]; Zhao, 2013 [5]). According to Confucius, society is sick, which can be solved if the noble class shows love to the masses and the masses respect the noble class people (Kajawo, 2019) [4]. Confucius dedicated most of his life to teaching and writing. He taught poetry, classics, rites, and music to as many as 3000 pupils (Qijia, 2009 [7]; Tan, 2018 [10]). He was the first person to help systematically disseminate ancient Chinese culture (Zhao, 2013) [5]. Unfortunately, Confucius did not document any part of his doctrines. His disciples wrote the information about him and his educational activities.

According to Confucius, approach the people with dignity, and they will respect you, show pity towards your parents and kindness towards your children, and they will be loyal to you (Tan, 2015) [15]. Promote those who are worthy, train those who are incompetent. According to him, this was the best form of encouragement. He emphasized the importance of meeting one's obligations through the right attitude (Dau-Lin, 1997 [16]; Zhao, 2013 [5]). In his view, leaders must be well cultivated in morality, and the people in a society should all have their respective levels of morality so that the society should remain stable. He believes that people should be role by morality and not by law. Education was seen as an indispensable factor for social stability and development. Confucius said, by nature near together, by practice far apart (Wang, 2004 [17]; Qijia, 2009 [7]). Nature here refers to the human nature of inherent quality and what he meant by practice refers to the effect or influence of environment and education. This means that all people were born equal as regards their inherent qualities. According to Kim (2004) [18], what Confucius meant was that the desire to live a righteous life could only be achieved through someone's conscious efforts, but unfortunately, not everyone makes conscious efforts to live appropriately as human beings. This means that living well within the community depends on an individual and not on others. To Confucius, it is up to the learner to seek what is right.

It was upon his theory of human nature that Confucius had based his entire educational thought and his view of appointing only people of virtue and ability to the office (Ni, 2017 [9]; Kajawo, 2019 [4]). As earlier mentioned, Confucius had shaped the present Chinese culture in one way or the other. During his time, he criticizes a lot of Chinese beliefs and practices. He analyzed and interrogated the existing culture at that time, which has shaped the present Chinese culture (Zhao, 2013 [5]; Tan, 2017 [3]). During his time, cultural norms and rules were influenced by political rulers in which Confucius criticizes without fear (Tan, 2018) [10]. Confucius is also known to be a transformational leader according to him education should aim at transforming individuals (Zhou, 2017), this means that educational leaders have much to learn from Confucius as far as leadership is concerned. His leadership was guided by morality, social values, and demo-

cratic practices (Fernandez, 2004 [19]; Bi, Ehrich & Ehrich, 2011 [20]).

Confucius emphasized that learning should be gear towards understanding and fulfilling one's true self (improving one's self) rather than aiming at gaining recognition from others (Ng, 2009) [11] To Confucius, learning should be aimed at enabling learners to discover their potentials and help them realized who they are (Self-realization). By "Self" Confucius means continuous and lifelong growth (Kim, 2004) [18]. According to Confucius, learners should be encouraged to learn for the sake of "self" not "others." This is because learning for the sake of self is considered to be better because it enables a learner to interact with everyone in the community and also help him or her to be integrated into the community while learning for the sake of others is detrimental to one's self and others; it drives a learner to lose oneself as well as others (Yao, 1996 [21]; Zhao, 2013 [5]). According to him, when a man with humility embarks on building his character, he indirectly builds others' character (Tan, 2016 [22]; Ng, 2009 [11]). A humble man encourages others to be humble (Chan, 1970; Wang, 2004 [17]; Zhao, 2017 [2]). Kim (2004) [18] stated that learning for the sake of "self" is not based on self-love or limited to oneself but is geared towards cultivating "true self," enabling one to act well and be integrated into society. On the other hand, learning for others' sake can destroy oneself and others, leading to disunity in the community instead of unity. People, who seek self-fulfillment, aim to achieve goodness, and since they are focused on attaining goodness, they dislike those who destroy goodness (Kim, 2004) [18]. This means that someone who learns for self teaches or encourages others to be humble and righteous. While learning for others' sake is focused on gaining fame and recognition, they cannot portray goodness (Yao, 1996 [21]; Yuhan & Chen, 2013 [1]). This indicates that people who learn merely to achieved fame and recognition will do anything, whether good or bad, to achieve it. The reason being that their main goal is to satisfy others; they worry a lot about what people will do or say if they fail. Someone who is learning for the sake of safe does not need to worry about what others think. According to Confucius, if schools want to train noble citizens, learning must be oriented towards "self."

Furthermore, he emphasized modestly seeking knowledge and persistently pursuing goals (Ryu, 2010 [23]; Tan, 2017 [3]). By modestly seeking knowledge, he meant that we should recognize if we know something or not. This can be attributed to what is called today in education "metacognition", reflecting on your learning to determine your strengths and weaknesses. Knowing about one's abilities is crucial because it can improve learning. For Confucius, learning and reflection should be a way of life (Kim, 2003 [24]; Wen, 2011 [25]; Tan, 2016 [22]). Reflection enables one to develop insight. Our ability to do this is attributed to knowing. By persistently pursuing goals, he meant we should learn as if we are following someone we could not catch up with. To Confucius, learning and reflection depend on one another; learning without reflection and reflection without learning is meaningless. Confucius refers to someone who learns but does

not think as someone who is lost and someone who thinks but does not engage in learning as being in danger; thinking without learning is a wastage of time (Chan, 1970; Tan, 2016 [22]). For Confucius, learning and reflection can help a learner attain both cognitive and social development, which enables the learner to behave well, hence contributing to society's development.

3. Principles and Methods of Moral Education

3.1. Establishing Correct Goals in Life

According to Confucius, establishing a correct purpose was the key to one's development. In his opinion, a person should not merely be content with his material life; he should have a higher spiritual goal (Chan, 2000) [12], that is, he should have his ideal of future social development, toward which he should contribute. His main ideas are as follows; firstly, he talks about establishing one's goals based on both the present situation and prospects. Secondly, he mentioned that spiritual life should be given more priority than material life. Finally, he emphasized focusing on one's will and persisting with one's goals (Hagen, 2010) [26]. He required his students to make their will so solid and firm in such a way that nothing can make them change it (Tan, 2017) [3].

3.2. Self-Control and Introspection

Confucius maintained that, in dealing with relationships with people, one must be strict with himself and control and inspect his words and behavior so that they might conform to moral standards; this was what he called "self-control" (Yuhan, & Chen, 2013) [1]. By introspection, he meant that we should re-examine ourselves (self-assessment). He also emphasized learning for self rather than learning for recognition or learning for others; according to him, if anyone wants to be noble or superior, they should learn for "self" and not for others (Kim, 2004 [18]; Ng, 2009 [11]).

3.3. Correcting Errors and Reforming Oneself

A gentleman, according to Confucius, accepts that he/she has made a mistake and tries to look for ways to solve the problem (Sim, 2009) [27]. Confucius theory of self-reform consists of the following aspects; a person should refrain from hiding his errors; he should remold himself; he should recognize that man errs; he should deal appropriately with his mistakes and correct them, and he should adopt a correct attitude toward other people's mistakes and their criticisms (Shen, 2008) [28]. This implies that we should treat others the way we want to be treated.

3.4. Practicing What One Preaches

Confucius stresses that people must practice and act in accordance with what they say; to him, those who did not practice what they preached were not noble. This shows that people should live by example. Regarding the educational sys-

tem, it means that teachers should be role models (Watson, 2007 [29]; Shim, 2008 [30]). They should practice what they teach in school so that students can see and emulate. It is difficult to trust someone who says one thing and does the other. This means that a noble leader practices what he or she preaches. To Confucius, a teacher's responsibilities should include cultivating students' morality, imparting knowledge to them, and developing students' abilities (Woods & Lamond, 2011 [31]; Tan, 2017 [3]). If a teacher is expected to cultivate students' morality, it means that they need to be role models; this entails practicing what they preach. This means that a teacher should set examples for his or her students because each word from a teacher directly influences the development of the student's personality.

3.5. Method

The primary method for exploring the influence of Confucius's educational thoughts on China's educational system was a systematic review. As the basis for this study, literature was reviewed, paying attention to the purpose of education, method of education, nature of education, subject matter, moral education, and theoretical basis of education according to Confucius. The researchers searched articles and books through databases in education and philosophy. For example, the researchers conducted a systematic search of the following databases: Academic Search Complete, Google Scholar, Education Full Text, ERIC, JSTOR, Wilson Select Plus, Wiley, and Academic Search Premier, for material on Confucius's Educational Thoughts on China's educational system. keywords such as Confucius educational thoughts, Confucius teachings, China's educational system, Chinese Philosophy, Confucianism, and Confucius's thought on moral education, were used to search materials. The search yielded 102 articles, after removing the exact duplicate 75 articles were left, the researcher further securitized the articles to make sure that they met the objective of the study, this yielded 41 articles. It is important to point out that, the researchers limited the search to studies published in English.

4. Findings

4.1. Confucius Thought on the Purpose of Education and Its Influence on the Present Chinese Educational System

According to Confucius, education should be aimed at training "shi" (qualities of a gentleman). His aim of education was to cultivate such a perfect personality. By perfect personality, he meant someone with sound morality who can bring peace and happiness to people. He advocated the cultivation of "gentleman" and said that when a student finds that he can more than cope with his studies, then he takes office," a principle that went against the backward hereditary system for filling public positions (Tan, 2018) [10]. To him, education's objective should be to teach all people without discrimination towards rank or social status. That is, he advocated for education for all. This Confucius view seems to have influenced

the present Chinese policy on free six years of primary schools and free three years of secondary schools. At the university level, there are also Confucius scholarships that allow everyone to study the Chinese language. For Confucius, learning is a lifelong effort that involves aiming for moral excellence and becoming a virtuous person (Kim, 2004) [18]. Confucian education's objective was to train someone to become a "junzi" which means a consummate, ideally ethical, and capable person who practically embodies a set of virtues (Dau-Lin, 1997 [16]; Yuhan, & Chen, 2013 [1]; Tan, 2016 [22]). In addition, Confucius emphasized lifelong learning (Zhifa *et al.*, 2020) [8], which implies that schools' goals and objectives should be to teach students about life itself which implies that students should be able to use the knowledge and skills they have acquired in school to solve real-life problems. Today, world organizations such as the United Nations (UN) emphasize lifelong learning to ensure sustainable development. This is supported by Kim (2004) [18], who stated that due to the need to build a knowledge-based society, teaching methods and strategies that can enable students to acquire knowledge, skills, and attitudes that promote lifelong learning are emphasized. This means that learning should not be limited to theory; it should include practical activities and co-curricular activities to enable the students to acquire practical skills and self-esteem. It is good to give learners a chance to practice what they have learned in school to make learning enjoyable. By practicing what they have learned in school, enables them to acquired practical skills that are needed in the job market.

According to Confucius, to train someone who can bring peace and happiness to the people (gentleman), learning should be life-oriented. Learning should be geared towards developing good habits that can help one live well with others in society (Frederickson, 2002 [32]; Ni, 2017 [9]). This means that the curriculum should be derived from society and the people's needs and wants. Learning should be gear towards solving real-life problems rather than focuses on knowing the truth about the world. Learning, for Confucius, should not end with books and formal schooling but should be continuous for one's entire life because learning is a lifelong effort to become a good person (gentleman) and live well in society (Han & Scull, 2010) [33]. To Confucius, education's objective should be directed toward attaining a unity of self and the world, which he considers the highest learning stage (Kim, 2004 [18]; Wang, 2004 [17]). According to him, students should learn and develop values that can enable them to live and interact well within the community. This indicates that one of the learning objectives should be studying and analyzing how human beings behave. Analyzing how human beings function or behave will enable one to know how to interact with others in the community.

4.2. Confucius Thoughts on the Method of Teaching and Its Influence on the Present Chinese Educational System

He emphasizes elicitation. The elicitation method was the basic method that Confucius used in his teaching because he realized that knowledge should be

acquired. Learning should be a process of exploring and understanding based on one's initiative; hence he put particular emphasis on the need for the students to take the initiative when it comes to teaching and learning (Yao, 1996 [21]; Kim, 2004 [18]). An elicitation method is a deductive teaching method; he used logic to teach independent study. According to him, someone cannot acquire knowledge without studying independently. Confucius encourages students to be eager and excited to learn to motivate teachers to teach more. Confucius emphasized the need for students to take ownership of their learning and engage in higher-order thinking. This means that he advocated for problem-based learning (Han & Scull, 2010 [33]; Tan, 2015 [15]). Teaching was also done through lecturing, reading, music, playing, and singing. The nature of education was informal, Confucius considered his learners' needs, and he considered the characteristics of the learners, such as age, before responding to their questions. According to Confucius, studying without reflection will lead no way, and reflecting without study is a waste of time since it will lead you into trouble (Defoort, 2001 [34]; Tan, 2018 [10]). Confucius is against passive learning and rote-memorization (Tan, 2017) [3]. Confucius discourages memorization and encourages critical thinking processes such as analyzing, interpreting, evaluating, summarizing, and synthesizing (Tan, 2016) [22]

Confucius based his teaching on the individual students' characteristics and aptitude (Han & Scull, 2010 [33]; Zhifa *et al.*, 2020 [8]), which means that it is useless to teach students what they cannot comprehend. Teachers should be encouraged and give full support to students' initiative when it comes to studies to guarantee the attainment of educational goals and objectives. He tried to understand and get to know his students when teaching (Qijia, 2009) [7]. It is good to note that his teaching methods varied according to the student's different intelligence levels. In today's classrooms, teachers are encouraged to consider the learners' characteristics and prior knowledge before designing lesson plans. They are also encouraged to use different teaching methods depending on the needs of the learners. Moreover, one of the Sustainable Development Goals is to ensure inclusive education, which is in line with Confucius's teaching method. He advocated for both verbal and non-verbal methods of teaching. To Confucius, non-verbal teaching means teaching through hints and examples (Shim, 2008) [30]. In addition, a successful teacher takes care of the students. To him, the teacher needs to show love to the students by encouraging them to work hard.

According to Tan (2018) [10], Confucius advocates for learners-centered teaching and learning; Confucius encourages his students to construct their beliefs actively. He encourages them to learn by making connections in order to understand concepts easily. This teaching method has influenced the present teaching method in schools in China which is practical in nature. Schools in China engage more in practical activities than theory. As far as the method of teaching is concerned, Confucius emphasized the following:

Firstly, he emphasized paying great attention to teaching methods and adeptly using elicitation in teaching. According to him, a competent teacher should reg-

ularly review what he had learned and try to gain new understanding and discoveries based on a thorough grasp of the facts (Shim, 2008 [30]; Hwang, 2013 [35]). A good teacher should impart knowledge to students and enable them to think and seek knowledge independently and become people of moral integrity. He advocated for a positive relationship between teachers and students (Elliott &Tsai, 2008) [36]. To him, the teacher should try his or her best to teach students everything. Confucius was a successful educator because he put effort into using the correct teaching methods (Qijia, 2009) [7]. Teaching students using the elicitation method and helping them infer from examples. He also emphasized cooperative learning; that is, according to him, learners will feel more fulfilled when they share their ideas with classmates. Looking at today's classrooms, teachers often group learners into groups to discuss and share ideas on a particular topic or concept, hence encouraging cooperative learning.

Secondly, he stressed the importance of studying diligently and paying special attention to the facts (Ryu, 2010 [23]; Tan, 2017 [3]). According to him, Confucius advocated becoming wise by learning; intellectual education depends on seeing and hearing a great deal. This can be associated with today's emphasis on using different instructional materials in our classrooms to suit the content and the different types of learners in a class, such as using computers, televisions, pictures for the visual learners, and radio tape recorders for the auditory learners. Confucius emphasized reflections and facts before making judgments; for example, if so many people dislike someone or like him or her, there is a need to examine to understand the reasons before drawing. This means that people should not depend on popular opinion; there is a need to do a careful investigation before making judgments (Tan, 2018) [10].

Thirdly, he emphasized doing regular reviews and learning new things by restudying the old. According to Confucius, it should be considered a pleasure to turn acquired knowledge into skill and ability through repeated practice and reviewing (Elliott & Tsai, 2008) [36]. To him, one can always gain something new by regularly reviewing what one studied in the past. The old is the foundation of the new, and the new is the development of the old; regular reviewing reflects the interrelation between the old and the new and the transition from the old to the new (Han & Scull, 2010) [33]. Today there is much emphasis on previous knowledge. Teachers are always advised to stimulate the recall of previous knowledge before starting a lesson because it serves as the foundation for learning which is very important. Learning itself involves repeated practice, and it is only through repeated practice that knowledge can be consolidated. When a person has acquired true mastery of that knowledge, he will draw inferences about other cases from one instance, predict the future by referring to the past and search for the unknown based on what is already known. Chen, Tolmie &Wang (2017) [37] found out that students' thinking skills can be improved using Confucius's teaching method.

In addition, he emphasized combining learning with thinking, with learning

as the foundation. According to Confucius, there is no way someone can act or behave appropriately without learning (Ryu, 2010) [23]. Learning should not be separated from thinking because, without thinking, knowledge cannot be digested and hence will be of no use, whereas without learning, thinking will have no foundation and will be harmful. As a result of this, he advocated that learning should be combined with thinking. Confucius emphasizes reflective learning, which is what is referred to today as critical thinking. Without critical thinking or reflective learning, learners will only be taught how to memorize facts and concepts, and as a result of this, the learners will be ill-equipped, they will not be able to carry out inquires, justify their beliefs, critique their traditions, make decisions or autonomous choices in life (Tan, 2018) [10]. To Confucius, learning should be directed toward attaining unity of self and the world, and for this to happen, the learner needs to show interest and commitment to learned (Kim, 2004 [18]; Tan, 2017 [3]). For Confucius, learning occurs when an individual reflects on his or her life and one's nature of living; through reflection, one is expected to identify aspects of lacking and seek ways to improve those aspects.

4.3. Confucius Thought on Subject Matter and How It Influence the Present Chinese Educational System

The six classics constituted the curriculum's main body; they include; the book of changes, the book of history, the book of songs, the book of rites, the spring and autumn annals, and the book of music. It is important to note that the six classics influence both the ancient and the present Chinese educational systems (Kim, 2003 [24]; Tan, 2016 [22]). The book of rites consisted of moral norms and the corresponding rituals and etiquettes. The book of music was made up of music, music for celebration, funeral, marriage, and instruments. The book of history was made up of political and historical documents (Qijia, 2009) [7]. There are still aspects of Confucius classics in today's educational systems in some subjects like history, music just to name but these. He inherited the six arts from the western Zhou educational system; the subject matter he intended to teach his disciples was much broader in scope compared to the Western Zhou Dynasty (Shim, 2008 [30]; Yuhan, & Chen, 2013 [1]). The subject matter centers on politics, morality, and culture. Specifically, it was made up of rites, music, archery, chariot, driving, history, and mathematics; besides these six arts, he added culture, the conduct of affairs, loyalty to superiors, and the keeping of promises (Mutschle, 2019) [6]. As earlier mentioned, he aimed to train his students to become "gentlemen" (sound morals and ability to bring peace and happiness to other people) whom he set trick requirements.

Besides the six arts, he added culture, the conduct of affairs, loyalty to superiors, and promises. To him, a young man has to behave well to his parents at home and his elders, be cautious in giving promises and punctual in keeping them, and have kindly feelings towards everyone, but seek the good's intimacy. The subject matter of education, as envisioned by Confucius, consisted of two

parts; Education in politics and morality and education in culture and learning (Elliott & Tsai, 2008) [36]. Conduct of affairs, loyalty to superiors, and the keeping of promises fall into moral and political education, whereas "polite arts" belong partly to the scope of moral and political education and partly to knowledge and education (Mutschle, 2019) [6]. The six classics constituted the main body of the curriculum taught in Confucius's private schools. Confucius's educational program was lacking in training in skills and techniques in the natural sciences. According to him, achievement in moral culture is superior to those in techniques and skills (Frederickson, 2002 [32]; Watson, 2007 [29]). This view influence ancient Chines education; they were a tradition of despising the natural sciences and forsaking techniques and skills, which had a detrimental effect on the development of ancient Chinese education.

4.4. Confucius Thoughts on Moral Education and Its Influence on the Chinese Educational System

Above all, Confucius laid great stress on moral education to cultivate an individual as a person. Confucius's moral education aimed to improve people's character and behavior, training them to become completely virtuous people. According to him, the first necessary condition for being a gentleman was to acquire a noble character (Qijia, 2009 [7]; Yuhan & Chen, 2013 [1]). The process of moral education, according to Confucius, involves the interaction of moral knowledge, emotions, will, and behavior (Woods & Lamond, 2011) [31]. He emphasized the relationship between moral education and intellectual development by saying that it is only by learning and education that someone can acquire good qualities (Shen, 2008 [28]; Ng, 2009 [11]). With regards to the relationship between intellectual and moral education, he said, "A young man has to behave well to his parents at home and his elder, to be cautious in giving promises and punctual in keeping them, in having kindly feelings towards everyone, but seek the intimacy of the good" (Cheng, 2006 [38]; Sim, 2009 [27]). Confucius also emphasized that morality should not be seen merely as the rational subject (Froese, 2008) [39]. To Confucius, loving others and connecting with them in a meaningful and patterned way is a precondition for behaving morally (Dau-Lin, 1997 [16]; Wang, 2004 [17]). To Confucius, a gentleman should be respectful and loyal in any situation, whether in private or public. In addition, he or she should show some interest and commitment to leading others no matter the situation. He emphasized benevolence as a principle of morality.

According to Qijia (2009) [7], Confucius emphasized that moral education should be conducted through intellectual education, but the main purpose of intellectual education should be the teaching of morality. He stressed that students should be educated in the concept of morality, rites, benevolence, and how they might learn to distinguish between good and evil, right and wrong (Woods & Lamond, 2011) [31]. He was the first educator to comment on the relationship between moral and intellectual education and give primary importance to moral

education (Chan, 2000) [12]. Intellectual education has an essential part in moral education because a learned person knows the great and far-reaching significance of morality. He combined moral and intellectual education in the same system, treating them as two aspects of the same process but with more significant stress laid on moral education and intellectual education being regarded as a means to achieve moral education (Wang, 2004 [17]; Tan, 2007 [13]). Confucius emphasized that students should learn about morality, goodness, and rites and should both study and follow the way. Moral education involves the handling of emotions (Frederickson, 2002 [32]; Ng, 2009 [11]). Moral education can help raise the level of emotion. According to him, the process of forming a moral character includes four aspects; knowledge, emotion, will, and action.

4.5. Confucius Theoretical Bases on Education and How It Has Influenced the Present Chinese Educational System

4.5.1. The Theory of no Distinction in Education

Confucius emphasizes the theory of no distinction in education, which means that teaching should be given to everyone without discrimination (Ng, 2009 [11]; Zhifa, *et al.*, 2020 [8]). According to Confucius, teaching should be given to all people without discrimination toward ranks or social status. Education should be offered to any person, whether aristocratic, submissive, or humble. Before this Confucius view, there had been a class distinction in China (Dau-Lin, 1997 [16]; Hagen, 2010 [26]). Thanks to Confucius, education became available to ordinary people in remote areas. Today China has a policy of free and compulsory six years of primary education and free three years of secondary schools, allowing everyone to be educated.

Furthermore, there are several scholarships in China, such as the Confucius scholarship, presidential scholarship, and the Chinese Government Scholarship. These scholarships aimed at giving students from other countries the opportunity to study in China regardless of race, culture, or religion. The aristocrats' monopoly of education in China was shattered by the theory of no class distinction in education. Confucius students were from different social classes, few from aristocratic families, and many from poor homes. It is also important to note that there was no restriction on age in accepting students. He accepted every student regardless of their social status, thus making education available to the non-aristocratic (Rosemont, 1986 [40]; Zhao, 2013 [5])

4.5.2. Theory Regarding the Role of Education: The Role of Education for the State and Society

This theory came up because education can enlighten people, control their minds, make them abide by regulations and rules, develop a clear conscience in them, and form a force of moral belief, thus achieving the goal of education (Ng, 2009) [11]. Confucius considered population, wealth, and education to be the three main elements for building a country. The population is the foundation, for without population, there would be no such thing a governing a state or

building a country. After establishing a population, the next thing to do is enrich them, that is, to make the population rich by using their hands. This is because it is only through laying the foundation of material life that education can be possible, and it is only when education is conducted well can the affairs of the state be called well managed (Fox, 1997 [41]; Hagen, 2010 [26]). Confucius placed social wealth first before education, which means that he had realized that the economy restrained education. The development of education depends on the development of the economy. According to Confucius, three necessary conditions for the prosperity and development of a country, a nation, or a society are a flourishing population, a prosperous economy, and an advanced education system.

Moreover, to Confucius, education like politics and law was also an essential means of governance. Besides, education had an important function that neither politics nor law could replace, for it enlightens people, control their minds, make them abide by regulations and rules, develop a clear conscience in them and form a force of moral belief; thus achieving the goal of government by the effect of morality (Qijia, 2009 [7]; Zhao, 2013 [5]). He maintained that people must first be enlightened with education and when this proved to be of no effect, they should be punished so that a society without crime might eventually be created, government through the effect of morality was considered to be more important than government by punishment (Sim, 2009) [27]. This was one of the main differences between Confucianism and legalism. According to Confucius order could be maintained in a community by establishing better ritual actions, taking the people's needs and wants into consideration than imposing rules and regulations on them (Kim, 2004) [18].

5. Conclusion

This study found out that Confucius contributed significantly to the modern Chinese educational system. However, Confucius has been criticized for various reasons; for example, he emphasized moral education and being a gentleman neglecting skills, techniques, and natural sciences. This greatly affected the ancient Chinese educational system. Confucius's shortcomings gave rise to other schools of thought such as the Mohist, Daoist, and legalist. Mocius, a Confucian scholar, disagrees with some of the Confucian ideas that enable him to establish the Mohist School. The main idea of the Mohist School was to train people to have "universal love." According to the Mohist School, the objective of education was to train people to acquire skills, which was what Confucius failed to include in his teachings. However, like the Confucianists, the Mohists also prioritized morality. Morality was seen as a fundamental personality factor. Furthermore, another school of thought that came up was the Daoist School founded by Lao Zi, his main idea was human nature, and the content of education was based on the "law of nature." According to the Daoist School, education should be according to inactive nature and no textbook; this education method is not en-

couraged in this modern society. Unlike the Daoist, Confucius encourages his students to be active. Another school of thought that came up was the Legalist school; this school was led by Zi Xia, who was originally a student of Confucius. The legalist school advocated for law because according to them the society was in disorder. Their educational aim was to train people in farming, war, and law. The Legalist school of thought greatly criticized Confucius's thoughts. One of the legalists, Han Fei, criticized the Confucian school's moral criteria, saying that Confucianism is foolish learning that can only bring poverty, military weakness, and doom to a country. Confucianism is also criticized for emphasizing the stratification of society and man superiority over women. It essential to point how that, despite these criticisms, the fact remains that Confucius contributed greatly to the Chinese educational system. His educational thought has been inherited and has inspired many educators. This study was limited to English publications; it is suggested that more reviews should be carried out including articles published in other languages. Moreover, more studies should be carried out on how Confucius's educational thoughts have contributed to school leadership and management in China.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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