

# AN INVESTIGATION OF CHINESE NEW HSK TEST TAKERS' LEARNING MOTIVATION IN THAILAND

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## Abstract

This research aimed: (1) to identify the Chinese new HSK test takers' demographic factors including their gender, years of learning Chinese, studying school, family background and test levels; (2) to determine the levels of their learning motivation including the extrinsic motivation, intrinsic motivation, and self-efficacy for learning; (3) to compare the test takers' learning motivation according to their demographic factors; (4) to determine the effects of these demographic factors across extrinsic motivation, intrinsic motivation, and self-efficacy for learning.

The sample included all Chinese new HSK test takes for Levels 1-6 at Bangkok University Test Site in the year 2015. A total of 311 Thai students from the different schools of Thailand were selected using the convenience sampling technique.

The research found that: (1) the majority of new HSK test takers were female students, from the public schools, with Thai-Chinese family background, learning Chinese for about 1-6 years, and having taken the Chinese new HSK tests for the beginner and intermediate levels (Levels 1-4); (2) the level of new HSK test takers' motivation for learning Chinese was moderate, their extrinsic motivation high, their intrinsic motivation and their self-efficacy for learning moderate; (3) the female students have higher learning motivation than the male students; students who learned for 1-6 years had higher learning motivation than those who learned for 7 years up; students from Thai-Chinese families had higher learning motivation than those from pure Thai families; students at the beginner level had higher learning motivation than those at the intermediate and advanced levels; (4) the effects of gender, years of learning Chinese, school type and family background and test level existed across the combination of three scales of motivation. Students' gender, years of learning, family background, and test level had

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effects on their extrinsic motivation; gender, school type, family background and test level had effects on their intrinsic motivation; and gender, years of learning, school type, family background and test level had effects on their self-efficacy for learning at .05 level of significance.

A discussion about each finding and recommendations for Chinese teachers and schools as well as for the future researchers were provided at the end of this study.

**Keywords:** Chinese New HSK Test Takers, Learning Motivation, Extrinsic Motivation, Intrinsic Motivation, Self-efficacy for Learning, Demographic factors, Thailand

## **INTRODUCTION**

With the great development of China and China's economy, the "Chinese fever" has spread to the world; more and more people are learning Chinese nowadays. Thailand is one of the countries in Southeast Asia, which has the most Chinese language learners (*HANBAN Thailand's Office Report, 2015*). With a long-term good friendship with China for centuries, Thailand has become the country with the most students learning Chinese, and Chinese language courses are opened almost in every school of Thailand, from nursery to university level. Currently, many international schools in Thailand which usually focused solely on English language teaching also provide Chinese courses for their students. Though some schools offer the Chinese language as an elective course, the number of students who are learning Chinese has increased very fast in Thailand (*HANBAN Thailand's Office Report, 2015*).

The increase in students learning Chinese worldwide is dramatic: they amount to an estimated 40 million today and are expected to be 100 million in 2020 (Globalexam, 2013). In order to promote Thai students studying Chinese, the governments of Thailand and China have cooperated with each other since 2003. A memorandum of understanding has thus been signed between China and Thailand in order to promote the teaching of Chinese, and 800,000 Thai students are learning Chinese in various contexts (Globalexam, 2013).

A good case in point is "the Chinese Volunteer Teacher Project". "The Chinese Volunteer Teacher Project" was launched in Thailand in 2003, and every year there are many Chinese volunteer teachers who come to Thailand for teaching Chinese in the schools of Thailand. Under the project and with the invitation of the Thai Ministry of Education, in recent years the number of Chinese volunteer teachers for Thailand has already surpassed 1,000 (*HANBAN Thailand's Office Report, 2015*). According to the former Chinese ambassador Mr. Guan Mu, who said that a "wave of Mandarin learning" is burgeoning in Thailand, and as reported by Xinhua News Agency (May 25) in 2009, there are 1,105 schools and colleges in Thailand offering Chinese courses and more than 400,000 Thai people who are learning Chinese in various ways.

The new HSK (Chinese Proficiency Test) is an international standardized test that assesses and rates non-native Chinese speakers' Chinese language proficiency for academic and professional purposes (Chinesetest, 2015). This test is sponsored solely by Hanban which is a non-governmental public institution affiliated with the Ministry of

Education of China (Chinesetest, 2015). New HSK tests have 6 different levels. Levels 1-2 are counted as the beginner levels, levels 3-4 are the intermediate levels, and levels 5-6 are the advanced levels. The HSK tests have become more and more popular recently, as their results can show the level of proficiency in Chinese, just as the TOEFL or IELTS tests' results can represent the non-native English speakers' English proficiency level. For this reason, the new HSK is sometimes called the "Chinese TOEFL" for the Chinese language learners in the world (Chinesetest, 2015).

According to HANBAN, Thailand's office report of to the year of 2015, more than 30,000 people attended the Chinese HSK test, on a total of 25 different testing sites in Thailand. Thailand is the country which not only has the most Chinese language learners but also the most test takers of the new HSK in Asia. HSK test scores have even become the new standard for recruiting Thailand's immigration police officers, as Netease International News (May 26, 2015) reported.

Various reports have described the large number of Thai people and students who are learning Chinese or taking the new Chinese HSK tests in Thailand. However, very few studies focused on the new HSK test takers' Chinese learning motivation levels with their possible related factors.

Therefore, the researcher decided to conduct this study to investigate the new HSK test takers' motivation of learning Chinese in Thailand, and to explore the possible related factors, so as to propose some guidelines for teachers and schools that are teaching and preparing Thai students for the Chinese new HSK tests in Thailand.

## PURPOSES OF THE STUDY

This research aimed: (1) to identify the Chinese new HSK test takers' demographic factors including their gender, years of learning Chinese, studying school, family background and test levels; (2) to determine the levels of their learning motivation including their extrinsic motivation, intrinsic motivation, and self-efficacy for learning; (3) to compare the test takers' learning motivation according to their demographic factors; (4) to determine the effects of these demographic factors across three scales of motivation including extrinsic goal orientation, intrinsic goal orientation, and self-efficacy for learning.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Motivation is a complex phenomenon. It has many dimensions including cognition and behavior. According to Kleinginna & Kleinginna (1981, as cited in Huitt, 2001), motivation is an internal need, desire, or want that influences the human behaviors. The theoretical framework of this research is mainly based on the social cognitive learning theory.

According to the social cognitive learning theory (Bandura, 1994), learning behavior is reciprocally influenced by behavioral, environmental and personal factors. Motivation, from the social cognitive perspective, is an internal state that can direct and maintain behavior (Bandura, 1993).

*Intrinsic motivation* refers to the degree in which students participate in a task because of internal reasons such as challenge and curiosity (Pintrich, Smith, Garcia & McKeachie, 1991). Learners with high levels of intrinsic motivation are willing to put effort

into their learning and typically enjoy the learning activities. They normally also have high levels of self-efficacy (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Lepper, Corpus, and Iyengar (2005) stated that students regularly show intrinsic motivation through their personal learning goals in order to motivate themselves in the learning process with self-determination.

**Extrinsic motivation** refers to the level of a learner's participation in a task because of external reasons such as grades and rewards, i.e., recognition, that students receive from others (Pintrich et al., 1991). The extrinsically motivated learners may not be interested in the task, but they still put effort into reaching the goal. However, once the goal is attained, the motivation is gone.

**Self-efficacy for learning** refers to students' beliefs about their ability to complete learning tasks effectively (Bandura, 1977). Self-efficacy is the self-appraisal of an individual's ability to handle a task (Pintrich et al., 1991).

The process of learning is complex and usually requires both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation as instigators of effort. According to Pintrich & Schunk (1996), the student's learning motivation sometimes is high when motivated intrinsically and sometimes is low when motivated extrinsically. But usually, the motivation is moderate when both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations together play a role in learning. Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, therefore, cannot always be separated. They are the dual dimensions of the motivation scale. Intrinsic motivation is at a high level of the motivation scale, and extrinsic motivation is at a lower level of the motivation scale (Pintrich & Schunk, 1996).

The students' intrinsic, and extrinsic motivation and self-efficacy are also related

and affect the learning motivation (Pintrich et al, 1991). If students believe they can learn an academic subject, they are more likely to put appropriate efforts into achieving their goal (Pintrich et al, 1991). Daskalovska, Gudeva & Ivanovska (2012) also pointed out that at the beginning of learning, language learners are typically motivated extrinsically; they learn for grades or rewards. However, when language learners are able to perform the language skills successfully at certain levels, their self-efficacy increases, and they are then likely to put more effort into their learning. At this time, learners desire to succeed in their language learning and become engaged in learning more intrinsically.

Motivation is a personal cognitive factor for learners that influences, and is influenced by, both environmental and behavioral factors. Some previous studies, including the research of Baker and MacIntyre (2003), and Sung and Padilla (1998), all reported the importance of gender as a variable in second language motivation, and found significantly higher motivation for females than for their male counterparts. Moreover, previous studies from Bear (1997), Ryan et al. (1997), Chantel et al. (1985), and Gould, Feltz & Weiss (1985), all supported that initial motivation is intrinsic and that this is moderated by gender.

School and family as the key environmental factors may also influence the learning motivation and performance. Bandura (1989) stated that people's beliefs and cognitive competencies are developed and modified by environmental influences that convey information and activate emotional reactions through modeling, instruction and social persuasion.

Student motivation may be dependent on varied factors, including home environment, classroom environment, and the school

system, as Joyette (2015) pointed out in many of her researches. According to her, a child who comes from a family which is caring, comfortable and supportive brings to the classroom motivation arising from his home environment; a positive school environment can reinforce the student's motivation and help him to achieve at even higher levels or it can create motivation where there was none from the home. XiJin, YouHua & ShaoJi (2012) wrote in their book that students' motivations of learning Chinese from different families or schools could be very different.

Masuntisuk (2009) explained that learning Chinese in Thailand is a compulsory part of primary education in Chinese schools and private schools, but, as for the public schools, they offer Chinese as a concentration during high school. According to Masuntisuk (2009), the secondary and high schools in Thailand, regardless whether private or public, all offer Chinese as concentration, but at the elementary level, the programs are different. Students are required to learn Chinese in the Chinese schools or in some private schools, beginning at the elementary level, while Chinese language studies in public schools are optional, generally beginning with middle school. Public Schools offering the Chinese language as a concentration will begin teaching it in high school.

## RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

The research instrument was a questionnaire consisting of 2 parts. The first part was to ask the participants' demographic factors including their gender, years of learning Chinese, family background, studying school and the test level that they would take.

The second part used the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) (Pintrich et al., 1991) in order to study the level of participants' motivation for learning Chinese. The MSLQ is a self-report instrument designed by Pintrich et al. in 1991. It is used to assess high school and university students' motivation, including the three subscales of extrinsic motivation, intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy for learning.

The MSLQ employs a 7-point Likert scale as listed below:

- |                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| • Not at all true of me | 7 |
| • Untrue of me          | 6 |
| • Somewhat untrue of me | 5 |
| • Neutral               | 4 |
| • Somewhat true of me   | 3 |
| • True of me            | 2 |
| • Very true of me       | 1 |

The researcher reported the level of the students' extrinsic motivation, intrinsic motivation, and self-efficacy for learning based on a 5-level rating scale according to the manual of MSLQ developed by Pintrich et al. in 1991. As every item was likely to reach from 1 (minimum) - 7 (maximum), based on the number of items, the level judgment would be based on the total summed scores for each subscale. The interpretation of the scores of three sub scales based on the original author's manual (Pintrich et al, 1991) is listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Interpretation of the Scores of Questionnaire Results

Interpretation	Very high	High	Moderate	Low	Very low
Extrinsic motivation (4 items)	28 – 25	24 – 21	20 – 13	12 – 9	8 – 4
Intrinsic motivation (4 items)	28 – 25	24 – 21	20 – 13	12 – 9	8 – 4
Self-efficacy for learning (8 items)	56 – 49	48 – 41	40 – 25	24 – 17	16 – 4
Overall motivation (16 items)	112 – 97	96 – 81	80 – 49	48 – 33	32 – 16

The original developers of the MSLQ tested the construct validity of the scales using confirmatory factor analysis, and all subscales showed acceptable factor validity (Pintrich et al., 1991). According to Artino (2005), the MSLQ has good predictive validity and is a very complete instrument for research in motivation and learning strategies. Feiz, Hooman, and Kooshki (2013), in a validation study of the MSLQ, found the instrument to be a “useful” measuring instrument. Further studies indicating the validity of the MSLQ were conducted by Cook, Thompson and Thomas (2011) and Rotgans (2010).

The questionnaire was given to every HSK test taker on the day when they came to register for the new HSK test or the day when they participated in the test at the Bangkok University test site in 2015. The overall reliability of the questionnaire was calculated by using Cronbach’s Alpha, which was around .76 as Pintrich et al.(1991) reported, and was .82 in this current study.

## SAMPLE

This research used all 311 test takers who sit in the 6 levels of the Chinese new HSK tests at Bangkok University Test Site (only) in the year of 2015 as the participants for this study by using the convenience sampling technique. All test takers are Thai, most of them from secondary schools, high schools or universities of Thailand. They took the test, on March 28<sup>th</sup>, July 19<sup>th</sup>, September 13<sup>th</sup>, and November 14<sup>th</sup> in 2015 respectively.

## RESULTS

1. The Chinese new HSK test takers’ demographic factors including their gender, years of learning, school type, family background and test levels.

In order to identify the Chinese new HSK test takers’ demographics including their gender, years of learning Chinese, studying school, family background and test levels, the researcher used the frequency and percentage

to depict the demographic profile of the participants at this test site in 2015.

Below, Table 2 shows the percentage and number of the Chinese new HSK test takers' demographic information. Data analysis about all 311 HSK Level1-6 test takers showed 90.4% of them were female and only 9.6% male students; 54.9% of the students had learned Chinese for 1-6years, and 45.1% of them for 7 years up; 57.9% of the students were from public schools, and 42.1% of them from private schools; 80.7% of them had Thai-Chinese family background, while 19.3% of them were from pure Thai families.

Table 3 below shows the percentage and number of test takers for each level. As observed, 36.3% of the students came to take the Level 2 test, 26.4% of students came for the Level 3 test, 21.9% of them for the Level 1 test, and 11.3% for the Level 4 test. The majority of the test takers took the Chinese HSK tests for the beginner level (58.2%) and intermediate level (37.7%); only very few (4.1%) took the HSK test for the advanced level (level 5-6).

Table 2. *The Percentage and Number of Chinese HSK Test Takers' Demographic Information (n=311)*

	<b>Demographics</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Number</b>
Gender:	Female	90.4	281
	Male	9.6	30
Years of learning:	1-6 years	54.9	171
	7 years up	45.1	140
School type:	Private	42.1	131
	Public	57.9	180
Family background:	Thai-Chinese	80.7	251
	Pure Thai	19.3	60

Table 3. *The Percentage and Number of Each Level's Test Takers (n=311)*

<b>Level</b>	<b>HSK test takers</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Number</b>
Beginner level	Level 1	21.9	68		
	Level 2	36.3	113	58.2	181
Intermediate level	Level 3	26.4	82		
	Level 4	11.3	35	37.7	117
Advance level	Level 5	2.9	9		
	Level 6	1.2	4	4.1	13
	Total	100	311	100	311

2. The level of new HSK Test takers' Chinese learning motivation, including their extrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivation, and self-efficacy for learning.

In order to study the test takers' learning motivation level including their motivational goal orientation and self-efficacy for learning, the researcher used the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire to survey the participants' motivation for learning Chinese, and reported the level of the test takers' extrinsic motivation, intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy for learning. The evaluation was based on their means and standard deviations, according to the criteria of the questionnaire, in the research instrument as Table 1 presents.

Table 4 shows the means and standard deviations for all 311 test takers' motivation. Accordingly, the level of new HSK test takers' overall motivation for learning Chinese was interpreted as "moderate", their extrinsic motivation for learning Chinese as "high", while

their intrinsic motivation was "moderate", and their self-efficacy for learning "moderate" as well.

3. The comparisons of the new HSK Test taker's learning motivation according to their gender, years of learning Chinese, school type, family background and test level.

In order to compare the new HSK Test taker's learning motivation according to their gender, years of learning Chinese, school type, family background and test level, the researcher did independent samples t-test to analyze the data. Tables 5-9 presented the t-test comparison's results as follows:

Table 5 shows the independent samples t-test comparison of the new HSK test takers' overall learning motivation with their gender. There was a significant difference between test takers' overall learning motivation according to their gender; and the male students had lower learning motivation than the female students.

Table 4. Results of Mean and Standard Deviation for Test Takers' Motivation (n=311)

HSK Test taker's Learning Motivation	Mean	S.D.	Interpretation
Extrinsic motivation	20.30	.861	High
Intrinsic motivation	19.22	.547	Moderate
Self-efficacy for learning	39.72	.648	Moderate
Overall motivation	79.24	1.296	Moderate

Table 5. Results of Independent Samples t-test Comparison of New HSK Test Taker's Overall Learning Motivation with Their Gender (n=311)

Gender	N	Mean	S.D.	t	Sig(2-tailed)
Female	281	79.44	1.184	9.685	.000*
Male	30	77.33	.479		

Table 6 shows the independent samples t-test comparison of the new HSK test takers' overall learning motivation with the years of learning. There was a significant difference between HSK test takers' overall learning motivation according to the years of learning Chinese, and the students who learned for more than 7 years had lower learning motivation than those who learned for 1-6 years.

Table 7 shows the independent samples t-test comparison of the new HSK test takers' learning motivation with their school type. There was a significant difference between new

HSK test takers' learning motivation according to school types, and the students from private schools had a higher learning motivation than those from public schools.

Table 8 shows the independent samples t-test comparison of the new HSK test takers' learning motivation with their family background. There was a significant difference between new HSK test takers' learning motivation according to their family background. As observed, the students from Thai-Chinese families tended to have a higher Chinese learning motivation compared with those from pure Thai families.

Table 6. *Results of Independent Samples t-test Comparison of New HSK Test Taker's Learning Motivation with the Years of Learning Chinese (n=311)*

<b>Years of Learning</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S.D.</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>Sig(2-tailed)</b>
1-6 years	171	79.43	15.33	2.774	.006*
7years up	140	79.02	12.16		

Table 7. *Results of Independent Samples t-test Comparison of New HSK Test Taker's Learning Motivation with the School Type (n=311)*

<b>School Types</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S.D.</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>Sig(2-tailed)</b>
Private schools	131	79.44	1.464	1.670	.021
Public schools	180	79.10	1.000		

Table 8. *Results of Independent Samples t-test Comparison of New HSK Test Taker's Learning Motivation with the Family Background (n=311)*

<b>Family Background</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S.D.</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>Sig(2-tailed)</b>
Thai-Chinese family	251	79.47	1.333	6.579	.000*
Pure Thai family	60	78.32	.452		

As the majority of the test takers took the Chinese new HSK tests for the beginner level (58.2%), and the intermediate level (37.7%) Only very few (4.1%) took the HSK test for the advanced level (level 5-6). In order to use the data more meaningfully, the researcher re-divided the levels into two levels, namely the beginner level, and the Intermediate & advanced level, and did an independent samples t-test to compare the test takers' learning motivation with these two levels, as Table 9 below shows. Though the t-test Significance (2-tailed) was .096, which was bigger than .05. However, we can see the Sig (1-tailed) was .048, which was still significant at the .05 level of significance. Thus, there was a significant difference between the test takers' learning motivation according to the test levels, and the test takers at the beginner level had a relatively higher motivation than those at intermediate & advanced levels.

4. The effects of demographic factors across their extrinsic motivation, intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy.

In order to determine the effects of gender, years of learning Chinese, school type family

background, and test level across the combination of three scales of motivation, the researcher decided to use Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) to analyze the data instead of using t-tests for each of all indices which may increase Type-I errors.

The results of the multivariate test is shown in Tables 10-11. Table 10 shows the Pillai's Trace heuristics with the F-statistics in the MANOVA test. Pillai's Trace heuristics was used to find the combination of extrinsic goal orientation, intrinsic goal orientation, and self-efficacy for learning. The research found that the effects of gender, years of learning Chinese, school type, family background, and test level existed on the combined motivational variables. According to the results, the differences of gender, years of learning Chinese, school type, family background, and test level significantly affected the differences across the combination of extrinsic goal orientation, intrinsic goal orientation, and self-efficacy for learning at .05 level of significance. These results further proved and confirmed the findings of t-test comparisons in Part III.

Table 9. Results of Independent Samples t-test Comparison of New HSK Test Taker's Overall Learning Motivation with the levels (n=311)

Levels	N	Mean	S.D.	t	Sig(2-tailed)
Beginner	181	79.34	1.333	1.670	.096
Intermediate & advanced	130	79.10	1.000		

Table 10. Results of Multivariate Tests (n=311)

Effect		Value	F	Sig.
Gender	Pillai's Trace	.255	35.050	.000*
Years of learning	Pillai's Trace	.267	37.337	.000*
School	Pillai's Trace	.143	17.135	.000*
Family background	Pillai's Trace	.210	27.167	.000*
Test level	Pillai's Trace	.371	60.380	.000*

Meanwhile, as the results of MANOVA tests of between subject effects shows in Table 11, this study finally found that the students' gender, years of learning, family background, and test level have effects on their extrinsic motivation; gender, school type, family background and test level have effects on their intrinsic motivation and gender, years of learning, family background and test level have effects on their self-efficacy for learning at .05 level of significance. However, there were no significant differences between learners' intrinsic motivation according to the years of learning, and no significant differences between learners' extrinsic motivation and self-efficacy according to the schools types.

## DISCUSSION

The study found that the majority of HSK test takers in Thailand were female students,

from the public schools, with a Thai-Chinese family background, having learnt Chinese for about 1-6years, and most of them took the Chinese HSK tests for the beginner level and intermediate levels (levels 1-4). Similarly in Korea, JinJun's HSK Implementation Report In Korea (2011) also found that 65% of the HSK test takers were female, 35% of them were male; the ages of most participants were from secondary school to university level, and the Levels 1-4 tests got the most participants around the whole world.

Motivation, from the social cognitive perspective, is an internal state that can direct and maintain behavior (Bandura, 1993). The two sources of motivation are intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation is from the learner himself/herself and extrinsic motivation is from the learning environment. This study found that the Thai students' extrinsic goal orientation for learning Chinese was high, their intrinsic goal orientation was moderate, and their self-

Table 11. *Results of Tests of Between Subject Effects (n=311)*

Source	Dependent Variable	F	Sig.
Gender	Extrinsic motivation	48.494	.000*
	Intrinsic motivation	5.387	.021*
	Self-efficacy for learning	47.590	.000*
Years of learning	Extrinsic motivation	54.046	.000*
	Intrinsic motivation	.296	.587
	Self-efficacy for learning	16.767	.000*
School type	Extrinsic motivation	.035	.852
	Intrinsic motivation	46.668	.000*
	Self-efficacy for learning	1.047	.307
Family background	Extrinsic motivation	9.411	.002*
	Intrinsic motivation	46.044	.000*
	Self-efficacy for learning	9.068	.003*
Test level	Extrinsic motivation	47.872	.000*
	Intrinsic motivation	4.867	.028*
	Self-efficacy for learning	59.727	.000*

efficacy for learning and performance of Chinese was moderate.

According to Prinrich & Schunk (1996), the students' learning motivation sometimes is high when motivated intrinsically, and sometimes their motivation is low when motivated extrinsically, but usually their motivation is moderate when both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations together play a role in learning. Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, therefore, cannot always be separated. They are dual dimensions of the motivation scale. Intrinsic motivation is at the high level of the motivation scale, and extrinsic motivation is at the lower level of the motivation scale. Joyette (2015) also mentioned that intrinsic motivation is the most powerful motivation, so in order to improve the Thai Students' Chinese language learning motivation, the school or family education still need to focus more on enhancing the HSK test learners' intrinsic motivation.

The study found that female students, students who had learned for 1-6 years, students from Thai-Chinese families, and students at the beginner level tended to have higher Chinese learning motivation than male students, students who had learned for 7 years up, students from pure Thai families, and students at the intermediate and advanced level. The effects of gender, years of learning Chinese, school type and family background and test level existed across the combination of three scales of motivation including extrinsic motivation, intrinsic motivation, and self-efficacy for learning.

Some previous studies, including the research of MacIntyre et al. (2002); Baker and MacIntyre (2003), and Sung & Padilla (1998), had reported the importance of gender as a variable in second-language motivation and found significantly higher motivation for

females than their male counterparts. And Lahpai's (2014) study also found significant differences in students' learning motivation according to their gender and grade at Laiza high school in Myanmar.

The study found a significant difference in new HSK test takers' learning motivation according to their family background, and the students from Thai-Chinese families tended to have higher Chinese learning motivation compared with those from pure Thai families. According to Joyette (2015), a child who comes from a family which is caring, comfortable and supportive brings to the classroom motivation arising from his family environment. In relation to family motivation, such a student would require really strong school motivation to cause him to perform equally. XiJin, YouHua & ShaoJi (2012) also confirmed that students' motivation of learning Chinese from different families could be very different. Family background definitely affected the Thai students' Chinese learning motivation.

The significant differences in new HSK test takers' learning motivation according to their school types, where private school students tended to have higher learning motivation compared with public school students, were confirmed by this research. Joyette (2015) also pointed that a school system which is extremely regimented can impact students negatively. According to her, a positive school environment can reinforce the students' motivation and cause them to achieve even higher levels or will create motivation where there was none from the home. Thus, the school system itself can influence students either to excel or to rebel. Masuntisuk (2009) explained that learning Chinese in Thailand was a compulsory part of primary education in

Chinese schools and other private schools, but for the public schools they offered Chinese as a concentration during high school.

Masuntisuk (2009) also mentioned that the secondary and high schools in Thailand, regardless whether private or public, all offered Chinese as concentration, but at the elementary level, the curricula were different. Students were required to learn Chinese in some private schools beginning at the elementary level, while Chinese language study in public schools was optional, beginning generally in middle school. Public schools that offered the Chinese language as a concentration would begin teaching it in high school. Therefore, the students from different types of schools might have different years of learning and their learning motivation might be different at the similar ages.

Moreover, the study also found that the learning motivation of test takers at the intermediate & advanced level was lower than that at the beginner level. Most students with 7 years up learning experiences usually took the higher levels' tests such as the intermediate or advanced levels' tests. Jinju (2013) in his report pointed out that the difficulty of new HSK tests based on its levels was increased from levels 1-6. Yunwen (2015) also mentioned that the advanced level tests measured test takers' advanced-level grammatical knowledge and textual knowledge with an integrated task. Thus, the test takers would face more stress and difficulty when they took the advanced levels. It was very possible that the intermediate & advanced learners' learning motivation was lower than the beginners'. Meanwhile, the test levels and years of learning were actually related in the way that students of the beginner level usually had learned Chinese for fewer years, i.e. they

were with 1-6 years of learning experience. To become intermediate & advanced learners, they might need more years of learning. The researcher divided them into 1-6 years and 7 years up, considering that some of them start to learn Chinese in their primary school period(6 years already), but some start from the secondary school period. Therefore, it was not surprising that students who had learned for 1-6 years had higher motivation than those who had learned for 7 years up, also because they attend the lower level tests, which were easier and with less stress; compared with those who had learned for 7 years up and attend the higher level tests.

The findings also revealed that though all the factors have some effects on the students' overall learning motivation, for specific parts, they may function differently. Accordingly, the extrinsic motivations and self-efficacy of students from private or public schools could be similar, and the students' years of learning may not influence their intrinsic motivation. Previous studies like the studies of Bear(1997), Ryan et al. (1997), Chantel et al. (1985) and Gould, Feltz & Weiss(1985), supported this finding that the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations were moderated by gender differences.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### *For the Schools and Chinese Teachers*

As this research identified the moderate level of intrinsic motivation, the researcher would like to recommend to the teachers to enhance the Thai students' intrinsic motivation for Chinese in the schools of Thailand through various teaching strategies, such as developing different learning activities to make the learning

process more interesting; helping the students enjoy the learning itself, and so on. As the research found that the students' extrinsic motivation was high, the Chinese teachers should go on to do what they are doing, and additionally consider using praise and encouragement with guidance to help students improve learning. Based on the findings of the moderate level of self-efficacy for learning and performance, students' self-efficacy for learning Chinese was recommended to be improved. The Chinese teachers could provide more learning strategies, as well as encourage the students to learn from other successful learners by watching and learning together with their peers. Meanwhile, since a positive learning environment encourages every student to take risks by attempting harder learning tasks, the teachers and schools can consider cultivating a more supportive learning environment to facilitate the growth of students' self-efficacy.

This study's findings confirmed the effects of the demographic factors including gender, years of learning Chinese, school type, family background and test level on students' learning motivation. As it is impossible to change those demographic factors, their effects should be neglected in the teaching process. More encouragement should be provided for those male students, those who had learned for more than 7 years, those from public schools, from pure Thai families, and those taking higher levels of HSK tests, as their learning motivation may be lower than that of the female students, those who had learned for only 1-6 years, those from private schools, from Thai-Chinese families, and those taking the beginner level tests. Lastly, the school and family education are suggested to be cooperative, with each supporting and increasing the learners' learning

motivation. The schools and Chinese teachers should reach for more involvement of the family, organize more meaningful Chinese activities in the schools, to encourage more students to participate. On the other hand, the families and parents should also support the children to attend more Chinese activities if possible. The schools and families should work together closely to help improve the students' Chinese learning motivation in the future.

### ***For the Future Researchers***

As this study only collected the data from one test site in 2015, this researcher also recommends to the future researchers to try to collect data from all other sites to compare and analyze the Thai students' new HSK test achievement in a wider scope and extent, as the students from different regions and areas of the test sites may have different demographic profiles.

Future researchers can also explore more about the Thai students' Chinese learning motivation and their test achievements on the country level, so that more interesting findings can help better preparing the Thai learners to learn the Chinese language better in the future.

Future researchers can also combine the qualitative and quantitative research designs to establish the relationship between motivation and Chinese language achievement. The mixed approaches would give a greater depth to the findings and will improve the understanding of students' learning motivation and Chinese language achievement in the world.

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