

**A CORRELATIONAL–COMPARATIVE STUDY OF MOTIVATION
AND PERCEIVED PARENTAL ENCOURAGEMENT FOR
LEARNING CHINESE AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE OF GRADES 5
AND 6 STUDENTS AT KHLONG TOEI WITTAYA SCHOOL,
BANGKOK, THAILAND**

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between Grades 5 and 6 students' motivation and their perceptions of parental encouragement for learning Chinese as a foreign language and to compare two variables in grades 5 and 6 levels at Khlong Toei Wittaya School, Bangkok, Thailand. The participants of this study were 109 students from Grades 5 and 6 at Khlong Toei Wittaya School, Bangkok, Thailand. This study was designed as a quantitative correlational-comparative study. An adapted version of Gardner's (2004) Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) was used to collect data from 61 Grade 5 and 48 Grade 6 students during the 2019-2020 academic year. Descriptive statistics means standard deviations, correlational analysis (Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient), and an independent samples t-test (2-tailed) were used to analyze the data. The study found that Grades 5 and 6 students' motivation for learning Chinese as a foreign language at Khlong Toei Wittaya School and their perceptions of parental encouragement for learning Chinese as a foreign language were slightly high. Also, a significant positive relationship between motivation and perception of parental encouragement for learning Chinese as a foreign language was found for each grade level. Furthermore, the findings also indicated no significant difference between Grades 5 and 6 students' motivation for learning Chinese as a foreign language and no significant difference between their perceptions of parental encouragement for learning Chinese as a foreign language.

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Introduction

In these years, with the further acceleration of globalization, Chinese language fever" was further warming up (Lin, 2011). Chinese was a language spoken by the largest population in the world (2.8 billion); that was to say, one out of five people spoke Chinese. Besides the People's Republic of China, some well-developed and large-scale Chinese communities in Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Mongolia, Singapore, the Philippines, Brunei, etc., also spoke Mandarin Chinese. On the other hand, many countries had Confucius Institute. This meant many people began to study Chinese in the world.

Teachers and researchers commonly consider motivation as a key influencing factor in the learning efficiency of the second language (Dörnyei, 1998). Successful learning of a second language was usually associated with 'motivation.' If a student had a strong motivation to learn Chinese, the student's academic performance would be better, and the student would like to learn Chinese. Because of Gardner's original socio-educational model, the second language performance could be affected by learning aptitude and motivation. In contrast, the model paid more attention to the latter, so motivation significantly affected language learning.

Parental encouragement in this study was the students feeling that their parents supported them in their second language study (Gardner, 1985a). Parental encouragement affected language achievement and supported students' learning motivation (Gardner, 2009). A word of encouragement in a child's study or life would greatly increase the child's confidence and make progress. Parent typical weekly communication regarding homework papers, school activities, and grades received in the classroom improves students' academic performance (Henderson 2002). A school in which parents are committed to their children's academic development produces high competent learners than a school in which parents do not pay attention to education. Parents encouraged the children to use heartfelt encouragement to send positive signals to children and encouraged children to grow up happily.

Research Objectives

The following objectives were addressed in this study.

1. Determine the Grade 5 students' motivation level for learning Chinese as a foreign language at Khlong Toei Wittaya School.

2. Determine the level of Grade 6 students' motivation for learning Chinese as a foreign language at Khlong Toei Wittaya School.
3. Determine the level of Grade 5 students' perceptions of parental encouragement for learning Chinese as a foreign language at Khlong Toei Wittaya School.
4. Determine the level of Grade 6 students' perceptions of parental encouragement for learning Chinese as a foreign language at Khlong Toei Wittaya School.
5. To determine if there is a significant relationship between Grade 5 students' motivation and perceptions of parental encouragement for learning Chinese as a foreign language at Khlong Toei Wittaya School.
6. Determine if there is a significant relationship between Grade 6 students' motivation and their perceptions of parental encouragement for learning Chinese as a foreign language at Khlong Toei Wittaya School.
7. Determine if there is a significant difference between Grades 5 and 6 students' motivation for learning Chinese as a foreign language at Khlong Toei Wittaya School.
8. Determine if there is a significant difference between Grades 5 and 6 students' perceptions of parental encouragement for learning Chinese as a foreign language at Khlong Toei Wittaya School.

Literature Review

In this research, the researcher used Gardner's Socio-Educational Model (2010) to discuss the two variables, namely motivation and parental encouragement.

Socio-Educational Model

The Socio-Educational Model served as the main theory regarding motivation in the language learning field (MacIntyre & Dunne, 2002). The model paid attention to integrative motivation (Gu, 2009) and developed a dynamic model regarding the impact of attitude and motivation on the achievement of language learning and the impact of the achievement of language learning on attitude and motivation cyclically (Gardner, 2001b). The goal of language learning was to develop students' ability to read, write, speak, and understand a second language, which could be evaluated by many tests to assess these abilities (Gardner, 1985a). However, there were six variables, and only the two variables of motivation and parental encouragement were used in this study. Motivation in this model was defined as the combination of an individual's language learning desire, attitudes, and motivational intensity (Gardner, 1985b). The parental encouragement was the extra incentive the parents gave the students to boost their academic life (Lawrence & Barathi, 2016).

Conceptual Framework

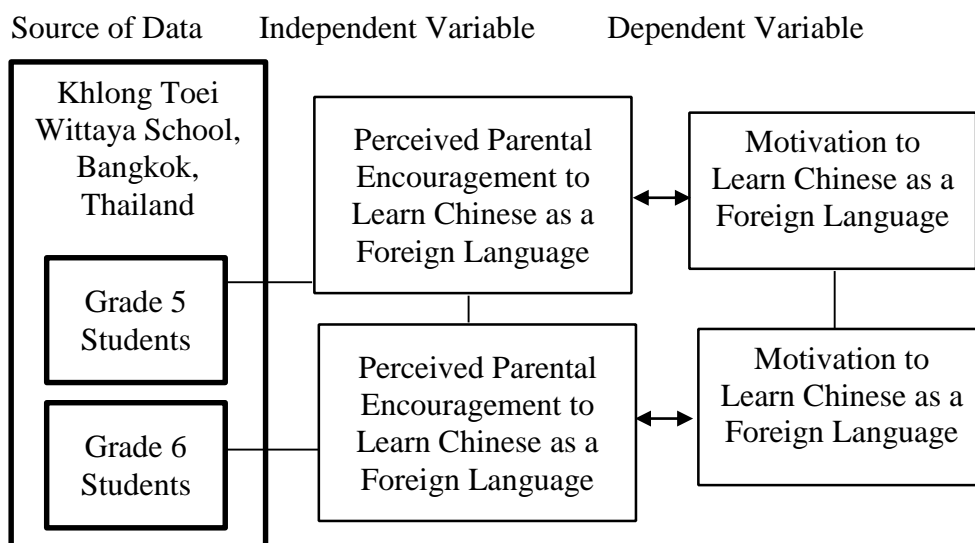


Figure 1. Conceptual framework.

Methodology/Procedure

Population and Sample

The target population of the research study was the enrolled students of Grades 5 and 6 at Khlong Toei Wittaya School, Bangkok, Thailand, in the academic year of 2019- 2020. The total number of students in Grade 5 and Grade 6 were 109, 48 students from Grade 5 and 61 students from Grade 6.

Research Instruments

The study adopted the Questionnaire about the Motivation and Perceived Parental Encouragement in Learning Chinese Skills as the research instrument. The questionnaire consists of two parts. One instrument was used in this study. The questionnaire on motivation and parental encouragement for Chinese learning (see Appendix A) assessed students' motivation level, perception level of parental encouragement, and motivation orientation for Chinese learning. The questionnaire was then adapted international AMTB version for Chinese learning as a foreign language (Gardner, 2004). In 2019, Huang used Gardner's AMTB in her research, asking about motivation and parental encouragement in learning Chinese.

In this study, the researcher used a questionnaire asking the students about learning Chinese Thai Grade 5 and Grade 6 students by translating English to Thai.

Findings

The findings regarding each research objective are summarized as follows.

Research Objective 1

Research Objective 1 showed that the total mean score for Grade 5 students' motivation to learn Chinese as a foreign language was slightly high. Their mean scores for the three subscales: motivational intensity to learn Chinese, desire to learn Chinese, and attitude toward learning Chinese, were also interpreted as slightly high.

Research Objective 2

Research Objective 2 showed that the total mean score for Grade 6 students' motivation to learn Chinese as a foreign language was slightly high. Their mean scores for the three subscales: motivational intensity to learn Chinese, desire to learn Chinese, and attitude toward learning Chinese, were also interpreted as slightly high.

Research Objective 3

Research Objective 3 showed that the mean score of Grade 5 students' perceived parental encouragement for learning Chinese as a foreign language was slightly strong.

Research Objective 4

Research Objective 4 showed that the mean score of Grade 6 students' perceived parental encouragement for learning Chinese as a foreign language was slightly strong.

Research Objective 5

Research Objective 5 showed the research findings showed that there was a very strong positive significant relationship between Grade 5 students' motivation and perceived parental encouragement for learning Chinese as a foreign language.

Research Objective 6

Research Objective 6 showed the research findings showed that there was a strong positive significant relationship between Grade 6 students' motivation and perceived parental encouragement for learning Chinese as a foreign language.

Research Objective 7

Research Objective 7 showed the research findings showed that there was no significant difference between Grades 5 and 6 students' motivation for learning Chinese as a foreign language.

Research Objective 8

Research Objective 8 showed the research findings showed that there was no significant difference between Grades 5 and 6 students' perceived parental encouragement for learning Chinese as a foreign language.

Discussion

This section discussed the findings of this research by relating them with the findings of previous research studies.

Grades 5 and 6 Students' Motivation for Learning Chinese as Foreign Language at Khlong Toei Wittaya School

As found in the study, Grades 5 and 6 students from Khlong Toei Wittaya school were slightly high motivated to learn Chinese as a foreign language. Motivation could directly impact language learning and be an essential factor in the success or failure of all difficult activities (Alizadeh, 2016). There were two reasons for students' high motivation in learning Chinese.

Although teaching resources were limited, the most important thing in language learning was to speak more and communicate with others in Chinese. The school would also hold activities related to Chinese festivals every time, strengthening students' memory. Another reason was that most Chinese teachers were Chinese or came back after studying in China for many years, and the pronunciation was very accurate. Students were willing to learn with such teachers.

Grades 5 and 6 Students Perceived Parental Encouragement for Learning Chinese as a Foreign Language at Khlong Toei Wittaya School

The researcher found that the Grade 5 and Grade 6 students' parental encouragement in Khlong Toei Wittaya School was slightly high, and parental encouragement impacted students' language learning. Parents would encourage students when they had good academic performance and let them continue to work hard. Students would study harder when their parents recognized them. If the students didn't get good grades, the parents would support them instead of criticizing them, so that the students would be interested in their studies.

Grades 5 and 6 Students' Motivation and Perceived Parental Encouragement for Learning Chinese at Khlong Toei Wittaya School

As demonstrated by the study, a statistically positive significant relationship could be found between Grades 5 and 6 students' motivation and parental encouragement for Chinese learning as a foreign language at Khlong Toei Wittaya School. This study finding met a lot of previous studies which showed that perceived parental encouragement was a crucial factor, and it generated students' motivational characteristics for learning a second/foreign language.

Motivation was always regarded as a major influencing factor in the success or failure of second language learning. Language learners who were motivated showed a strong willingness to make more effort to learn the language and showed determination and continuous effort to finish tasks and look for more learning opportunities. Perceived parental encouragement could also affect a student's learning ability for a second language.

Vijculata and Lee (1985) surveyed students' motivation, and the result showed a significant correlation between perceived parental encouragement and students' motivation. Corte's (2002) correlational relationship between students' motivation to learn a second language and perception of perceived parental encouragement was explored; Cortes explained that in this study's context, parents played a role in influencing their Children's second language learning. Yu (2010) The results show that integrative motivation plays a very important positive role. In another study by Penjak and Karninčić (2015), the perceived parental encouragement influenced students to learn a second language.

Previous studies by Hou and Lynch (2016) and Huang and Lynch (2019) also investigated students' motivation and perceptions of parental encouragement for Chinese learning as a foreign language. In Hou and Lynch and Huang and Lynch's studies, they also found that primary students' Chinese language learning motivation and the encouragement they received from their parents were significantly correlated. Hou and Lynch (2016) mentioned the essential role parents play in children's development. Gardner (1985b) also demonstrated that parents could actively and passively affect students' language learning.

Furthermore, as revealed in the study, there was no statistically significant difference between Grades 5 and 6 students' motivation and their perceptions of parental encouragement for learning Chinese as a foreign language at Khlong Toei Wittaya School, Bangkok, Thailand. As found, they had the same motivation level for learning Chinese as a foreign language and received the

same encouragement from their parents.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of Grades 5 and 6 students' motivation and their perceived parental encouragement for learning Chinese as a foreign language at Khlong Toei Wittaya School, Bangkok, Thailand, the researcher offered the following recommendations for school, teachers, students, and parents at that particular school, as well as for future researchers.

Recommendations for School

The school should realize that working with the community and parents could help students with their education. Therefore, the researchers recommend that the school, if possible, enrich teaching resources as much as possible. For example, let students do some handwork to use as teaching tools or draw some pictures so that students could learn happily.

Recommendations for Teachers

Teachers should be aware that they are the key to the students because they could maintain students' motivation and create a better, more active learning environment. They should be able to organize and prepare effective lesson plans with proper teaching materials to attract students' attention during the class.

Recommendations for Students

It was hoped that students would realize that Chinese was important for their later life. Students should know how to learn Chinese to prepare for greater success in the future.

Recommendations for Parents

Parents wanted their children to achieve good academic performance. They should encourage students, communicate more with teachers, and cooperate with teachers in their teaching work.

Recommendations for Future Researchers

Future researchers might consider using a larger sample size to study the relationship between student motivation and perceived parental encouragement. With larger samples, the results would be more reliable and generalizable.

Future researchers could compare the highly motivated students with lowly motivated students' perceived parental encouragement. This showed that parents had different ways of encouraging their children and different

motivations for their children to learn Chinese. It was suggested that future research should be carried out to investigate how the motivation and perceived parental encouragement affected students' academic performance in different grades and subjects in different schools.

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