

The English Learning Motivation of Chinese Secondary School Students: Cross-grade Survey Analysis

Xiaojing Song

Marketing Trading Center, Xizang Province, People's Republic of China

Email: huaiyuweiyu@gmail.com

doi: <https://doi.org/10.37745/ijelt.13/vol1n66784> Published November 5, 2023

Citation: Song X. (2023) The English Learning Motivation of Chinese Secondary School Students: Cross-grade Survey Analysis, *International Journal of English Language Teaching*, Vol.11, No.6, pp.67-84

ABSTRACT: Existing literature indicates that motivation is the most powerful determining factor that influences the rate and success of second language learning (Jiang, 2016; Kramsch & Yin, 2018; Li & Edwards, 2017; Liu et al., 2016; Liu, 2016; You & Dörnyei, 2016; Zhi & Wang, 2019). Currently, there is a growing body of empirical research indicating the changes in second language learning motivation at different school levels at the same or different schools (Chambers, 1999; Kim, 2011, 2012a, b; Lamb, 2007; Williams et al., 2002). The findings of previous studies have mostly shown that student second language learning motivation increases with increasing school levels. Dörnyei (2000) suggested that concentrating on the time dimension of second language motivation is crucial for comprehending the second language motivation of students. However, the temporal variations of second language motivation, particularly motivational changes at different Chinese secondary school levels, have not been emphasized by second language motivation researchers, therefore, this quantitative research investigated the changes in Chinese secondary school students' English learning motivation from junior high to high school. An English learning motivation questionnaire was used and administered to 3000 students from Grades 7 to 12 in public secondary schools across Mainland China, and employed the reliability analysis and analysis of variance to analyze quantitative data. The statistical results revealed that Chinese high school students ranked highest in English learning motivation, followed by junior high school students. Furthermore, the college entrance examination had a positive impact on high school students' motivation to learn English.

KEYWORDS: English learning motivation, Chinese secondary school students, college entrance examination, cross-grade analysis

INTRODUCTION

This study adopted a quantitative research method to investigate the changes in Chinese secondary school students' English learning motivation from junior high to high school.

Existing literature indicates that motivation is the most powerful determining factor that influences the rate and success of second language learning (e.g., Jiang, 2016; Kramsch & Yin, 2018; Li & Edwards, 2017; Liu et al., 2016; Liu, 2016; Luo & Gong, 2015; Xu & Case, 2015; You & Dörnyei, 2016; Zhi & Wang, 2019). Contemporary research by many researchers (e.g., Lai & Lyu, 2020; Nana & Sidhu, 2019; Xu & Case, 2015; You & Dörnyei, 2016; Zhi & Wang, 2019) have underlined the temporal fluctuation and dynamic nature of second language motivation in recent years. They have shown that motivation undergoes continuous fluctuations, indicating a dynamic changeability in learning across varied time spans (You & Dörnyei, 2016).

According to Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011), "motivation does not remain constant throughout months, years, or even a single session. It ebbs and flows in complex ways in response to various internal and external influences" (p. 6). Given that second language learning is a long-term activity, it is expected to go through diverse phases (Dörnyei, 2005). More specifically, motivation ranges from taking a single second language class to studying a language for months, years, or even a lifetime. Furthermore, students' second language learning motivation varies throughout school levels (i.e., junior high or high school). Students may be less motivated to acquire a second language in junior high school, but highly motivated in high school.

There is a growing body of empirical research indicating the changes in learning motivation at different school levels at the same or different schools (e.g., Chambers, 1999; Kim, 2011, 2012a, b; Lamb, 2007; Williams et al., 2002). The findings of previous studies have mostly shown that student motivation increases with increasing school levels. Dörnyei (2000) suggested that concentrating on the time dimension of second language motivation is crucial for comprehending the second language motivation of students.

However, the temporal variations of second language motivation, particularly motivational changes at different secondary school levels, have not been emphasized by second language motivation researchers. By using a quantitative research method, which includes a motivational questionnaire, this research investigates (1) changes in Chinese secondary school students' English learning motivation from junior high to high school and (2) changes in Chinese secondary school students' English learning motivation's subcomponents from junior high to high school.

English Education in China

In the educational sector of the People's Republic of China (hereafter China), the significance of English has been increasingly highlighted. According to Jiang (2003), the Chinese government urged children to learn English early in their education, because English is the official language of 53 countries and is spoken by around 400 million people across the globe, and it is the most common second language in the world (Jiang, 2016; Kramsch & Yin, 2018). Many countries also include English as a second language in their school syllabus and children start learning English at a young

Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development-UK

age. Moreover, English is also a commonly used language in science, aviation, computers, diplomacy, and tourism, knowing English can increase students' chances of getting a good job in these sectors' companies.

In order to enhance English learning, the Chinese Ministry of Education (hereafter MOE) enacted new curriculum reforms. Taking into account regional disparities in schooling, the reform was carried out in two batches: Beginning in the fall of 2001, primary schools in cities and counties were required to provide English programs for grades 3 students and higher, while all other schools were required to do so in the following year. The reform, meant to increase students' overall language proficiency, had five interconnected components: language skills, linguistic knowledge, emotional attitude, learning techniques, and cultural consciousness (MOE, 2001).

According to this new reform, objectives during primary school were to stimulate and raise children's interest in English study. Compared with the primary school learning context, for junior high school students, English is regarded as one of the three core school subjects along with Chinese and Mathematics. In addition, junior high school students must pass a high school entrance exam, which includes English. English accounts for a significant share of college entrance exam for high school students - 150 out of the total score of 750 marks. Therefore, English performance is seen as a key element that determines whether high school students can enroll in a prominent institution in China.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Studies on the second language learning motivation of Chinese students (e.g., Chen et al., 2005; Gao et al., 2004, 2007; Hao & Hao, 2001; Hua, 1998; Shi, 2000; Tachibana et al., 1996; Taguchi et al., 2009; Wu et al., 1993) have noted that students have a high level of instrumental motivation to learn English. Further, instrumental motivation often reflects Chinese cultural and educational traditions.

For instance, Hua (1998) and Shi (2000) identified certificate motivation, or the motivation to learn English in order to obtain a certificate stating it, as the primary motivational type for many Chinese high school learners and defined it as their desire to learn English in order to achieve high scores. Chen et al. (2005) explored the effect of Chinese culture on the second language learning of Taiwanese learners. They developed a motivator, the Chinese imperative, which focuses on the social pressure exerted on Chinese students' second language learning by parents, instructors, and the whole Chinese community. Similarly, Taguchi et al. (2009) also identified a mostly exam-oriented motivation among Chinese students' second language learning.

However, the majority of research on Chinese students' English-learning motivation has concentrated on higher education, particularly undergraduates (Wang & Zhang, 2005). It is uncommon to find a comprehensive study on comparative the motivation of junior

Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development-UK

high and high school students. Moreover, Chinese second language motivation studies have often ignored the temporal variation of second language learning motivation.

Consequently, this quantitative research emphasizes the temporal dimension of second language learning motivation. As previously stated, its significance has been underscored by second language motivation researchers (e.g., Doˆrnyei, 2001, 2005; Doˆrnyei & Ushioda, 2009, 2011; Kim, 2009; Shoaib & Doˆrnyei, 2005), despite the rarity of related studies, as Doˆrnyei (2001) indicates:

Although most practitioners with sufficient classroom experience are aware that student motivation does not remain constant during such a lengthy process, hardly any research has been done on analyzing the dynamics of second language motivational change and identifying typical sequential patterns and developmental aspects. (p. 82).

In addition, current researches often examine changes in motivation between grades at the same school level (e.g., Chambers, 1999; Kim, 2011; Koizumi & Matsuo, 1993; Lamb, 2007; Williams et al., 2002) or at two distinct school levels (e.g., Kim, 2012a, b; Tachibana et al., 1996). For instance, Williams et al. (2002) and Chambers (1999) found that the second language learning motivation of British students increased between the seventh and ninth grades, while Tachibana et al. (1996) found that the motivation for learning English in both Chinese and Japanese students increased from junior high to high school.

Lamb (2007) investigated the English learning motivation of Indonesian junior high school students over twenty months using surveys and interviews. The investigation revealed interesting findings: As the students got more aware of their motivation, they used various self-regulation tactics to sustain their English learning drive.

Recently, Kim (2012a) administered a questionnaire to 2783 Korean students in Grades 3 through 12 to examine changes in motivation among Korean second language learners. The data suggested that second language learning motivation among Korean students tends to exhibit a curving pattern. Specifically, the motivation of Korean students consistently fell from Grades 3 through 9 and then showed an upward tendency between Grades 10 and 12.

As indicated in the findings of previous studies, students' second language learning motivation undergoes dynamic changes at different school levels (i.e., junior high and high school). According to some researches, students' second language motivation tends to increase as they advance throughout the school levels and therefore shows a positive trend (e.g., Kim, 2012a; Sakai & Kikuchi, 2009). They indicate that teacher-related factors are the most beneficial factors that encourage students' second language learning (Hamada, 2011; Kikuchi, 2009).

However, few studies have investigated the changes in second language learning

motivation from junior high to high school. In addition, considering the Chinese educational framework, in which English remains one of the major subjects until the end of high school, it is essential to comprehend students' second language learning motivation at different stages of education. Therefore, two research questions were developed:

- (1) How does English learning motivation change in Chinese secondary school students from junior high to high school?
- (2) How do English learning motivation's subcomponents change in Chinese secondary school students from junior high to high school?

METHODS

According to second language motivation researchers, a quantitative research method study is a promising direction for future second language motivation research; hence, this method merits academic attention (Doˆrnyei, 2007; Doˆrnyei & Ushioda, 2011; Kim & Seo, 2012). Therefore, the quantitative research method was chosen for this study, as it has particular value in achieving an elaborate and comprehensive understanding of complex topics within an educational context (Doˆrnyei, 2007; Mertens, 2005). This research looked into the changes in English learning motivation of Chinese secondary school students from junior high to high school by using the English learning motivation questionnaire.

Instruments

This study used the English learning motivation questionnaire (see "Appendix 1"), which was designed by Qian-Mei Zhang and Tae-Young Kim (Zhang & Kim, 2013) with a total of 35 questions and adopted a five-point Likert scale (i.e., 1=strongly agree, 5=strongly disagree). The measurement covers seven subcomponents: self-development motivation, academic motivation, patriotic motivation, achievement motivation, integrative motivation, pragmatic motivation, and other-regulated motivation. *Self-development motivation* reflects students' realistic understanding of the importance of English, eagerness to communicate with others in English, desire to expand their own opinions/knowledge, and anxiety to strengthen self-development; *academic motivation* reflects students' internal forces in English learning, and also it reflects students' ability to learn English and actively evaluate themselves; *patriotic motivation* reflects the phenomenon that English is used as a tool to realize students' patriotic aspirations in China; *achievement motivation* shows students' needs for achievement, records their use of English to meet the requirements of school and expectations of parents and themselves; *integrative motivation* exhibits students' positive attitude towards the target language and target language group; *pragmatic motivation* demonstrates the motivation of students to learn in order to obtain practical and utilitarian benefits from English learning (such as getting good grades on exams, doing better than others, getting an English certificate, finding a good job, or getting a better salary); *other-regulated motivation* proves that students' learning motivation can be influenced by others (such as friends and classmates), their own role models, or the

Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development-UK

social learning environment. Among them, self-development motivation, patriotic motivation, achievement motivation, and pragmatic motivation refer to using English to achieve specific, pragmatic goals, and they are produced by tool orientation.

Participants

The sample for this quantitative research was comprised of 3000 students from Grades 7 to 12 in public secondary schools across Mainland China. The sample collection was based on convenience sampling and students who were willing to respond to the survey.

Data Collection and Analysis

The research was carried out from January to February 2023 by employing an English learning motivation questionnaire. Before administering the main study, the researcher conducted a pilot study in December 2022 in which a total of 300 secondary school students participated. The pilot study's findings revealed that the questionnaire items had high internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha=0.823$), which can be used for subsequent research. Finally, 3000 students from Grade 7 to Grade 12 in public secondary schools across Mainland China completed the questionnaires. All the resulting data were processed using the Statistics Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 29.0, employing two statistical measures: reliability analysis and analysis of variance.

RESULTS

This study involved 3000 secondary school students, covering six grades from Grade 7 to Grade 12, with 500 students in each grade, including 2074 male students, accounting for 69.13%, and 926 female students, accounting for 30.87%.

The Current Situation of Secondary School Students' English Learning Motivation

Table 4-1 Current Characteristics of Secondary School Students' English Learning Motivation

English learning motivation's subcomponents	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Self-development motivation	1.00	4.60	2.41	0.73
Academic motivation	1.00	4.14	2.28	0.61
Patriotic motivation	1.00	5.00	2.44	0.80
Achievement motivation	1.00	4.75	2.41	0.75
Integrative motivation	1.00	4.60	2.45	0.69
Pragmatic motivation	1.00	5.00	2.42	0.75
Other-regulated motivation	1.00	5.00	2.40	0.85
English learning motivation	1.09	3.88	2.39	0.58

It can be seen from Table 1 that the mean of secondary school students' English learning motivation is 2.39, indicating that secondary school students' English learning motivation is in a lower intermediate state. At the same time, the types of English learning motivation among secondary school students are integrative motivation, patriotic motivation, pragmatic motivation, self-development motivation, achievement

Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development-UK

motivation, other-regulated motivation, and academic motivation from high to low. That is, the motivation of secondary school students to learn English is mainly based on a good attitude toward the target culture, as well as the eagerness to understand movies, magazines, or newspapers, and accumulate foreign knowledge.

Current Situation of English Learning Motivation at Different Secondary School Levels

Table 4-2 Analysis of Variance of English Learning Motivation at Different Secondary School Levels

Dependent variable	Secondary school levels				t	p
	Junior high school		High school			
	M	SD	M	SD		
English learning motivation	2.24	0.53	2.55	0.58	-14.989***	<0.001

*** $p < 0.001$

The analysis of variance found that the English learning motivation difference between junior high school students and high school students is statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). Further analysis shows that high school students' English learning motivation scores are significantly higher than junior high school students' (Table 2).

Table 4-3 Analysis of Variance of English Learning Motivation's Seven Subcomponents at Different Secondary School Levels

English learning motivation's seven subcomponents	Secondary school levels				t	p
	Junior high school		High school			
	M	SD	M	SD		
Self-development motivation	2.24	0.66	2.57	0.75	-12.901***	<0.001
Academic motivation	2.15	0.55	2.42	0.63	-12.739***	<0.001
Patriotic motivation	2.27	0.75	2.61	0.81	-11.779***	<0.001
Achievement motivation	2.25	0.71	2.56	0.76	-11.588***	<0.001
Integrative motivation	2.36	0.66	2.55	0.70	-7.352***	<0.001
Pragmatic motivation	2.24	0.70	2.59	0.76	-13.021***	<0.001
Other-regulated motivation	2.20	0.76	2.60	0.88	-13.305***	<0.001

*** $p < 0.001$

The findings from the analysis of variance indicate the statistical difference between junior high and high school students in English learning motivation's seven subcomponents of self-development motivation, academic motivation, patriotic motivation, achievement motivation, integrative motivation, pragmatic motivation, and other-regulated motivation ($p < 0.001$), which shows that high school students' motivation scores are significantly higher than junior high school students' as shown in Table 3.

The Current Situation of English Learning Motivation in Different Secondary School Grades

Table 4-4 Analysis of Variance of English Learning Motivation in Different Secondary School Grades

Dependent variable	Secondary school grades	M	SD	F	sig.	Scheffe
English learning motivation	Grade 7 ^a	2.02	0.50	317.350	<0.001	f>e>c>d>a ; f>b>c>d>a
	Grade 8 ^b	2.47	0.45			
	Grade 9 ^c	2.23	0.54			
	Grade 10 ^d	2.09	0.50			
	Grade 11 ^e	2.51	0.45			
	Grade 12 ^f	3.04	0.34			

*** $p < 0.001$

Through the analysis of variance, it is found that the English learning motivation difference in different secondary school grades is statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). Further analysis shows that the motivation score of Grade 12 is significantly higher than that of Grade 7, Grade 8, Grade 9, Grade 10, and Grade 11. The score of motivation in Grade 9 is substantially higher than that in Grade 7 and Grade 10. The motivation score of Grade 10 is significantly higher than that of Grade 7 (Table 4). In other words, the development of English learning motivation shows twists and turns. There is a significant rise from Grade 7 to Grade 8, a considerable decline from Grade 8 to Grade 10, and an increase from Grade 10 to Grade 12.

Table 4-5 Analysis of Variance of English Learning Motivation's Seven Subcomponents in Different Secondary School Grades

English learning motivation's seven subcomponents	Secondary school grades	M	SD	F	sig.	Scheffe
Self-development motivation	Grade 7 ^a	2.01	0.57	176.494	<0.001	f>e>b>c>d>a
	Grade 8 ^b	2.47	0.63			
	Grade 9 ^c	2.24	0.69			
	Grade 10 ^d	2.11	0.62			
	Grade 11 ^e	2.56	0.67			
	Grade 12 ^f	3.06	0.64			
Academic motivation	Grade 7 ^a	1.93	0.49	258.479	<0.001	f>e>c>d>a ; f>b>c>d>a
	Grade 8 ^b	2.35	0.50			
	Grade 9 ^c	2.15	0.57			
	Grade 10 ^d	2.01	0.51			
	Grade 11 ^e	2.31	0.53			
	Grade 12 ^f	2.95	0.44			

Patriotic motivation	Grade 7 ^a	2.00	0.65	133.586	<0.001	f>e>b>c>d>a
	Grade 8 ^b	2.52	0.69			
	Grade 9 ^c	2.30	0.82			
	Grade 10 ^d	2.14	0.72			
	Grade 11 ^e	2.66	0.76			
	Grade 12 ^f	3.03	0.70			
Achievement motivation	Grade 7 ^a	2.04	0.70	160.085	<0.001	f>e>b>c>d ; f>e>b>c>a
	Grade 8 ^b	2.45	0.66			
	Grade 9 ^c	2.26	0.70			
	Grade 10 ^d	2.07	0.65			
	Grade 11 ^e	2.56	0.65			
	Grade 12 ^f	3.05	0.64			
Integrative motivation	Grade 7 ^a	2.16	0.62	138.050	<0.001	f>e>b>c>d ; f>e>b>c>a
	Grade 8 ^b	2.62	0.63			
	Grade 9 ^c	2.30	0.64			
	Grade 10 ^d	2.12	0.63			
	Grade 11 ^e	2.53	0.63			
	Grade 12 ^f	2.98	0.56			
Pragmatic motivation	Grade 7 ^a	2.03	0.70	173.835	<0.001	f>e>b>c>d>a
	Grade 8 ^b	2.46	0.62			
	Grade 9 ^c	2.24	0.71			
	Grade 10 ^d	2.11	0.65			
	Grade 11 ^e	2.56	0.67			
	Grade 12 ^f	3.10	0.61			
Other-regulated motivation	Grade 7 ^a	2.01	0.70	164.395	<0.001	f>e>c>d>a ; f>b>c>d>a
	Grade 8 ^b	2.43	0.77			
	Grade 9 ^c	2.17	0.76			
	Grade 10 ^d	2.10	0.75			
	Grade 11 ^e	2.53	0.78			
	Grade 12 ^f	3.19	0.75			

*** $p < 0.001$

Through analysis of variance, it is found that there are statistically significant differences in English learning motivation's seven subcomponents of self-development motivation, academic motivation, patriotic motivation, achievement motivation, integrative motivation, pragmatic motivation, and other-regulated motivation among different secondary school grades ($p < 0.001$), as shown below.

The scores of self-development motivation, patriotic motivation, and pragmatic motivation are consistent. The motivation score of Grade 12 is significantly higher than that of Grade 7, Grade 8, Grade 9, Grade 10, and Grade 11. The motivation score of Grade 11 is considerably higher than that of Grade 7, Grade 8, Grade 9, and Grade 10.

The motivation score of Grade 8 is substantially higher than that of Grade 7, Grade 9, and Grade 10. The score of motivation in Grade 9 is significantly higher than that in Grade 7 and Grade 10. The motivation score of Grade 10 is significantly higher than that of Grade 7 as shown in Table 5. That is, the developments of self-development motivation, patriotic motivation, and pragmatic motivation show twists and turns. There is a significant increase from Grade 7 to Grade 8, a drop from Grade 8 to Grade 10, and a sharp rise from Grade 10 to Grade 12.

The scores of motivation in academic motivation and other-regulated motivation are consistent. The motivation score of Grade 12 is significantly higher than that of Grade 7, Grade 8, Grade 9, Grade 10, and Grade 11; the motivation scores of Grade 8 and Grade 11 are significantly higher than those of Grade 7, Grade 9, and Grade 10; the score of motivation in Grade 9 is considerably higher than that in Grade 7 and Grade 10; the motivation score of Grade 10 is significantly higher than that of Grade 7 (Table 5). That is, the developments of academic motivation and other-regulated motivation show twists and turns; in other words, there is a significant rise from Grade 7 to Grade 8, a considerable decline from Grade 8 to Grade 10, and a hike from Grade 10 to Grade 12.

The scores of achievement motivation and integrative motivation are consistent. The motivation score of Grade 12 is significantly higher than that of Grade 7, Grade 8, Grade 9, Grade 10, and Grade 11; the motivation score of Grade 11 is significantly higher than that of Grade 7, Grade 8, Grade 9, and Grade 10; the motivation score of Grade 8 is considerably higher than that of Grade 7, Grade 9, and Grade 10; the motivation score of Grade 9 is significantly higher than that of Grade 7 and Grade 10 (Table 5). That is, the developments of achievement motivation and integrative motivation show twists and turns. There is a sharp increase from Grade 7 to Grade 8, a significant drop from Grade 8 to Grade 10, and a dramatic increase from Grade 10 to Grade 12.

DISCUSSION

This research employs the quantitative research methodology to investigate the changes in Chinese secondary school students' English learning motivation across various school grades and the changes in Chinese secondary school students' English learning motivation's subcomponents across various school grades. According to the statistical results of surveys, Chinese high school students ranked highest in English learning motivation, followed by junior high school students (see Tables 2 and 3).

It should be noted that the questionnaire revealed a positive trend in terms of second language learning motivation in Chinese high school English classes. The types of English learning motivation among high school students are integrative motivation, patriotic motivation, pragmatic motivation, self-development motivation, achievement motivation, other-regulated motivation, and academic motivation from high to low. That is, the motivation of high school students to learn English is mainly based on a

Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development-UK

good attitude toward the target culture, as well as the eagerness to understand movies, magazines, or newspapers, and accumulate foreign knowledge.

Additionally, preparation for the college entrance exam also influenced high school students' second language learning positively. This is consistent with earlier research on Chinese students (e.g., Liu, 2011; Liu & Chen, 2007; Tachibana et al., 1996). Liu and Chen (2007) and Liu (2011) found that Chinese high school students tended to be motivated in English learning, which researchers ascribed to the college entrance exam. Namely, high school students' English learning motivation are greatly motivated by the college entrance exam; consequently, the college entrance examination motivates students' second language learning (Hamada & Kito, 2008; Kirkpatrick & Zang, 2011; Tachibana et al., 1996).

Moreover, in this exam-oriented educational environment, instructors prefer to utilise exam-oriented teaching approaches in second language classes, and this positive consequence is attributed to the effect of college entrance exam (Magid, 2011). The high school students were comfortable with the teacher's grammar-translation teaching techniques and the exam-oriented teaching approach. It has been stated that the primary job of Chinese high school English instructors is to prepare their students for college entrance exam, and hence English classes are largely grammar-focused and teacher-centered (Magid, 2011). Exam-oriented teaching approaches are therefore considered a motivational factor for high school students (Hamada & Kito, 2008; Kikuchi, 2009).

Furthermore, both junior high and high school students in China are required to take entrance examinations: high school entrance exam for junior high school students and college entrance examination for high school students. After completing the junior high school curriculum, junior high school students have the option to choose either a vocational or an academic, college-bound high school. And a majority of college-bound high school students face the college entrance examination, which will affect students' fate and the situation of their families (Xu, 2008). As a result, compared to junior high school students, high school students are more driven to achieve good grades on college entrance examination. This study employed a quantitative research method to provide empirical evidence that Chinese high school students' English learning become motivated because of college entrance exam.

CONCLUSION

This quantitative study investigated how Chinese secondary school students' English learning motivation changed from junior high to high school. Chinese high school students had the highest level of English learning motivation, while junior high school students were the least motivated. Besides, the college entrance examination had a positive impact on high school students' English learning motivation.

This study has following limitations. First, though this research aimed to examine the

Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development-UK

changes in Chinese secondary school students' English learning motivation from junior high to high school and the changes in Chinese secondary school students' English learning motivation's subcomponents from junior high to high school, the research design was quasi-longitudinal. This study was only able to present differences in English learning motivation at school levels, and by looking at these differences, the participants' changes in motivation were inferred. Therefore, future research needs to concentrate on longitudinal changes by exploring the temporal variations of second language learning motivation (Dörnyei, 2005; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011; Kim, 2006; Ushioda, 2001).

Second, this quantitative study only adopted a questionnaire to investigate the changes in Chinese secondary school students' English learning motivation from junior high to high school and the changes in Chinese secondary school students' English learning motivation's subcomponents from junior high to high school, and did not conduct semi-structured interviews with students to explore the reasons for second language motivational changes across school levels. Therefore, interviews with a diverse student population should be conducted in future research to explore students' perceptions of their English learning motivation in a more thorough manner.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to express her heartfelt thanks to all the participants.

Disclosure Statement

The author declares that she has no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

REFERENCES

- Chambers, G. N. (1999). *Motivating language learners*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Chen, J. F., Warder, C. A., & Chang, H.-T. (2005). Motivators that do not motivate: The case of Chinese learners and the influence of culture on motivation. *TESOL Quarterly*, 39(4), 609–633.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2000). Motivation in action: Towards a process-oriented conceptualisation of student motivation. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 70, 519–538.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2001). *Teaching and researching motivation*. Harlow, UK: Pearson Education.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2005). *The psychology of the language learner: Individual differences in second language acquisition*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2007). *Research methods in applied linguistics*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Dörnyei, Z., & Ushioda, E. (2009). *Motivation, language identity and the L2 self*. Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Dörnyei, Z., & Ushioda, E. (2011). *Teaching and researching motivation* (2nd ed.). Harlow, UK: Pearson Education.

- Gao, Y.-H., Zhao, Y., Cheng, Y., & Zhou, Y. (2004). Motivation types of Chinese university undergraduates. Retrieved September 28, 2009, from http://www.stanford.edu/~yuanzhao/asian_engteaching.
- Gao, Y.-H., Zhao, Y., Cheng, Y., & Zhou, Y. (2007). Relationship between English learning motivation types and self-identity changes among Chinese students. *TESOL Quarterly*, 41(1), 133–155.
- Hamada, Y. (2011). Different demotivators for Japanese junior high and high school learners. *Pan-Pacific Association of Applied Linguistics*, 15(1), 15–38.
- Hamada, Y., & Kito, K. (2008). Demotivation in Japanese high schools. In K. Bradford Watts, T. Muller, & M. Swanson (Eds.), *JALT 2007 Conference Proceedings* (pp. 168–178). Tokyo: JALT.
- Hao, Z., & Hao, R.-P. (2001). Yingyu Chengji yu chengjiu dongji, zhuangtai jiaolv de xiangguan yanjiu. [Research on the relationship between English achievement and achievement motivation as well as anxiety state: A case study]. *Foreign Language Teaching and Research*, 33(2), 111–115.
- Hua, H.-F. (1998). Shilun yingyu xuexi dongji yu celue de yanjiu. [A review of research on English-learning motivations and strategies]. *Foreign Language World*, 1998(3), 44–47.
- Jiang, G. (2016). Implementing suggestions on deepening the reform of examination and enrolment system and steadily advancing the national assessment system of foreign language proficiency. *China Examinations*, 2016(1), 3–6.
- Jiang, Y.-J. (2003). English as a Chinese language. *English Today*, 19(2), 3–8.
- Kikuchi, K. (2009). Listening to our learners' voice: What demotivates Japanese high school students? *Language Teaching Research*, 13(4), 453–471.
- Kim, T.-Y. (2006). Motivation and attitudes toward foreign language learning as socio-politically mediated constructs: The case of Korean high school students. *The Journal of Asia TEFL*, 3(2), 165–192.
- Kim, T.-Y. (2009). The dynamics of L2 self and L2 learning motivation: A qualitative case study of Korean ESL students. *English Teaching*, 64(3), 49–70.
- Kim, T.-Y. (2011). Korean elementary school students English learning demotivation: A comparative survey study. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 12(1), 1–11.
- Kim, T.-Y. (2012a). An analysis of Korean elementary and secondary school students' English learning motivation and their L2 selves: Qualitative interview approach. *Korean Journal of English Language and Linguistics*, 12(1), 67–99.
- Kim, T.-Y. (2012b). The L2 motivational self system of Korean EFL students: Cross-grade survey analysis. *English Teaching*, 67(1), 29–56.
- Kim, T.-Y., & Seo, H.-S. (2012). Elementary school students' foreign language learning demotivation: A mixed methods study of Korean EFL context. *The Asia Pacific Education Researcher*, 21(1), 160–171.
- Kirkpatrick, B., & Zang, Y.-B. (2011). The negative influences of exam-oriented education on Chinese high school students: Backwash from classroom to child. *Language Testing in Asia*, 1(3), 36.

- Koizumi, R., & Matsuo, K. (1993). A longitudinal study of attitudes and motivation in learning English among Japanese seventh-grade students. *Japanese Psychological Research*, 35(1), 1–11.
- Kramsch, C., & Yin, P. (2018). Teaching foreign languages in the glocal contact zone. The case of France and China. In: A. F. Selvi & N. Rudolph (Eds.), *Conceptual shifts and contextualized practices in education for glocal interaction, intercultural communication and language education* (pp. 17-36). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-6421-0_2.
- Lai, C., & Lyu, B. N. (2020). Hongkong and informal language learning. In M. Dressman & R.W. Sadler (Eds.), *The Handbook of Informal Language Learning* (pp. 273-287). John Wiley & Sons Ltd. <https://doi-org.ezp.sub.su.se/10.1002/9781119472384.ch1>.
- Lamb, M. (2007). The impact of school on EFL learning motivation: An Indonesian case study. *TESOL Quarterly*, 41(4), 757–780.
- Li, D. G. & Edwards, V. (2017). Overseas training of Chinese secondary teachers of English. In N. Van Deusen-Scholl & S. May (Eds.), *Second and foreign language education* (3rd, ed.) (pp. 374-383). Springer International Publishing. DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-02246-8_14.
- Liu, H.-G., & Chen, P.-. P. (2007). Gaozhongsheng Yingyu Xuexi Dongji Yanjiu. [A study on English learning motivation of high school students]. *Journal of Basic English Education*, 9(6), 19–24.
- Liu, J.-H. (2011). Gaozhongsheng Yingyu Dongji Jiantui Shizheng Yanjiu [A study on learning motivation of high school students]. *Overseas English*, 12, 47–48.
- Liu, N., Lin, C. K., & Wiley, T. G. (2016). Learner views on English and English language teaching in China. *International Multilingual Research Journal*, 10(2), 137–157. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19313152.2016.1147308>.
- Liu, W. (2016). The changing pedagogical discourses in China : The case of the foreign language curriculum change and its controversies. *English Teaching: Practice & Critique*, 15(1), 74–90. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ETPC-05-2015-0042>.
- Luo, S., & Gong, Y. (2015). Exploring ways to accommodate task-based language teaching in Chinese schools. In M. Thomas (ed.), *Contemporary task-based language teaching in Asia, contemporary studies in linguistics series* (pp. 30-45). Bloomsbury Academic.
- Magid, M. (2011). *A validation and application of the L2 motivational self system among Chinese learners of English*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Nottingham, UK: University of Nottingham.
- Mertens, D. M. (2005). *Research and evaluation in education and psychology: Integrating diversity with quantitative qualitative, and mixed methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China. (2001). Jiaoyubu guanyu jijin tuijin xiaoxue kaishe yingyu kecheng de zhidao yijian. [The Ministry of Education guideline for vigorously promoting the teaching of English in primary schools]. Retrieved October 15, 2009, from

- Nana, W., & Sidhu, G. K. (2019). Motivation level of middle school students to learn English as a foreign language: A case study in China. *International Journal of Advanced Science and Technology*, 28(8), 617 - 624.
- Ryan, R. M., & E. L. Deci. (2000). "Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivations: Classic Definition and New Directions." *Contemporary Educational Psychology* 25 (1): 54–67.
- Sakai, H., & Kikuchi, K. (2009). An analysis of demotivators in the EFL classroom. *System*, 37(1), 57–69.
- Shi, Y.-Z. (2000). Daxuesheng yingyu xuexi dongji diaocha baogao. [A survey on university students' English-learning motivation]. *Foreign Language Teaching*, 19(4), 8–11.
- Shoab, A., & Dörnyei, Z. (2005). Affect in life-long learning: Exploring L2 motivation as a dynamic process. In P. Benson & D. Nunan (Eds.), *Learners' stories: Difference and diversity in language learning* (pp. 22–41). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Tachibana, Y., Matsukawa, R., & Zhong, Q.-X. (1996). Attitudes and motivation for learning English: a cross-national comparison of Japanese and Chinese high school students. *Psychological Reports*, 79, 691–700.
- Taguchi, T., Magid, M., & Papi, M. (2009). The L2 motivation self system among Japanese, Chinese and Iranian learners of English: A comparative study. In Z. Dörnyei & E. Ushioda (Eds.), *Motivation, language identity and the L2 self* (pp. 66–97). Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Ushioda, E. (2001). Language learning at university: Exploring the role of motivational thinking. In Z. Dörnyei & R. Schmidt (Eds.), *Motivation and second language acquisition* (pp. 93–126). Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Ushioda, E. (2016). "Language Learning Motivation Through a Small Lens: A Research Agenda." *Language Teaching* 49 (4):564–577.
- Vallerand, R. J. (1997). "Toward a Hierarchical Model of intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation." *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* 29: 271–360.
- Wang, X.-M., & Zhang, W.-Z. (2005). Guonei waiyu xuexi dongji yanjiu xianzhuang fenxi. [An overview of research on English learning motivation in China]. *Foreign Language World*, 4, 58–65.
- Weeks, A., H. Swerissen, & J. Belfrage. (2007). "Translating Instruments Into Other Languages: Basic Considerations." *Evaluation Review* 31: 153–165.
- Wen, X. (1997). "Motivation and Language Learning with Students of Chinese." *Foreign Language Annals* 30 (2): 234–251.
- Wong, R. M. H. (2014). "An Investigation of Strategies for Student Motivation in the Chinese EFL Context." *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching* 8 (2): 132–154.
- Williams, M., Burden, R., & Lanvers, U. (2002). 'French is the language of love and stuff': Student perceptions of issues related to motivation in learning a foreign language. *British Educational Research Journal*, 28(4), 503–528.

Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development-UK

- Wu, Y.-A., Liu, R.-Q., & Jeffrey, P. (1993). Zhongguo yingyu benke xuesheng suzhi diaocha baogao. [Learner factors and language learning achievement: A survey]. *Foreign Language Teaching and Research*, 1993(1), 36–46.
- Xu, W., & R. E. Case. (2015). “Age-Related Differences in Motivation in Learning English among Mainland Chinese Students.” *International Journal of Applied Linguistics* 25 (1): 67–82.
- Xu, X. (2008). Influence of instrumental motivation on EFL learners in China and its implication on TEFL instructional design. Retrieved October 15, 2009, from <http://www.usask.ca/education/coursework/802papers/xu/>.
- You, C. J., & Z. Dörnyei. (2016). “Language Teaching Motivation in China: Results of a Large-Scale Stratified Survey.” *Applied Linguistics* 37 (4): 495–519.
- Zhang, Q. M., & T. Y. Kim. (2013). “Cross-grade Analysis of Chinese Students’ English Learning Motivation: A Mixed-Methods Study.” *Asia Pacific Education Review* 14: 615–627.
- Zhi, M. X., & Wang, Y. T. (2019). Washback of college entrance English exam on student perceptions of learning in a Chinese rural city. In K. Bailey & R. Damerow (Eds.), *Chinese-speaking learners of English: Research, theory, and practice* (1st ed.). (pp. 26–38.). Routledge. <https://doi-org.ezp.sub.su.se/10.4324/9780429290848>.

Appendixes

Appendix 1. English learning motivation questionnaire

Grade: Gender:

I learn English because.....

1=Strongly Agree; 2=Agree; 3=Neither Agree nor Disagree; 4=Disagree; 5=Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5
(1) English is interesting.					
(2) I would like to learn as many languages as possible.					
(3) I am interested in English culture and history.					
(4) I like British/Americans.					
(5) It would help me while traveling abroad in the future.					
(6) Learning English often gives me a feeling of success.					
(7) Fluent English is a symbol of good education and accomplishment.					
(8) Learning English is a challenge.					
(9) English is an important international language in the world.					
(10) My parents expect me to learn English.					
(11) I want to do better than others.					
(12) English is an important tool for my grade.					
(13) English is a required course in school.					
(14) I want to get a high score on English exams.					
(15) I like my English teacher.					
(16) My role models are good at English.					
(17) Learning English is fashionable.					
(18) Others (friends, classmates) are learning English.					
(19) I want to serve my motherland in the future.					
(20) I have talent in English learning.					
(21) I want to get the certificate of English in the future.					
(22) I want to make friends of different nationalities.					
(23) I want to attend a good university.					
(24) It is my dream to learn English well.					
(25) Learning English will broaden my insight/knowledge.					
(26) It can help me find a good job.					
(27) It can help me get a good salary in the future.					
(28) I want to understand foreign movies, magazines or newspapers.					
(29) I want to study abroad.					
(30) Learning English is important in China.					
(31) English is an important tool for communication.					
(32) English can enhance my understanding of the world.					
(33) I want to introduce my hometown to the world.					
(34) I want to become a good English speaker.					
(35) I hope the world understands China more.					

Appendix 2. Analysis of variance of English learning motivation in different secondary school grades

Secondary school grades	Self-development motivation		Academic motivation		Patriotic motivation		Achievement motivation		Integrative motivation		Pragmatic motivation		Other-regulated motivation	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Grade 7 ^a	2.01	0.57	1.93	0.49	2.00	0.65	2.04	0.70	2.16	0.62	2.03	0.70	2.01	0.70
Grade 8 ^b	2.47	0.63	2.35	0.50	2.52	0.69	2.45	0.66	2.62	0.63	2.46	0.62	2.43	0.77
Grade 9 ^c	2.24	0.69	2.15	0.57	2.30	0.82	2.26	0.70	2.30	0.64	2.24	0.71	2.17	0.76
Grade 10 ^d	2.11	0.62	2.01	0.51	2.14	0.72	2.07	0.65	2.12	0.63	2.11	0.65	2.10	0.75
Grade 11 ^e	2.56	0.67	2.31	0.53	2.66	0.76	2.56	0.65	2.53	0.63	2.56	0.67	2.53	0.78
Grade 12 ^f	3.06	0.64	2.95	0.44	3.03	0.70	3.05	0.64	2.98	0.56	3.10	0.61	3.19	0.75

Analysis of variance of English learning motivation's seven subcomponents in different secondary school grades

English learning motivation's seven subcomponents	<i>F</i>	sig.	Scheffe
Self-development motivation	176.494	<0.001	f>e>b>c>d>a
Academic motivation	258.479	<0.001	f>e>c>d>a; f>b>c>d>a
Patriotic motivation	133.586	<0.001	f>e>b>c>d>a
Achievement motivation	160.085	<0.001	f>e>b>c>d; f>e>b>c>a
Integrative motivation	138.05	<0.001	f>e>b>c>d; f>e>b>c>a
Pragmatic motivation	173.835	<0.001	f>e>b>c>d>a
Other-regulated motivation	164.395	<0.001	f>e>c>d>a; f>b>c>d>a