

A Study of the Chinese Learning Motivation among Learners in Finland

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Abstract: This study aims to describe and examine the learning motivation of Chinese language learners in Finland as well as the variables that might affect their learning motivation. A total of 178 learners from the Confucius Institute at the University of Helsinki and its five teaching sites in other cities participated in the survey and completed a questionnaire reflecting six types of motivation for learning Chinese. Descriptive statistics and Independent Samples Tests were conducted. Results indicated that Chinese language learners in Finland have the highest degree of integrative and intrinsic motivations, while extrinsic motivation is the weakest. Female learners are significantly more situation-motivated than male learners. Learners under the age of 30 are significantly more instrumentally motivated than those above 30. Significant difference also exists between beginners and advanced learners in Achievement Motivation, which is, beginners are significantly more motivated by learning achievement than advanced learners. Learners with and without China experience have significant difference in their instrumental motivation, with the former significantly more instrumentally motivated than the latter, but no significant difference was found between learners in Helsinki and in other cities in all six types of learning motivation.

Key words: Chinese learning motivation, integrative motivation, instrumental motivation, intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, situational motivation, achievement motivation, learners in Finland

1. Introduction

Finland is relatively a small Nordic country with a population of about five million people, smaller than most major cities around the world, but its education has been considered a miracle for many years, attracting global attention as one of the best in the world since it was reformed 40 years ago (Sahlberg, 2010). In 2000, 2003, and 2006, Finland topped the PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) rankings and consistently ranked near the top in other years. In 2012, its position declined to 12th (OCED, 2014), and in 2015, it ranked 5th among the participating 73 countries and economies, still at the top despite the drop (OCED, 2016).

Although Finland's top-performing youth have been the subjects of numerous educational and academic studies, Chinese language education and Chinese language learners in Finland have seldom attracted attention of scholars both inside and outside the country. Finns began Chinese language learning from last century, and more systematic Chinese teaching already started in 1970s at the University of Helsinki (Gao & Li, 2009). In 1987, as the University established East Asian Studies Program, students could choose to concentrate on China, and

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correspondingly choose Chinese as their main language of study, marking an important turning point in the history of Chinese education in Finland (Tian, 1993). In 2007, the first Confucius Institute in Finland was established at the University of Helsinki, and more students from all other programs and schools could choose Chinese as one of their elective courses. After 10 years of development, the Institute has grown into the biggest Chinese language education center in the country. Currently, the Institute has about 350 registered students in Helsinki in one academic semester. Besides Helsinki, the Institute also has five Chinese language teaching sites located in other five cities, enrolling a total of more than 300 students each semester. However, in the past decades, few studies have been done on Chinese language education in Finland, except that Tian (1993) shortly introduced Chinese language education in the newly established East Asian Studies Program at the University of Helsinki, Gao and Li (2009) gave a brief overview of Chinese language education in Finland, and Cen (2014) briefly reviewed some of its new developments. No comprehensive studies have ever been done on the latest situation of Chinese language education in Finland, or on the Chinese language learners in Finland, although their number has been increasing year by year.

This study intends to bring into spotlight the Chinese language learners in Finland by focusing on their learning motivation. Specifically, the study focuses on six types of motivation: integrative, instrumental, intrinsic, extrinsic, situational and achievement, and intends to explore the following two questions:

(1) What are the characteristics of Chinese learning motivation among learners in Finland?

(2) Is their learning motivation affected by such variables as gender, age, Chinese language proficiency, experience with China and location where they study?

2. Literature Review on Language Learning Motivation

For the past decades, motivation has been a central area for empirical research and theoretical work within the context of second language learning. The most influential model of language learning motivation was developed by Robert Gardner, known as the Socioeducational Model (Gardner, 1985). Gardner defined motivation as a “combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favourable attitudes towards learning the language” (ibid: 10). According to this model, there are two types of motivation: integrative and instrumental. The integrative motivation refers to learners’ desire to at least communicate or at most integrate (or even assimilate) with the members of the target language. The instrumental motivation refers to more functional reasons for learning the language such as getting a better job, a higher salary or passing an examination (Gardner, 1985). However, Ellis (2008) claims that Instrumental Motivation is not contrary to Integrative Motivation rather it works in conjunction with Integrative Motivation.

The Socioeducational Model was acknowledged as a breakthrough in motivation research although it has been seriously criticized by a large number of researchers (e.g., Dornyei, 1990, 1994; Oxford & Shearin, 1994; Oxford, 1996; Belmechri & Hummel, 1998; Crookes & Schmidt, 1991). Other theories of motivation in psychology were proposed to expand Gardner’s concept of language learning motivation and view it as a more cognitive term (Vandergrift, 2005). One of the dominant theories in motivational psychology is Deci and Ryan’s (1985) self-determination theory. The theory distinguishes between two types of motivations: intrinsic and extrinsic. The first refers to an individual’s motivation to perform a particular activity because of internal rewards such as joy, pleasure and satisfaction of curiosity, whereas in extrinsic motivation the individual expects an extrinsic reward such as good grades or praise from others. As Williams and Burden (1997) indicated, “one of the

most general and well-known distinctions in motivation theories is that of intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation”.

Hungarian psychologist Dornyei (1994) also suggests a motivation model viewing motivation as an intricate process with three levels: the language level, the learner level, and the learning situation level. He explains that the language level focuses on motives and orientations related to diverse aspects of language, such as how it carries the culture, the milieu where it is spoken, and the potential necessity of proficiency in it. The learner level focuses on a synthesis of affects and cognitions to form fairly static personality traits to increase learner’s self-confidence and learning goals. The learning situation level consists of intrinsic and extrinsic motivational conditions, focuses on the syllabus, the teaching materials, the teaching methods, and the learning tasks.

Motivational psychologists have also been looking for the motors of human behaviour in the individual being, focusing on personality traits like anxiety and need for achievement (Dornyei, 1994). Atkinson and McClelland proposed an achievement motivation theory (McClelland et al. 1953). According to them, need for achievement is a relatively stable personality trait and is considered to affect a person’s behaviour in every facet of life, including language learning. Atkinson and his colleagues (1964) formed the concept that achievement motivation stems from two separate needs: the motivation to achieve and the motive to avoid failure (Atkinson & Feather, 1966). Gill (2000) defines achievement motivation as “a person’s orientations to strive for task success, persist in the face of failure, and experience the pride in accomplishment.”

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants

The participants were 178 learners of Chinese language registered in 2016–2017 academic year at the Confucius Institute at the University of Helsinki (68) and its five teaching sites located respectively at the University of Tampere (49), University of Eastern Finland (Joensuu and Kuopio) (34), University of Oulu (13), and University of Jyväskylä (14). 150 of them speak Finnish as their native language and the others’ native languages include Swedish, French, Russian, German, Spanish, English, Greek, Korean, Japanese and Vietnamese.

3.2 Instrument and Procedures

A motivation questionnaire was employed for the study. The questionnaire contains the participants’ background information and consists of 21 five-point Likert scale items on learning motivation.

The background information includes participants’ gender, age, occupation, Chinese learning experience, Chinese language proficiency and experience with China, and is used to examine whether these variables affect their Chinese learning motivation.

The 21 motivation items are answered on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 5 (Absolutely true of me) to 1 (Not true at all) and are classified to examine the participants’ integrative (Items 1–3), instrumental (Items 4–9), intrinsic (Items 10–12), extrinsic (Items 13–15), situational (Items 16–17) and achievement (Items 18–21) motivation. The questionnaire is written both in Chinese and English.

The statistical software SPSS11.5 was used to analyze the data. Descriptive statistics (mean, frequency and standard deviation) were carried out for all items involved in this study. Independent Samples Test was used to compare the means of two independent groups respectively categorized according to different variables (gender, age, Chinese language, China experience, location), in order to determine whether the two groups are significantly different in terms of certain motivation types or individual motivation items.

4. Results and Discussions

4.1 Chinese Learning Motivations among Finnish Learners in General

Descriptive statistics were used to understand the general characteristics of learning motivations among Chinese language learners in Finland. As is shown in Figure 1, among the 178 participants, integrative motivation is the strongest ($M = 4.1667$), followed by the second strongest intrinsic motivation ($M = 3.9756$). Achievement motivation ($M = 3.0518$) and situational motivation ($M = 3.0414$) are moderate. Extrinsic motivation has the lowest score ($M = 1.8202$) and is the weakest motivation among all participants, followed by the second weakest instrumental motivation ($M = 2.8352$)

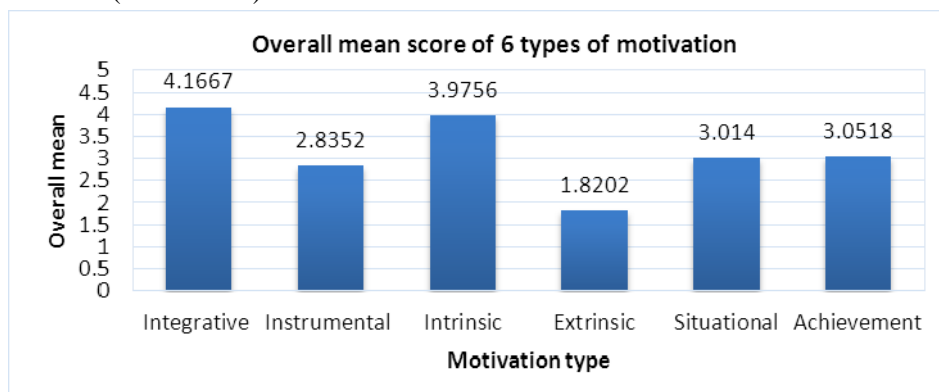


Figure 1 Overall Mean Scores of 6 Motivation Types

By comparing mean scores of all 21 motivation items, we can further find three strongest motivation items ($M > 4.1$), and five fairly strong motivations items ($M > 3.8$), as well as three weakest motivations items ($M < 2.0$) and three very weak motivation items ($M < 2.4$) among all participant, as is shown in Table 1.

The top three strongest motivation items ($M > 3.93$) are Item 3 (“I learn Chinese because I want to communicate with Chinese-speaking people”, $M = 4.4551$, integrative); Item 11 (“I learn Chinese because I like this language itself”, $M = 4.1461$, intrinsic); Item 1 (“I learn Chinese because I am interested in Chinese culture, customs and arts”, $M = 4.1124$, integrative). The five very strong motivation items are respectively: Item 18 (“Learning Chinese well can give me sense of achievement”, $M = 3.9382$, achievement); Item 2 (“I learn Chinese because I want to know more about the life of Chinese people”, $M = 3.9326$, integrative); Item 6 (“I learn Chinese so that I can have more job opportunities”, $M = 3.9045$, instrumental); Item 12 (“Chinese is interesting itself, and it can help me to become a knowledgeable person”, $M = 3.8933$, intrinsic); and Item 10 (“It is a mental challenge and mental exercise to learn Chinese”, $M = 3.8876$, intrinsic).

The top three weakest motivation Items are: Item 13 (“I learn Chinese because my parents or my school asked me to do so”, $M = 1.1854$, extrinsic); Item 15 (“I learn Chinese because my friend(s) is /are learning the language”, $M = 1.5955$, extrinsic) and Item 21 (“I will lose interest in Chinese if I get a low score in Chinese exams”, $M = 1.9213$, achievement), followed by three other very weak motivation Items: Item 5 (“I learn Chinese because I want to get a scholarship for further study in China”, $M = 2.1404$, instrumental); Item 9 (“I learn study Chinese because I want to pass HSK/HSKK tests”, $M = 2.3034$, instrumental); and Item 16 (“I learn Chinese because the learning materials I use are very interesting”, $M = 2.3202$, situational).

Table 1 Overall Mean Scores of 21 Motivation Items

| Motivation item | Number of participants | Frequency | | | | | Mean | Std. deviation |
|-----------------|------------------------|-----------|----|----|----|-----|--------|----------------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | |
| ITEM 3 | 178 | 0 | 8 | 19 | 35 | 116 | 4.4551 | 0.8574 |
| ITEM 11 | 178 | 2 | 8 | 34 | 52 | 82 | 4.1461 | 0.9572 |
| ITEM 1 | 178 | 2 | 8 | 34 | 52 | 82 | 4.1124 | 0.8949 |
| ITEM 18 | 178 | 4 | 10 | 44 | 55 | 65 | 3.9382 | 1.0204 |
| ITEM 2 | 178 | 6 | 7 | 42 | 68 | 55 | 3.9326 | 0.9363 |
| ITEM 6 | 178 | 12 | 14 | 33 | 39 | 80 | 3.9045 | 1.2473 |
| ITEM 12 | 178 | 6 | 7 | 42 | 68 | 55 | 3.8933 | 0.9999 |
| ITEM 10 | 178 | 2 | 16 | 49 | 44 | 67 | 3.8876 | 1.0516 |
| ITEM 17 | 178 | 5 | 13 | 62 | 47 | 51 | 3.7079 | 1.0491 |
| ITEM 4 | 178 | 15 | 20 | 42 | 43 | 58 | 3.6124 | 1.2761 |
| ITEM 20 | 178 | 11 | 26 | 50 | 61 | 30 | 3.4101 | 1.1175 |
| ITEM 19 | 177 | 25 | 31 | 70 | 36 | 16 | 2.9379 | 1.1339 |
| ITEM 14 | 178 | 34 | 38 | 73 | 17 | 16 | 2.6798 | 1.1565 |
| ITEM 8 | 178 | 48 | 36 | 42 | 34 | 18 | 2.6517 | 1.3285 |
| ITEM 7 | 178 | 67 | 39 | 26 | 26 | 20 | 2.3989 | 1.4035 |
| ITEM 16 | 178 | 42 | 64 | 52 | 13 | 7 | 2.3202 | 1.0381 |
| ITEM 9 | 178 | 67 | 35 | 46 | 15 | 15 | 2.3034 | 1.2835 |
| ITEM 5 | 178 | 72 | 49 | 27 | 20 | 10 | 2.1404 | 1.2247 |
| ITEM 21 | 178 | 65 | 71 | 35 | 5 | 2 | 1.9213 | 0.8794 |
| ITEM 15 | 178 | 129 | 16 | 15 | 12 | 6 | 1.5955 | 1.1069 |
| ITEM 13 | 178 | 164 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 1.1854 | 0.6925 |

It is obvious that the most prominent motivation among Chinese language learners in Finland is integrative and intrinsic. They learn Chinese mainly because they have a great interest in the language itself and the Chinese culture, and a strong desire to communicate with Chinese-speaking people and to understand China. The sense of achievement they get from the learning process is also an important motivation. On the country, they do not learn Chinese because of external pressure from family, school or friends nor for the instrumental purpose of taking Chinese exams, or winning scholarships to go to China. Their motivation is not affected much by their final test scores or learning materials, either. However, it is worth noting that although instrumental motivation is not strong among Finnish learners, “having more job opportunities” is the most prominent instrumental motivation among them, ranking the 6th strongest of all motivation Items, which, to a certain extent, reflects that Chinese language is playing a more and more important role in Finnish society and marketplace.

4.2 Gender and Learning Motivation

Of the 178 participants, 77 are male (43%), and 101 are female (57%). The mean scores of the six motivation types among males and females are shown in Figure 2.

It can be seen that male and female learners show similarities as well as differences in terms of the degree of the six types of motivation. Both male and female learners have the highest degree of integrative motivation, followed by the second highest intrinsic motivation, while the weakest motivation among both male and female learners is extrinsic, which conforms to the findings concerning the general characteristics of the whole group. The difference between the two gender groups is that among males achievement motivation is stronger than the

other two motivation types, while among females, situational motivation is stronger in comparison with instrumental and achievement motivation.

Independent Samples T-test indicated that male and female learners have significance difference in situational motivation. Female learners are significantly more situation-motivated than male learners [$t(176) = 2.1$, $p = 0.038$], e.g., their motivation are more likely to be affected by the learning materials they use as well as by the teacher and classmates in the Chinese class (Table 2). In other five types of motivation, the difference between the two genders is not statistically significant.

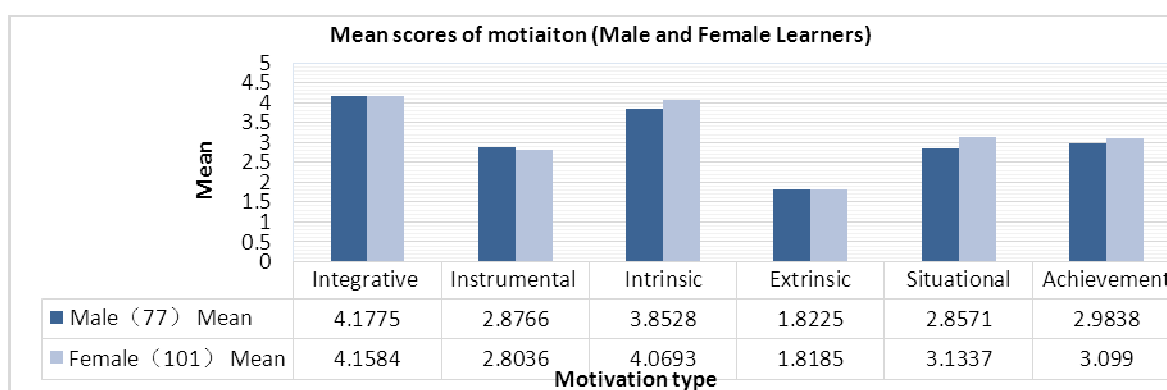


Figure 2 Male and Female Learners' Mean Scores of 6 Motivation Types

Table 2 Independent Samples T-test of Motivation Types (Male vs. Female Learners)

| | | Levene's test for equality of variances | | t-test for equality of means | | | | | | |
|-------------|-----------------------------|---|-------|------------------------------|-------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|---|--------|
| | | F | Sig. | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean difference | Std. error difference | 95% confidence interval of the difference | |
| | | | | | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| Situational | Equal variances assumed | 0.278 | 0.598 | -2.1 | 176.0 | 0.038 | -0.276 | 0.131 | -0.536 | -0.016 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | -2.1 | 170.3 | 0.035 | -0.276 | 0.130 | -0.533 | -0.019 |

Analysis of the 21 motivation Items among males and females was also done. Firstly, the top 5 strongest and weakest motivation items among male and female learners are respectively identified. It is found that that, among the top 5 strongest motivation items, both male and female learners show similar strong degrees of integrative and intrinsic motivation, which means, they are both highly motivated to learn Chinese by the similar strong desire to communicate with Chinese people, interest in Chinese culture and love for the language itself. Slightly different is that male learners are more motivated by the sense of achievement and job opportunities learning Chinese can bring about, while female learners are more concerned about becoming a more knowledgeable person.

The top three weakest motivational factors are exactly the same among male and female learners, which tells us that both male and female learners don't learn Chinese because of pressure from family or school or influence from friends, and a low test score in Chinese exams does not demotivate them easily. In addition, both genders don't attach importance to getting scholarships to study in China. The difference is, for males, learning materials don't seem to affect their motivation while for females, passing HSK/HSKK tests is not a motivating factor.

Secondly, Independent Samples T-test was carried out for the 21 individual motivation items. Results

indicated that significant difference existed in two of the above-listed top-5 strongest Items (Item 3 and Item 11) and one of the top-5 weakest Items (Item 21), as is shown in Table 3. This can be interpreted that although both males and females have strong integrative and intrinsic motivation, but males, in comparison with females, have a significantly stronger motivation to communicate with Chinese people [$t(176) = 3.38, p = 0.001$], but in terms of love for the language itself, females show a significantly greater degree than males [$t(176) = 2.11, p = 0.036$]. As for test score, although it is a weak motivation factor among both genders, females are significantly more likely to lose interest in learning Chinese than males if they get a low score in exams [$t(176) = 2.61, p = 0.01$].

Table 3 Independent Samples T-test of motivation Items (Male vs. Female Learners)

| | | Levene's test for equality of variances | | T-test for equality of means | | | | | | |
|---------|-----------------------------|---|-------|------------------------------|-------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|---|--------|
| | | F | Sig. | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean difference | Std. error difference | 95% confidence interval of the difference | |
| | | | | | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| Item 3 | Equal variances assumed | 15.98 | 0.000 | 3.25 | 176 | 0.001 | 0.411 | 0.126 | 0.161 | 0.660 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | 3.38 | 175.9 | 0.001 | 0.411 | 0.121 | 0.171 | 0.651 |
| Item 11 | Equal variances assumed | 0.769 | 0.382 | -2.11 | 176 | 0.036 | -0.303 | 0.143 | -0.586 | -0.020 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | -2.05 | 144.9 | 0.041 | -0.303 | 0.147 | -0.594 | -0.012 |
| Item 21 | Equal variances assumed | 0.314 | 0.576 | -2.61 | 176 | 0.010 | -0.342 | 0.130 | -0.600 | -0.083 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | -2.62 | 165.8 | 0.010 | -0.342 | 0.130 | -0.599 | -0.084 |

4.3 Age and Learning Motivation

The study divides the 178 participants into two age groups: under the age of 30 (99% of them are students in universities) and equal to or above 30 (about 96% are working or retired people). 141 are under 30 (79.2%) and 37 are equal to or above 30 (20.8%). The mean scores of the six motivation types among these two age groups are shown in Figure 3.

It is not surprising to find that the two age groups both show very high degrees of integrative and intrinsic motivation, the same as the whole group in general. But generally speaking, these two types of motivation are even stronger among those above 30 than among those under 30. In comparison, learners under 30 have relatively higher achievement motivation, and those above 30, are to a certain extent, more situation-motivated. Although instrumental and extrinsic motivations are weak among both groups, they are relatively stronger among the group under 30.

Through Independent Samples T-test (Table 4) we found that although the two age groups are somewhat different in all six motivation types, significant difference was only found in terms of instrumental motivation. Learners under the age of 30 are significantly more instrumentally motivated than those above 30 [$t(176) = 2.09; p = 0.03$]. This reflects that people who are already working or retired choose to learn Chinese mainly because of their desire to integrate with Chinese people and their interest in the language and culture, thus, compared with students still in universities, they care much less about the instrumental benefits brought about by learning the language.

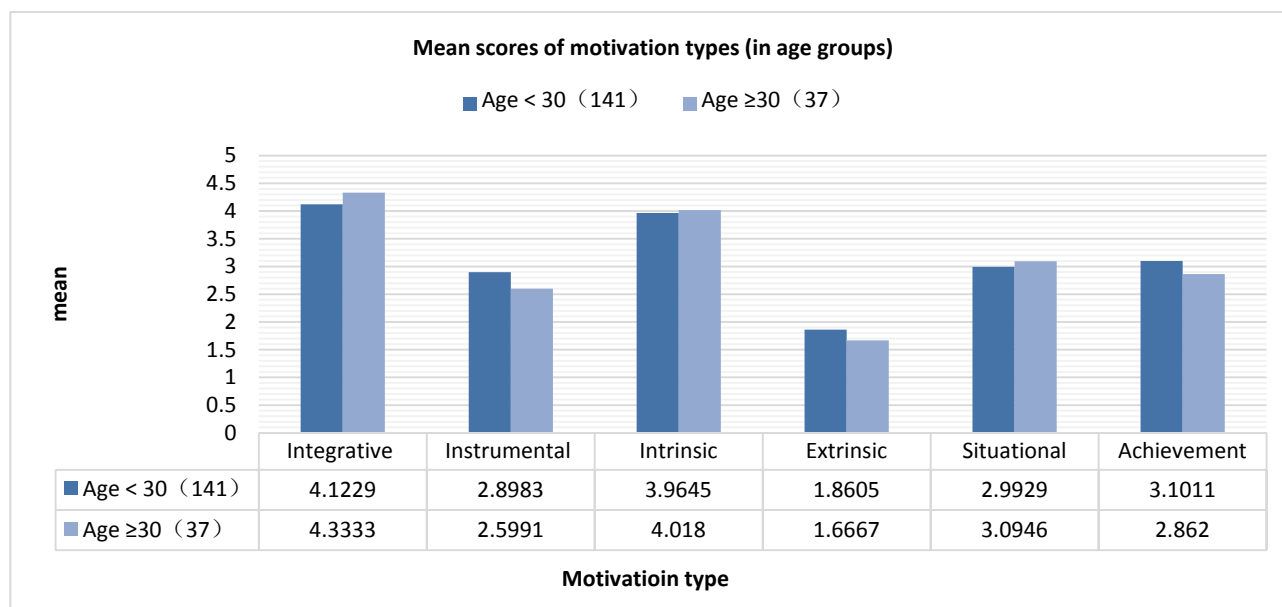


Figure 3 The Two Age Groups' Mean Scores of 6 Motivation Types

Table 4 Independent Samples Test of Motivation Types (Aged under 30 vs. above 30)

| | | Levene's test for equality of variances | | T-test for equality of means | | | | | | |
|--------------|-----------------------------|---|-------|------------------------------|-------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|---|--------|
| | | F | Sig. | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean difference | Std. error difference | 95% confidence interval of the difference | |
| | | | | | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| Instrumental | Equal variances assumed | 1.055 | 0.306 | 2.09 | 176.0 | 0.038 | 0.3111 | 0.1487 | 0.0177 | 0.6045 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | 2.29 | 61.2 | 0.026 | 0.3111 | 0.1361 | 0.0389 | 0.5833 |

In terms of individual motivation Items, it is obvious that among learners under 30, four of the top five strongest motivation items are integrative and intrinsic motivation and another is a very strong instrumental motivation, e.g., “I learn Chinese so that I can have more job opportunities”, while among those above 30, the top five strongest motivation items are all integrative and intrinsic, and this group also shows a higher degree in these two motivation types. Both age groups are highly motivated by their love for the language itself, but the elder group prone to regard learning Chinese as a mental challenge and mental exercise while the younger group think learning Chinese can make them become more knowledgeable people. The top four weakest motivation Items among both age groups are the same, which means that both groups are not motivated by extrinsic factors like school, family or friends, nor by achievement in exams, nor by instrumental scholarships to go to China. The difference is that the group under 30 don't mind whether the learning materials are interesting or not, while for the group above 30, getting promotion in their job is not a motivating factor.

Through Independent Samples T-tests, it was found that the learners under and above the age of 30 show significant differences in **Item 6** (I learn Chinese so that I can have more job opportunities, $t(48) = 2.38$, $p = 0.02$), **Item 8** (I learn Chinese so that I have a better chance to be promoted in my job, $t(176) = 2.56$; $p = 0.01$) and

Item 19 (I will study Chinese harder and better if I am often praised by others such as teacher or friends, $t(175) = 2.12$; $p = 0.03$). The group under 30 are significantly more motivated by job opportunities, promotion in jobs, and praises from others (Table 5).

Table 5 Independent Samples Test of Motivation Items (Aged under 30 vs. above 30)

| | | Levene's test for equality of variances | | T-test for equality of means | | | | | | |
|---------|-----------------------------|---|-------|------------------------------|-------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|---|--------|
| | | F | Sig. | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean difference | Std. error difference | 95% confidence interval of the difference | |
| | | | | | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| Item 6 | Equal variances assumed | 8.111 | 0.005 | 2.786 | 176 | 0.006 | 0.6301 | 0.2261 | 0.1838 | 1.0763 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | 2.381 | 47.52 | 0.021 | 0.6301 | 0.2646 | 0.0979 | 1.1622 |
| Item 8 | Equal variances assumed | 3.275 | 0.072 | 2.557 | 176 | 0.011 | 0.6180 | 0.2416 | 0.1410 | 1.0948 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | 2.815 | 64.83 | 0.006 | 0.618 | 0.2195 | 0.1795 | 1.0563 |
| Item 19 | Equal variances assumed | 0.144 | 0.704 | 2.123 | 175 | 0.035 | 0.4450 | 0.2096 | 0.0312 | 0.8588 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | 2.226 | 57.81 | 0.030 | 0.4450 | 0.1999 | 0.0448 | 0.8452 |

4.4 Chinese Language Proficiency and Learning Motivation

133 (74.7%) of the 178 participants identify their own Chinese language proficiency as beginning level. Of these 133 beginners, 46 have studied Chinese for less than 6 months, 67 for six months to a year, 18 for 1 to 2 years, and only 2 for more than 2 years. There are 30 (16.9%) participants who think their Chinese language proficiency belongs to intermediate level, and 10 of them have studied Chinese for more than 2 years while the other 20 have studied Chinese for 1 to 2 years. Only 15 participants (8.4%) think they have attained advanced Chinese language proficiency, 14 of them having learned Chinese for more than 2 years.

Figure 4 shows that advanced learners have a higher degree of integrative motivation and a lower degree of instrumental and achievement motivation, compared with other two groups; intermediate learners in comparison with other two groups, are more instrumentally and intrinsically motivated and less extrinsically motivated; while beginners' achievement motivation is stronger and integrative motivation weaker than advanced and intermediate learners.

Through Independent Samples Tests (Table 6), no significant difference in the six motivations types was found between beginners and intermediate learners, or between intermediate and advanced learners. Significant difference was only found between beginners and advanced learners in Achievement Motivation. Beginners are significantly more motivated by learning achievement than advanced learners [$t(146) = 2.34$, $p = 0.02$].

Independent Samples Tests of all 21 motivational Items (Table 7) showed that significance differences exist between beginners and intermediate learners in **Item 3** (I learn Chinese because I want to communicate with Chinese-speaking people, $t(65) = 2.57$, $p = 0.01$), **Item 11** (I learn Chinese because I like this language itself), $t(161) = 2.23$, $p = 0.03$], **Item 15** (I learn Chinese because my friend(s) is /are learning the language, $t(77) = 3.04$, $p = 0.003$), and **Item 20** (Whether I make progress or not will greatly influence my motivation in learning Chinese, $t(161) = 2.20$, $p = 0.03$), as well as between beginners and advanced learners in in **Item 3** [$t(41) = 4.24$, $p = 0.000$], **Item 20** [$t(146) = 2.61$, $p = 0.01$]and **Item 21** [I will lose interest in Chinese if I get a low score in Chinese exams,

$t(146) = 2.09, p = 0.04]$ (Table 8). Although Item 3 ranks the strongest motivation for all three groups of learners, intermediate and advanced learners are even significantly more motivated than beginners by their desire to communicate with Chinese-speaking people. Intermediate learners also have a significant higher degree of “like for the language itself (Item 11)” than beginners, although this motivations factor is also very strong, ranking among the top three strongest motivation Items, for both beginners and intermediate learners. On the contrary, intermediate and advanced learners are significantly less motivated than beginners by an achievement factor (Item 20), e.g., progress in learning. Influence from friends (Item 20), also a very weak extrinsic factor among all three groups, has a significantly stronger motivating effect on beginners than intermediate learners, while another rather weak achievement factor, e.g., good scores in exams, is significantly more motivating for beginners than for advanced learners.

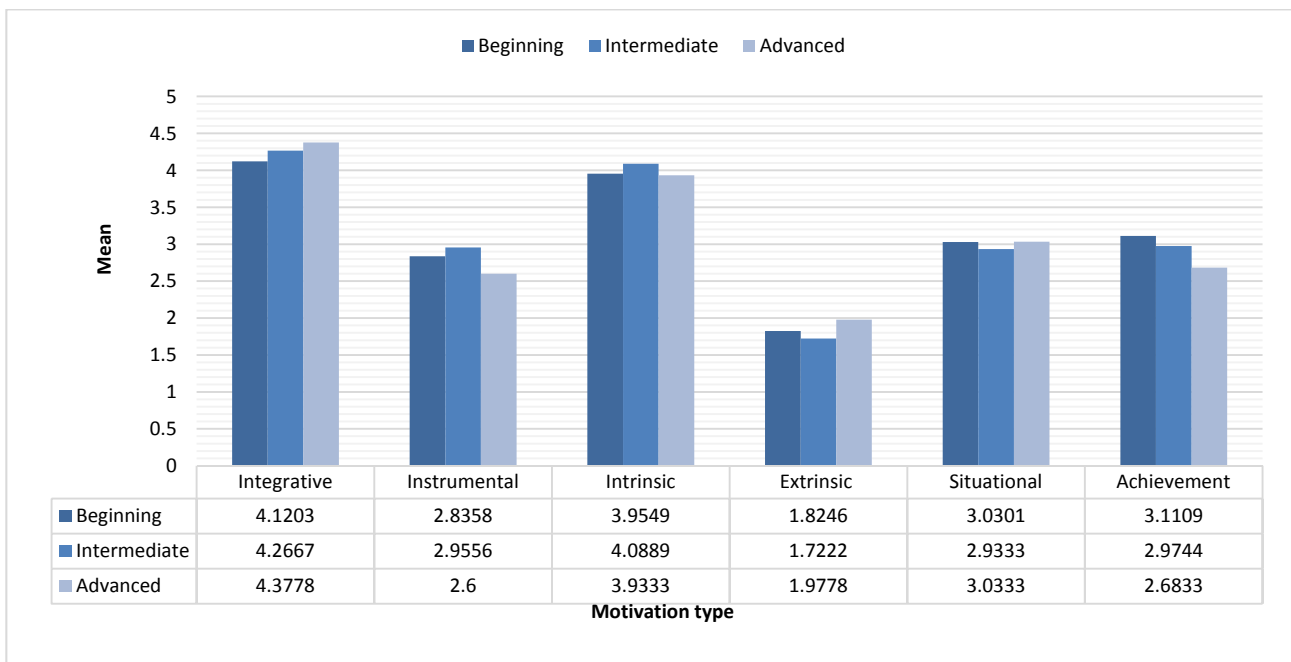


Figure 4 Mean Scores of 6 Motivation Types (Beginning, Intermediate, & Advanced Learners)

Table 6 Independent Samples Test of Motivation Types (Beginners vs. Advanced Learners)

| | | Levene's test for equality of variances | | T-test for equality of means | | | | | | |
|-------------|-----------------------------|---|-------|------------------------------|-------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|---|--------|
| | | F | Sig. | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean difference | Std. error difference | 95% confidence interval of the difference | |
| | | | | | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| Achievement | Equal variances assumed | 0.129 | 0.720 | 2.344 | 146 | 0.020 | 0.4275 | 0.1824 | 0.0670 | 0.7880 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | 2.360 | 17.37 | 0.030 | 0.4275 | 0.1811 | 0.0459 | 0.8091 |

Table 7 Independent Samples Tests of Motivational Items (Beginners vs. Intermediate Learners)

| | | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | t-test for Equality of Means | | | | | | |
|---------|-----------------------------|---|-------|------------------------------|-------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|---|---------|
| | | F | Sig. | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
| | | | | | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| Item 3 | Equal variances assumed | 11.104 | 0.001 | -1.96 | 161.0 | 0.051 | -0.3466 | 0.1764 | -0.6951 | 0.0018 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | -2.57 | 64.7 | 0.013 | -0.3466 | 0.1351 | -0.6164 | -0.0769 |
| Item 11 | Equal variances assumed | 2.862 | 0.093 | -2.22 | 161.0 | 0.027 | -0.4216 | 0.1893 | -0.7953 | -0.0478 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | -2.79 | 59.8 | 0.007 | -0.4216 | 0.1508 | -0.7233 | -0.1198 |
| Item 15 | Equal variances assumed | 18.206 | 0.000 | 2.16 | 161.0 | 0.032 | 0.4842 | 0.2239 | 0.0421 | 0.9263 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | 3.05 | 76.7 | 0.003 | 0.4842 | 0.1589 | 0.1679 | 0.8006 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | 0.54 | 42.2 | 0.594 | 0.1258 | 0.2345 | -0.3474 | 0.5990 |
| Item 20 | Equal variances assumed | 0.194 | 0.660 | 2.203 | 161.0 | 0.029 | 0.4897 | 0.2223 | 0.0508 | 0.9287 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | 2.016 | 39.5 | 0.051 | 0.4897 | 0.2429 | -0.0015 | 0.9809 |

Table 8 Independent Samples Tests of Motivational Items (Beginners vs. Advanced Learners)

| | | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | t-test for Equality of Means | | | | | | |
|---------|-----------------------------|---|-------|------------------------------|-------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|---|---------|
| | | F | Sig. | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
| | | | | | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| Item 3 | Equal variances assumed | 17.914 | 0.000 | -2.131 | 146 | 0.035 | -0.5133 | 0.2408 | -0.9892 | -0.0374 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | -4.240 | 41.49 | 0.000 | -0.5133 | 0.1211 | -0.7577 | -0.2689 |
| Item 20 | Equal variances assumed | 0.058 | 0.810 | 2.610 | 146 | 0.010 | 0.7564 | 0.2898 | 0.1837 | 1.3290 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | 2.723 | 17.69 | 0.014 | 0.7564 | 0.2778 | 0.1721 | 1.3407 |
| Item 21 | Equal variances assumed | 1.179 | 0.279 | 2.095 | 146 | 0.038 | 0.5033 | 0.2403 | 0.0284 | 0.9781 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | 3.246 | 25.26 | 0.003 | 0.5033 | 0.1550 | 0.1841 | 0.8224 |

Interestingly, through Independent Samples Tests of 21 motivational Items, no significant difference was found among all motivation Items between intermediate and advanced learners.

4.5 China Experience and Learning Motivation

Of the 178 participants, 70 (39.3%) have been to China at least once while 108 (60.7%) have no experience with China at all. Figure 5 shows that those who have already had experience with China have a higher degree of integrative, instrumental, extrinsic and situational motivations than those who have never been to China, while the latter are more intrinsically and achievement motivated, but through Independent Samples T-test (Table 9), significant difference was only found between learners with and without China experience in their instrumental

motivation, with the former significantly more instrumentally motivated than the latter [$t(176) = 2.28$; $p = 0.02$].

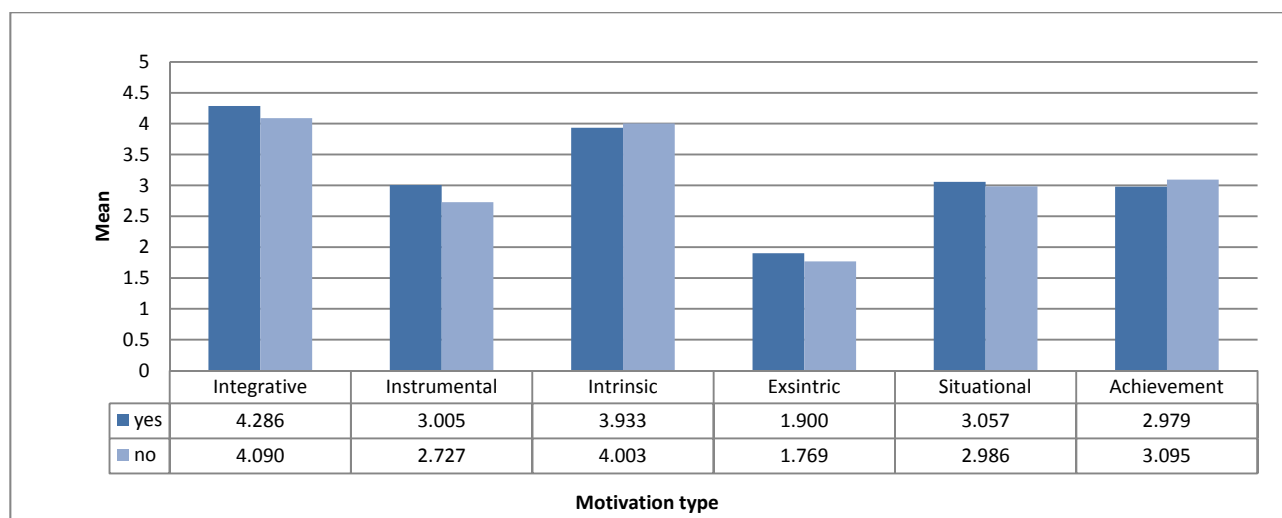


Figure 5 Mean Scores of 6 Motivation Types (China experience: Yes or No)

Further Independent Samples T-test of all 21 motivation Items (Table 10) found that learners with and without China experience show significant difference in Items 3 (I learn Chinese because I want to communicate with Chinese-speaking people), Item 4 (I learn Chinese because I need it while traveling in China.), Item 9 (I learn study Chinese because I want to pass HSK/HSKK tests) and Item 12 (Chinese is interesting itself, and it can help me to become a knowledgeable person). Although Item 3 ranks the strongest motivation Item for both groups of learners, those with China experience have significantly stronger desire to communicate with Chinese-speaking people than those without any China experience [$t(171) = 4.43$; $p = 0.000$]. In addition, learners with China experience are also significantly more motivated by two instrumental factors, e.g., their need to travel in China [$t(176) = 2.58$, $p = 0.01$] and their wish to pass the HSK/HSKK tests [$t(175) = 2.81$; $p = 0.005$] than those without any China experience. On the contrary, for those without China experience, passing HSK/HSKK tests is the fifth weakest motivation factor. This can be interpreted that those who have already been to China got to know the necessary of knowing the language when travelling in China and passing HSK/HSKK tests will also help them get opportunities to go to China again, while those who have never been to China might not want to travel to China, so they care little or might know nothing about HSK/HSKK tests. For them, an intrinsic factor, e.g., their interest in the language and their simple hope of becoming a knowledgeable person by learning the language, is significantly more motivating [$t(114) = 2.25$; $p = 0.02$].

Table 9 Independent Samples Test of Motivation Types (Learners with or without China Experience)

| | | Levene's test for equality of variances | | T-test for Equality of Means | | | | | | |
|--------------|-----------------------------|---|------|------------------------------|-------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|---|--------|
| | | F | Sig. | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean difference | Std. error difference | 95% confidence interval of the difference | |
| | | | | | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| Instrumental | Equal variances assumed | 1.1805 | 0.28 | 2.2781 | 176 | 0.024 | 0.2779 | 0.1220 | 0.0372 | 0.5187 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | 2.2470 | 140.6 | 0.026 | 0.2779 | 0.1237 | 0.0334 | 0.5224 |

Table 10 Independent Samples Test of Motivation Items (Learners with or without China Experience)

| | | Levene's test for equality of variances | | T-test for equality of means | | | | | | |
|---------|-----------------------------|---|-------|------------------------------|-------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|---|---------|
| | | F | Sig. | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean difference | Std. error difference | 95% confidence interval of the difference | |
| | | | | | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| Item 3 | Equal variances assumed | 39.3 | 0.000 | 3.94 | 176 | 0.000 | 0.4979 | 0.1265 | 0.2482 | 0.7475 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | 4.43 | 171.1 | 0.000 | 0.4979 | 0.1124 | 0.2761 | 0.7197 |
| Item 4 | Equal variances assumed | 1.99 | 0.159 | 2.58 | 176 | 0.011 | 0.4976 | 0.1928 | 0.1172 | 0.8780 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | 2.62 | 155 | 0.010 | 0.4976 | 0.1898 | 0.1227 | 0.8725 |
| Item 9 | Equal variances assumed | 1.81 | 0.181 | 2.82 | 176 | 0.005 | 0.5503 | 0.1953 | 0.1648 | 0.9357 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | 2.77 | 139.5 | 0.006 | 0.5502 | 0.1985 | 0.1579 | 0.9426 |
| Item 12 | Equal variances assumed | 9.12 | 0.003 | -2.42 | 176 | 0.017 | -0.3656 | 0.1514 | -0.6644 | -0.0669 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | -2.25 | 114.3 | 0.026 | -0.3656 | 0.1622 | -0.6870 | -0.0442 |

4.6 Location and Learning Motivation

The total 178 participants are divided into two groups according to the location where they study Chinese: in Helsinki or in other cities. 68 (38.2%) are studying Chinese at the Confucius Institute in Helsinki (Helsinki CI), while 110 participants (71.8%) are studying Chinese at the Institute's teaching sites located in other cities, e.g., Tampere, Oulu, Jyväskylä, Joensuu and Kuopio.

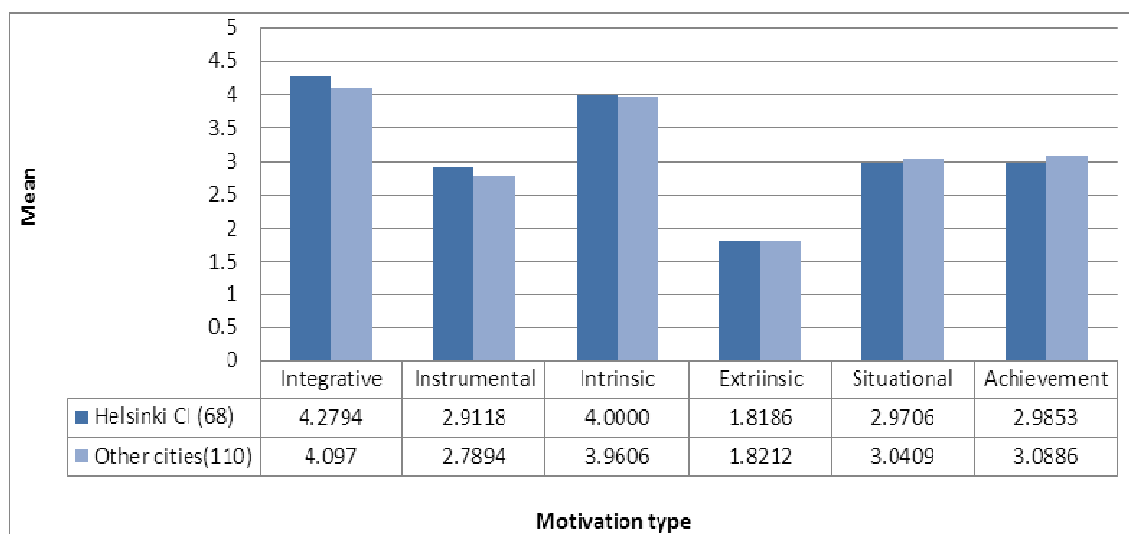


Figure 6 Mean Scores of 6 Motivation Types (Helsinki CI or Other Cities)

It can be seen from Figure 6 that learners in Helsinki CI have a slightly higher degree of integrative and instrumental motivation than learners in other cities, while learners outside Helsinki are slightly more situational and achievement motivated, but through Independent Samples T-test, no significant difference between them was found in all six motivation types. They are only significantly different in terms of Item 3 (I learn Chinese because I want to communicate with Chinese-speaking people) and Item 9 (I learn study Chinese because I want to pass

HSK/HSKK tests) (Table 11). Item 3 still ranks the strongest motivation among these two groups, but learners in Helsinki CI even show a significantly stronger degree of this integrative motivation, e.g., the desire to communicate with Chinese-speaking people [$t(154) = 2.06$; $p = 0.04$]. This is probably because Chinese language education in Helsinki has a longer history than in other cities and Helsinki CI is now the largest Chinese language education center in Finland, thus learners here have more opportunities and stronger need to communicate with Chinese-speaking people.

In addition, passing HSK/HSKK tests is a significant stronger motivator for learners in Helsinki CI than those in other cities, where it is among the top five weakest motivation items. This is probably because Helsinki CI is the largest HSK/HSKK testing center in Finland and provides the tests regularly twice a year, thus learners have easier access to the tests compared with learners in other cities. In addition, the tests are probably more actively promoted among learners in Helsinki CI than in the teaching sites located in other cities and more scholarship opportunities related to the tests are available in Helsinki CI.

Table 11 Independent Samples Test of Motivation Items (Learners in Helsinki CI or in Other Cities)

| | | Levene's test for equality of variances | | T-test for equality of means | | | | | | |
|--------|-----------------------------|---|-------|------------------------------|-------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|---|--------|
| | | F | Sig. | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean difference | Std. error difference | 95% confidence interval of the difference | |
| | | | | | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| Item 3 | Equal variances assumed | 4.879 | 0.028 | 2.01 | 176 | 0.046 | 0.2631 | 0.1311 | 0.0042 | 0.5219 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | 2.06 | 153.8 | 0.041 | 0.2631 | 0.1278 | 0.0106 | 0.5155 |
| Item 9 | Equal variances assumed | 4.314 | 0.039 | 3.17 | 176 | 0.002 | 0.6184 | 0.1952 | 0.2331 | 1.0037 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | 3.044 | 124.2 | 0.003 | 0.6184 | 0.2031 | 0.2160 | 1.0205 |

5. Conclusions

The findings of the study indicated that learners of Chinese language in Finland have the highest degree of integrative and intrinsic motivations and lowest extrinsic motivation in general. Instrumental motivation is the second weakest on the whole, but “in order to have more job opportunities” is a very strong instrumental motivator for them, especially among learners under the age of 30. Gender seems to affect situational motivation while age has an effect on instrumental motivation. Finnish female learners are significantly more motivated than male learners by the learning situations like interesting learning materials and pleasant learning environment (teachers and classmates), while younger learners under 30 have a stronger instrumental motivation than learners above 30. In comparison, the group under 30 (mostly students) is significantly more motivated by job opportunities, promotion in jobs, as well as praises from others. Chinese language proficiency also affects the learning motivation in some way or another. While beginners and intermediate learners do not show any significant difference in all six types of motivation, nor do intermediate and advanced learners, there exists a significant difference between beginners and advanced learners in terms of achievement motivation. Beginners have a significantly higher achievement motivation than advanced learners. More specifically, beginners are more motivated by the progress they make in the learning process than advanced learners. Learners with different Chinese language proficiencies also show some differences in terms of several individual motivation Items, but no significant difference was found between intermediate and advanced learners.

Instrumental motivation is also significantly affected by learners' experience with China, e.g., whether they have ever been to China or not. Those with China experience have a higher instrumental motivation, more specifically, for travelling in China and passing Chinese proficiency tests, probably in order to get opportunities to study in China. When the location where learners study Chinese is concerned, learning motivation seems to have little to do with it. No significant difference was found in all six motivation types between learners from the Confucius Institute at University Helsinki and its teaching sites at universities in other cities. They were only significantly different in two specific motivation Items, e.g., learners in Helsinki have higher motivation to communicate with Chinese-speaking and to pass the Chinese proficiency tests than those in other cities.

The findings may present some implications for Chinese language instructors and educators in Finland. It is clear that teachers need to reinforce learners' strong integrative and intrinsic motivation by, for example, engaging them in communication with Chinese people, providing them with more opportunities to access Chinese culture, offering more planned activities that enable an optimal match between the learning situation and the student's individual learning characteristics, etc. At the same time, learners' gender, age, Chinese level, China experience as well as location need to be taken into consideration while designing course content, selecting materials, choosing teaching methods, giving feedback, etc. in order to enhance their situational and achievement motivation. Learners' instrumental and extrinsic motivation also needs to be strengthened with more practical benefits and greater demand offered by the society as a whole.

This study might also provide some findings indicating that Finnish learners differ in some way from learners in other countries in their Chinese learning motivation. Further research needs to be done to make a detailed comparison and contrast. Also there might be some other variables that affect Finnish learners' motivation, which also needs more future research.

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