

# Chinese College Students Foreign Language Learning Motivation Across Year Levels: Basis for Developing After Class English Learning Motivation Program

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## Abstract

The study focused on the Chinese vocational college student's motivation in learning English as a foreign language. It assessed their motivation in terms of integrative, instrumental, intrinsic, and extrinsic dimensions. The findings showed adequate level of motivation in all dimensions with instrumental motivation getting the highest rating. Moreover, there are no significant differences in the motivations of the students based on their level. This implies that the motivation in learning English does not change as the students go to higher year levels. This finding is different from what is seen in the literature as a declining trend in the English learning motivation among university students. Nevertheless, the students' motivation still need to be improve to reach the highest level. In this context, the researcher developed an after class program to enhance the students' motivation in learning English.

## Keywords

Learning motivation in English, Integrative motivation, Instrumental motivation, Intrinsic motivation, Extrinsic motivation.

## 1. Introduction

Globalization has made English the language of international communication. Its role in economic growth and social development of non-English speaking countries is increasingly becoming significant. For big economies like China, English proficiency enables it to strengthen its role in the world affairs. Good English proficiency opens doors to greater opportunities and increases China's overall international competitiveness (Zhenyu, 2020). This is the reason why English is a compulsory subject in China.

Chinese students begin formal lessons in English at third grade. In high school, English is one of the main subjects along with Chinese language and mathematics. Moreover, English is one of the test subjects in the "gaokao" or national college entrance exam. For college students, English is also important. They work hard to pass the Test Band 4 to have advantages over their peers in finding a job. On the average, Chinese students study English for ten years from elementary to college. Despite this, China has a low proficiency in English (Yao, 2022). In the 2022 English Proficiency Index, China ranked at 62 (low proficiency) down from a moderate proficiency ranking of 49 and 38 in 2021 and 2020 respectively. This problem can also be seen among college students' lack of oral English efficiency.

Motivation is the most crucial factor in learning English as a foreign language (Alfian, 2018; Ye, 2022). A high level of motivation may override the deficiencies in one' language aptitude which is important in second language learning (Pan, 2021). According to Lamb (2016), motivation in learning a foreign language is a process external to the individual and can only be inferred through the learners' personal or academic goals, desire to achieve set goals, attitude towards the second language, their interests in the language, and enjoyment of the learning process.

There are two major categories of motivation in the vast literature of foreign language learning. These are integrative-instrumental motivation, and intrinsic-extrinsic motivation.

The factors affecting Chinese students' English ability is well studied in China. Several studies have identified different set of variables that contribute or hinder Chinese students English proThe review of literature has shown that the concept of English learning motivation of college students is well established in China. Moreover, the frameworks of motivation in the proposed study; integrative-instrumental and intrinsic-extrinsic, have been successfully used in previous studies describing the English learning motivations of Chinese college students. The literature has also shown that these four types of motivations complement one another and can be used to assess English learning motivation in a single study.

## 2. Methodology

This chapter presents the research design to be used, the respondents of the study, the research instrument, the data gathering procedure, and the statistical data analysis that will be used.

### 2.1. Research Design

The research design that would serve best the purpose of the study is a quantitative descriptive and comparative one. The study determined a numeric representation of the college students English learning motivation in terms of integrative, instrumental, intrinsic, and extrinsic motivation. Once the assessment was done per year level, the significant differences between the year level motivations was determined.

### 2.2. Research Locale and Research Respondents

The study was conducted at Songshan Shaolin Wushu Vocational College (SSWVC) in Zhegzhou, China during the SY 2022-2023. The said school is one of the big colleges in the province with 6690 students. As described by Chen & Yang (2018), English education in higher vocational colleges is not encouraging. Given this issue, it is assumed that this study is of great importance to SSWVC.

### 2.3. Sampling Method

Random stratified sampling method was used in the study to ensure the representation of different academic departments and year levels. The minimum sample size for a population of 6690 is 364 based on Cochran's equation. The 364 respondents were equally distributed across the different programs and year levels.

**Table 1.** Distribution of Respondents

Academic Departments	1st Yr		2nd Yr		3 <sup>rd</sup> Yr		Total	
	N	n	N	n	N	n	N	n
Department of Cultural Communication	186	10	355	19	69	5	610	34
Department of Martial Arts	648	35	918	50	707	38	2273	123
Department of Defense Education	280	15	407	22	464	25	1151	62
Department of Tourism and Management	436	24	491	27	270	15	1197	66
Department of Information Tech	377	20	604	33	478	26	1459	79
Total	1927	104	2775	151	1988	109	6690	364

## 2.4. Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher sought the approval of the school administration before commencing with data gathering. Once approval was given, invitations to participate in the study were sent to the respondents. The consents of the interested students were sought through the informed consent form before they given the survey questionnaire. Before participating in the survey, the respondents should voluntary sign the informed consent form first. The survey was conducted online through the Tencent forms.

## 2.5. Research Instruments

The instrument was developed by the researcher based from the qualitative findings of Pan (2022) and the instrument used by Kreishan and Al-Dhaimat (2013). It was composed of four parts covering integrative, instrumental, intrinsic, and extrinsic motivations. Four Likert scales for responses was provided in the questionnaire. The initial draft of the questionnaire was subjected to validation by three experts in educational research from different HEIs in Zhengzhou. After validation, the questionnaire was pilot tested to students in other schools. The reliability of the major parts of the survey questionnaire was tested separately using Cronbach's Alpha. The alpha coefficient of integrative motivation is 0.946, instrumental motivation, 0.951; intrinsic, 0.961; and extrinsic, 0.928. All the alpha values are within the range of 0.70-0.90, and therefore reliable.

## 2.6. Data Analysis Procedure

The responses of the respondents under the different sections of the survey were organized and tallied. The means for integrative, instrumental, extrinsic, and intrinsic motivation were computed separately. Their means were interpreted using the scale below.

Range	Interpretation
3.51 - 4.00	Very High Level
2.51 - 3.50	High Level
1.51 - 2.50	Low Level
1.00 - 1.50	Very Low Level

In determining whether the four types of motivation in learning English significantly differ across year levels, ANOVA was used.

## 2.7. Ethical Considerations

To protect the welfare of the student respondents, a formal letter was sent to them to inform them about the study. Through the letter, the researcher explained the purpose of the study, the possible risks and benefits in joining the study. The respondents' consent for the conduct of the survey was also sought through the informed consent form. One of the conditions in the consent form was confidentiality. It assured the respondents that their identities and other information would be used only for the study.

## 3. Conclusion

1. The respondents have adequate overall motivation in learning English and it can still be enhanced further. All four dimensions of their motivation (integrative, instrumental, intrinsic, and extrinsic) are still far from its fullest.
2. The school is able to sustain the motivation of the respondents from first year to third year level. This is evident in the no significant differences in the motivation to learn English across year levels.

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