

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

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## Abstract

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **Introduction**

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

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

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

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