

The Relationship between Chinese Language (Mandarin) Classroom Learning Environment and Students' Motivation to Learn Mandarin: A Study of a Sample of Grade 7&8 Students from a Chinese School in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

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Abstract: Classroom environment research has been conducted in many countries to investigate the relationship between the classroom learning environment and factors related to student learning. These factors include both cognitive as well as affective dimensions. Among the affective factors investigated that relates to classroom learning environment include attitude and motivation of students to learn. Two aspects of classroom learning environment will be investigated. The students' preferred classroom learning environment and the actual classroom-learning environment. The relationship between students' perception of their classroom learning environment and their motivation to learn Chinese language will be investigated.

Key Words: classroom learning environment, students' motivation

1. INTRODUCTION

A. Chinese Language Teaching in Malaysia

Malaysia education system is unique in that, there are three medium of instruction in the national education system—Malay, Mandarin and Tamil.

It is in fact an attempt of trying to simplify the issue by worrying of thinned Chinese community resources and public funding. If a person donates RM7 to a Chinese independent high school and RM3 to a national-type secondary school, the money would not be wasted. There are always returns we can get from investment in education. A Chinese independent high school may have 10 bright students to show, while a national-type secondary school might produce more. No matter what type of schools the Chinese talents are from, the Chinese community will be the ultimate beneficiary.

Although the syllabus cannot be changed, Dong Zong can still pass on the Chinese independent high school teaching methods. At the same time, it can also encourage the national-type secondary schools teachers to communicate with educators from Taiwan and China.

After the formation of the two-party system, the national-type secondary schools will not turn into abandoned children. For example, the Perak state government has set aside RM2 million for 17 national-type secondary schools.

Education is not a zero-sum game. The combination of educational resources and experience can bring a greater force, while segmentation and fragmentation will only weaken Chinese education.

B. Statement of Problem

The purpose of the study is to investigate the relationships (if any) between students' motivation in learning Chinese Language and the classroom learning environment with the aim of exploring measures to promote students' motivation to learn Chinese Language. More specifically the research seeks answers to the following research question:

C. Research Questions

Research questions are as follows:

- a. Is there a significant relationship between Mandarin classroom learning environment and students' motivation to learn Mandarin?
- b. Are there significant differences between year 7 and year 8 students of their motivation to learn Mandarin under the same classroom-learning environment?

D. Research Objectives

The research objectives of the study are as follows:

- a. To investigate the relationship between Mandarin classroom learning environment and students' motivation of the sample of grade 7&8 students involved in the study.
- b. To investigate the differences between year 7 and year 8 students of their motivation to learn Mandarin under the same classroom-learning environment.

The review on classroom environment studies conducted in Malaysia indicated that relationships between learning outcomes and Mandarin classroom learning Environment had not been investigated in Malaysia before this study was conducted. This present study was the first classroom learning environment study conducted in the context of Mandarin classrooms in Malaysia. This study is significant in that it is aligned with the Malaysia Chinese Language education policy.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology used in the study. It will be recalled that the focus of the study is to investigate the relationship and the differences between year 7 and year 8 students of their motivation to learn Mandarin under the same classroom-learning environment.

Research Setting

The research is expected to be conducted at a selected Chinese school in Kuala Lumpur. The researcher will choose a respectively Chinese Independent Secondary High School in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. First of all, the researcher needs to get a permission to do this research in the selected school and then make an appointment with the principal or the department in charge. This questionnaire survey will be done at one day when the students are free to do it.

B. Research Design

The study will employ a questionnaire design. In this design, data will be collected through the teacher and students in the class. Students need to understand every questions in the questionnaire and they can ask the researcher at any time in the survey when they have any problem to do it. In addition, ethical issues also considered from the researcher, students can

break off at any time if they don't want to do this survey.

C. Sample Size

This study include 2 type of students at the same school, year 7 and year 8, the researcher will randomly choose 4 classes at grade 7 and another 4 at grade 8 to do the questionnaire survey.

D. Data Collection

Data will be collected by the researcher and her assistant, who will come and personally administer the questionnaire, on the day agreed. All data collected will be kept strictly confidential. The researcher undertaken to share the findings of the study with the school authorities.

E. Data Analysis Procedure

Once data is collected it will be analyzed by both descriptive and inferential statistics to answer the referred questions.

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