

**THE RELATIONSHIP OF SELF-EFFICACY FOR AND
ENJOYMENT OF LEARNING CHINESE AS A FOREIGN
LANGUAGE WITH CHINESE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF
GRADES 7 AND 8 STUDENTS AT PRAMANDANIJIANUKROAH
SCHOOL, BANGKOK, THAILAND**

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Abstract: The main purpose of this study was to determine if there was a significant relationship of self-efficacy for and enjoyment of learning Chinese as a foreign language with Chinese academic achievement of Grades 7 and 8 students at Pramandanijianukroah School, Bangkok, Thailand. A total of 126 students from Grade 7 and 139 students from Grade 8, enrolled during the academic year 2019-2020, participated in this study. The Questionnaire of Chinese Self-Efficacy was used to measure participants' self-efficacy for learning Chinese as a foreign language, while the Questionnaire of Chinese Language Enjoyment was used to measure participants' enjoyment of learning Chinese as a foreign language. The Grade 7 and Grade 8 final exams of Chinese language subject for Term 1 were used to measure participants' Chinese academic achievement. Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) and correlational analysis (using multiple correlation coefficient) were performed on the collected data. The findings indicated that participants' self-efficacy for learning Chinese as a foreign language was slightly low. The level of enjoyment of learning Chinese as a foreign language was found to be neither high nor low for Grade 7 students, whereas it was high for Grade 8 students. Chinese academic achievement for Grade 7 students was found to be satisfactory, while for Grade 8 students it was good. The multiple linear relationship of self-efficacy for and enjoyment of learning Chinese as a foreign language with Chinese academic achievement was significant and strong for Grade 7 students, whereas it was significant and moderately strong for Grade 8 students.

Keywords: Chinese as a Foreign Language, Self-Efficacy for Learning,

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Enjoyment of Learning, Academic Achievement, Grades 7 and 8 Students, Thailand.

Introduction

Learning Chinese is very popular in Thailand. Many schools in Thailand have opened Chinese language courses, and the numbers of students who learn Chinese as a foreign language is increasing rapidly (Wuttiphan, 2013). According to the Basic Education Core Curriculum, enacted by The Ministry of Education of Thailand, Chinese language constitutes a basic learning content prescribed for the entire compulsory education (The Ministry of Education of Thailand, 2008).

Self-efficacy (defined as “a belief in one’s own ability to successfully accomplish something”, Bandura, 1997, p. 15) plays an important role in learning a second language. In different language learning contexts, it has been reported that self-efficacy has a strong predictive power on academic achievement (Raofifi, Tan & Chan, 2012). Therefore, it is reasonable to hypothesize that, in the Thai educational context, self-efficacy for learning Chinese as a foreign language also has a positive and strong correlation with Chinese academic achievement.

In second or foreign language acquisition, enjoyment has also been reported to influence the learners’ academic achievement through shaping their cognitive processes (Carmona-Halty, Salanova, Llorens, & Schaufeli, 2018; Krashen, 1982). Therefore, it is also reasonable to assume that enjoyment of learning Chinese as a foreign language may have a positive, strong correlation with Chinese academic achievement.

Learning Chinese as a foreign language is a compulsory course for Grade 4 to Grade 12 students in Pramandanijanukroah School, Bangkok, Thailand, since 2010. However, as the researcher has observed, even though Grades 7 and 8 students have learned Chinese language for at least three years, they still seem to lack self-efficacy for learning and performing in Chinese language class. Besides, they also seem not to enjoy attending to Chinese language lessons. Based on the students’ academic transcripts from 2017 and 2018, less than 10% of the secondary students at Pramandanijanukroah School were unable to get an excellent academic achievement in Chinese language subject, which was particularly true for Grades 7 and 8 students. Therefore, this research explored the self-efficacy for and enjoyment of learning Chinese as a foreign language held by Grades 7 and 8 students at Pramandanijanukroah School, in order to identify whether those variables were significantly related to students’ Chinese academic achievement.

Research Objectives

The following research objectives were addressed in this study.

1. To determine the levels of self-efficacy for learning Chinese as a foreign language of Grades 7 and 8 students at Pramandanijianukroah School, Bangkok, Thailand.
2. To determine the levels of enjoyment of learning Chinese as a foreign language of Grades 7 and 8 students at Pramandanijianukroah School, Bangkok, Thailand.
3. To determine the levels of Chinese academic achievement of Grades 7 and 8 students at Pramandanijianukroah School, Bangkok, Thailand.
4. To determine whether there is a significant relationship of self-efficacy for and enjoyment of learning Chinese as a foreign language with Chinese academic achievement of Grade 7 students at Pramandanijianukroah School, Bangkok, Thailand.
5. To determine whether there is a significant relationship of self-efficacy for and enjoyment of learning Chinese as a foreign language with Chinese academic achievement of Grade 8 students at Pramandanijianukroah School, Bangkok, Thailand.

Theoretical Framework

This study was conducted based on the following supporting theories: Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy theory, Krashen's (1982) second language acquisition theory, and Csikzentmihalyi's (1990) flow theory.

Bandura's (1997) Self-Efficacy Theory

This theory introduces the idea that self-efficacy is a social cognitive construct and that the perception of self-efficacy is influenced by four factors: mastery experience (i.e., prior success), vicarious experience (i.e., modeling from others), verbal persuasion (i.e., encouragement from others), and somatic and emotional states (i.e., physiological and emotional reactions toward a situation or task).

Krashen's (1982) Second Language Acquisition (SLA) Theory

According to this theory, SLA is built on five main hypotheses: the acquisition-learning distinction; the natural order hypothesis; the monitor hypothesis; the input hypothesis, and the affective filter hypothesis (Krashen, 1982). The acquisition-learning distinction (as the foundation of the other hypotheses) and the affective filter hypothesis were applied in this study, due to their relation to the variables addressed in this study. The acquisition-learning distinction illustrates the language acquisition and learning systems and their impact on SLA. The affective filter hypothesis illustrates how affective variables (e.g., self-efficacy, positive emotions and motivation)

impact on SLA.

Csikzentmihalyi's (1990) Flow Theory

This theory describes the flow state as an optimal experience in which learners can become absorbed, characterized by a deep sense of enjoyment in the process of a learning activity. It determines that the enjoyment, which is one of the emotional components comprising a flow state, leads to the improvement of a performance or to the achievement of something exceeding prior expectations.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study was designed based on two main stages. Firstly, the participants' levels of self-efficacy for and enjoyment of learning Chinese as a foreign language, as well as their levels of Chinese academic achievement, were measured and interpreted. Secondly, the relationship among self-efficacy for learning Chinese as a foreign language, enjoyment of learning Chinese as a foreign language and Chinese academic achievement was statistically examined.

The conceptual framework of this study is shown in Figure 1.

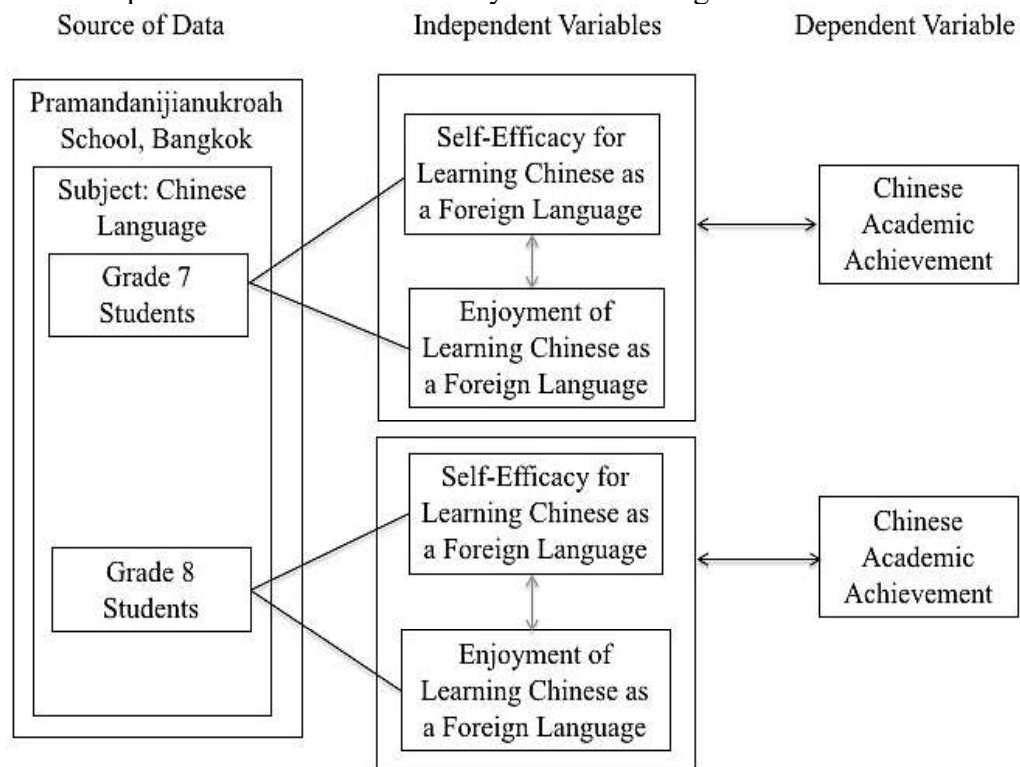


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Current Study

Literature Review

In this section, some previous studies related to the research variables addressed in this study are reviewed and summarized.

Kitikana (2017) carried out a study in Thailand on fourth year undergraduate, to explore the correlation between the English self-efficacy and English learning academic achievement. The results revealed that the participants' English self-efficacy was relatively high, and the higher their level of self-efficacy, the higher the English learning academic achievement the students had.

Leeming (2017) carried out a longitudinal mixed method study to investigate the variables which may predict the change of students' self-efficacy for English speaking in a private university in Japan. The results revealed that the target students had low self-efficacy in general. Also, it was found that the development of students' self-efficacy played a vital role ensuring that students feel capable of speaking in English.

Raofi and Maroofi (2017) carried out a study to investigate the relationship among self-efficacy, task value, strategy use and academic achievement in English writing on 304 undergraduates majoring in English as a second language in a university in Malaysia. After controlling the other predictive variables (i.e., task value and strategy use), students' self-efficacy was found to have a significant predictive power on English writing academic achievement.

Mierzwa (2018) explored the influence of foreign language enjoyment (FLE) in learning English as a foreign language in five secondary grammar schools in Southwestern Poland. The results indicated that there was a significant positive relationship between FLE and students' English academic achievement.

Li (2019) carried out a study in China to explore the multiple relationship of students' trait emotional intelligence (TEI) and foreign language enjoyment (FLE) on English as foreign language (EFL) academic achievement on a sample of 1307 high school Chinese students. The results revealed that the participants had moderate to high levels of TEI, and low to moderate levels of FLE. Meanwhile, the FLE was strongly and positively correlated to both students' self-perceived and actual EFL academic achievement.

Dewaele and Alfawzan (2018) carried out a mixed method study to examine the correlation of the foreign language enjoyment (FLE) and foreign language

classroom anxiety (FLCA) on foreign language performance (FLP) among two groups of EFL students: one comprised of secondary school students in London, and the other comprised of undergraduate students in Saudi Arabia. The data analysis showed that levels of FLE of the two groups were high, and the higher level of FLE, the better English performance they had.

Wei, Gao and Wang (2019) carried out a study to examine the relationship of grit, classroom environment (CE) and foreign language enjoyment (FLE) with foreign language academic achievement (FLA) among 832 middle school students in China. After controlling the interaction of grit and CE, the FLE and FLA were found to be positively strongly correlated.

Hanewald (2013) carried out a study to review 27 previous studies on the transition between primary and secondary school, published between December 2005 to December 2011, as well as to highlight the importance of this period for adolescents and how it can be supported. It was found that the students' self-efficacy, self-esteem, emotional factors (e.g., enjoyment), teacher pedagogy, teacher support, peer support, transition adjustment and parental involvement significantly influence the students' academic achievement.

Methodology/Procedure

Population and Sample

This research was conducted on a population sample comprised of all 161 students in Grade 7 and 175 students in Grade 8, enrolled in Chinese language course in the academic year 2019-2020 at Pramandanijianukroah School, Bangkok, Thailand. During the data collection, 126 out of 161 (78%) Grade 7 students and 139 out of 175 (79%) Grade 8 students were present.

Research instruments

This study was conducted based on the following research instruments: the Questionnaire of Chinese Self-Efficacy (QCSE), the Questionnaire of Chinese Language Enjoyment (QCLE), and the Grade 7 and Grade 8 final exams of Chinese language subject for Term 1.

Questionnaire of Chinese Self-Efficacy (QCSE)

This questionnaire is an adaptation of the Questionnaire of English Self-Efficacy (QESE), originally developed by Wang and her colleagues (Wang et al., 2013). In order to measure self-efficacy for learning Chinese as a foreign language, all the occurrences of the words "English" in the original questionnaire were replaced by the word "Chinese". The target students were asked to rate their self-efficacy on 32 items related to their Chinese language

learning skills, using a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*I am totally unable to do this*) to 7 (*I am totally able to do this*). All the QCSE items were translated into Thai by a professional translator using the back-translation method.

Questionnaire of Chinese Language Enjoyment (QCLE)

This questionnaire is an adaptation of the Questionnaire of Foreign Language Enjoyment (QFLE; Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014), comprised of 21 items using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). In order to measure the enjoyment of learning Chinese as a foreign language, all the occurrences of the phrase “foreign language” in the original questionnaire were replaced by the phrase “Chinese language”. Besides, a specific learning context “in Chinese classroom” was added in Item 10 and Items 14 to 21. All the QCLE items were translated into Thai by a professional translator using the back-translation method.

Grade 7 and Grade 8 Final Exams of Chinese Language Subject for Term 1

The final exam of Chinese language subject for Grade 7 in Term 1 was used to measure the academic achievement of Grade 7 students in the target school. Similarly, the final exam of Chinese language subject for Grade 8 students in Term 1 was used to measure the academic achievement of Grades 8 students in the same school. Both exams were developed by their subject teachers. For Grade 7 students, there were 40 multiple choice items in the final exam. Similarly, the final exam for Grade 8 students was also comprised of 40 multiple choice items. The students were expected to obtain at least 10 points out of 20 points, with a score lower than 10 points being regarded as a failure.

The collected quantitative data was analyzed by using descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) and a statistical hypothesis testing (correlational analysis using multiple correlation coefficient) were used to address the research objectives and hypothesis of this study.

Research Findings

This section summarizes the findings obtained from the data analysis performed on the collected data.

Findings from Research Objective 1

Regarding to this research objective, the following findings were obtained.

- The level of self-efficacy for learning Chinese as a foreign language of Grade 7 students at Pramandanijanukroah School, Bangkok, Thailand, was slightly low (on a scale of 1-7, with 7 being very high), $M = 3.15$, $SD = 1.49$.

- The level of self-efficacy for learning Chinese as a foreign language of Grade 8 students at Pramandanijianukroah School, Bangkok, Thailand, was slightly low (on a scale of 1-7, with 7 being very high), $M = 3.46$, $SD = 1.49$.

Findings from Research Objective 2

Regarding to this research objective, the following findings were obtained.

- The level of enjoyment of learning Chinese as a foreign language of Grade 7 students at Pramandanijianukroah School, Bangkok, Thailand, was neither high nor low (on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being very high), $M = 3.42$, $SD = 1.16$.
- The level of enjoyment of learning Chinese as a foreign language of Grade 8 students at Pramandanijianukroah School, Bangkok, Thailand, was high (on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being very high), $M = 3.82$, $SD = .91$.

Findings from Research Objective 3

Regarding to this research objective, the following findings were obtained.

- The level of Chinese academic achievement of Grade 7 students at Pramandanijianukroah School, Bangkok, Thailand, was satisfactory (on a scale of 0-20, with 20 being excellent), $M = 10.29$, $SD = 4.91$.
- The level of Chinese academic achievement of Grade 8 students at Pramandanijianukroah School, Bangkok, Thailand, was good (on a scale of 0-20, with 20 being excellent), $M = 13.05$, $SD = 4.73$.

Findings from Research Objective 4

Regarding to this research objective, the following findings were obtained.

- At the target school, Grade 7 students' self-efficacy for learning Chinese as a foreign language was found to be significantly, positively and strongly correlated with their Chinese academic achievement, $r = .65$, $r^2 = .42$, $p < .001$.
- At the target school, Grade 7 students' enjoyment of learning Chinese as a foreign language was found to be significantly, positively and strongly correlated with their Chinese academic achievement, $r = .63$, $r^2 = .40$, $p < .001$.
- At the target school, Grade 7 students' self-efficacy for learning Chinese as a foreign language and enjoyment of learning Chinese as a foreign language were found to have a significant, strong multiple correlation with their Chinese academic achievement, $R = .70$, $R^2 = .49$, $F(2,123) = 58.44$, $p < .001$.

Findings from Research Objective 5

Regarding to this research objective, the following findings were obtained.

- At the target school, Grade 8 students' self-efficacy for learning Chinese as a foreign language was found to be significantly, positively and moderately strongly correlated with their Chinese academic achievement, $r = .41$, $r^2 = .17$, $p < .001$.
- At the target school, Grade 8 students' enjoyment of learning Chinese as a foreign language was found to be significantly, positively and weakly correlated with their Chinese academic achievement, $r = .37$, $r^2 = .13$, $p < .001$.
- At the target school, Grade 8 students' self-efficacy for learning Chinese as a foreign language and enjoyment of learning Chinese as a foreign language were found to have a significant, moderately strong multiple correlation with their Chinese academic achievement, $R = .45$, $R^2 = .20$, $F(2,136) = 17.38$, $p < .001$.

Discussion

In this section, the findings obtained from the current study are discussed, placing such findings in context with previous studies. The discussion is presented and organized by variables.

Self-Efficacy for Learning Chinese as a Foreign Language

It was found that the level of self-efficacy for learning Chinese as a foreign language was slightly low for both Grade 7 and Grade 8 students at the target school. This indicates that participants perceived themselves as having a slightly low ability to perform and succeed in tasks and activities related to Chinese as a foreign language class. The result is similar with Leeming (2017), who also obtained low levels of self-efficacy for English speaking in native Japanese speakers enrolled in a compulsory oral English course in a private university in Japan.

Enjoyment of Learning Chinese as a Foreign Language

Firstly, it was found that the level of Grade 7 students' enjoyment of learning Chinese as a foreign language was neither high nor low. Based on the fact that enjoyment is interpreted as a flow state in this study (Csikzentmihalyi, 1990), it can be concluded that Grade 7 students at the target school were moderately entertained by the tasks and activities performed in Chinese as a foreign language class, were moderately absorbed in the learning process, and had a moderate satisfaction when engaged in Chinese language tasks. These results were similar with Li (2019), who also obtained low-moderate level of enjoyment of learning English as a foreign language in Chinese high school students.

Secondly, it was found that the level of Grade 8 students' enjoyment of learning Chinese as a foreign language was high. This can be interpreted as Grade 8 students at the target school being highly entertained by the tasks and activities performed in Chinese as a foreign language class, being highly absorbed in the learning process, and having a high satisfaction when engaged in Chinese language tasks. The results were similar with Mierzwa (2018), who obtained high level of foreign language enjoyment in learning English as a foreign language in secondary grammar school students in Southwestern Poland.

Self-Efficacy for Learning Chinese as a Foreign Language and Chinese Academic Achievement

Firstly, it was found that Grade 7 students' self-efficacy for learning Chinese as a foreign language was significantly and strongly correlated with their Chinese academic achievement, and explained 42% of the total variance of their Chinese academic achievement. Secondly, it was found that Grade 8 students' self-efficacy for learning Chinese as a foreign language was significantly and moderately strongly correlated with their Chinese academic achievement, and explained 17% of the total variance of their Chinese academic achievement. These findings were consistent with Kitikanan (2017), who found that English self-efficacy in a group of Thai EFL learners in a university in Thailand was strongly correlated with English academic achievement, and therefore had a strong predictive power for English academic achievement. In the current study, it can be concluded that self-efficacy for learning Chinese as a foreign language was an important factor having a strong (for Grade 7 students) or moderately strong (for Grade 8 students) positive influence on the participants' Chinese academic achievement.

Enjoyment of Learning Chinese as a Foreign Language and Chinese Academic Achievement

Firstly, it was found that Grade 7 students' enjoyment of learning Chinese as a foreign language was significantly, positively and strongly correlated with their Chinese academic achievement, and it explained 40% of the total variance of it. These results are consistent with previous studies, such as Wei et al. (2019), who found a positive relationship between FLE and English academic achievement in a group of middle school students in China.

Secondly, it was found that Grade 8 students' enjoyment of learning Chinese as a foreign language was significantly, positively and weakly correlated with their Chinese academic achievement, and it explained only 14% of the total variance of it. These results differ from those reported in previous studies (e.g., Dewaele & Alfawzan, 2018; Li, 2019; Wei et al., 2019).

Based on the findings of the current study, it can be concluded that enjoyment of learning Chinese as foreign language was a factor having a strong (for Grade 7 students) or weak (for Grade 8 students) positive influence on the participants' Chinese academic achievement.

Self-Efficacy for Learning Chinese as a Foreign Language, Enjoyment of Learning Chinese as a Foreign Language and Chinese Academic Achievement

Firstly, it was found that there was a significant, strong multiple correlation of self-efficacy for and enjoyment of learning Chinese as a foreign language with Chinese academic achievement of Grade 7 students at the target school. Moreover, the combination of self-efficacy for and enjoyment of learning Chinese as a foreign language was found to explain 49% of the total variance of Grade 7 students' Chinese academic achievement. Secondly, it was found that there was a significant, moderately strong multiple correlation of self-efficacy for and enjoyment of learning Chinese as a foreign language with Chinese academic achievement of Grade 8 students at the target school. The combination of self-efficacy for and enjoyment of learning Chinese as a foreign language was found to explain 20% of the total variance of Grade 8 students' Chinese academic achievement.

From these results, it can be concluded that the combination of independent variables in the current study had a strong (for Grade 7 students) or moderately strong (for Grade 8 students) explanatory and predictive power for participants' Chinese academic achievement. Since an important prerequisite for experiencing and maintaining a flow state (e.g., enjoyment) is that the demands of the task faced by the individual are not beyond the individual's perceived skills or capabilities (i.e., self-efficacy), so the individual is able to achieve positive, appealing and pleasant performance outcomes (Csikzentmihalyi, 1990), it was expected, as hypothesized, to find that increases or decreases in the combination of the independent variables in this study had a significantly strong (for Grade 7 students) or moderately strong (for Grade 8 students) impact on the increase or decrease in participants' Chinese academic achievement. However, this explanatory and predictive power decreased from being able to explain 49% of the Chinese academic achievement in Grade 7 to 20% in Grade 8. One of the possible explanations is the instructional transition in Chinese as a foreign language class between primary and secondary school for the participants. In Grade 7 at the target school, students experience a shift from a learner-centered environment in terms of teacher pedagogy, teacher support and social adjustment (i.e., communication with peers and teachers) to a more teacher-centered learning environment. Since this study was conducted during Term 1 of the academic

year 2019-2020, Grade 7 students had less than a semester to get familiar with the new learning environment in secondary school, and their self-efficacy for and enjoyment of learning Chinese as a foreign language, at the moment of the data collection, could be somehow influenced by their primary school experience, in particular, by the social aspects of FLE (Hanewald, 2013). Grade 8 students have had more than a year to adjust to the secondary school learning environment in Chinese as a foreign language class. In this new environment, other factors (e.g., teacher effectiveness or parental involvement) could be considered as variables having a stronger explanatory and predictive power for Chinese academic achievement than the independent variables considered in the current study.

Recommendations

The recommendations of the current study are intended to benefit the teachers, the school administrators, the students, as well as the future researchers.

Recommendations for Teachers

Based on the findings of this study, Chinese language teachers can revise their teaching strategies or apply multiple teaching strategies which focus on stimulating students' self-efficacy and enjoyment. For example, in order to improve students' self-efficacy for learning Chinese as a foreign language, teachers can provide more support, arrange more activities (i.e., Chinese speech contests, Chinese song competitions and Chinese drama shows). In order to improve students' enjoyment of learning Chinese as a foreign language, teachers can use various teaching materials (i.e., Chinese magazines, Chinese calligraphy brushes and inks) and organize some classroom activities for students. Moreover, keeping in mind that students' enjoyment might change over time (Csikzentmihalyi, 1990), Chinese language teachers should always be aware of the classroom atmosphere to take prompt actions in maintaining students' flow state of mind (and hence enjoyment) for longer.

Recommendations for School Administrators

Chinese activities through which students can obtain their mastery experience and vicarious experience (e.g., Chinese speech contests), must be supported by school administrators. Besides, the school administrators could provide some teaching materials particularly for Chinese teaching at secondary level (e.g., Chinese reading books), to support the teacher to organize multiple activities for Chinese language learning. Additionally, the school administrators should organize professional development programs with relevant topics for Chinese language teachers in future training sessions.

Recommendations for Students

The participants' level of self-efficacy for learning Chinese as a foreign language was found to be slightly low, and the mean Chinese academic achievement was found to be closer to the passing score than to the higher score. Therefore, in order to improve their self-efficacy and academic achievement in Chinese as a foreign language class, students might practice more (i.e., mastery experience), learn from peers (i.e., vicarious experience), and control themselves to have a positive emotional reaction toward tasks and learning activities (i.e., somatic and emotional states). Also, the possible changes and improvements promoted by the Chinese language teachers and school administrators, based on the recommendations made in this article, will provide students with learning opportunities that they should take advantage of and engage in.

Recommendations for Future Researchers

Based on the research findings of this study, future researchers, in addition to enjoyment, should consider other factors that may influence students' Chinese academic achievement, such as students' interest, teacher effectiveness or parents' involvement. Besides, future researchers may explore a non-linear relationship between the variables in the study, which is hinted by having a strong relationship and a low coefficient of the determination. Additionally, longitudinal research could be conducted to explore the subtle developmental shifts that may occur in the variables addressed in this study, during the transition from one grade to another during the entire secondary education, in order to explore the dynamic relationships among self-efficacy for learning Chinese as a foreign language, enjoyment of learning Chinese as a foreign language and Chinese academic achievement.

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