

Relationship Between Attitude, Learning Orientation, Motivation, and Proficiency Degree of the Chinese Language Among Trainee Teachers

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the relationship between attitude, learning orientation, motivation, and mastery of the Chinese language among trainee teachers by using Gardner and Lambert's social psychology model and Gardner's psychological model of learning. A total of 181 trainee teachers were selected to answer a questionnaire. Data were analyzed by using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling. The findings indicated extrinsic motivation was related negatively to Chinese language skills and achievement. Intrinsic motivation and integrative orientation were related positively to Chinese language skills, whereas intrinsic motivation, integrative orientation, and motivational intensity were related positively to Chinese language achievement. In addition, integrative orientation, instrumental orientation, and attitude toward learning situations were positive predictors of the motivational intensity of the trainee teachers. Therefore, this study provides a model to the Institute of Teacher Education on the factors that need to be considered to motivate trainee teachers in mastering the Chinese Language.

Keywords: integrative orientation, instrumental orientation, attitude toward learning, motivation, motivational intensity, Chinese language

Povzetek

Namen te študije je bil raziskati povezavo med odnosom, učno usmerjenostjo, motivacijo in ravni znanja kitajskega jezika med učitelji pripravniki z uporabo Gardnerjevega in Lambertovega modela socialne psihologije in Gardnerjevega psihološkega modela učenja. Skupaj je bilo izbranih 181 učiteljev pripravnikov, ki so odgovorjali na vprašanja. Podatki so bili analizirani z metodo modeliranja delnih strukturnih enačb najmanjših kvadratov. Ugotovitve so pokazale, da je bila zunanja motivacija negativno povezana tako z jezikovnimi sposobnostmi kot tudi ravni znanjem kitajskega jezika. Notranja motivacija in povezovalna naravnost sta bili pozitivno povezani z jezikovnimi sposobnostmi, medtem ko so bile intrinzična motivacija, povezovalna naravnost in intenzivnost motivacije pozitivno povezane z visoko ravni znanja kitajskega jezika. Poleg tega so bili povezovalna naravnost, ciljna usmerjenost in odnos do učnih situacij pozitivni napovedovalci intenzivnosti motivacije učiteljev pripravnikov. Zato ta študija daje Inštitutu za izobraževanje učiteljev model o dejavnikih, ki so nujni za motivacijo učiteljev pripravnikov pri usvajanju kitajskega jezika.

Ključne besede: povezovalna naravnost, ciljna usmerjenost, odnos do učenja, motivacija, intenzivnost motivacije, kitajščina

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1 Introduction

With rapid development, China emerges as the country with the world's second-largest economy. The impact of China's economic growth has created a new atmosphere for learning Chinese, which is also spurred by its efforts to cultivate its soft power by promoting the Chinese language and culture (Wang, 2019). In Malaysia, the Chinese language has progressively become more prestigious and more popular as an additional language for non-native speakers besides the Chinese in Chinese schools that provide the mother tongue education to the local Chinese. Although Chinese poses a high difficulty level for many, it is regarded as a tool for students to function as professionals in an international context (Wen & Piao, 2020).

In this regard, the Malaysian Ministry of Education (MoE) strives to improve the professionalism of teaching in collaboration with foreign universities and conducts various teacher education programs to attract outstanding Malaysian students who hold a Certificate of Education (equivalent to 'O' level) to choose the profession of a teacher. Since the year 2012, such outstanding students in the Study of Chinese as a Foreign Language have been sent to China universities to learn the Chinese Language for five years. After graduating, these students will be placed at the Institute of Teachers Education to pursue the Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PDE) Program in three semesters and thus become teachers. They will be placed in government primary and secondary schools to teach the Chinese Language as an additional language and communicative language respectively. According to the Brief Facts of the Institute of Teacher Education, the number of outstanding students sent to universities in Beijing to learn the Chinese Language were 105, 426, 72, 164, 101, and 83 respectively in the period between 2015 and 2020. This shows the MoE has been producing Malay teachers to teach Chinese language as L2 consistently and such efforts also expanded its Chinese language education to all strata of society in Malaysia.

However, Mahmud, Mohamad Nasri, Samsudin and Halim (2018) found that the contents of teacher education programs are limited. As a result, some trainee teachers could not master the contents of the subject in depth though the development of teacher education programs should be in line with current developments to ensure that trainee teachers master pedagogical, curriculum, professionalism, assessment, and language skills as well as the ability to face the challenges of education in the future (Zakaria et al., 2017).

During the training process under the PDE program, the problem of Chinese language proficiency influences the motivation of the trainee teachers in the teaching and learning process. A study by Ng, Wong, Tan, Guek, and Lim (2017) showed the level of oral proficiency of the Malay trainee teachers was low, and they were not competent to be Chinese language teachers in national schools. Different from native speakers, non-native speakers face more challenges and tend to be less confident in delivering knowledge to students. This was proved by the study of Yang (2019) who indicated that

native speakers of English teachers felt confident in speaking English naturally. In contrast, non-native speakers had lower language proficiency, which limited their use of English in class.

Researchers have identified, attitude, learning orientations, and motivation as three substantial factors that have great impacts on learners' success and achievement. Many studies (e.g. Xie, 2014; Yasima et al., 2017) have proved the importance of attitudes (Huang, 2018; Christiansen, 2019; Liu et al., 2021; Patria, 2021), learning orientation (Gardner & Lambert, 1972, 1985, 2001), and motivation (Kowalczyk & Biedroń, 2017; Farshbafian et al., 2018; Tanjitanont et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2021) in language learning across various contexts in different countries. The above research has primarily focused on EFL/ESL learners. Studies on other languages, particularly Chinese Language especially on trainee teachers are still at the infant stage. The present study addresses this gap in the current literature.

2 Literature review

2.1 Attitude

Attitude is a factor of self-appraisal of an object, which either gets accepted or rejected. The ability of students to master a second language is not only influenced by their mental competence or language skills, but also by the students' attitudes and perceptions toward the target language (Gardner & Lambert, 1986). Thus, it can be concluded that students' language learning attitude may affect their ability in learning a foreign language (Smith, 1971). If a student is interested and eager to learn, they will have a positive attitude and be more enthusiastic about learning the additional language, and vice versa.

Furthermore, Gardner (1985) stated that attitudes towards language learning situations are constructed from attitudes towards language related to the educational context, namely attitudes towards teachers, courses, and language learning, while attitudes towards social refer to attitudes towards culture, and attitudes towards native speakers and communities of the target language. All of these contexts are inherent in language learning and shape students' attitudes toward language achievement performance positively (Gardner, 2001).

Most recent studies on the attitude mainly focus on non-native speakers of English, such as Huang (2018); Christiansen (2019); Liu, Zhang, and Fang (2021); Patria (2021). Only a few studies were found related to the attitude toward Chinese language learning. Wiener (2017) examined how cue-weighting of a non-native speech cue changes during early adult second language (L2) acquisition by observing and interviewing ten native English-speaking learners of a first-year Chinese course. Results were compared to ten native Mandarin speakers. Learners' reaction time and d-prime results became more

native-like after two months of classroom study but plateaued thereafter. Besides that, Liu and Wang (2019) included that the six participants all had experiences studying in China, and all held lifelong learning attitudes as well as demonstrated various self-regulation strategies with strong self-motivation and dedication. While they all took Chinese classes at college, only two of them studied prior to college, which is encouraging for Chinese learners who were unable to learn Chinese from an early age.

In Indonesia, the study by Kurniawan and Suprajitno (2019) explained that parents strongly encourage children to learn and use the Chinese language effectively to increase the interest of Indonesian students. In addition, the school's Chinese cultural activities are also effective in attracting students to learn the language and culture. In other words, parental encouragement and Chinese culture effectively change students' attitudes towards the Chinese language and successfully attract them to choose the language subject. Research by Xiong and Eamoraphan (2020) investigated 124 adult learners' attitudes toward native and non-native Chinese-speaking teachers in Thailand from three aspects: motivation, communication, teaching, and learning. Findings showed that the adult learners had no preference for either native Chinese-speaking teachers or non-native Chinese-speaking teachers, regardless they were from the beginning level, intermediate level, or advanced level. A one-way ANOVA showed that attitudes of adult learners from different learning levels towards native and non-native Chinese-speaking teachers were not significantly different.

From the previous studies, it can be concluded that the attitude towards the learning situation of teacher education programs is a factor that affects Chinese language proficiency among trainee teachers. In the learning process, trainee teachers interact with the Chinese language lecturers, use the Chinese language and follow Chinese language education programs daily. Thus, in this study, attitudes towards lecturers, the Chinese language, and educational programs are the three main subscales of attitudes towards situations to measure the attitudes of trainee teachers in Chinese language learning.

2.2 Learning orientation

According to Social Psychology Theory (Gardner & Lambert, 1972), learning orientation is divided into two types, namely integration and instrumental orientation. Both orientations determine a person's motives for language learning and thus influence their motivation to achieve their objectives.

According to Gardner and Lambert (1972), integration-oriented language learning goals show that trainee teachers integrate into the target language culture and consider themselves part of the native speaker community, while instrumental-oriented learning goals show that trainee teachers consider the learnt language as a tool to help them obtain employment opportunities, prizes, or approval in a program

(Gardner, 1985, 2001). This indicates that each individual has a different learning orientation with the aim of achieving learning objectives.

As such, there is much research that presents differences in integration and instrumental orientation in learning. In the study by Tan, Chew, Fonny, and Zanariah (2019), t-test analysis showed that there was a significant difference between the integration and instrumental orientation in learning the Chinese language between Chinese and Malay trainee teachers in Malaysia. In addition, a comparison between the levels of integration and instrumental orientation found that Malay trainee teachers were more instrumental-oriented, especially in future educational and career development. As such, Chinese language teacher education has a high economic value and Chinese language proficiency paves many advantages to Chinese language trainee teachers.

Ventivani, Muyassaroh, Putri, and Mardasari (2021) determined the learning orientation of third-year students of the Mandarin study program at the Universitas Negeri Malang by using surveys and interviews in their process of learning Mandarin. The results showed that there were four learning orientations in Mandarin, namely (1) the language is presently an important communication tool, (2) mastering the language is considered make it easier for someone to get a job, (3) the language is popular, and (4) the language can increase self-confidence. Based on these, the orientation of learning Mandarin for third-year students of the Mandarin study program at the Universitas Negeri Malang was extrinsic and instrumental.

Besides, Wang (2019) notified that non-native speakers who specialized in Mandarin show strong interest in engaging in community activities and interacting with Chinese native speakers understand their culture and lifestyle. Consequently, using the Chinese language when communicating with the Chinese community effectively improves their proficiency level within a short time. Yu and Downing's study (2012) found that students who embraced integrative orientation and motivation may master Mandarin better than students who studied with instrumental orientation and motivation. This showed that communication with native speakers improves foreign language proficiency effectively. Thus, integrative orientation is a major factor in improving target language proficiency positively (McEown et al., 2014; Liu & Li, 2018).

In this study, the integration orientation indicates that a learner shows interest in modern Chinese culture, way of life, art, and literature, through which they improve and better understanding native Chinese speakers. On the other hand, the instrumental orientation indicates the trainee teachers's purposes of learning the Chinese language, which are to get employment opportunities and opportunities for further studies after undergraduate graduation, interest in social status, side income, and others.

2.3 Motivation

In the learning process, motivation may fluctuate over time and vary in relation to the learning experience; for example, successful language learning itself leads to improved motivation (Gardner, 1985). The study from Lee, Qin, Li, Xiong, and Lin (2021) shows that group-specific motivational components and teacher-specific components are the most critical factors affecting motivation level in language learning.

Deci and Ryan (2000) posit their widely accepted differentiation of motivation as “intrinsic” and “extrinsic” motivation. They revisited the classic definitions of these two kinds of motivations which are well adhered to in this study. As in the classification, intrinsic motivation (IM) is the execution of an activity for its innate gratification without the thought of any consequence, while extrinsic motivation (EM) is the execution of an activity to receive external rewards.

A comparative study of intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation with academic achievement by Taylor et al. (2014) indicated that intrinsic motivation is a positive factor in academic achievement and extrinsic motivation has a negative relationship with academic achievement among students from primary and secondary schools, higher education, and students from different cultures.

In the context of this study, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation were applied. Individuals who are intrinsically motivated will find interesting situations where they can develop themselves through what challenges the activity may give (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The extrinsic motivations of external regulation indicate that trainee teachers value the merits and importance of teacher education programs to them. The extrinsic motivation of introjection regulation indicates that vocational students consider self-achievement in the learning process while self-regulation indicates students’ awareness of self-interest in teacher education (Utvær & Haugan, 2016).

Motivational intensity is the force of self-motivation to achieve success (Brown, 2014). Masgoret and Gardner (2003) explained that motivational intensity refers to a highly motivated individual who constantly enhances effort, completes all work diligently, has goals, passion, and inspirations, enjoys engaging in activities, and who is willing to accept reinforcement to achieve success in language learning, using strategies to achieve learning achievement. Thus, motivational intensity describes the behavior of interest, desire, and like to achieve an objective as a means of assessing the development of individual strengths in language learning. (Gardner, 1985).

Some studies revealed that the motivational intensity levels in English language learning were at a moderate level among the Thai undergraduates majoring in English for International Communication (EIC) (Tanjitanont et al., 2020) and language learners at Pomeranian University in Słupsk (Kowalczyk & Biedroń, 2017). On the contrary, the study by Farshbafian et al. (2018) demonstrated the high level of motivational intensity for learning Persian among Turkish-speaking students. However, Kowalczyk and

Biedroń's (2017) research showed the more people can imagine themselves as speaking like a native speaker, the higher the levels of general motivation and the intensity of motivation are.

The motivational intensity that will be handled in the present research is related to the willingness to learn Chinese, the desire for high achievement, and the interest in the Chinese language. In the learning process, the attitude, orientation, and motivation of the different educators directly affect their academic achievement in the Chinese language. As such, learning orientations and attitudes toward the learning situation continue to influence their motivation and thus achieve success in their learning (Gardner, 1985, 2001).

The study applied the social psychology model (Gardner & Lambert, 1972) and the psychological model of learning (Gardner, 1985) as the conceptual foundation of the study. Gardner's (1985) social learning model explains that the attitudes, motivations, and nature of individual orientation have been distinguished from the beliefs and culture of the environment. Therefore, this study aimed to identify the relationship between learning orientation (integration and instrumental orientation), attitude to learning situations (Chinese attitude, Chinese language, and teacher education programs), motivational intensity, and self-determination (intrinsic and extrinsic motivation) with mastery of Chinese Language (Chinese Language skills and achievement) among trainee teachers. The following research questions were formulated:

1. Are there any relationships between integration and instrumental orientation, attitude towards learning situations, motivational intensity, and intrinsic and extrinsic motivation with Chinese language skills among trainee teachers?
2. Are there any relationship between integration and instrumental orientation, attitude towards learning situations, motivational intensity, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation with Chinese language achievement among trainee teachers?
3. Are attitudes to learning situations, integrative and instrumental orientation predictors of motivational intensity among trainee teachers?

3 Methodology

3.1 Research design

This study is a correlation study that aims to identify variables that have some sort of relationship to the extent that a change in one creates some change in the other. This method was used to enable data collection of integration orientation, instrumental orientation, extrinsic motivation, intrinsic motivation, attitude towards learning

situations, and sample motivational intensity among the Chinese language trainee teachers from the PDE program in Malaysia.

3.2 Respondents

A total of 181 samples were selected from 3 different locations of the Institutes of Teacher Education across the country using the cluster random sampling method. Samples in peninsular Malaysia were divided into the northern zone (Penang and Perak) and the eastern zone (Pahang). Next, the Chinese language teacher training groups of the Institute of Teacher Education were randomly selected as the sample in the study from the Diploma of Postgraduate Education (DPE) Program. The DPE trainee teachers consisted of a Malay ethnic with a Bachelor's Degree in Mandarin as a foreign language that they had obtained from some university in China. All of them have passed the Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi (HSK6), which is a proficiency examination of the Chinese Language in China. 31 male (17.12%) and 150 (82.87%) female trainee teachers are all Malay native speakers. Their age ranged from 23 to 25 years. Table 1 shows the profile of respondents in the study.

Table 1: Profile of Respondents

| Demography | | DPE | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|-----|-------|
| | | F | % |
| Ethnic | Malay | 181 | 100 |
| Gender | Male | 31 | 17.12 |
| | Female | 150 | 82.87 |
| Age | 23 years | 135 | 74.59 |
| | 24 years | 39 | 21.55 |
| | 25 years | 7 | 3.87 |
| Chinese Language Proficiency Test | HSK 6 | 181 | 100 |
| Mother tongue | Malay Language | 181 | 100 |
| Total | | 181 | 100 |

3.3 Research instruments

The research instrument consisted of a Chinese language test and a questionnaire. The Chinese language test aimed to measure the trainee teachers' achievement in the Chinese language and consisted of 20 questions concerning Chinese language and 20 questions concerning Chinese culture. . Aspects of Chinese language knowledge included grammar, phonetics, characters, and vocabulary of the Chinese language whereas aspects of Chinese culture included the history of Chinese classical education and philosophy; the development of the Chinese language and characters, Chinese

classical literature, ancient science and technology in China as well as the development of traditional Chinese culture. The total score of this test was 100% and the total score of each respondent was categorized into five grades, namely grade A (100% -75%), grade B (74% -60%), grade C (59% -40%), grade D (39% -20%) and grade E (19% -0%).

The questionnaire was divided into three sections. The first section focused on the integrative and instrumental orientation aspects (10 items) and learning motivation in the Chinese language (24 items) (Larisa, Mohd Don & Loh, 2016). The second section focused on the attitudes toward learning situations (12 items) and was modified from Ho (1998), whereas the third section focused on the modified motivational intensity component (7 items) and was derived from the study of Liu (2017). Each item used a five-point Likert scale, in which 1 means "strongly disagree" and 5 means "strongly agree". Forth section was comprised of Chinese language skills including communication, reading, and writing skills. The language skills assessment was a self-rated item of the respondents, consisting of three modified items from the study of Shafaei and Razak (2016). Items about the Chinese language were measured with a 4-point Likert scale, namely 1 as "weak", 2 as "less skilled", 3 as "good" and 4 as "excellent". Each respondent was given a set of Chinese language tests and answered within 1 hour. A set of questionnaires was to be answered after that.

The Chinese language test and questionnaire in this study have been validated by six field experts in the field. A pilot study was conducted at an Institute of Teacher Education in Perak involving 66 Chinese language trainee teachers. The alpha coefficient for the questionnaire ranged from .70 to .96 for all constructs and sub-constructs of the study. Therefore, both instruments were suitable for use in the real study.

3.4 Data analysis

After data screening and preliminary tests for normality, homogeneity of variances, sphericity, and presence of outliers, it was determined that non-parametric analyses were required. The Partial Least Square Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) analysis method was used in the study by using Smart PLS 3.0. Smart PLS 3.0 software is ideal for testing formative and reflective constructs, small sample sizes, complex latent latencies, and Hierarchical Component Models (Hair et al., 2017). Thus, the structural model which is known as the inner model was carried out to analyze the data. In this study, exogenous variables were integration orientation variables, instrumental orientation, attitudes towards learning situations, intrinsic motivation, and extrinsic motivation, whereas endogenous variables consisted of intensity motivation, Chinese language achievement, and language skills.

4 Findings

4.1 Structural model of the study

The structural model of this study is a high-hierarchical model using latent variable values from high-level constructs to test and predict exogenous latent relationships with endogenous. The following hypothesis test shows the relationship between each latent exogenous to the latent endogenous as shown in Figure 1.

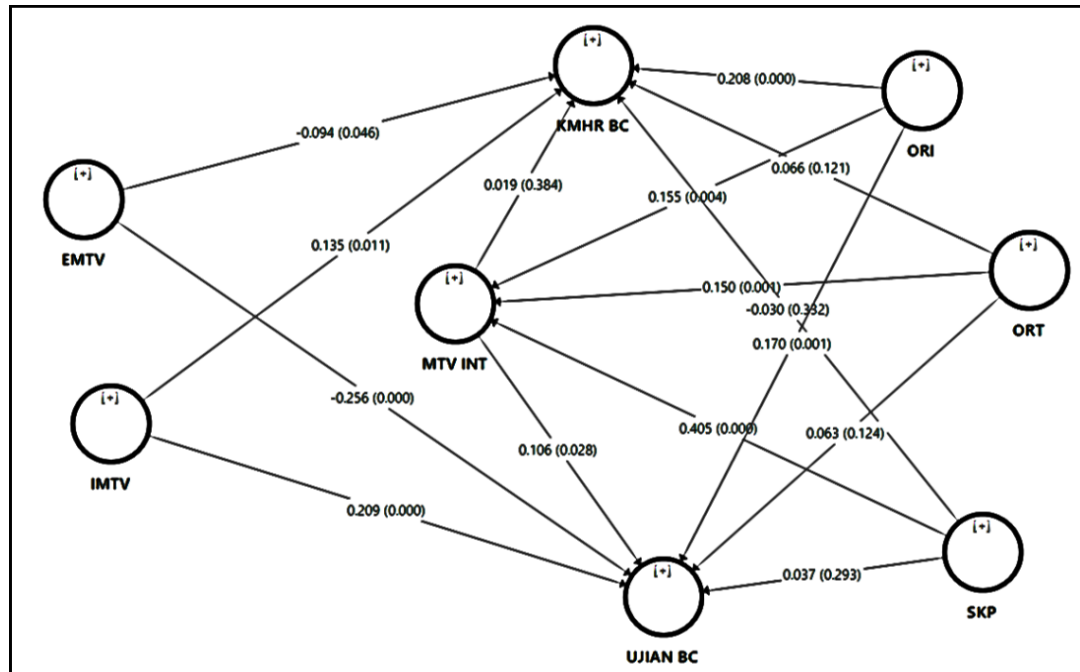


Figure 1: Structural Model

Table 2: Path Coefficient and Hypothesis Test

| Relationship | Beta | SD | t- value | p- value | Result |
|----------------------|-------|------|----------|----------|-----------------|
| MTV EKST -> KMHR BC | -.094 | .055 | 1.705 | .044 | Significant |
| MTV INST -> KMHR BC | .135 | .059 | 2.273 | .012 | Significant |
| ORI -> KMHR BC | .208 | .056 | 3.689 | .000 | Significant |
| ORT -> KMHR BC | .066 | .055 | 1.183 | .118 | Not Significant |
| SKP -> KMHR BC | -.030 | .068 | .441 | .329 | Not Significant |
| MTV INT -> KMHR BC | .019 | .065 | .292 | .385 | Not Significant |
| MTV EKST -> UJIAN BC | -.256 | .051 | 4.996 | .000 | Significant |
| MTV INST -> UJIAN BC | .209 | .045 | 4.673 | .000 | Significant |
| ORI -> UJIAN BC | .170 | .054 | 3.173 | .001 | Significant |
| ORT -> UJIAN BC | .063 | .056 | 1.132 | .129 | Not Significant |
| SKP -> UJIAN BC | .037 | .068 | .547 | .292 | Not Significant |

| Relationship | Beta | <i>SD</i> | <i>t</i> - value | <i>p</i> - value | Result |
|---------------------|------|-----------|------------------|------------------|-------------|
| MTV INT -> UJIAN BC | .106 | .056 | 1.883 | .030 | Significant |
| ORI -> MTV INT | .155 | .057 | 2.726 | .003 | Significant |
| ORT -> MTV INT | .150 | .048 | 3.094 | .001 | Significant |
| SKP -> MTV INT | .405 | .057 | 7.148 | .000 | Significant |

Note: EMTV - extrinsic motivation; IMTV – intrinsic motivation; MTV INT – motivational intensity; KMHR BC – Chinese language skills; UJIAN BC – Chinese language test; ORI – integration orientation; ORT – instrumental orientation; SKP – attitude towards the learning situation

The results of the study in Figure 1 and the results of the coefficient test and hypothesis in Table 2 have been obtained after having performed bootstrapping calculations using 5000 repeated samples. The results of the coefficient analysis showed that there was a significant positive relationship between intrinsic motivation ($\beta = .135$, $p < .05$) and integrative orientation ($\beta = .208$, $p < .05$) with language skills, but there was a direct significant negative relationship between extrinsic motivation ($\beta = -.094$, $p < .05$) and language skills, whereas there was no direct relationship between instrumental orientation ($\beta = .066$, $p > .05$), attitude toward learning situations ($\beta = -.030$, $p > .05$) and intensity motivation ($\beta = .019$, $p > .05$) with language skills.

Furthermore, coefficient analysis revealed that there were significant positive and direct relationship between intrinsic motivation ($\beta = .209$, $p < .05$), integrative orientation ($\beta = -.170$, $p < .05$) and intensity motivation ($\beta = .106$, $p < .05$) with Chinese language achievement. On the other hand, there was a significant direct negative relationship between extrinsic motivation ($\beta = -.256$, $p < .05$) and Chinese language achievement. However, there was no significant direct relationship between instrumental orientation ($\beta = .063$, $p > .05$) and attitude toward learning situations ($\beta = .037$, $p > .05$) with Chinese achievement.

Finally, the coefficient analysis showed that there was a significant direct positive relationship between integrative orientation ($\beta = .155$, $p < .05$), instrumental orientation ($\beta = .150$, $p < .05$), and attitude toward learning ($\beta = .1405$, $p < .05$) with motivation. In other words, the higher the integrative orientation, instrumental orientation, and attitude toward the learning situation, the higher the motivation for learning the Chinese Language among the trainee teachers.

Overall, the findings indicated that extrinsic motivation was related negatively to Chinese language skills and achievement. Intrinsic motivation and integrative orientation were related positively to Chinese language skills, whereas intrinsic motivation, integrative orientation, and intensity motivation were related positively to Chinese language achievement. In addition, the instrumental orientation and attitude towards the learning situation did not indicate any relationship to Chinese language skills and achievement among the trainee teachers. However, integrative orientation,

instrumental orientation, and attitude toward learning situations were positive predictors of the intensity of motivation of the trainee teachers.

5 Discussion

The structural models showed that extrinsic motivation has a negative relationship with Chinese language skills and achievement. This situation illustrated that trainee teachers place great emphasis on self-satisfaction, which is to fulfill their desires to achieve well-being. This means that rewards such as job opportunities, prestigious positions, social status, praise, and appreciation do not influence the behavior of trainee teachers to improve their Chinese language skills and achievement positively. On the other hand, job opportunities are available for all trainee teachers after graduating from teacher education programs. This situation makes job opportunities not to become the main factor in motivating trainee teachers to get excellent results. Therefore, extrinsic motivation is not a major goal in the teaching and learning process of the teacher education program in Malaysia. This is in the contrary to previous studies (Samejon, 2015; Utvær & Haugan, 2016; Tanjitanont et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2021) which indicated extrinsic motivation as a powerful factor that increases the performance of learners in English.

However, the results of this study showed a positive and significant relationship between intrinsic motivation with Chinese language achievement and language skills. In other words, the higher the intrinsic motivation, the higher the Chinese language skills and achievement. This result illustrated the learning situation in teacher education institutes is fun, there is autonomous support from lecturers and the opportunity for independent involvement has motivated trainee teachers in teacher education. The findings of this study are in line with the study by Shogren, Raley, Wehmeyer, Grandfield, Jones, and Shaw (2019) and Núñez and León (2019), which state that the classroom environment and situation with autonomous support that encourages and opportunities students' involvement in learning and freedom of control in the classroom atmosphere will generate positive emotions, fun, willingness, and a high desire to meet internal satisfaction and well-being. According to the theory of self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 2000), each individual performs an activity or work to meet psychological needs.

In addition, the findings showed that there was a significant and direct positive relationship between integrative orientation and Chinese Language skills. However, there was no direct significant relationship between instructional orientation and attitude toward learning situations with Chinese language skills and achievement. This finding indicates that integrative orientation is a predictor of Chinese language skills and achievement, which matches the results by Liu and Li (2018). The higher the level of integrative orientation, the higher the Chinese language skills and achievement

among trainee teachers. This explains that culture and language are interconnected and inseparable, which is due to the cultural understanding facilitating language proficiency.

The construction of integrative orientation in the study encompassed three elements, namely Chinese culture, Chinese community social-cultural, Chinese arts and literature. This explains why the trainee teachers are interested in Chinese culture, Chinese community social culture, and Chinese arts and literature. In other words, Chinese culture, arts and literature are effective factors that stimulate the interest of trainee teachers to pursue study in Chinese language education.

According to Gardner (1985, 2001), acceptance of another culture is the psychological preparation for accepting another culture as an additional culture in their lives. Pavlova and Vtorushina (2018) proved that in a student's cognition, culture is manifested in their knowledge of the language and cultural picture of the world as well as in the student's cognitive motivation and aspiration for constant improvement of foreign language skills.

In a plural and multicultural society such as Malaysia, Chinese culture is an additional culture within Malaysian society. Malay trainee teachers who are interested in Chinese culture will accept the culture as an additional culture. In addition, non-native Chinese language trainee teachers without basic Chinese education have successfully mastered Chinese culture within five years of studying Chinese as a foreign language at China university, which also showed that learning the Chinese language and culture has provided positive pressure on the mastery of Mandarin. Therefore, non-native trainee teachers who love to engage in Chinese community-based social activities can certainly help them master the Chinese Language. This is because interaction with native speakers may improve foreign language mastery, enhance their sense of belonging in their career, and establish positive occupational values to support their career (Yu, 2018).

Moreover, the findings of the study indicate that there is no relationship between attitude toward learning situations and Chinese language skills and achievement. This means that the attitude towards the learning situation is not a predictor of Chinese language skills and achievement. Attitudes toward learning situations in this study focused on perceptions towards the Chinese language, Chinese lecturers, and Chinese language education programs. The positive or negative attitude of the trainees towards the learning situation reflected the behavior of the teachers accepting or rejecting Chinese language, Chinese lecturers, and Chinese language teacher education programs. Therefore, findings show that the attitude of trainee teachers towards the learning situation does not necessarily have a significant positive relationship with Chinese language skills and achievement, as also proved by Xiong and Eamoraphan (2020).

On the other hand, the findings of the study also show a positive relationship between motivational intensity and Chinese language achievement. This can be interpreted as the higher intensity motivation, the higher achievement of the trainee teachers. Thus, the development of intensity motivation in learning among the trainee teachers depends on integration orientation, instrumental orientation, and attitude towards learning situations to develop efforts to pursue learning interests, continue efforts and retain efforts to achieve success. This finding is in line with the findings by Dörnyei (2009) who stated that a student with high language proficiency does not necessarily succeed in language learning if they are not motivated in language learning.

However, the results of this study also indicate that there is no significant relationship between intensity motivation and language skills. This finding shows that trainee teachers did not have high-intensity motivation to improve their communication, reading, or writing skills. This is because trainee teachers use the Chinese Language daily, which indicates that they have a good level of communication, reading, and writing skills and therefore they do not have the desire to motivate themselves. Liu's (2017) study also showed that foreign students learning Mandarin have a high level of language proficiency that did not show high motivational intensity.

According to the social learning model (Gardner, 1985, 2001) and the social psychology model (Gardner & Lambert, 1972), motivational intensity is an important factor that leads one to achieve one's self, but it is established by the orientation and attitude towards positive language. Therefore, the motivational intensity is not necessarily directly related to language skills (Pae, 2008). According to Gendolla, Wright, and Richter (2019), one will not put any effort in solving learning difficulties if they evaluate that knowledge is too difficult to master. This is associated with the proficiency level of Chinese language skills among trainee teachers. Trainee teachers have rated themselves to have excellent levels of language skills, and as such faced no obligations to increase their efforts and improve their language skills.

6 Recommendations

The study specifically selected Malay trainee teachers in the Chinese language by using survey methods and PLS-SEM analysis. It investigated the learning orientation, attitude, and motivation of the Chinese Language among the trainee teachers.

Limitation of this study is that the data were collected in three research sites only. This implies that the findings and conclusions may differ if the study is administered with different framework. Therefore, future studies are proposed to expand sampling to Malaysian institutions of a higher, tertiary education such as public universities.

Furthermore, an advanced model evaluation is proposed by using observed heterogeneity and unobserved heterogeneity modeling analysis techniques with the

aim of making comparisons of studies from various groups such as ethnic groups or between two different countries. Moreover, it would be beneficial to employ data triangulation by including qualitative research methods in a similar topic to gain a better understanding of the matter. The results of the suggested studies will contribute to new knowledge and add to the existing sources in the development of teacher education programs in the future.

7 Conclusion

In a nutshell, the present study addressed a niche in the Chinese language learning model, namely the relationship between orientation, attitude, and motivation with the mastery of the Chinese language among Malay trainee teachers from the Institutes of Teacher Education in Malaysia, thus becoming a specific guide to career prediction. As discussed, the structural model indicated that intrinsic motivation and integrative orientation have positive relationships with Chinese language achievement. This situation explained that the success of the Chinese language and Chinese culture among the trainee teachers depends on the extent to which intrinsic motivation and individual integrative orientation dictate their career planning, using existing knowledge resources, control, and individual actions in learning activities to achieve success.

As a consequence, the existence of motivational models and self-determination in the study can contribute to linking the teaching and learning network of the Chinese language in the realm of the professions of future teachers. This may have far-fetched implications for Chinese language trainee teachers as it is recommended that they seek influential factors as stated above in an effort to become positively motivated teachers in their careers. Therefore, lecturers at the Institute of Teacher Education need to be aware that an autonomous support learning environment can generate intrinsic motivation to change the behavior of trainee teachers to be proactive and productive. This is an important insight which helps produce professionally trained teachers who meet the needs of the nation's education staff and who are fit, qualified, skilled, and meet the needs of global education.

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