

Research on Motivation to Learn Foreign Languages and Culture among Foreign Students at MUST

Susan Hui-Yun Yang

The study focuses on exchange students, including Filipino students who registered in the Mechanical Engineering Department, Vietnamese students, and other ASEAN students who studied Chinese at MUST. In total, there were 165 college students participating in the research.

The pool consisted of 90 female students, 68 male students and 7 students who chose the category “Other”. Their average age was 20. Most of them were 18 years old, and a few of them were 30-40 years old. There were 89 Vietnamese students, 57 from the Philippines, 11 from Japan, 3 from Korea and the rest from different countries, including Ethiopia, Indonesia, Mongolia, Thailand, and the Ukraine. A questionnaire about learning foreign languages and culture was distributed to these participants. The questionnaire (English version and Vietnamese version) was put online. Some of the participants were interviewed and had a series of discussions on their experience of learning the foreign languages. It was found that about 13% of the participants strongly agree that they usually work hard in their English classes, and 18% in their Chinese classes. About 42% of them strongly agree Chinese is relevant to their career development, and 33% of them strongly agree English is relevant to their career development. Filipino students, most of whom would like to continue Chinese study in the future, have higher motivation in studying Chinese than those who come from Japan and Vietnam.

At least half of all the participants are interested in reading Chinese and English story books. Most of them think that to practice writing Chinese characters and English words per day is helpful for improving their writing skills. Finally, most of them think it’s helpful for them to study both foreign languages by attending cultural activities.

The research results will be very helpful for curriculum theorists to examine the philosophical and ideological underpinnings of existing curricula tailored for the foreign students at MUST. Besides studying how curricula are used and evaluating the effectiveness of the teaching methodology, they can improve the teaching and learning quality by doing research on curriculum development from the perspectives of motivation theories for figuring out the conflicting and corresponding visions, as well as the enduring concerns on globalization policies, of both teachers and foreign college students.

