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An Investigation and Analysis of Chinese Language Learning Motivation among Vietnamese High School Students

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Abstract

Against the backdrop of expanding economic and educational cooperation between China and Vietnam, as well as the continuous development of international Chinese language education, Chinese has become an increasingly important foreign language option in Vietnamese secondary education. This study investigates the motivations underlying Chinese language learning among Vietnamese high school students. A total of 71 students from 10 high schools across northern, central, and southern Vietnam participated in the research. Data were collected through questionnaire surveys and analyzed using descriptive statistical methods, supported by a review of relevant literature on second language learning motivation.The findings indicate that Vietnamese high school students' motivation for learning Chinese is primarily characterized by a strong instrumental orientation, accompanied by notable intrinsic interest motivation, while social communication motivation remains comparatively weak. Motivations associated with career development, future employment opportunities, overseas study, and educational advancement emerged as the most influential factors. In addition, students demonstrated considerable interest in Chinese culture, language learning, and Chinese popular media, including films, music, and online content. By contrast, motivations related to authentic communicative needs were less prominent.The study further reveals that Chinese learning motivation among Vietnamese high school students is shaped by multiple social and educational factors, including examination systems, career expectations, digital media exposure, and learning environments. Compared with university students, high school learners demonstrate stronger examination-oriented and stage-specific motivational characteristics and are more strongly influenced by external educational conditions.The findings of this study provide practical implications for curriculum design, classroom instruction, localized teaching material development, and learning support systems in Vietnamese high schools. In addition, the study contributes to the broader discussion of second language learning motivation within the context of international Chinese language education in Southeast Asia.

Keywords: Vietnamese high school students; Chinese language learning; learning motivation; international Chinese education; second language acquisition recognition.

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1. Introduction

In the context of globalization and increasing regional integration, foreign language proficiency has become an important asset for young learners in education, employment, and intercultural communication. Alongside China's expanding global influence, the demand for Chinese language learning has grown rapidly worldwide. Owing to geographical proximity, close economic cooperation, and longstanding cultural connections, Southeast Asia has gradually become a major region for the development of international Chinese language education [1]. As neighboring countries with extensive historical and economic ties, China and Vietnam have maintained close cooperation in trade, education, tourism, and cultural exchange. In recent years, the advancement of regional economic integration and the Belt and Road Initiative has further increased the demand for multilingual professionals, contributing to the growing popularity of Chinese among Vietnamese students.

Chinese language education in Vietnam has developed considerably over the past decade. The Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training has promoted reforms in second foreign language education, and Chinese has gradually been introduced into the curricula of several public and specialized high schools. In major cities such as Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, and Da Nang, both the number of schools offering Chinese courses and the number of students studying Chinese have increased steadily. At the same time, the influence of the Chinese Proficiency Test (HSK) in Vietnam has expanded significantly. According to Vietnam.vn, the number of HSK candidates in Vietnam exceeded 146,000 in 2025, while cumulative registrations surpassed 530,000, making Vietnam one of the fastest-growing HSK markets globally [2]. In addition, the Confucius Institute at Hanoi University reported nearly 10,000 HSK and HSKK registrations during the first quarter of 2025 alone[3]. These developments reflect the growing demand for Chinese language competence among Vietnamese youth.

Beyond educational demand, the expansion of China–Vietnam economic cooperation has also increased the need for Chinese-speaking professionals in Vietnam. Reports indicate that Chinese-related employment opportunities have grown substantially in fields such as translation, tourism, international business, cross-border e-commerce, and education[4]. Under these circumstances, an increasing number of Vietnamese students regard Chinese as a valuable resource for future education, employment, and career advancement.

The high school stage represents a critical period during which learners gradually develop educational aspirations, language awareness, and career planning. Compared with university students, high school learners are generally more strongly influenced by examination systems, parental expectations, teacher guidance, and peer environments. Consequently, the motivations that encourage Vietnamese high school students to learn Chinese may influence not only their individual learning outcomes but also curriculum design, classroom practices, and language education policies in Vietnamese secondary education. Investigating Chinese learning motivation among Vietnamese high school students therefore carries both theoretical and practical significance.

From a theoretical perspective, previous studies on Chinese learning motivation among Vietnamese learners have focused primarily on university students, international students, and adult learners, while relatively little attention has been paid to adolescent learners at the high school level. However, high school students differ considerably from university students in terms of psychological development, learning autonomy, academic pressure, and future planning. Their motivational structures may therefore demonstrate characteristics that cannot be fully explained through findings derived from adult learners. Research on Vietnamese high school students may consequently broaden the application of second language motivation theories within the context of adolescent Chinese language learning in Southeast Asia.

From a practical perspective, understanding students' motivational orientations may help teachers and curriculum designers develop more effective teaching strategies, classroom activities, and learner support systems. Such research may also contribute to the development of localized teaching materials and more learner-centered Chinese language programs in Vietnamese high schools.

Research on second language learning motivation has been widely developed in both international and Chinese scholarship. Gardner and Lambert categorized language learning motivation into instrumental motivation and integrative motivation[5]. Instrumental motivation refers to practical goals such as examinations, employment, and educational advancement, whereas integrative motivation reflects learners' interest in the target language community and culture. Within the Vietnamese high school context, motivations related to HSK examinations, university admission, and future career opportunities largely reflect instrumental orientation, while interest in Chinese films, music, history, and popular culture may be associated with integrative motivation.

Building upon socio-psychological approaches, Dörnyei emphasized the influence of classroom environment, teacher behavior, learning tasks, and learner self-concepts on language learning motivation[6]. Since high school students rely heavily on classroom-based learning, their motivation is often shaped by teaching methods, peer interaction, and classroom atmosphere. Dörnyei's framework therefore provides valuable insights into the development of learning interest and motivational persistence among adolescent learners.

In addition, Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory distinguishes between intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation[7]. Intrinsic motivation refers to learning driven by personal interest and enjoyment, whereas extrinsic motivation is associated with external pressures and rewards such as examinations, parental expectations, and future employment. In the Vietnamese context, some students may learn Chinese because of their interest in Chinese culture or language learning itself, while others may be motivated primarily by academic and professional considerations. This theoretical perspective helps explain the diversity and sustainability of learners' motivational orientations.

Previous research in international Chinese education has also examined Chinese learning motivation among learners from different cultural backgrounds. Some studies have focused on ethnic Chinese learners in Southeast Asia and international students studying in China. For example, Wang Aiping emphasized the importance of cultural identity in shaping Chinese learning motivation among ethnic Chinese students[8]. Similarly, Wang Zhigang and colleagues found that ethnic Chinese learners tended to demonstrate stronger integrative motivation than non-ethnic Chinese learners[9]. These findings suggest that cultural identity

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and ethnic background may significantly influence language learning attitudes and investment.

Other studies have explored Chinese learning motivation among non-ethnic Chinese learners. Gong Ying's research on Japanese learners of Chinese found that interest in Chinese culture and a desire for cultural closeness could strengthen integrative motivation[10]. Such findings indicate that Chinese learning motivation is shaped not only by practical considerations but also by learners' perceptions of Chinese culture and society.

Research on Vietnamese learners of Chinese has mainly concentrated on university students. Nguyen Thi Mai Anh identified several motivational dimensions among Vietnamese university students, including instrumental motivation, integrative motivation, media-related motivation, and interest motivation[11]. Nguyen Thi Cam Tu highlighted the influence of cognitive, emotional, and social factors on Vietnamese university students' Chinese learning motivation[12]. In addition, Dinh Thi Hoang Lan found that ethnic Chinese university students tended to display stronger identity-related motivation, whereas non-ethnic Chinese students were more strongly influenced by instrumental goals[13]. These studies provide valuable foundations for understanding Chinese learning motivation among Vietnamese learners.

Nevertheless, several limitations remain in existing research. First, high school students remain relatively underrepresented compared with university students and adult learners. Second, although previous studies have discussed instrumental and integrative motivation extensively, relatively few have examined these motivational dimensions within the specific context of Vietnamese high school education, including examination systems, HSK-related educational opportunities, and future career expectations. Third, the growing influence of Chinese digital media and online entertainment among Vietnamese adolescents has received insufficient scholarly attention. Finally, many existing studies remain largely descriptive and provide limited discussion of pedagogical implications for curriculum development and classroom instruction.

Against this background, the present study investigates the Chinese learning motivation of Vietnamese high school students, with particular attention to the structural characteristics and practical influences of different motivational dimensions. By combining questionnaire survey data with theories of second language learning motivation, this study aims to provide a more systematic understanding of adolescent Chinese language learning motivation within the Vietnamese educational context.

2. Research Design

2.1 Research Participants

This study targeted Vietnamese high school students as the research participants, and a total of 71 valid questionnaires were collected. The respondents were primarily between 15 and 18 years old and were drawn from high schools located in northern, central, and southern Vietnam, thereby providing a certain degree of regional representation. Specifically, the northern sample included students from Chu Van An High School, Ha Noi–Amsterdam High School, and Phan Dinh Phung High School; the central sample included students from Thanh Chuong 3 High School, Quoc Hoc High School, and Phan Chau Trinh High School; while the southern sample was collected from Nguyen Huu Cau High School, Gia Dinh High School, Vung Tau High School, and Nguyen Minh Khai High School. The sample included not only schools located in major urban areas with relatively strong educational resources but also schools from regions with different economic and cultural backgrounds. As a result, the sample was able to reflect, to some extent, the diversity of Chinese learning motivation among Vietnamese high school students.

Regarding school type, 58 respondents were from public high schools, accounting for 81.7% of the sample, while 13 respondents were from private schools or foreign-language-specialized schools, accounting for 18.3%. This distribution generally reflects the structure of secondary education in Vietnam, where public schools constitute the dominant educational sector. In addition, students from foreign-language-specialized schools tended to possess relatively richer foreign language learning experiences, which may provide useful insights into differences in Chinese learning motivation across educational backgrounds.

With respect to the duration of Chinese language learning, 31 students had studied Chinese for less than one year (43.7%), 24 students had studied Chinese for one to two years (33.8%), and 16 students had studied Chinese for more than two years (22.5%). This distribution indicates that the participants included both beginner learners and students with relatively sustained learning experience.

In terms of Chinese language proficiency, 35 students had not yet taken the HSK examination (49.3%), 24 students had passed HSK Levels 1–2 (33.8%), and 12 students had reached HSK Levels 3–4 (16.9%). These results suggest that some participants had already developed a certain level of Chinese proficiency and relatively clear learning goals, whereas others remained at the initial stage of Chinese language learning.

Overall, the participants demonstrated a reasonable degree of diversity in terms of regional background, school type, duration of Chinese learning, and language proficiency level. Such diversity contributes to a broader understanding of the characteristics and internal variations of Chinese learning motivation among Vietnamese high school students.

Nevertheless, several limitations should be acknowledged. The data were collected primarily through online questionnaires using convenience sampling; therefore, the sample size remains relatively limited. The findings are intended mainly to reflect general tendencies in Chinese learning motivation among Vietnamese high school students and should not be generalized directly to the entire population of Vietnamese secondary school learners. Furthermore, differences in educational resources, curriculum arrangements, and family backgrounds across regions were not examined systematically in the present study and may warrant further investigation in future research.

2.2 Research Methods

This study employed questionnaire surveys, literature review, and descriptive statistical analysis to investigate the Chinese learning motivation of Vietnamese high school students.

First, questionnaire surveys were conducted to collect first-hand data concerning students' Chinese learning motivation. The questionnaire consisted of 22 items in total. Questions 1–21 were closed-ended items using binary response options ("agree" and "disagree"), while Question 22 was an open-ended item allowing respondents to provide additional explanations regarding their motivations for learning Chinese. The questionnaire was divided

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into three sections. The first section collected participants' background information, including age, region, school type, duration of Chinese learning, and HSK level. The second section examined different dimensions of Chinese learning motivation, including examination-related motivation, career development, interest in Chinese culture, interest in films, music, and literature, interest in language learning, social communication needs, and ethnic Chinese identity. The final section consisted of an open-ended supplementary question intended to capture motivational factors beyond the fixed-response items.

Second, the study employed a literature review to examine theories of second language learning motivation and previous studies on Chinese learning motivation among Vietnamese learners. The theoretical framework mainly drew upon the motivational theories proposed by Gardner, Dörnyei, Deci, and Ryan, while also incorporating findings from previous studies conducted by Nguyen Thi Mai Anh, Nguyen Thi Cam Tu, and Dinh Thi Hoang Lan on Vietnamese university students learning Chinese. The literature review not only summarized existing research findings but also provided the theoretical foundation for the development of research questions, questionnaire design, and data interpretation in the present study.

Finally, descriptive statistical analysis was used to organize and interpret the questionnaire data. The analysis primarily focused on calculating the frequencies and proportions of "agree" and "disagree" responses for each questionnaire item. Based on Gardner's distinction between instrumental and integrative motivation, as well as Deci and Ryan's theory of intrinsic motivation, the motivational orientations of Vietnamese high school students were categorized into three major dimensions: instrumental motivation, intrinsic interest motivation, and social communication motivation.

Given the relatively small sample size and the binary-response structure of the questionnaire, the study did not employ complex inferential statistical analysis or significance testing across variables such as region, school type, or gender. This methodological approach was considered more appropriate for the scope and characteristics of the available data and helped avoid overinterpretation of limited statistical results, thereby enhancing the overall credibility and validity of the research findings.

3. Results

3.1 Questionnaire Collection and Overall Sample Characteristics

This study conducted an online questionnaire survey through the Wenjuanxing platform between March and April 2026. A total of 71 questionnaires were distributed, and all 71 questionnaires were deemed valid, resulting in a response rate of 100%. All respondents were Vietnamese high school students who were either currently studying Chinese or had prior exposure to the language.

Overall, the findings reveal a relatively clear pattern in the Chinese learning motivation of Vietnamese high school students. Among the various motivational dimensions, motivations related to career development, future employment opportunities, and personal advancement emerged as the most prominent. At the same time, intrinsic interest in Chinese culture, films and television programs, and language learning itself was also widely recognized among respondents. In contrast, motivation associated with real-life social communication and interpersonal interaction appeared comparatively weak.

These findings suggest that Vietnamese high school students do not learn Chinese solely for examination-related purposes. Rather, their learning motivation appears to be shaped by a combination of practical considerations, future-oriented expectations, cultural interest, and personal enthusiasm for language learning.

Table 1. Survey on Chinese Learning Motivation among Vietnamese High School Students

No.	Content	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)
1	Hope to use HSK Level 3 results to satisfy high school graduation foreign language requirements	69.0	31.0
2	Hope to choose Chinese as the foreign language subject in the national university entrance examination	71.8	28.2
3	Hope to use HSK Levels 4–6 results and high school Chinese scores as university application materials	64.8	35.2
4	Hope to directly enter the second year of university study with HSK Levels 5–6 results	35.2	64.8
5	Hope to study in China in the future	84.5	15.5
6	Hope to travel to China in the future	87.3	12.7
7	Hope to engage in cross-cultural or business cooperation work related to China in the future	71.8	28.2
8	Hope to engage in Chinese language education work in the future	57.7	42.3
9	Hope to engage in interpretation or translation work in the future	84.5	15.5
10	Hope to work as a Chinese-speaking tour guide in the future	50.7	49.3
11	Believe that Chinese is a foreign language with strong developmental advantages besides English	76.1	23.9
12	Hope to learn Chinese for communication because there are many Chinese people nearby	43.7	56.3

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13	Hope to learn Chinese for communication because of having Chinese friends	43.7	56.3
14	Like Chinese culture	97.2	2.8
15	Hope to watch Chinese films and television works through Chinese learning	93.0	7.0
16	Hope to read Chinese novels or appreciate Chinese songs through Chinese learning	93.0	7.0
17	Hope to learn about modern Chinese technology through Chinese	57.7	42.3
18	Hope to learn about Chinese history and culture through Chinese	74.6	25.4
19	Believe that mastering Chinese can provide more employment opportunities	98.6	1.4
20	Interested in learning new languages itself	97.2	2.8
21	Have an ethnic Chinese or Chinese background	0.0	100.0

Source: Compiled by the author based on a questionnaire survey conducted among 71 Vietnamese high school students between March and April 2026.

The responses to the open-ended question revealed that three participants additionally identified Chinese idols, film and television celebrities, and online popular culture as important reasons for learning Chinese, accounting for 4.2% of the total sample. This finding suggests that Chinese popular culture also plays a role in stimulating Chinese learning interest among some Vietnamese high school students.

3.2 Analysis of Major Motivational Dimensions

Drawing upon Gardner's distinction between instrumental and integrative motivation, as well as Deci and Ryan's theory of intrinsic motivation, this study categorizes Vietnamese high school students' Chinese learning motivation into three major dimensions: instrumental motivation, intrinsic interest motivation, and social communication motivation. Compared with previous studies that adopted more fragmented classifications, this framework provides a clearer understanding of the relationships among different motivational orientations.

3.2.1Instrumental Motivation as the Dominant Motivational Orientation

The findings indicate that instrumental motivation constitutes the primary driving force behind Vietnamese high school students' Chinese learning. Among all questionnaire items, the statement "mastering Chinese can provide more employment opportunities" received the highest agreement rate, at 98.6%. In addition, 84.5% of respondents expressed interest in pursuing interpretation or translation careers in the future, while 71.8% hoped to cooperate with Chinese individuals or enterprises professionally. Furthermore, 57.7% of respondents indicated interest in Chinese language education careers, and 50.7% hoped to work as Chinese-speaking tour guides. The data also show that 84.5% of students hoped to study in China in the future, whereas 87.3% expressed interest in traveling to China.

These findings may be associated not only with the increasingly close economic relationship between China and Vietnam but also with the competitive nature of Vietnam's educational system and foreign language environment. For many high school students, foreign language learning is viewed primarily as a practical resource for improving educational competitiveness and future employability rather than as a purely interest-driven activity. In a context where English learning has already become widespread and highly competitive, Chinese is increasingly perceived as a foreign language with distinctive developmental advantages.

In addition, high school students are generally still in the early stages of academic and career planning. Consequently, their learning decisions are often strongly influenced by external factors such as examination systems, parental expectations, and teacher guidance. Gardner argued that instrumental motivation is closely related to learners' practical needs concerning educational opportunities, career development, and social competition[14]. Within the Vietnamese context, Chinese is increasingly regarded not merely as a language skill but also as a form of educational and professional capital.

The results further indicate that 69.0% of respondents hoped to use HSK Level 3 results to satisfy foreign language graduation requirements, 71.8% intended to select Chinese as the foreign language subject in the national university entrance examination, and 64.8% hoped to use HSK Levels 4–6 results and Chinese academic performance as part of university applications. These findings suggest that Chinese learning has become increasingly integrated into Vietnamese students' educational planning.

However, only 35.2% of respondents hoped to enter directly into the second year of university study based on advanced HSK qualifications. This comparatively lower proportion may reflect students' limited awareness of relevant educational policies as well as the perceived difficulty of achieving higher HSK levels.

3.2.2 Strong Intrinsic Interest Motivation

In addition to instrumental motivation, Vietnamese high school students also demonstrated strong intrinsic interest motivation related to culture and language learning. Specifically, 97.2% of respondents reported that they were interested in Chinese culture, while 93.0% expressed interest in watching Chinese films and television programs through learning Chinese. Similarly, 93.0% hoped to read Chinese novels or appreciate Chinese music, and 74.6% wished to learn more about Chinese history and culture. Moreover, 97.2% of respondents indicated that they were interested in learning new languages in general.

These findings suggest that the dissemination of Chinese culture and popular media has significantly influenced Vietnamese adolescents' interest in learning Chinese. In recent years, Chinese television dramas, online short videos, popular music, and digital literature have become increasingly accessible to Vietnamese youth, enabling many students to encounter Chinese cultural content even before formally studying the language. Such exposure appears to strengthen students' curiosity and enthusiasm toward Chinese learning.

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A notable characteristic of this motivational dimension is its strong connection with digital media. Compared with traditional classroom exposure, contemporary Vietnamese adolescents are more likely to encounter Chinese culture through social media platforms, online entertainment content, short-video applications, and popular music. This pattern of "cultural exposure preceding language learning" reflects the growing influence of digital globalization on foreign language learning motivation.

At the same time, 57.7% of respondents expressed interest in learning about modern Chinese technology through Chinese language study. This finding suggests that some Vietnamese high school students are also interested in China's contemporary social and technological development rather than focusing solely on traditional cultural aspects.

From the perspective of motivation theory, these learning behaviors mainly reflect intrinsic interest motivation, in which learners engage in language learning because of personal interest, enjoyment, and satisfaction derived from the learning process itself. According to Deci and Ryan, intrinsic motivation can strengthen long-term learning persistence[15]. Consequently, this type of motivation may contribute positively to sustained engagement in Chinese language learning.

3.2.3 Relatively Weak Social Communication Motivation

Compared with career-oriented and cultural-interest motivations, social communication motivation appeared relatively weak overall. The findings show that only 43.7% of respondents reported learning Chinese because there were many Chinese people nearby, while another 43.7% indicated that they learned Chinese because they had Chinese friends.

These findings suggest that most Vietnamese high school students are not primarily motivated by immediate communicative needs. Instead, their Chinese learning appears to be influenced more strongly by future educational and professional aspirations, as well as cultural interest. One possible explanation is that most Vietnamese high school students have limited opportunities to participate in authentic cross-cultural communication environments. As a result, they may find it difficult to develop communication-oriented learning needs based on direct interpersonal interaction.

In addition, Chinese language teaching at the secondary school level in Vietnam still focuses largely on classroom instruction and examination preparation, while opportunities for authentic communicative practice and international exchange remain relatively limited. Consequently, although students may demonstrate strong interest in Chinese culture, this interest has not yet fully developed into stable real-life communicative motivation. Clément, Dörnyei, and Noels argued that social interaction environments play a significant role in shaping learners' motivation[16]. Therefore, the limited availability of authentic language environments may help explain the comparatively weak social communication motivation observed in this study.

4. Discussion

4.1 Main Characteristics of Chinese Learning Motivation among Vietnamese High School Students

The findings of this study suggest that career-oriented motivation represents the most prominent motivational dimension among Vietnamese high school students learning Chinese, followed by intrinsic cultural interest motivation. Educational advancement motivation also demonstrates a strong practical orientation, whereas social communication motivation appears comparatively weak. Overall, the motivational pattern identified in this study can be summarized as a dominance of instrumental motivation, accompanied by substantial intrinsic interest motivation and relatively limited social communication motivation.

First, career development motivation constitutes the primary driving force behind Chinese learning among Vietnamese high school students. Specifically, 98.6% of respondents believed that Chinese proficiency could increase employment opportunities, 84.5% hoped to pursue translation or interpretation-related careers, and 71.8% expressed interest in future cooperation with Chinese enterprises. These findings indicate that most students have already recognized the practical value of Chinese in future academic and professional development. This result is generally consistent with Gardner and Masgoret's argument that instrumental motivation is closely associated with career prospects and practical benefits [17]. In recent years, the expansion of economic cooperation between China and Vietnam, together with the increasing presence of Chinese enterprises in Vietnam, has contributed to a growing social demand for Chinese-speaking professionals.

Second, cultural interest also emerged as an important intrinsic source of motivation. A large proportion of respondents expressed strong interest in Chinese culture, films, television programs, and music. These findings suggest that Chinese popular culture has become an important channel through which Vietnamese adolescents encounter Chinese language and culture. According to Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory, personal interest plays an important role in sustaining long-term learning engagement[18]. However, it should also be noted that adolescents' cultural interest may remain largely entertainment-oriented and may not necessarily develop into stable integrative motivation. Therefore, teachers may need to transform cultural resources such as films, music, and online media into structured language learning activities in order to facilitate deeper language development.

Third, educational advancement motivation demonstrates clear stage-specific characteristics. A considerable proportion of respondents hoped to use HSK scores to fulfill graduation requirements or support university applications. These findings indicate that Chinese learning among Vietnamese high school students remains strongly influenced by examination systems and educational competition. At the same time, only a relatively small proportion of students hoped to enter directly into the second year of university study through advanced HSK qualifications. This may suggest that many high school students have not yet developed long-term academic planning related to Chinese learning. Consequently, while Chinese instruction in high schools should respond to examination demands, excessive emphasis on test-oriented teaching should be avoided.

Finally, social communication motivation appears relatively limited. Only 43.7% of respondents reported learning Chinese because of real-life communicative needs. This finding suggests that most Vietnamese high school students have relatively limited opportunities to participate in authentic cross-cultural communication environments. As a result, they may find it difficult to develop stable communication-oriented learning needs. Clément, Dörnyei, and Noels emphasized the important role of social interaction environments in shaping language learning motivation[19]. Therefore, the limited availability of authentic

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communicative contexts may partly explain the comparatively weak social communication motivation observed in this study.

4.2 Differences between High School Students and University Students in Chinese Learning Motivation

Compared with previous studies on Vietnamese university students, high school students appear to demonstrate more stage-specific and practically oriented motivational characteristics.

Chinese learning among university students is often closely connected with professional specialization, long-term career planning, and cultural identity. For example, Nguyen Thi Mai Anh noted that the motivational structure of Vietnamese university students learning Chinese is relatively complex and strongly influenced by academic environments and disciplinary backgrounds[20]. In contrast, high school students have generally not yet established clear academic specializations or long-term professional goals. Their motivation is therefore more strongly shaped by examination systems, educational advancement pressure, and exposure to popular culture.

In addition, none of the respondents in the present study reported an ethnic Chinese background. This finding suggests that Chinese learning among Vietnamese high school students is driven primarily by practical considerations and personal interest rather than by ethnic or cultural identity. Consequently, Chinese language promotion at the high school level should pay closer attention to students' developmental needs, future aspirations, and practical learning expectations.

4.3 Implications for Chinese Teaching in Vietnamese High Schools

The findings of this study provide several implications for Chinese language teaching in Vietnamese high schools.

First, curriculum design should incorporate more localized and career-related learning contexts, such as China–Vietnam trade, tourism services, and cross-border communication. Such content may help students recognize the practical relevance of Chinese learning to future academic and professional development.

Second, teachers should make more effective use of Chinese films, music, and digital media resources by transforming them into structured classroom activities, such as role-play tasks, lyric analysis, cultural comparison projects, and short review writing. These activities may help increase students' learning engagement while simultaneously improving their language production abilities.

Third, although responding to HSK examination requirements remains important, Chinese instruction should avoid excessive reliance on mechanical drilling practices. Vocabulary and grammar instruction should instead be integrated into communicative and task-based learning activities in order to promote both examination competence and communicative competence.

In addition, schools may benefit from utilizing digital platforms to create more authentic opportunities for language interaction. Activities such as online exchange programs, Chinese language clubs, and language partner projects could help increase students' opportunities to use Chinese in meaningful communicative contexts.

Finally, Chinese language education in Vietnamese high schools still faces several challenges, including insufficient localization of teaching materials, limited instructional time, and uneven distribution of educational resources. Future efforts should therefore focus on developing localized teaching materials and strengthening teachers' abilities in task-based instruction and digital resource integration.

4.4 Research Limitations

Several limitations of this study should be acknowledged. First, the sample size was relatively limited, and convenience sampling was adopted during data collection. Consequently, the findings cannot be generalized fully to all Vietnamese high school students learning Chinese.

Second, the study relied primarily on questionnaire surveys and descriptive statistical analysis, without incorporating qualitative research methods such as interviews or classroom observations. As a result, the deeper psychological and social factors underlying certain motivational tendencies could not be explored comprehensively.

Finally, this study did not conduct detailed comparisons across variables such as region, school type, gender, or Chinese proficiency level. Future research could further investigate these differences in order to provide a more nuanced understanding of Chinese learning motivation among Vietnamese adolescent learners.

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