

# **Learning Chinese as a Second Language: An investigation on the Intention of Thai in Bangkok to study Chinese**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The main purpose of this research is to help and promote Thai people to learn Chinese. A conceptual model was created using value, culture, information and environment as independent factors and intention to learn Chinese as the dependent variable in this research. A random survey of 398 Thai people was conducted using a quantitative research method. It is concluded that value and culture are the main factors affecting Thai people's learning of Chinese.

**Keywords:** Thai, Chinese, behavioral, intention, language.

## **1.1 Introduction**

As China grows economically, and strengthens itself both domestically and abroad, the role of Chinese language and culture is becoming increasingly important. With the development of international globalization, more and more Chinese people are moving from China to the world. China's influence on the world stage is rapidly gaining attention and prominence, especially in the areas of world trade, geopolitics and culture. China is now the world's second largest economy after the United States. Culturally speaking, Mandarin is the official language of China and today it has become one of the most spoken languages in the world. The language is also one of the official languages used by Singapore, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau and all other people of Chinese descent. Naturally, more and more people in the world, including Thailand, choose to learn Chinese in addition to their mother tongue for different reasons, which may be but not limited to cultural, socio-economical etc.

Due to the special geographical location of China and Thailand, the two countries are relatively close. In recent years, more and more Chinese have chosen to travel to Thailand to study and work, and more and more Thais have visited China. Many of the policies of the two countries have also promoted the exchange of culture and economy between China and Thailand. For example, the "One Belt and One Road" policy proposed by China in 2013 and the Kunming-Bangkok Highway, which was launched in 2008, are very conducive to promoting the relationship between China and Thailand.

Chinese is the official language of China, and speaking this one language unifies all of China's population. Having the ability to speak Chinese is beneficial to Thai's as it will add value to any business done with China. If Thai's are able to speak Chinese fluently and understand Chinese culture, there will be more choices in the direction of employment and business opportunities for Thai nationals. More and more Thai people learn Chinese, which will promote the exchanges between China and Thailand.

## **1.2 Purpose**

This study focuses on factors that are related to the intention to learn Chinese based in the Metropolis in Bangkok, Thailand. In order to determine the factors that affect the Thai people's learning of Chinese. Finding out the factors that affect Thai people's learning of Chinese, discuss the results of this research and make recommendations, the main purpose of which is to help and promote the learning of Chinese by Thai's. Promote cultural exchanges between China and Thailand and attract more Thais to learn Chinese.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Value**

Researchers have found that when people make certain purposeful decisions, they must perceive the existence of certain values. Perceived value can promote people's decision-making intentions.

Since the 2000s, as people have realized and perceived perceived value, more and more researchers have begun to pay attention to the concept of perceived value (Chen, Tsai, 2007; Kashyap, Bojanic, 2000; Murphy et al., 2000; Petrick et al. , 1999). Petrick and Backman, 2001). Holbrook (1994, p. 22) pointed out that all marketing activities in social activities have a very important foundation, which is to meet the customer's initial expectations and provide customers with the value they expect.

### **2.2 Environment**

Schultz (2002) acknowledges that self-association with the natural environment is a commitment to the environment. Testing the self-feeling interconnectivity by including nature in the self-scale. According to research, the commitment to the environment is a powerful predictor of sustainable consumption behavior (Rusbult et al., 2001). There is a correlation between environmental commitments and self-reported environmental behaviors and intentions (Davis et al., 2009) **2.3**

### **Culture**

More and more scholars and entrepreneurs recognize that the cultural distance between China and Western countries is enormous. Chinese culture has its own characteristics compared with Western culture. Unfortunately, few people realize the importance and urgency of tapping the core of Chinese culture. And culture also influences people's consciousness decisions. Culture has profoundly shaped individual thoughts and behaviors, which is a common sense (Kevin et al., 2010).

### **2.4 Information**

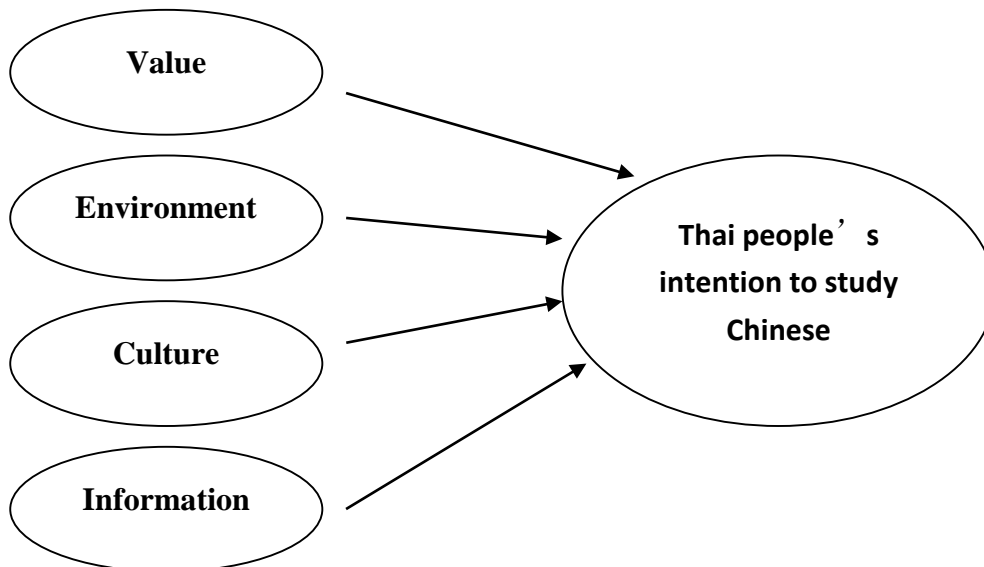
Empirical evidence suggests that social factors, personal attitudes, and technological factors combine to influence information-based technology usage intentions. The technology acceptance model and its extensions (Davis, 1989; Venkatesh and Davis, 2000) help explain the technology-related aspects of technology usage intentions. This line of theory highlights the role of perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use as direct drivers of usage intentions

## RESEARCH FRAMEWORKS

The researcher has identified the conceptual framework through literature review. This conceptual framework will show the factors that influence Thais' intention to learn Chinese. These four factors are value, environment, culture, and information.

In this study, the researcher chose the framework. Because the independent variables found by the researcher work together and affect the dependent variables at the same time.

Conceptual Framework



### 3.1 Research Hypotheses

H1o: Value does not have any statistical influence on Thai people's intention to study Chinese.

H1a: Value have statistical influence on Thai people's intention to study Chinese.

H2o: Environment does not have any statistical influence on Thai people's intention to study Chinese.

H2a: Environment have statistical influence on Thai people's intention to study Chinese.

H3o: Culture does not have any statistical influence on Thai people's intention to study Chinese.

H3a: Culture have statistical influence on Thai people’s intention to study Chinese.

H4o: Information does not have any statistical influence on Thai people’s intention to study Chinese.

H4a: Information have statistical influence on Thai people’s intention to study Chinese

### 3.2 Research Methodology

This research is quantitative in nature. The researcher first determined the sample population to be Thai’s living in the metropolitan area of Bangkok, the capital of Thailand, and the researcher employed random sampling as the technique to gather data from the respondents. The researcher first analyzed the reliability of the instrument, then proceeded to collect data. The researcher has used descriptive analysis to explain the demographic data collected by the researcher. Third, the relationship between independent and dependent variables was studied using correlation analysis. Finally, multiple linear regressions is used to determine if the independent variable has any statistical effect on the dependent variable.

In addition, the study decided to use the “5 point Likert Scale” to get their thoughts, mindsets and related data as it was widely used and easily adapted to any part of their questionnaire. The study provided five grades of ratings: completely disagree = 1, disagree = 2, neutral = 3, agree = 4, strongly agree = 5

## FINDINGS

### 4.1 Descriptive Analysis

**Table 1**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Frequency</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
Male	170	42.7	170	42.7
Female	228	57.3	398	100

A total of 398 valid questionnaires were collected in this study. The result is Thai people living in Bangkok and Thai people with Chinese language intentions. The number is 398 (100%). There were 170 male respondents (42.7% of the total surveyed). There are 228 women (57.3% of the total number of people surveyed).

**Table2**

Age	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percent
under 18	83	20.9	83	20.9
18-25	192	48.2	275	69.1
26-30	80	20.1	355	89.2
31-40	33	8.3	388	97.5
40-50	9	2.3	397	99.8
Above50	1	0.2	398	100

Among the members of the survey, 83 people were younger than 18 years old (20.9% of the total surveyed), 192 people were 18-25 years old (48.2% of the total survey), and 80 people were 26-30 years old (accounting for 20.1% of the total number of surveys), 33 people aged 31-40 years old (8.3% of the total survey), 9 people aged 40-50 (2.3% of the total survey), and over 50 years old 1 person (0.2% of the total number of people surveyed)

#### 4.2 Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient Table

**Table 3 - Pre-testing Result (N=100)**

Variable	Cronbach's alpha	Number of Item
Thai people's Intention to study Chinese	0.769	4
Value	0.812	4
Environment	0.792	4
Culture	0.846	4
Information	0.805	4

According to Table 3, the Cronbach's Alpha results for all variables were greater than 0.75, which is good or excellent internal consistency (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Therefore, the

questions designed in this questionnaire can be used reliably as a tool to collect data from this study.

### 4.3 Hypotheses Testing

#### 4.3.1 Table4 – Correlation relationship between IV and DV

Factors	Significant value 0.05 level (two tailed)	Level of correlation	Correlation coefficient  (Thai people have intention to learn Chinese )
Value	.000	.669**	Strong relationship
Environment	.000	.511**	Moderate relationship
Culture	.000	.577**	Moderate relationship
Information	.000	.526**	Moderate relationship

According to the analysis in Table 4, the significant value between the value and the Thai people's willingness to learn Chinese is  $<0.05$ , indicating that there is a significant statistical relationship between this value and the Thai people's willingness to learn Chinese. As a result, the null hypothesis was rejected. In addition, the correlation between this value and Thai learning Chinese is 0.669, indicating that there is a strong relationship between this value and Thai learning Chinese. The correlation between environmental factors and Thai learning Chinese is 0.511, indicating that there is a Moderate relationship between the environment and Thai people learning Chinese. The correlation between cultural factors and Thai learning Chinese is 0.577. The correlation between information factors and Thai learning Chinese. At 0.526, both are Moderate strength relationships.

#### 4.3.2 Multiple Linear Regressions

In order to study whether a Thai person has a dependent variable in the study of learning Chinese, a multi-factor framework was studied to study the relationship between multiple independent variables or independent variable sets of multiple cause frames. In other words, this study uses a multivariate framework to identify the impact of various potential predictors, such as value, environment, culture, information, and whether Thais have an intention in learning Chinese



In this section, multiple linear regressions were carried out to investigate the relationship between independent variables and dependent variables: which independent variables affect dependent variable and how those independent variables affect dependent variable.

**Table 5**
**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.699 <sup>a</sup>	.489	.484	.46768	.489	94.036	4	393	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), MeanINF, MeanVL, MeanEN, MeanCUL

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	82.271	4	20.568	94.036	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	85.958	393	.219		
	Total	168.230	397			

**Table 6 ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

a. Dependent Variable:  
MeanINTL

b. Predictors: (Constant),  
MeanINF, MeanVL, MeanEN,  
MeanCUL



**Table 7**
**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.938	.164		5.710	.000
1 MeanVL	.546	.055	.546	10.019	.000
MeanEN	-.095	.060	-.093	-1.563	.119
MeanCUL	.268	.064	.274	4.205	.000
MeanINF	.025	.064	.025	.390	.696

**Table 8**

Hypothesis	Significant Value	Standardized Coefficient ( $\beta$ )	Decision
H1o: Value does not have any statistical influence on Thai people's intention to	.000	.546	Rejected

The first part of the multiple linear

regression

mode

is used to determine how well the regression model fits the data. As can be seen from Table 5, the adjusted R-squared value is 0.484, which means that 48.4% of the variance of Thais with Chinese intent can be predicted from these four independent variables (value environmental culture information). This also means that among the Thais who have learned Chinese intentions, there is still 51.6% of the variance left, which can be gender-separated by other independent variables or other predictors not in this study. However, the (48.4%) figure is a general indicator

study Chinese.			
H2o : Environment does not have any statistical influence on Thai people's intention to study Chinese.	.119	-.093	Not Rejected
H3o: Culture does not have any statistical influence on Thai people's intention to study Chinese.	.000	.274	Rejected
H4o Information does not have any statistical influence on Thai people's intention to study Chinese.	.696	.025	Not Rejected

that the predictors we studied can at least predict the near-half variance of the dependent variable.

In the second section, from table 6 the Sig of ANOVA < 0.05, which means there is at least one independent variable that can have a significant impact on dependent variables.

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION Conclusion**

The basic purpose of this study was to determine what factors affect Thais' intention to learn Chinese. This study has determined the influence of independent variables based on the "multiple causes" model, value environmental culture information as an independent variable. Thais have the intention to learn Chinese as a dependent variable.

First, the researchers conducted interviews in various areas of Bangkok to understand whether those factors are the key factors affecting the Thai people's intention to learn Chinese. Then, the questionnaires were designed in conjunction with other scholars' research and were distributed in various areas of Bangkok. Finally, the quantitative analysis was performed using spss software, including reliability analysis, Pearson correlation analysis, and multiple linear regression. Finally, from the results of the four hypothesis tests, there are two that cannot be rejected, namely H2 and H4. The results show that the two independent variables of value culture are statistically significant for Thais to choose to learn Chinese. Discussions and recommendations have been introduced by researchers. In addition, the adjusted R Square is equal to 0.484, which means that there is still 51.6% of the remaining space for learning Chinese intentional

differences, which can be explained by other independent variables derived from further research.

### **Recommendations**

The current research results may be helpful for Chinese language education in Chinese, and the work of Chinese promoters. In this section, the factors that influence the Thai people's intention to learn Chinese based on value factors and cultural factors are Chinese. Promoters or enthusiasts provide useful advice. Both of these factors have a high beta coefficient in the multivariate regression analysis, so most of the attention should be focused on these areas.

First of all, the value factor has the greatest influence on the Thai people's intention to learn Chinese. How to increase this value to attract more Thai people to learn Chinese is particularly important. In the case of Thais who already have an interest in learning Chinese, they should further understand what kind of value, economic or spiritual aspects are needed. How can I be able to perceive this value for Thais who do not learn Chinese?

Secondly, in terms of culture, there should be more activities to promote cultural exchanges between China and Thailand, so that Thais can better understand China and let Chinese people know more about Thailand. For example, in the just-concluded 70th anniversary of the founding of China, many important figures from the Thai political and business community were invited. In recent years, many Thai literary and art workers have been familiarized by the Chinese audience. Many Chinese literary and art workers will also come to Thailand. Conduct cultural exchanges. In addition, tourism, exchange of students and so on are all very good ways to promote cultural exchanges between the two countries. Both are conducive to the promotion of Chinese in Thailand. **Further Studies**

Regarding further research, four hypotheses are proposed for Thais who intend to learn Chinese. The hypothesis about environmental and information factors is not established. It is not excluded because the survey is limited by number, time, and geography. Errors can be further explored in future studies and research. In addition, in this study, due to time constraints, the researchers only collected the age and gender of the respondents, and whether the age and gender have an influence on the Thai people's intention to learn Chinese, and did not do further research in the future. In this study, this aspect can also be used as the direction of investigation.

In addition, according to the adjusted R-squared result, there is still 51.6% of the remaining space for learning Chinese intentions, which can be further independent research found in other independent variables (such as service, teaching quality, etc.)

In addition, after more and more Thais have learned Chinese, how to promote Chinese better, better teaching to Thai people will be the next interesting topic, or how to put Chinese in addition to Thailand. Better promotion to other countries in the world and the spread of Chinese culture will be an eye-catching topic.

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