

## **Motivation to learn English and age differences:**

### **The case of Chinese immigrants**

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#### **Abstract**

Numerous studies have been carried out to investigate motivation; however, limited research has been done to evaluate how age differences have an impact on the second language-learning pattern. This study, therefore, investigated how gender differences place impact on a group of Chinese immigrant students' motivation to learn English. It is hoped that an understanding of Chinese immigrant students' motivation to learn English in relations to age differences would have implications on current teaching and learning practices, based on the adopted motivational theory and that these would enhance learners' motivation to learn English while adjusting to and integrating with the new learning environment.

**Key words:** Motivation to learn, English, Chinese immigrants, Dörnyei, Hong Kong.

#### ***Abstracto***

*Numerosos estudios se han llevado a cabo para investigar el origen de la motivación, sin embargo, las investigaciones sobre la relación entre las diferencias de edad y el impacto en el patrón de aprendizaje de idioma, son limitadas. Este estudio, por tanto, investiga cómo las diferencias de género impactan la motivación para aprender inglés de un grupo de estudiantes chinos inmigrantes. Se esperaría que la motivación de estos estudiantes con relación a su diferencia de edad influencien las prácticas actuales de enseñanza y aprendizaje basadas en la teoría adoptada de motivación. A su vez, se esperaría que ésta aumente la motivación de los estudiantes para aprender inglés mientras se ajustan e integran a un nuevo ambiente de aprendizaje.*

*Palabras claves: Motivación para aprender; inglés; inmigrantes chinos; Dörnyei; Hong Kong*

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### **Introduction**

Previous researches have demonstrated the effect of age on learners' motivation. One of the first studies by Weiner and Peter (1973) showed that among younger children, achievement was evaluated primarily by outcome. With increasing development, effort expenditure became the principal determinant of evaluation. However, with still further development, outcome became the main evaluative concern again. Weisz et al. (1982) also found younger children are egocentric and usually overestimate their own personal control, therefore more internal attributions may also be expected. Later, Igoe and Sullivan (1991) found that older students take less responsibility for their learning, desire less personal challenge, care less about the approval of others, and feel less school-related competence compared to younger children. Stipek (1981) has reported that the correlation between the perceived and actual performance is higher, and reflects a more accurate judgment of one's attainment for older children than for younger children. There is also consistent evidence in different circumstances suggesting that young children are more optimistic about their future performance than the older children and that they

generally overrate their competence (e.g. Parsons & Ruble, 1977; Yussen & Berman, 1981).

However, these researches only focus on general performance not subject / language focused - English. Also, these studies examined different age groups while this study only focuses on Chinese immigrant students who are at the age between 13 and 22.

The results found in this study can be applied in this particular context, which helps educators understand what teaching strategies can be employed to teach different age groups of Chinese immigrant students.

### *Conceptual Framework*

Dörnyei's (1998) work has been considered as one of the most influential contemporary motivational constructs in second language (L2) learning (see Table 1).

He reviewed over 80 relevant L2 studies and combined most of the major motivational theories and constructs into his motivation framework (Wong, 2007).

Dörnyei's model filled the gaps of Oxford and Shearin's (1994) and Williams and Burden's (1997) work. Wong (2007) also added two important motivational components that had not yet been considered - 1) the role of parents in students' L2 learning motivation (Wong, 2007) and (2) the role of culture in influencing L2 learning motivation. The addition of these two components will make Dörnyei's

motivational framework more comprehensive for the evaluation and investigation of how to motivate Chinese immigrant students to learn English.

Table 1 shows culture-specific and parent-specific motivational component added to Dörnyei’s conceptual framework, which is to be used as the conceptual framework of this study.

*Table 1. Culture-specific and parent-specific motivational component added to Dörnyei’s conceptual framework*

Language Level	Integrative motivational subsystem
	Instrumental motivational subsystem
Learner Level	Need for achievement
	Self-confidence
	* Language use anxiety
	*Perceived L2 Competence
	*Casual attributions
	*Self-efficacy

Learning Situation Level	
<i>Course-specific motivation components</i>	Interest (in the course)
	Relevance (of the course to one's needs)
	Expectancy (of success)
	Satisfaction (one has in the outcome)
<i>Teacher-Specific motivational components</i>	Affiliative motive (to please the teacher)
	Authority type (autonomy-supporting)
	Direct Socialization of Motivation
	*Modeling
	*Task Presentation
	*Feedback
<i>Group-Specific motivational components</i>	Goal-orientations
	Norm & Reward System
	Group Cohesion
	Classroom Goal Structure
<i>*Parent-Specific motivation components</i>	Education background—English proficiency
	Financial support

	Affective encouragement
<i>*Culture-Specific motivation component</i>	Socio-cultural integration

*\* New motivation component added to Dörnyei's (1998) extended framework.*

## **Methodology**

### ***Design of Research Methods***

This study aimed to investigate how Chinese immigrant students' motivation in relations to age differences affected the teaching and learning of English as a second language. A 55-item questionnaire based on a six-point rating scale was set for Chinese immigrant students to elicit their responses (6 for strongly agree, 5 for agree, 4 for tend to agree, 3 for tend to disagree, 2 for disagree, 1 for strongly disagree). Mean scores between 3.56 - 6 would be considered as holding strong/positive motivation to learn English; mean scores between 1 - 3.55 would be considered as holding weak/negative motivation.

The questionnaire included items on different motivational constructs at different levels, based on the conceptual framework mentioned in the last section. They were language level, learner level and learning situation level. Three statements were constructed for each sub-component under each motivation dimension. Items on

parental education background and family income were also included in the questionnaire. The questionnaires administered to students were in Chinese, the language with which the students were most familiar, in order to avoid the problems of language barrier and communication breakdown.

Face to face and semi-structured interviews were conducted after the statistical results were preliminarily analysed. Interviews were conducted with the 10 randomly chosen respondents to fill the gaps in areas requiring further clarifications.

### ***Participants***

The sample in this study comprised a total of 109 secondary school Chinese immigrant students. Among them, 53 were girls and 56 were boys. Participants were all aged between 13-19. They were all from Guangdong province and had only been in Hong Kong for less than 3 years. They were invited to respond to the above-mentioned questionnaire.

### ***Procedures***

A pilot study was carried out before the final questionnaire was set. Students completed the Chinese version of the questionnaire. They were also invited to comment on the language and the content of the questionnaire. A reliability test was also carried out to ensure that the questionnaire items were reliable. Several items

were amended because the respondents found them vague and the reliability test found certain question items not statistically reliable.

In the main study, all students were gathered in the school hall and filled in the reviewed questionnaire under the researcher's monitoring. The researcher then read the instruction written on the questionnaire. Students were also assured that the information they provided would only serve the purpose of this study. Respondents were reminded that their participation was completely voluntary and all data collected would remain confidential. Informed consent forms were also distributed. Thirty minutes were given to fill in the questionnaire. Statistical analyses were carried out using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

Interviews with the respondents were conducted in the schools they attended. The room used for interviewing was a counselling room in which a non-threatening environment could help respondents to express their feelings about English learning. The researcher first thanked them for participating in this study and stated the purpose of the interviews and how it would be conducted. Respondents were also reminded that the interview would be tape-recorded and their responses would remain confidential.



### ***Data Analysis***

Data collected from the questionnaire was analysed using SPSS. Descriptive analyses (means and standard deviations) were mainly used to project participants' motivation and learning strategies for English learning.

Face-to-face interviews were conducted with an attempt to understand students' responses better in the context of teaching and learning affecting their motivation to learn English in Hong Kong. The qualitative data obtained were translated from the respondents' first language (Cantonese) into English and transcribed for coding.

### ***Research Questions***

This study set the following research questions for testing:

1. Does Chinese immigrant students have stronger motivation to learn English, as they grow older?
2. How does age difference affect Chinese immigrant students' motivation to learn English under different levels (language level, learner level and learning situation level), as they grow older?
3. How does age difference affect Chinese immigrant students' motivation to learn English under different motivational components (course-, teacher-, group-, parent- and culture-specific motivational components), as they grow older?

## Findings

Before examining how age differences relate to Chinese immigrant students' motivation to learn English, one has to bear in mind the number of respective analyses will be fairly extensive because of the age distribution of the participants. Participants of this study aged from 13 to 22 meaning there will be ten sub-sections to examine how each individual age group has different motivation to learn English. It is also important to include all analyses in this section as age is always regarded as an important factor, which affects students' motivation to learn English. Implications of teaching for different age group can hence be drawn based on individual analysis.

### ***RQ1: Age differences and motivation to learn English***

According to table 2, Chinese immigrant students who are aged under 15 all have a relatively weak mean score (lower than 4.000) and those who are aged older than 16 or above, their means are higher and motivation is stronger. Their means are all above 4.000. Chinese immigrant students who are over 20 have higher mean scores, which are over 4.100 (M: 4.376; M: 4.107; M: 4.340). The general motivation pattern and its relations can be shown by the following curve (see Figure 1), which shows Chinese immigrant students who are older have stronger motivation to learn English. As one 20-year-old interview respondent stated, "I am now 20 years old. For my age, I should be finishing university in the Mainland China. Since I have chosen

to come to Hong Kong, I have to pay double effort to work harder, so that I can make up the time I had lost.” (JT, 82).

*Table 2. Age and Chinese immigrant students' motivation*

<b>Age</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Average Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
13	5	3.782	1.268
14	14	3.810	1.767
15	14	3.768	1.991
16	18	4.014	1.606
17	18	4.036	1.736
18	16	4.052	1.821
19	11	4.057	1.524
20	9	4.376	1.330
21	2	4.106	1.088
22	1	4.340	0.000

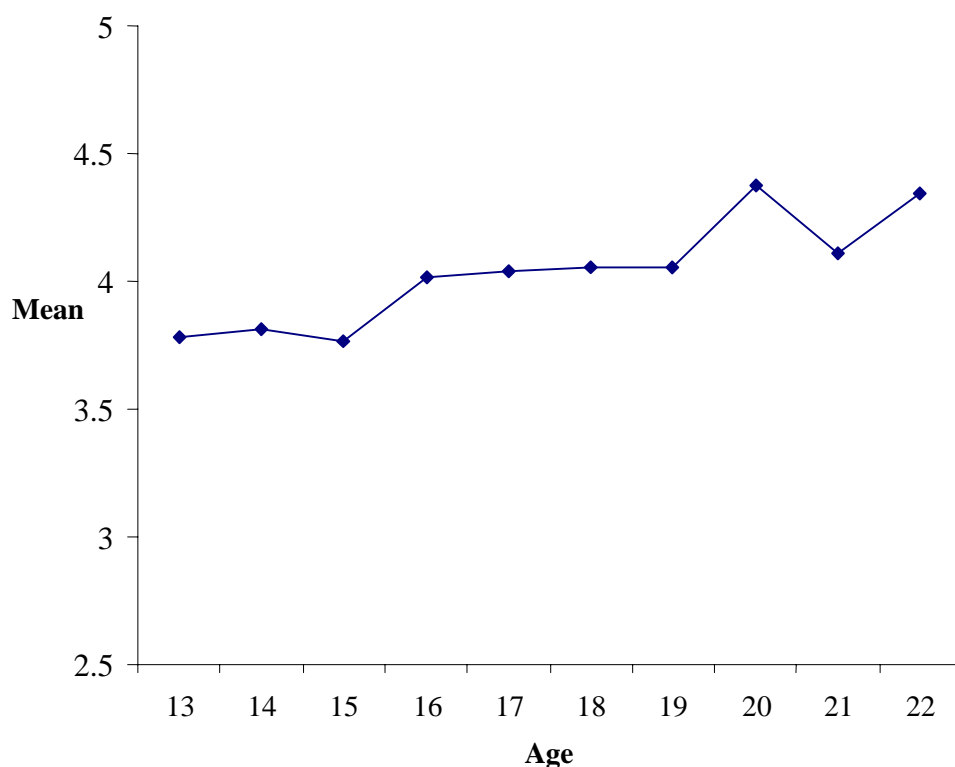


Figure 1. Age and Chinese immigrant students' motivation

***RQ2: Age differences and motivation to learn English: Language level, learner level and learning situation level***

***A. Language level***

At the level of motivation dimension, analysis needs to be done on individual motivation levels. Table 3 shows the results of how age relates to language level.

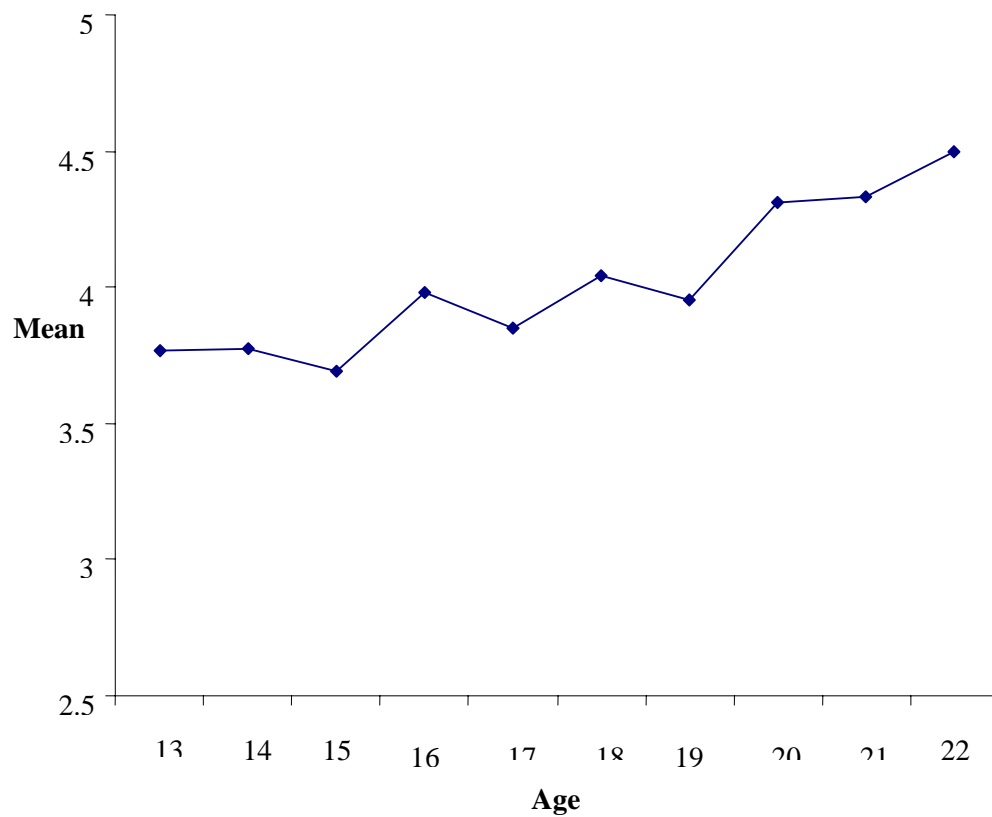
According to Table 3, it is clear that Chinese immigrant students, who are above the age of 20 have the strongest motivation while students under the age of 15 have relatively low motivation to learn English. One 19-year-old respondent said, “I came

to Hong Kong in January 2006, it wasn't the right time to start schooling because Hong Kong school academic terms starts in September. By the time I could start school, the government recommended me to repeat Form 4 so that I could catch up my English. Totally, I had lost two years in comparison with other local Hong Kong counterparts. That's why I need to study hard to catch up with my English then I will be able to get a placement at university and find a good job in Hong Kong." (MD, 75).

Though the mean scores of different age groups do not go higher as the Chinese immigrant students' age goes up, the tendency of the general motivation gets stronger, according to the following curve (see figure 2).

*Table 3. Age and Chinese immigrant students' motivation on language level*

	<b>Age</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
<b>Motivation dimension-- Language level</b>	13	5	3.766	1.534
	14	14	3.773	0.966
	15	14	3.690	1.150
	16	18	3.981	1.787
	17	18	3.851	0.810
	18	16	4.041	1.039
	19	11	3.954	1.624
	20	9	4.314	1.626
	21	2	4.333	1.649
	22	1	4.500	0.000



*Figure 2.* Age and language level

***B. Learner level***

According to table 4, there is a smooth curve that can be generated (see figure 3).

Chinese immigrant students who are over the age of 16 have strong motivation to

learn English at learner level as they all have a mean score of over 4.100 while

Chinese immigrant students who are under the age of 15 have relatively weaker

motivation. Their mean score are lower than 4.000. The following curve (figure 3)

also shows the increase of motivation trend, as the Chinese immigrant students grow older.

According to the interview responses, one representative view from a 19-year-old Chinese immigrant student stated, “I believe the older I am, the more I see effort important as a determining factor in my studies because the more I study, the more I can control my results. When I was young, I didn’t know how to achieve high scores because my study methods were not correct. I believe I have stronger confidence in myself now.” (YC, 71).

*Table 4. Age and Chinese immigrant students’ motivation on learner level*

	<b>Age</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
<b>Motivation dimension-- Learner level</b>	13	5	3.827	1.351
	14	14	3.949	1.870
	15	14	3.884	1.893
	16	18	4.137	1.686
	17	18	4.233	1.885
	18	16	4.263	1.780
	19	11	4.184	1.517
	20	9	4.793	1.350
	21	2	4.222	0.903
	22	1	4.111	0.000

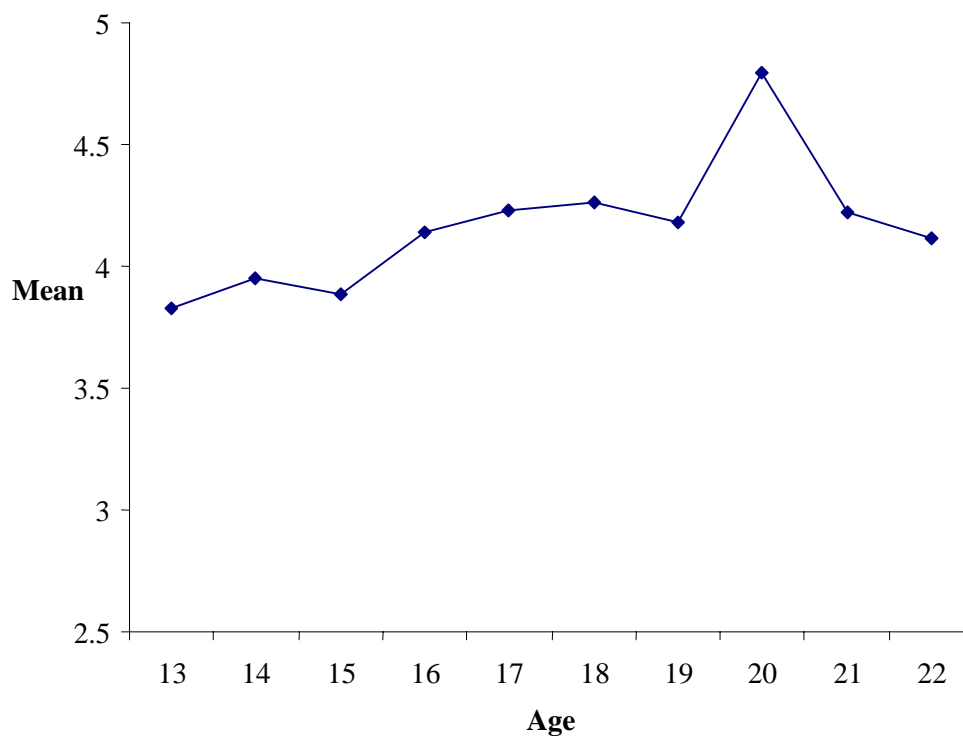


Figure 3. Age and learner level

### *C. Learning situation level*

At the level of learning situation level, table 5 shows that Chinese immigrant students who are under the age of 15 have the weakest motivation while students over 16 possess stronger motivation to learn English. Their mean scores range from 3.767 to 4.408. Students who are 22 have the strongest motivation to learn English. Though the curve shown in the following (see figure 4) is not a curve that goes up as Chinese immigrant students' age grow older, statistics show Chinese immigrant students who

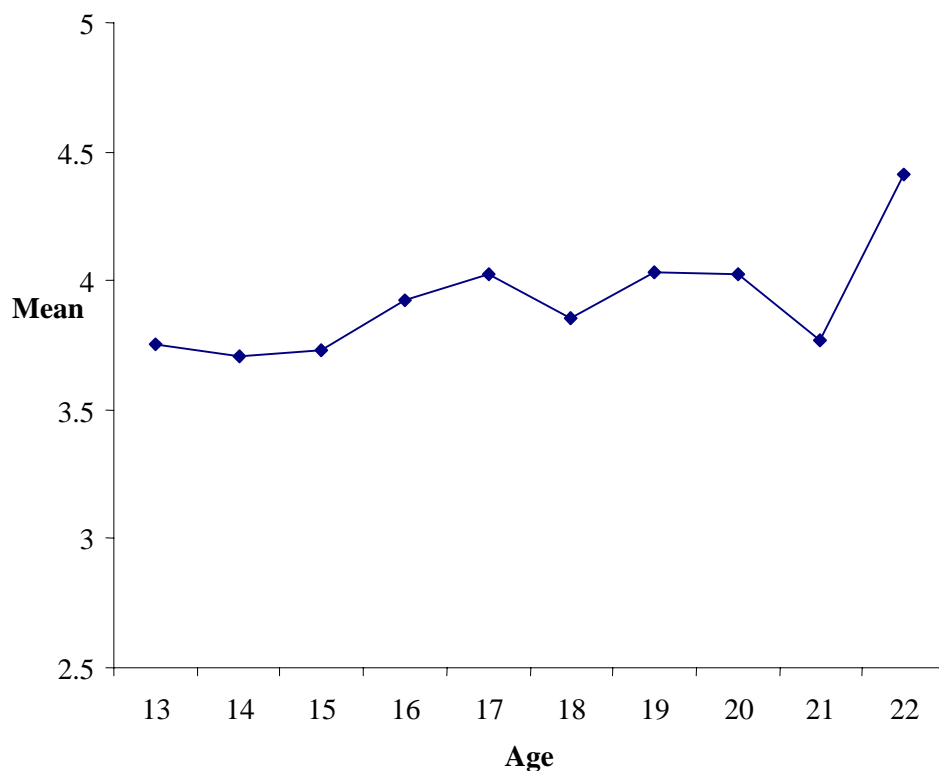


are under the age of 15 possess relatively weaker motivation to learn English while those who are over 15 hold stronger motivation relatively.

A 20-year-old Chinese immigrant student explained, “Learning situation is definitely one of the key contributing factors that affect my motivation to learn English. We are young people; we look at peers very importantly. We can also be very easily influenced by teachers and friends. I think if my friends work hard, I will work hard too. If my teacher likes me or praises me, I will also try harder.” (LL, 58).

*Table 5. Age and Chinese immigrant students’ motivation on learning situation level*

	<b>Age</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
<b>Motivation dimension-Learning situation level</b>	13	5	3.752	1.261
	14	14	3.707	0.893
	15	14	3.731	1.017
	16	18	3.922	1.658
	17	18	4.026	1.709
	18	16	3.851	1.773
	19	11	4.033	1.540
	20	9	4.022	1.384
	21	2	3.767	1.212
	22	1	4.408	0.000



*Figure 4. Age and learning situation level*

***RQ3: Age differences and motivation to learn English: Specific motivational components***

After investigating how Chinese immigrant students' motivation relates to age at different motivation dimensions (language level, learner level and learning situation level), how different age groups of Chinese immigrant students react differently to different learning situations is the focus of this section.

### ***A. Course-specific motivational component***

First, learning situation related to course-specific factors and its relations to Chinese immigrant students' age are shown in table 6. According to table 6, no general pattern can be generated as different age groups have different mean scores representing their motivation to learn English. Chinese immigrant students at the age of 21 have the weakest motivation of all. Chinese immigrant students at the age of 13, 18, 14 and 17 share similar motivation patterns. While Chinese immigrant students at the age of 15 and 19 to 21 have a very close motivation pattern. Chinese immigrant students who are at the age of 22 possess the strongest motivation (see table 7). Looking at this motivation pattern in relation to the age of Chinese immigrant students, it is hard to attribute age as a factor affecting their motivation to learn English in the learning situation with course-specific factors.

*Table 6. Age and Chinese immigrant students' course-specific motivational components*

	<b>Age</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
<b>Motivation components-- course-specific motivational components</b>	13	5	3.600	1.322
	14	14	3.662	1.834
	15	14	3.829	1.316
	16	18	3.919	1.738
	17	18	3.700	1.020
	18	16	3.645	1.912
	19	11	3.888	1.622
	20	9	3.907	1.653
	21	2	3.305	1.267
	22	1	4.333	0.000

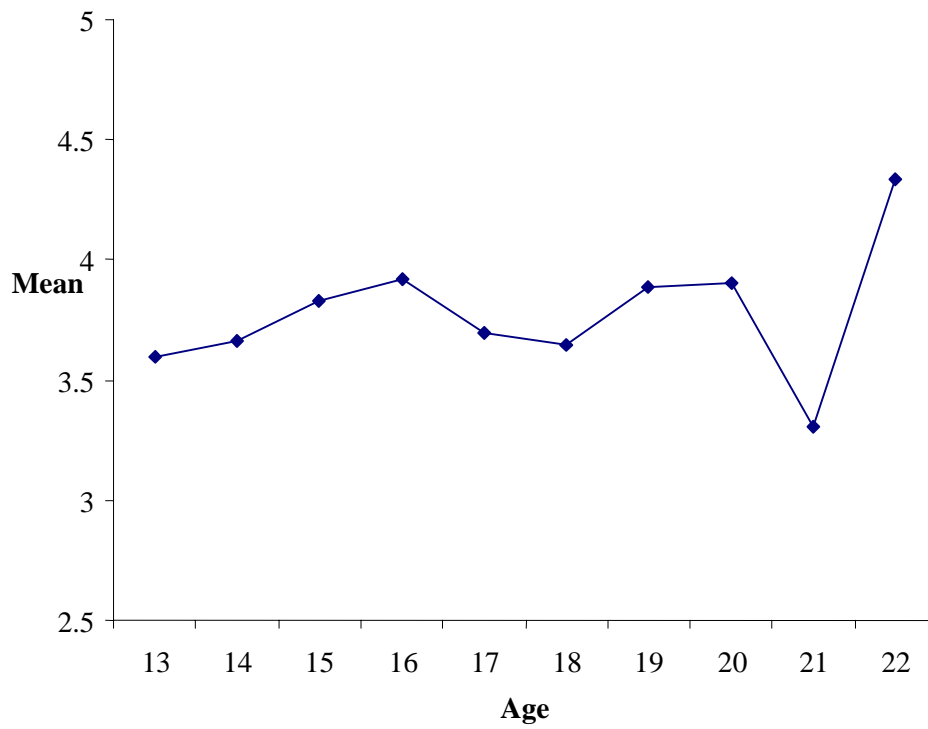


Figure 5. Age and course-specific motivation

Table 7. Age and Chinese immigrant students' course-specific motivational components

Motivation components-- course-specific motivational components	Age	n	Mean	Std. Deviation
	21	2	3.305	1.667
	13	5	3.600	1.322
	18	16	3.645	1.912
	14	14	3.662	1.834
	17	18	3.700	1.020
	15	14	3.829	1.316
	19	11	3.888	1.622

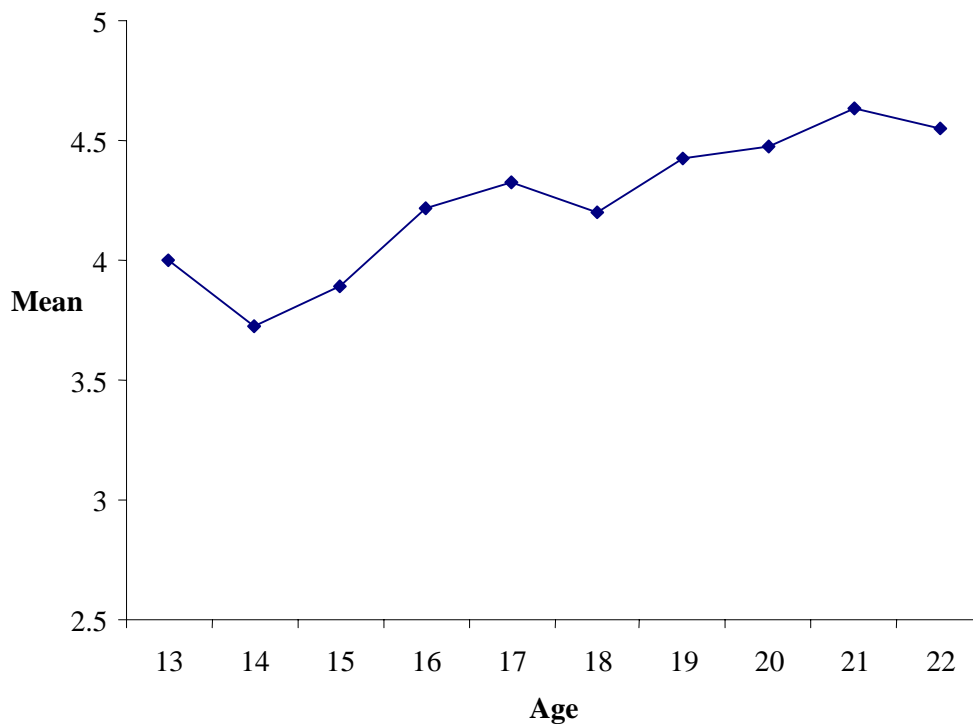
	20	9	3.907	1.653
	16	18	3.919	1.738
	22	1	4.333	0.000

### ***B. Teacher-specific motivational components***

As for the learning situation related to teacher-specific factors, an interesting picture emerged. Chinese immigrant students who are over the age of 16 and at the age of 13 have strong motivation if the learning situation is related to teachers. Their respective mean scores are all over 4.000. However, students who are at the age of 14 and 15 possess lower means which show teachers are less of their concern when learning English (see table 8 & figure 6). One respondent who was over 16 years old explained, “When I turn older, I found that teacher’s praises have positive impact on me because I want people around me have a good impression of me.” (GF, 79).

*Table 8. Age and Chinese immigrant students' teacher-specific motivational components*

	<b>Age</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
<b>Motivation components—teacher's specific motivational components</b>	13	5	4.004	1.262
	14	14	3.722	1.052
	15	14	3.889	1.089
	16	18	4.213	1.585
	17	18	4.322	1.730
	18	16	4.197	1.837
	19	11	4.422	1.702
	20	9	4.478	1.540
	21	2	4.631	1.325
	22	1	4.547	0.000



*Figure 6. Age and teacher-specific motivation*

### ***C. Group-specific motivational components***

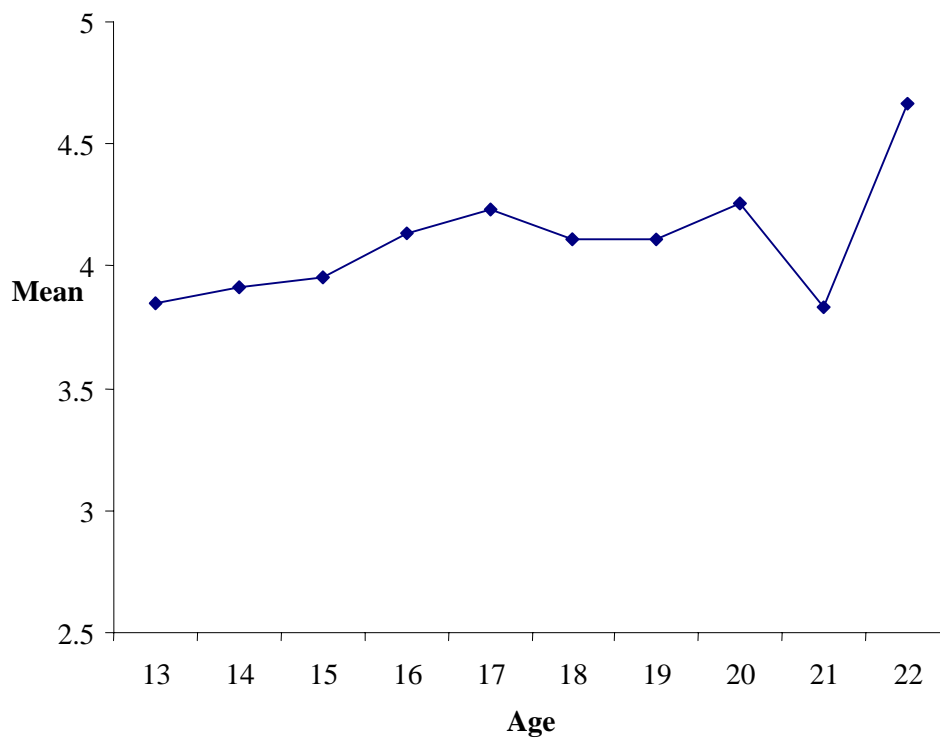
Looking at the learning situation with peer related factors, Chinese immigrant students who are at the age of 13 have the mean score of 3.850 and the mean scores go up until the age of 17. Then, the mean scores drop from 4.232 to around 4.11 at the age of 18 and 19. However, the curve slumps from a high mean down to the lowest mean of 3.833 and jumps up back to the highest level of 4.667 (see table 9 & figure 7). An interview respondent who was 19 years old can explain these results, “Peer influence no doubts plays a very important role in our lives. We play with our friends,



we have lunch together, we compare ourselves with each other...no matter what we do, we take each other's performance as our reference point. Therefore, peer influence plays a very important role in affecting my attitude of learning English. However, when I was younger, I didn't care that much because face wasn't an issue back then. For some reasons and I don't know since when, face and peer recognition became very important to me without being realising it." (PY, 91)

*Table 9. Age and Chinese immigrant students' group-specific motivational components*

	<b>Age</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
<b>Motivation components-- group-specific motivational components</b>	13	5	3.850	1.426
	14	14	3.916	0.977
	15	14	3.952	1.182
	16	18	4.134	1.720
	17	18	4.231	1.759
	18	16	4.109	1.766
	19	11	4.113	1.458
	20	9	4.259	1.545
	21	2	3.833	1.042
	22	1	4.666	0.000



*Figure 7. Age and group-specific motivation*

***D. Parent-specific motivational components***

When testing Chinese immigrant students' motivation in relations to parent-related factors, the following statistics (see table 10) shows the changes of mean scores and there is no consistency in changes of mean scores due to age changes. There was no general pattern generated from interview responses neither.

*Table 10. Age and Chinese immigrant students' parent-specific motivational components*

	<b>Age</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
<b>Motivation components- parent-specific motivational components</b>	13	5	3.522	1.629
	14	14	3.456	1.065
	15	14	3.182	1.975
	16	18	3.351	1.864
	17	18	3.780	1.693
	18	16	3.364	1.983
	19	11	3.681	1.770
	20	9	3.364	1.435
	21	2	3.277	1.235
	22	1	4.000	0.000

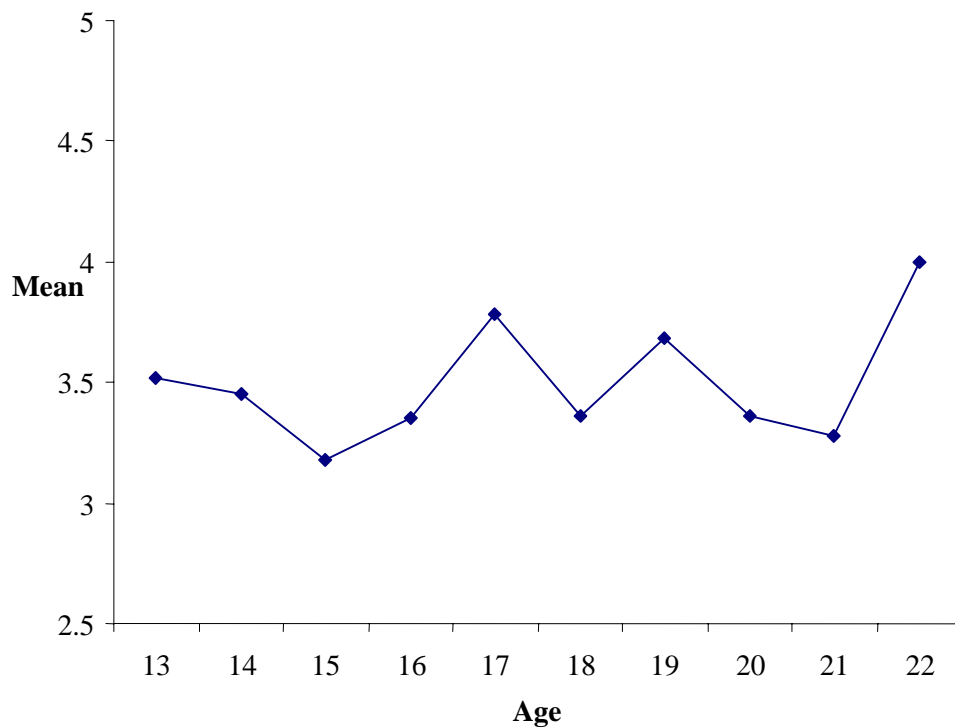


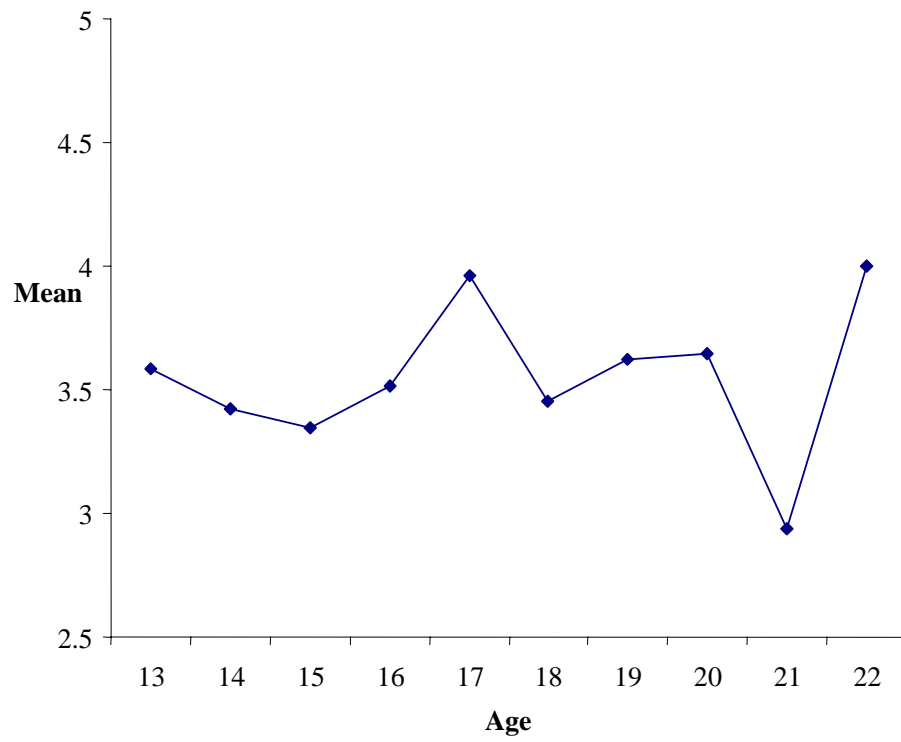
Figure 8. Age and parent-specific motivation

### *E. Culture-specific motivational components*

The next item to be examined is how age affects culture-related motivational factors. Glancing at table 11, no consistency of motivation enhancement can be spotted based on the changes of age. The age groups that received the lowest mean scores are age 21 (M: 2.935) and age 15 (M: 3.348), while the age groups receive the highest mean scores are age 22 (M: 4.000) and age 17 (M: 3.965). There was no general pattern generated from interview responses neither.

*Table 11. Age and Chinese immigrant students' parent-specific motivational components*

	<b>Age</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
<b>Motivation components- culture-specific motivational components</b>	13	5	3.581	1.633
	14	14	3.423	1.090
	15	14	3.347	1.932
	16	18	3.512	1.834
	17	18	3.965	1.655
	18	16	3.451	1.972
	19	11	3.621	1.733
	20	9	3.650	1.512
	21	2	2.935	1.510
	22	1	4.000	0.000



*Figure 9.* Age and culture-specific motivation

Table 12. Summary of findings: Age and motivation to learn English

	<b>Results</b>	
<b>General motivation to learn English</b>	The older the Chinese immigrant students are, the stronger motivation they possess	
<b>Language level</b>	Age group with stronger motivation: <i>over 20</i>	Age group with weaker motivation: <i>Under 15</i>
<b>Learner level</b>	Age group with stronger motivation: <i>over 16</i>	Age group with weaker motivation: <i>Under 15</i>
<b>Learning situation level</b>	Age group with stronger motivation: <i>over 16</i>	Age group with weaker motivation: <i>Under 15</i>
- <i>Course-specific motivational components</i>	No general pattern	
- <i>Teacher-specific motivational components</i>	Age group with stronger motivation: <i>13 &amp; over 16</i>	Age group with weaker motivation: <i>14 &amp; 15</i>
- <i>Group-specific motivational components</i>	Age group with stronger motivation: <i>13-16, 19, 22</i>	Age group with weaker motivation: <i>17, 18, 21</i>
- <i>Parent-specific motivational components</i>	No general parent	
- <i>Culture-specific motivational components</i>	No general parent	

Table 12 summarises the results of this present study. The research question being tested is to see whether Chinese immigrant students have stronger motivation to learn English, as they grow older. The statistical results show the mean scores have a general tendency to go up, as the age group of Chinese immigrant students grows older. Further examinations have been done to investigate if the general result stands

at different motivational level and under specific motivational components. One particular finding one can generate from table 12 is that: Chinese immigrant students who are at the age of 14 & 15 usually possess weaker motivation to learn English while students who are over 16 years old usually possess stronger motivation to learn English.

### **Discussions**

Age has been found as a significant factor in affecting learners' motivation to learn. This study also confirmed the findings found from previous studies (see, Corpus & Lepper, 2007 & Fomer, Cole, Sigal, Benbow, Satterwhite, Swygert & Ciesla, 2008). Chinese immigrant students were found to have stronger motivation to learn English, as they grow older, especially for a group of Chinese immigrant students who are over 16 years old. While for those who are under 15 years old, their motivation to learn English tend to be weaker.

Generally speaking, older Chinese immigrant students had stronger motivation to learn English. The reasons were two-fold. Firstly, Chinese immigrant students were relatively older than those locally born Hong Kong students even they were attending the same school form because very often Chinese immigrant students were required to repeat one year to catch up with their English level. Secondly, if the Chinese



immigrant students arrived Hong Kong before the Hong Kong academic year started, they would not be admitted to school until the coming September, which is the commencement of a new school academic term. Because of the above two reasons stated above, it is not hard to understand why older Chinese immigrant students had stronger motivation to learn English. When Chinese immigrant students found that they were older than the local counterparts, they tend to work harder to make up for their lost self-esteem.

At language level, old Chinese immigrant students were also more motivated to learn English. That could be due to the instrumental value of learning English. Also, they were able to appreciate the beauty of the English Language when they turned older. On one hand, older Chinese immigrant students had more imminent needs to learn English because the public examinations are approaching and they knew clearly that learning English was a basic requirement for getting into university hence being able to find a good job. For the sake of settling down in Hong Kong and not being looked down, older Chinese immigrant students would work harder than those younger ones. On the other hand, older Chinese immigrant students might have developed a better sense of appreciating the learning of a foreign language as part of cultural integration in Hong Kong.

On learner level, older Chinese immigrant students also have stronger motivation to learn English, which echoed the result found by Stipek (1981). According to both quantitative and qualitative results, both pointed at a direction that older Chinese immigrant students have stronger sense of self-efficacy in dealing with a difficult task in comparison with the younger ones. Older Chinese immigrant students tended to believe that paying sufficient effort could lead to academic success and they had stronger confidence in their study methods while the younger Chinese immigrant students were still searching for a good way to learn English in Hong Kong.

This study also found that peers and teachers were the most significant motivational components that place significant impact on the older Chinese immigrant students' motivation to learn English which contradicted the result found by Igoe and Sullivan (1991) that older students take less responsibility for their learning, desire less personal challenge, care less about the approval of others, and feel less school-related competence compared to younger children. This study, on the contrary, found that younger Chinese immigrant students did not seem to care too much about how their peers and teachers viewed them but the older Chinese immigrant students. The older Chinese immigrant students valued how their friends and teachers viewed them because that was how they could search for their own identity in a new social environment.

In Wang's (1993) work, he found that cultural factors like language shock, culture differences, culture background knowledge, motivation, and ego permeability, create psychological distance for the Chinese ESL learners. The role of teacher is therefore indispensable. Chinese ESL learners need encouragement from their teachers and peers, teachers need to arouse curiosity about English language culture and hold English activities to challenge ESL learners, such as speech contests and spelling bees. Teachers should also encourage projects, encourage excellence, and be supportive in correcting errors.

Previous research also confirmed the importance of peers in one's learning (Moss & St-Laurent, 2001; Ting, 1999). Peer group recognition was considered to be an important factor that helps students adjust to the new environment better, as peer recognition defined as a behavior that creates social bonding. Through this connection, students cultivate adequate cultural values in order to establish their social identity and roles, learn social skills and knowledge in order to function with others adhesively. A personal image will then be able to be established. Social systems link individual and social structure and environment, social network links the individual and community. These two linkages connect individuals and create social integration.

In response to the above results, the Government, schools and teachers all need to collaborate together so that the Chinese immigrant students can enjoy a meaningful school life while adjusting to a new social environment.

On the Government level, it should review the current admission policy for Chinese immigrant students. The Government should consider whether Chinese immigrant students be admitted to schools as soon as they arrive Hong Kong. Also, the government should also consider providing extra resources for Chinese immigrant students who needs remedial English classes so that they do not need to repeat one academic year just to catch up their English proficiency.

On the school level, schools should also provide orientation programmes for all Chinese immigrant students to familiarise Chinese immigrant students with the Hong Kong education system. For instance, the public examination systems and the university entrance requirement. Having these orientation programmes, Chinese immigrant students will be able to plan their studies well in advance and set the right study methods in order to achieve their academic goals.

Last but the least, on the teacher level, teachers should also pay extra attention on how they provide feedback for Chinese immigrant students as they viewed their teachers' comments and feedback very importantly. Teachers' feedback will help Chinese immigrant students evaluate their process of learning and make adjustment

accordingly. Positive reinforcement will help Chinese immigrant students build up self-confidence in learning English. Meanwhile, teachers should also provide moral classes for students across school forms with the purpose of appreciating one another so as to help Chinese immigrant students establish a good human relationship among themselves and integrate with the Hong Kong social culture and environment. If Chinese immigrant students can be accepted by their peers and people they associate with in daily lives, motivation to learn English can also be enhanced.

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**Received: March 27, 2008,**

**Published: June, 2008**