The Relationship between Dropout Rates of a Chinese Language Course, and Student Learning Motivation and Personal Factors

Taking the Dutch students majoring Chinese as an example

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Abstract

This study is aimed at clarifying the relationship between the dropout rates of a Chinese language course, and student learning motivation and personal factors. Three cohorts of first-year students majoring in Chinese at Zuyd University of Applied Sciences completed the 'Survey on L2 Motivational Self System with Chinese language learners in the U.S'. In addition, data about their gender, prior education, average results of the school leaving exam (GPA) and achievement were gathered. Logistic regression and bivariate post-analyses were used to analyse the data. The results showed that there is a relationship between dropout and GPA, and two motivation types. However, from the regression model can be derived that motivation predicts *study success* better than it predicts dropout. With regard to motivation, the motivation types 'Willingness to communicate' and 'Instrumentality-promotion' are positively and significantly associated with study success. The factors, prior education and gender showed no significant association with dropout.

Keywords: dropout, personal factors, motivation, L2 Motivational Self System, Chinese as a foreign language.

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0   INTRODUCTION

It has been established that an increasing number of people are learning Chinese worldwide. According to the Office of the Chinese Language Council International (Hanban), more than 50 million people were learning Chinese in 2010. In line with this increase in learners, is the increase in empirical research on Chinese as a Foreign/Second Language (CFL/CSL), along with publications in journals, books, dissertations, and conference proceedings (Jiang & Cohen, 2012). Most CFL/CSL research has been conducted in the US and China. However, the subject has received scant attention in other countries, including the Netherlands.

Proportionally with the increase in the number of learners, the number of dropouts is also expanding. In the Netherlands, the dropout rate of first year students majoring in Chinese at Zuyd University of Applied Sciences[1] is 50% to 60%. The Dutch Inspectorate of Education (Inspectie van het Onderwijs (2009)) concluded in a literature review that the dropout rate in general could be related to the following factors: 1. National policy or system-related factors, e.g., the duration of student financing. 2. Institution-specific factors, e.g. limited recruitment and information. 3. Program-related factors, e.g., the quality of structure and organization, number of contact hours. 4. Student-related factors, e.g., personal circumstances, low motivation.

As far as student-related factors are concerned, success or failure in learning a foreign language is determined by a complex interplay of different variables. The key variables include motivation, intelligence, attitude, language aptitude, learning styles (also known as learning patterns) and learning strategies. (Dörnyei, 2006; Ehrman & Oxford, 1995; Ellis, 2008; Lightbown, Spada, Ranta, & Rand, 2006; Skehan, 1989). According to Entwistle (2000), academic performance is influenced by different factors: student characteristics, teaching characteristics and departmental characteristics. Student characteristics are thereby often seen as central (see Vermunt, 2005) and Entwistle mentions among other factors, prior

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1   Dutch education system see **Appendix 1**

knowledge, learning style, attitudes to courses, and motivation (see Vermunt, 2005).

Therefore, this paper focuses on student characteristics, the relationship between dropout rates from a Chinese language course and student learning motivation and personal variables such as prior education, school leaving exams results (Grade Point Averages, GPA), and gender. A model has been constructed which has an accuracy of 79.2%.

0.1 The Relationship Between the Dropout Rate and Personal Variables

Although progressively more studies are carried out in higher professional education on study success and dropout in the first year, publications on dropout from language studies at the level of higher education are scarce, as became evident from an extensive search for relevant literature (NARCIS, Google scholar, Eric, ScienceDirect, Springerlink and Wiley Online Library). Only the study of Tsui and Kooi (2014) was carried out at a study program which focuses on the application of foreign languages.

0.2 Dropouts and Prior Education

According to the reports 'Facts and Figures: Graduates and drop-outs in higher education' of 2008–2012 from Vereniging Hogescholen[2], students from university preparatory education (VWO) have better results and drop out less often than students from upper secondary education who are not specifically oriented towards university studies (HAVO). The results of Annema and Ooijevaar (2011) and Kamphorst, Hofman, Jansen, and Terlouw (2009) show that students from VWO graduate sooner than students from HAVO. The article 'Factors affecting the success rate of freshmen in the Northeastern Netherlands' (HBO-Aansluitingsmonitor Werkgroep Aansluitingsmonitor Noordoost Nederland,

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2 The Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences

2012) shows that students from VWO continue studying longer than students with another preliminary education. However, Tsui and Kooi (2014) found that the success rate for VWO students studying Chinese language and culture in higher education is not necessarily higher than for HAVO students.

Various studies have shown that more MBO (Senior Secondary Vocational Education and Training) graduates than HAVO and VWO students drop out from the first year (Inspectie van het Onderwijs, 2009; Vereniging Hogescholen, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012). According to the study 'Dropout and Completion in Higher Education in Europe: main report' (Vossensteyn et al., 2015), students with straightforward educational trajectories are more successful in higher education than those with less direct or interrupted pathways. However, a German study found no negative effect (Heublein, Spangenberg, & Sommer, 2003), while a Spanish study found a negative impact (Lassibille & Navarro Gómez, 2008). Although education systems can be difficult to compare, the conclusion may be drawn that the effect on dropout of students' preparatory trajectory in secondary education is ambiguous.

0.3   Dropouts and GPA

Currall and Kirk (1986, p. 110) found that the overall Grade Point Average (GPA) was "the best single predictor of performance in foreign language courses". In the Netherlands, De Gruijter, Yildiz, and 't Hart (2006) and Torenbeek and Kamphorst (2012) claim that performances in secondary education are an important predictor for the study success in the first year of higher education. Furthermore, a multitude of studies show that students with a higher GPA generally obtain more credits in higher education, graduate sooner and drop out less often (Severiens, 2011).

A study by Jansen and Bruinsma (2005) shows that the GPA in secondary education is the most important predictor of results. Only 50% of the students in higher professional education with an average of six (out of ten) or lower graduated

within five years, compared to 70% of the students who passed their final exams with an average of seven or higher (Ooijevaar & Annema, 2009). Kamphorst et al. (2009, p. 81) mention in their article that the GPA constitutes a constant factor in the prediction of study progress in higher education. According to Tsui and Kooi (2014), the most important predictor of study success is the GPA. A student with a GPA of 6.4/10 or lower has a probability of success of approximately 25%. A GPA of 7.1/10 and up correlates with a 70% chance of being successful in higher education.

0.4 Dropouts and Gender

Many researchers (Beekhoven, De Jong, & Van Hout, 2003; Cappellari & Lucifora, 2009; Declercq & Verboven, 2010; Jansen & Bruinsma, 2005; Lacante et al., 2001; Ministerie van Onderwijs en Vorming, 2009; Need & de Jong, 1999; Richardson & Woodley, 2003; Rombaut, Cantillon, & Verbist, 2006; Simonite, 2003; Smith & Naylor, 2001; M. Van den Berg & Hofman, 2005; M. N. Van den Berg, 2002) found that women obtain better results in higher education than men. The study by Ooijevaar and Annema (2009) shows that the school leaving exam results play a more important role for men than for women. Women graduate sooner than men. Women with average school leaving exam results lower than six (out of ten) perform better than men who had average school leaving exam results of seven or higher. It is often assumed that women are better learners of foreign languages (Rosiers, Vermeiren, & Eyckmans, 2015; Saville-Troike, 2012). Furthermore, several studies on second language (L2) acquisition have found that female language learners outperform male learners (Boyle, 1987; Burstall, 1975; Davies, 2004; Pae, 2004; Van der Slik, Van Hout, & Schepens, 2015). However, research into the influence of gender shows neither directly observable differences (Rosiers et al., 2015) nor convincing evidence (Nyikos, 2008). Tsui and Kooi (2014) also found that men and women have an equal probability of success.

0.5 Motivation

Van Lier (1996, p. 98) stated that motivation "is a very important, if not the most important factor, in language learning". Cohen and Dörnyei (2002, p. 172) mentioned "Motivation is often seen as the key learner variable because without it, nothing much happens". Several studies (e.g. Dörnyei, 2003, 2005; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2013; Gardner, 1985, 2010; Noels, 2003, 2005; Oxford & Shearin, 1994; Scarcella & Oxford, 1992; Spolsky, 1969; Ushioda, 2009; Williams & Burden, 1997) have reported that motivation is one of the major factors determining success in second or foreign language learning.

"Although 'motivation' is a term frequently used in both educational and research contexts, it is rather surprising how little agreement there is in the literature with regard to the exact meaning of the concept" (Dörnyei, 1998a, p. 117). "In a general sense, motivation can be defined as the dynamically changing cumulative arousal in a person that initiates, directs, coordinates, amplifies, terminates, and evaluates the cognitive and motor processes whereby initial wishes and desires are selected, prioritised, operationalised, and (successfully or unsuccessfully) acted out" (Dörnyei, 2000, p. 64).

Research into language learning motivation is a complex matter whereby the learners' context is essential (Ceuleers & Van de Craen, 2007, p. 19). According to Dörnyei (1998b), motivation has also been widely accepted by both teachers and researchers as one of the key factors that influence the rate and success of L2 learning. Earlier research showed that motivation influences academic achievement (Boekaerts, Nuland, & Martens, 2010). Motivation has also been shown to be a predictor of L2 learning success (Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005; Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014; Gardner, 1985; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1991; Noels, Clément, & Pelletier, 1999; Schmidt & Watanabe, 2001; Tremblay & Gardner, 1995). Lack of regulation and motivation at the start of the year are significant predictors for dropout (Vanthournout, Gijbels, Coertjens, Donche, & Van Petegem, 2012).

Several studies into L2 motivation and the achievement of learners of

Chinese have been conducted, however, there is little research available that explicitly explores the relation between motivation and dropout from Chinese language and culture courses. Therefore, the present study examines the relationship between motivation and dropout from Chinese language courses by taking Dutch students majoring in Chinese as an example.

0.6   L2 Motivational Research

L2 motivational research carried out over the last five decades can be divided into the following phases (Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2012): 1. The social-psychological period (1959–1990), 2. The cognitive-situated period (during the 1990s), 3. The process-oriented period (turn of the century), 4. The socio-dynamic period (current). A review of all periods is beyond the scope of this paper. Roughly speaking, these four phases can be divided into two main phases in the research of L2 motivation.

In the first phase, i.e. the social-psychological period, the most influential motivation theory was considered to be the theory established by Gardner and Lambert (1959, 1972). They proposed two kinds of motivational orientation in language learning: integrative orientation and instrumental orientation. The first refers to "reflecting a sincere and personal interest in the people and culture represented by the other group". The second refers to "reflecting the practical value and advantages of learning a new language" (Gardner & Lambert, 1972, p. 132). Gardner's socio-educational model (1985) has been the dominant theory for several decades in the L2 motivational studies (Xie, 2011). This model originated from studies with a Canadian background. Integrativeness, the desire to identify and mix with English speaking people, is a central component of the model (Gardner, 1985). According to Gardner, L2 motivation "always had an integrativeness component", even when motivation is instrumental (Gardner, 1985, p. 168).

In the second phase, i.e. the cognitive-situated period, the process-oriented period, and the socio-dynamic period, researchers were dissatisfied with the

traditional socio-psychological model of L2 motivation (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009; Ryan, 2009) and started to challenge the model. Xie (2011, p. 3) and Papi (2010, p. 468) summarized the limitations of the socio-educational model as follows:

- inapplicability to the educational context and vagueness of the definition of integrative motivation (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991)
- failure to integrate the cognitive theories of learning motivation (Dörnyei, 1994; Oxford & Shearin, 1994)
- illegibility in the current age of globalization (Dörnyei & Csizér, 2002; Lamb, 2004; McClelland, 2000)
- inability to capture the complexity of the new conceptualizations of social identity (McNamara, 1997; Peirce, 1995)
- deficiencies in terminology, concepts and measurements (Dörnyei, 1994)
- lack of applicability in foreign language settings (Dörnyei, 1990; Oxford, 1996)
- contradictory results on the predicted learning achievements (Au, 1988; Chihara & Oiler, 1978)

According to Dörnyei (2005) and Ushioda (2001) motivation is a dynamic, ever-changing process. Research on motivation should also evolve over time. In 2005, Dörnyei (2005) proposed a new theory of L2 motivation and formulated the 'L2 Motivational Self System' (L2MSS). This motivational construct builds upon the foundations laid by Gardner (1985) but at the same time broadens the scope of the theory to make it applicable in diverse language learning environments (Dörnyei, 2010).

Dörnyei's theory of L2 motivation (2005) was inspired by the Possible Selves theory developed by Markus and Nurius (1986) and the Self-discrepancy theory introduced by Higgins (1987). Based on L2 motivation research (Noels, 2003; Ushioda, 2001) and his own empirical research, Dörnyei's L2MSS consists of three main dimensions (Dörnyei, 2009):

1. ideal L2 self, which is the L2-specific facet of one's 'ideal self': if the person

we would like to become speaks an L2, the '*ideal L2 self*' is a powerful motivation to learn the L2 because of the desire to reduce the discrepancy between our actual and ideal selves. Traditional integrative and internalized instrumental motives would typically belong to this component.

2. ought-to L2 self, which concerns the attributes that one believes one *ought to* possess to meet expectations and to *avoid* possible negative outcomes. This dimension corresponds to Higgins's ought self and thus to the more extrinsic (i.e. less internalized) types of instrumental motives.

3. L2 learning experiences, which concerns situated, 'executive' motives related to the immediate learning environment and experience (e.g. the impact of the teacher, the curriculum, the peer group, the experience of success) (p. 29).

Several quantitative studies in different countries (e.g., Al-Sheheri (2009) in Saudi Arabia; Csizér & Kormos (2009) in Hungary; Ryan (2009) in Japan; Taguchi et al. (2009) in Japan, China and Iran) have been conducted specifically to test and validate the L2MSS. All these studies found solid confirmation for the proposed 'self systems'.

0.7 L2MSS Motivation Test as Predictor for Dropout from Chinese Language Courses

In China, from 1990 to 2010, 36 (conference) papers, essays, Master's theses and monographs were published in relation to motivational research. However, most of their research contents, methods and instruments are inadequate (Gao, 2013). Today, although the amount of empirical research is increasing along with the number of learners of Chinese (Jiang & Cohen, 2012), due to the limited number of studies, findings relating to Chinese as a Second Language (CSL) learning motivation are tentative (Wen, 2011, p. 46).

Outside of China, although there is a well-developed body of research on language learning motivation, there are few studies outside China which specifically focus on the Chinese language (Wen, 2011, p. 45). Studies that use the

L2MSS to measure motivation in learning Chinese as a second language are scarce. One such study by Xie (2011) tested the validity of the L2MSS by investigating heritage and non-heritage[3] beginning Chinese language learners at college level in the United States. She suggested that applying the L2MSS can be extended to a language other than English and to second language settings. Subsequently, Xie (2014) conducted another study on heritage and non-heritage learners from 16 elementary-level Chinese classes. She found that the theory of L2MSS can be extended to motivation studies of Chinese learners and suggested they be applied to other languages. Based on the above literature, the present study will use the L2MSS to examine the relationship between motivation and dropout from a Chinese language course.

Although many studies related to dropout have been conducted, studies into the relationship between motivation and dropout from language courses are scarce. Furthermore, studies into the relationship between motivation and dropout from Chinese language courses are even scarcer.

Beside the aforementioned broad search of corpuses, The China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI), Chinese Teaching in the World and *Journal of International Chinese Teaching* also do not reveal anything. What can be found, however, is limited research into the relationship between motivation and achievement in CSL/CFL. None of the studies mention what happens to students with low achievement: do they persist with their studies or drop out?

0.8   Research Questions

The current study aims to explore the relationship between dropout rates of a Chinese language course and student learning motivation and personal factors. By taking Dutch students majoring in Chinese as its example, the current study addresses the following questions.

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3   Heritage learners are those who have one or two parents from Chinese ethnicity, and the parent(s) speak Mandarin Chinese or another Chinese dialect at home or other places (Xie, 2011, p. 18).

What is the relation between school leaving results and dropout?

What is the relation between prior education and dropout?

What is the relation between gender and dropout?

What is the relation between motivation and dropout?

1   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.1   Instrument

This study adopts the questionnaire 'A Survey on L2 Motivational self system with Chinese language learners in the U.S.' used by Xie (2011), who found that the theory of L2MSS can be extended to motivation studies of Chinese learners and suggests they can be applied to other languages. Her questionnaire was compiled on the basis of two existing and validated questionnaires: the questionnaires by Taguchi et al. (2009) and Yashima (2009) with a few minor changes. Xie's questionnaire was translated into Dutch and then translated back into English for verification purposes. Due to the fact that the participants of Xie's research were beginning-level Chinese language learners and studied Chinese as an elective course, while the participants of the present study are majoring in Chinese (beginning-level), three questions needed to be changed. For instance "Knowing no Chinese can negatively influence my study major" has been changed into "Insufficient knowledge of Chinese can negatively influence my chance of study success".

The questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first part collected the background information. The second part consisted of 61 six-point Likert items ranging across 12 motivational scales:1. Criterion measure: this measures the intended learning effort to learn Chinese.

1. Criterion measure: this part measures the intended learning effort to learn Chinese.

2. Ideal L2 self: this part represents learners' imagined, personally-desired future

Chinese-using self.

3. Ought-to L2 self: this part represents learners' future Chinese-using self, as expected or demanded by significant others.

4. Family influence: this part measures the impact of family background.

5. Instrumentality-promotion: this part represents learners' specific practical hopes and aspirations for their future; hypothesized to correlate with Ideal L2 self (Islam, Lamb, & Chambers, 2013, p. 5)

6. Instrumentality-prevention: this part represents learners' fears, duties and obligations in the future; hypothesized to correlate with the Ought-to L2 self (Islam et al., 2013, p. 5)

7. Attitudes toward learning Chinese: this part analyzes whether learners enjoy the Chinese learning experience.

8. Cultural interest: this part measures the extent to which learners wish to enjoy the cultural products of Chinese speaking communities.

9. Attitudes toward Chinese community: this part measures the learners' attitudes towards Chinese-speaking communities.

10. Integrativeness: this part represents a strong liking for Chinese and a desire to interact with the Chinese-speaking communities. This was included for comparison purposes with the Ideal L2 self (Islam et al., 2013, p. 5)

11. International posture: this part measures learners' desire to participate in the contemporary globalized world.

12. Willingness to communicate: this part measures the willingness to use Chinese in different contexts.

1.2 Participants and Data Collection

The Master in Oriental Languages and Communication (OTC) is a four-year program of higher education offered by Zuyd University of Applied Sciences in Maastricht, the Netherlands. OTC is a small department with approximately 400 students. OTC teaches three oriental languages: Arabic, Chinese and Japanese. However, students can only choose one of these languages to major in. In addition

to learning an oriental language, students also take subjects such as Dutch, English, introduction to economics, business organization and law, intercultural communication and presentation skills in the first year.

A school year is divided into four blocks. Each block consists of ten weeks: seven weeks for classes and 3 weeks for examination, re-examination and other activities related to the study.

The number of freshmen majoring in Chinese varies every year. Since 2011, the average number of first year students of Chinese has been approximately 75. In the first year, students have 9 contact hours of Chinese weekly. Each contact hour equals 45 minutes.

All OTC-freshmen of cohorts 2011–2012, 2012–2013 and 2013–2014 with a major in Chinese, still present at the beginning of their third block were included in the research. These cohorts consisted of 221 students. At the time Xie's questionnaire was sent, 214 students were still officially enrolled in the study programme and 7 students had dropped out. Xie's questionnaire was loaded into the faculty's online survey system.

After two weeks, a total of 145 respondents had completed the L2MSS. The respondents consisted of 102 female students (70.3%) and 43 male students (29.7%). 113 respondents (77.9%) possessed a HAVO-certificate, 17 respondents (11.7%) a MBO-certificate, 14 respondents a VWO-certificate (9.7%) and 1 respondent did not indicate the type of secondary education he/she followed (0.7%). As mentioned above, a small number of students had dropped out already (7), which means that there was no analysis possible of the motivation of these particular students. However, at the end of the school year 35 of the 145 respondents have dropped out. An analysis of the motivation of these 35 unsuccessful students who dropped out during the third and fourth blocks was, therefore, possible.

The GPA for students with a HAVO or VWO certificate were retrieved from the Education Executive Agency of the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture & Science. There is no central registration of MBO grade points.

2   DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

2.1 Group Characteristics

The respondents, as a group, show the following motivational characteristics (table 1). The mean total scores for each type of motivation are reported in the column 'Mean'. As the degree of motivation of a certain type is based on a different number of scales, the means themselves cannot be interpreted directly. Therefore, the means are expressed as a percentage of the maximum scores as well. The percentages can be compared and ranked.

Table 1

Motivational Characteristics

	Mean	Perc. of max. score	Rank
Attitude to L2 community	15.56	86%	1
Attitude to learning Chinese	24.17	81%	2
Criterion Measures	27.61	77%	3
Integrativeness	13.32	74%	4
Willingness to communicate	20.87	70%	5
Instrumentality-promotion	28.80	69%	6
Cultural Interest	16.07	67%	7
International posture	23.69	66%	8
Instrumentality-prevention	15.72	65%	9
Ideal L2 Self	26.52	63%	10
Family influence	15.87	53%	11
Ought-to L2 Self	14.46	40%	12
Average percentage of max. score		68%	

It is clear that the respondents are mostly motivated by 'attitude to L2 community', 'attitude to learning Chinese' and 'criterion measures'. They are least motivated by 'ought-to self', 'family influence' and 'ideal L2 self'. From the three types of motivation that characterize the students (table 1), only 'attitude

to learning Chinese' (81/100) correlates significantly with study success (please refer to the next section 'statistical analysis). This implies that the respondents appreciate the atmosphere created in the classroom and look forward to learning Chinese because they find it exciting and interesting.

Although students who responded that they would love to travel to Chinese-speaking countries to learn about the people and to meet them ('Attitudes to L2 community', 86/100), this kind of motivation does not contribute to these students students mastering Chinese (please refer to the next section 'statistical analysis).

The high score on 'criterion measures' (77%) implies that the students intend to work hard, do their best and do not mind working harder or doing more. This type of motivation, however, does not relate to study success.

2.2 Statistical Analysis

▪ In step one, each background and motivational predictor was associated with dropout.

▪ In step two, a null model was created that, in simple terms, predicted that no student would drop out. The significantly associating background variables were added to this null model, and named 'model 1'. Then, the significantly associating motivational variables were added one by one, based on the strength of Kendall's correlation with dropout. For each variable added, a new model was created, thus building the models numbered from 2 onwards.

▪ In step three, changes in model-fit were used to assess whether or not these variables significantly improved model-fit in addition to the previous model. The model with the highest number of variables that significantly improved the previous model-fit, was finally used in a logistic regression analysis with study success as the dependent variable.

Step 1 of analysis: association between background and motivational variables and dropout.

There was no significant association between gender and dropout ($x^2 = 3.070$, df =

1, p < .080) nor between the type of secondary education and dropout ($\chi 2 = 0.842$, df = 3, p = .839). However, there was a significant correlation between school leaving results (in terms of grade point average) and dropout ($\tau = .171$, p < .023). For the different types of L2 motivation the following correlations (Kendall's tau (τ)) with study success were found (table 2):

Table 2

Correlation between study success and different types of L2 motivation

Type of L2 motivation	Abbrev.	Kendall's tau	P-value
Willingness to communicate	WC	.272	.000
Instrumentality-promotion	IPROM	.203	.004
Attitude to learning Chinese	ATCHIN	.182	.011
Cultural Interest	CI	.176	.013
Ideal Self	ISELF	.161	.022
Criterion measures	CM	.137	.054 ns
Instrumentality-prevention	IPREV	.136	.570 ns
Integrativeness	INTG	.077	.295 ns
Family Influence	FI	.072	.304 ns
International posture	IP	-.064	.366 ns
Attitude to L2 community	ATCOM	.042	.570 ns
Ought to Self	OS	.017	.802ns

Step 2 of analysis: building models for regression analysis

In the second step, a null model was created that, in simple terms, predicted that no student would drop out. The significantly associating background variables were added to this null model, and named 'model 1'. Then, the significantly associating motivational variables were added one by one, based on the strength of Kendall's correlation with dropout. For each variable added, a new model was created, thus building the models numbered from 2 onwards (table 3).

Table 3

Different models for regression analysis

Model number	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Predictor 1	GPA	GPA	GPA	GPA	GPA	GPA
Predictor 2		WC	WC	WC	WC	WC
Predictor 3			IPROM	IPROM	IPROM	IPROM
Predictor 4				ATCHIN	ATCHIN	ATCHIN
Predictor 5					CI	CI
Predictor 6						ISELF

Step 3 of analysis: selecting the model for regression analysis

In the third step, changes in model-fit were used to assess whether or not these variables significantly improved model-fit The model with the highest number of variables that significantly improved the previous model-fit was finally used in a logistic regression analysis with study success as the dependent variable (table 4).

Table 4

Changes in model-fit

Model number	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Model coefficient	$\chi x2 =$ 6.612 $p < .010$	$x2 =$ 17.533 $p < .000$	$\chi x2 =$ 8.425 $p < .004$	$x2 =$ 0.397 $p < .529$	$x2 =$ 2.549 $p < .110$	$x2 =$ 0.803 $p < .370$

The last model that significantly improves the previous model-fit, is Model 3, which is used in logistic regression analysis with study success as a dependent variable. The analysis is shown in table 5.

Table 5

Regression analysis

	B	Wald	Sign.	95% CI for Odds Ratio		
				Lower	Odds	Upper
Constant	-20.168	14.373	.000			
GPA	1.848	7.830	.005	1.740	6.348	23.163
Willingness to communicate	.245	11.405	.001	1.108	1.277	1.472
Instrumentality-promotion	.159	7.574	.006	1.047	1.172	1.312

Note: outcome variable = study success
R_N^2 = .343 (Nagelkerke)
Model coefficient χ^2 = 32.570 p < .000, model accuracy = 79.2%
Model characteristics: model odds ratio: 11.0, power of test: .92, positive predictive value: 85%, model sensitivity: 50%, relative risk: 4.88

Students with high GPAs, high scores on 'Willingness to communicate' and 'Instrumentality-promotion' have a lower probability of dropping out (B-values respectively: B = 1.848, p = 0.005; B = .245 p = .001; B = .159, p = .006). The third step in the analysis clearly shows the unique contribution of motivational variables to dropout after controlling for GPA.

The model coefficient (χ^2 = 32.570 p = .000) shows that the model fits the data significantly better than the null model (i.e. the simple prediction that "no student will drop out"). Effect size for the logistic regression was computed using Nagelkerke R_N^2. The model gave a correct prediction in 79.2% of the cases.

From the power (.92), the sensitivity (50%) and the positive predictive value (85%), it is possible to derive the negative predictive value: 66.1%. This set of numbers shows that *high* scores on the GPA and on both types of motivation are strong predictors for *study success*. Low scores are less predictive of *dropout* but still better predictors than mere coincidence. The same conclusion can be drawn from the high odds ratio (11.0) and the comparison between the odds ratio and the relative risk (4.88). These two conclusions lead to the insight that motivation is not as strong an indicator for dropout as study success is.

A large number of variables are used in this study. Please refer to table 6. Variables which can significantly predict dropout or study success are indicated with a checkmark (√). Variables without predictive value are indicated with an ✕.

Table 6
Overview of all variables

	Variables	Predictive value of dropout/ study success
1	GPA	√
2	Instrumentality-promotion	√
3	Willingness to communicate	√
4	HAVO (prior education)	✕
5	VWO (prior education)	✕
6	MBO (prior education)	✕
7	Gender	✕
8	Criterion measure	✕
9	Ideal L2 self	✕
10	Ought-to L2 self	✕
11	Family influence	✕
12	Instrumentality-prevention	✕
13	Attitudes toward learning Chinese	✕
14	Cultural interest	✕
15	Attitudes toward Chinese community	✕
16	Integrativeness	✕
17	International posture	✕

3 CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

This study aims to clarify the relationship between the dropout rates of a Chinese language course and student learning motivation and personal factors. The results show that one personal factor is in line with previous studies that cannot be challenged: students with high GPA results are less likely to drop out. This

study finds that the factor 'prior education' showed no significant association with dropout, which is in line with the results of Tsui & Kooi (2014). Their research focused on Dutch students learning a European or Oriental language (English, French, German, Spanish, Arabic, Chinese or Japanese). Furthermore, the results of this study show that the factor 'gender' showed no significant association with dropout. This, too, is in line with the results presented in Tsui & Kooi (2014). In view of the above-mentioned results, the assumption can be made that prior education and gender cannot predict study success or dropout from a Chinese language course in the Netherlands.

This study was aimed at finding a relation between motivation and dropout (research question 4). The results show that there is a clear relationship between both variables. However, from the regression model can be derived that motivation predicts study success better than dropout.

Two kinds of motivation are positively associated with study success: 'Willingness to communicate' and 'Instrumentality-promotion'. Students with high scores on 'Willingness to communicate' love to speak Chinese, and actively and voluntarily take the opportunity to do so. Those with high scores on 'Instrumentality-promotion' do not consider mastering Chinese as their primary goal, but as a condition to achieving a higher objective, such as their career, living in China or being promoted.

'Willingness to communicate' may lead to practicing the language, and hence to more opportunities of generating useful feedback on the use of the language. When the student realizes he and his counterpart actually understand each other, this successful communication may be a motivator in itself, thus reinforcing the 'Willingness to communicate' etc. This reasoning is also in line with the findings of Yashima (2002) and Yashima, Zenuk-Nishide, and Shimizu (2004) who identified that International Posture and Willingness to Communicate are influencers of proficiency.

Results of the current study show that 'Instrumentality-promotion' is related

to studying Chinese successfully. A possible explanation could be that students with high scores on 'Instrumentality-promotion' are strategic learners (Beckman, 2002). They consider learning Chinese as their main strategic instrument to reach their goals. Strategic learning implies setting goals, defining policies to reach these goals, planning relevant activities, finding help and support and using feedback to make changes in any of the earlier steps, to make sure the objectives are met. In other words, strategic learners consciously manage their studies, which could lead to success.

This study has investigated factors that can be influenced (motivation) and factors that cannot be influenced (personal factors). As aforementioned, motivation is one of the major determining factors of success of foreign language learning. However, motivation is not seen as a static attribute but rather as a dynamic system that displays continuous fluctuation, going through certain ebbs and flows (Dörnyei, 2006). Quite often students are excited about learning Chinese and begin their studies with enthusiasm. However, this excitement and enthusiasm do not last very long (Sun, 2011). Research has demonstrated that students significantly change their preferences and motivation during their freshmen year (Vanthournout, Donche, Gijbels, & Van Petegem, 2011; Vanthournout et al., 2012). Research on how to keep students motivated and prevent them from dropout is needed.

As with any study, this study also has limitations. It only covers some motivating factors, but does not cover the de-motivating factors for language learning such as characteristics of teachers (Gorham & Christophel, 1992), classroom environment (Falout & Maruyama, 2004) and teaching and learning materials (Kikuchi & Sakai, 2009). Another limitation is a school year that at Zuyd University of Applied Sciences is divided into four blocks. Only the students still studying in the third block filled in the questionnaire. Therefore, we have no insights into the motivation of the seven students who had already dropped out at an earlier stage. The current study attempts to explain the relationship between dropout and motivation. However, the study found that motivation explains study

success better than dropout. In addition, there is no analysis of the early dropout cases. Therefore, a longitudinal study of how the motivation of CLF learners changes over time might give more illuminating insight.

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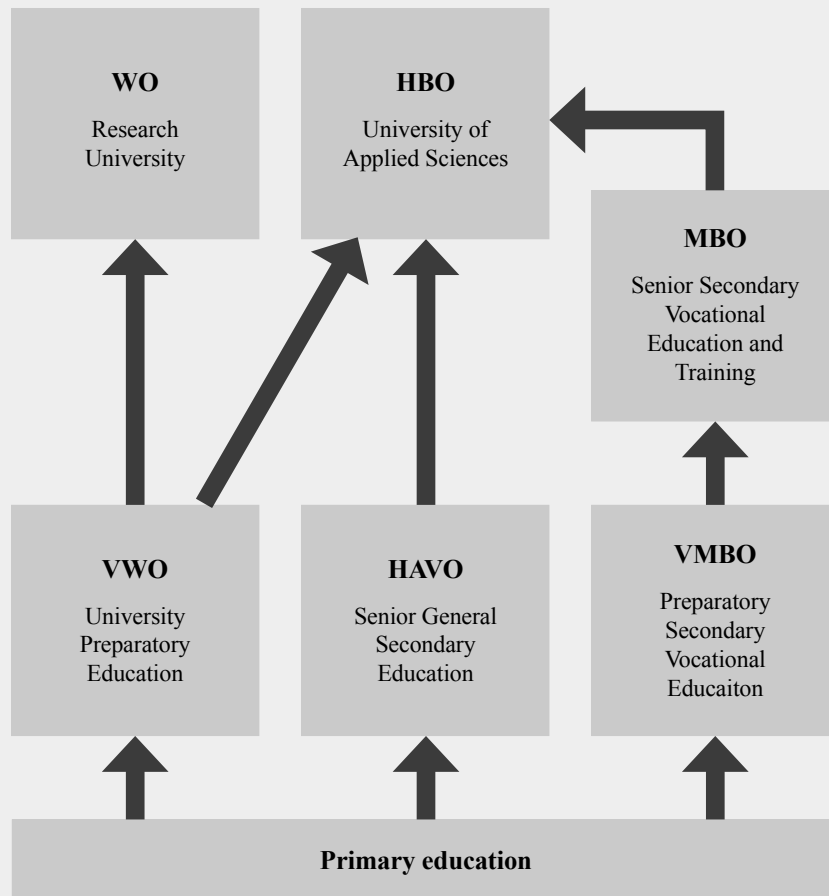
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APPENDIX 1: DUTCH EDUCATION SYSTEM

WO

Research University

HBO

University of Applied Sciences

MBO

Senior Secondary Vocational Education and Training

VWO

University Preparatory Education

HAVO

Senior General Secondary Education

VMBO

Preparatory Secondary Vocational Educaiton

Primary education

学习动机和个人因素与汉语学生辍学率的关系

以荷兰汉语专业学生为例

摘要

本研究旨在探索荷兰汉语学生辍学率与学习动机和个人因素的关系。研究者连续三年组织荷兰南方应用科技大学主修汉语专业的一年级学生填写"美国汉语学生二语动机自我系统学习动机量表",并收集了学生的性别、学历、中学毕业成绩等数据。通过回归分析和双变量后分析,发现辍学率与中学毕业成绩及两种学习动机相关。回归模式得出的结果显示,用学习动机来预测汉语学习的成功率比用来预测辍学率更有效。至于动机类型的中的"愿意沟通"和"工具型促进"与汉语学习的成功率呈正相关及显著相关。学历及性别等因素与辍学率不相关。

关键词:辍学 个人因素 学习动机 二语动机自我系统 对外汉语教学