

# An Analysis on Students' Chinese Learning Needs of Confucius Institute at Hasanuddin University, Indonesia

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**Abstract:** Hasanuddin University in Indonesia through a questionnaire, the key point is to understand the learning needs of students and to make suggestions for optimizing the curriculum and teaching methods of Chinese teachers. Due to the limited time and conditions, there are some deficiencies in this study. As there are many factors affecting the learning needs, the questionnaire may not cover the whole content, it can only reflect the learning needs of learners, and cannot be used as an accurate measure. The study focused on comprehensive learning needs, so it was not compare the learning needs of students from the two teaching sites, nor was it compare the learning needs of male and female learners, these questions also require precise analysis by subsequent researchers. In addition, although the optimization of the proposal has a certain practicality, but still need to practice and improve.

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## 1 Background

Located in the capital of South Sulawesi, Hasanuddin University is the best university in east Indonesia, ranking seventh among Indonesia's thousands of state universities. Since its establishment in 2011, Confucius Institute of Hasanuddin University has registered nearly 10,000 Chinese language learners. It is representative to take here as a research object. This

study is based on the Needs-analysis theory by Tom Hutchinson, Alan Waters(1987) and Nunan (1988) to investigate the Chinese language learning needs of students from Confucius Institute of Hasanuddin University.

## 2 The Definition of Needs

According to Hutchinson, Waters (1987), language learners' needs should be divided into Target Needs and Learning Needs. (Xu Wei. 2012:132) The Target Needs is what learners should do, which including the necessary knowledge, the lack of knowledge and the knowledge they want to learn. Learning needs refer to what learners have to do in order to learn, including learning environment, learners' knowledge, learners' skills and strategies, learners' motivation, etc. Nunan (1988) divides needs into objective and subjective needs. The former includes the learner's age, nationality, gender, educational background, current language level, difficulties in language learning, and current or future occupation while the latter refers to the cognitive and emotional needs of language learners, such as self-confidence, attitude and expectation.

## 3 Research Method

### 3.1 The Aim

Based on the Needs-analysis, this study investigates the learning needs of students in Confucius Institute at Hasanuddin University. It is hoped that reasonable suggestions will be made to improve the Chinese curriculum of Confucius Institute and enrich teachers' methods, so as to stimulate students' learning motivation, meet students' learning needs

and improve learning efficiency, promote Confucius Institute to better train local Chinese language talents.

### 3.2 Research object

The 150 questionnaires were distributed to two Chinese language centers, 146 of which were returned, and 143 of which were valid. Among the respondents, there were 61 males and 82 females. All of them were between the ages of 18 and 25. 36 of them had been to China, 12 were scholarship students of the Confucius Institute for one semester, and 24 had participated in summer camps or other visits to China, the others have never been to China. According to the basic information of the subjects, 76 of them studied Chinese for half a year, 43 for a year or so, and 24 for more than a year.

### 3.3 Sample collection

This research mainly carries on the sample collection by the questionnaire survey and focuses on the Chinese language learning needs of students in Confucius Institute. Divide the learning needs of students into four parts: students' learning ability; students' learning aspirations; students' learning processes; students' needs for learning environment. Except for the basic information to be filled in, the questionnaire, all appears in the form of selection, and provides 5 different answers according to questions.

## 4 Findings and Analysis

### 4.1 Students' learning ability

Through the analysis of the collected questionnaires, it is found that the students majoring in language (English, Japanese, Korean, etc.) are the most among all the students, accounting for 56.1% of the total sample, followed by the students majoring in tourism, of the total sample, 26.3% were enrolled, and the remaining 17.6% (sociology, medicine, economics, etc.) were from different majors. Among students, the second-year students accounted for the most, accounting for 47.3% of the total sample, followed by the first-year students, accounting for 31.5% and the remaining 21.2% of the students came from the third and fourth grades respectively. The proportion of students who have studied Chinese at Confucius Institute for six months or so is the highest and those who have studied for more than one year account the least.

The self-assessment of the respondents showed that

among the four basic abilities of listening, speaking, reading and writing in Chinese, 87.7% students thought their reading ability was better than the other three abilities, 12.3% students thought their Chinese listening ability was better than other abilities. No students thought their speaking or writing ability was better than other abilities. In the survey, 45.6% students thought Chinese characters were the most difficult to learn, followed by 40.4% students who believe grammar were the most difficult, and the remaining 14% students thought phonetics or new words were more difficult to learn.

### 4.2 Students' Learning Aspirations

a. Most of the reasons why students first chose to study Chinese were due to their interest in Chinese, especially Chinese characters.

b. There are two things that can happen to a learner as time goes on. (1) Learners' learning motivation has gradually changed from the external motivation of language interest to the internal motivation that needs to improve their Chinese proficiency. (2) Learners' learning motivation gradually changes from external motivation of language interest to losing interest and giving up Chinese learning.

c. 63.2% students began studying Chinese to prepare for future employment. Most of the students were majoring in tourism. The present achievement is not the most important factor which affects their learning motivation; they pay more attention to whether they master Chinese knowledge and ability. 36.8% students learning Chinese for the purpose of studying abroad. They put more emphasis on test scores and actively participate in Chinese cultural activities.

d. The encouragement from Chinese teachers affects a lot on the learners' motivation. 100% of the samples show that there is a direct relationship between learners' learning attitude and teachers' evaluation methods. Changing teachers may affect learners' motivation.

e. In the aspect of language skills, learners generally hope to improve their Chinese listening and speaking skills, followed by writing skills. Only 28% of the respondents thought they would stick to learning Chinese, 61.4% were unsure whether they would stick to learning Chinese, and 10.6% thought they might not stick to learning Chinese.

### 4.3 Students' Learning Processes

a. The institute often holds cultural activities, with 71.9% of students participating in more than five activities and 28.1% of students participating in more than three activities. The most popular activities for students are Chinese traditional festivals and some thematic cultural activities. In the sample, only 21.1% of the students had participated in Chinese cultural activities other than those organized by the Confucius Institute.

b. Students generally get along well with their Chinese teachers and believe that Chinese teachers are conscientious and methodical in their classroom teaching. Not many students feel anxious in class. Most students feel relaxed in Chinese class. Most of the students were attentive and seldom distracted in class, but the percentage of students who were willing to take the initiative to learn Chinese after class was not high. Therefore the classroom is their main study place and classroom learning takes up most of their Chinese study time

c. The students who have taken HSK (Chinese Writing Test) or HSKK (Chinese Speaking Test) account for 84.2% of the total sample. The proportion of students who have taken HSK is higher than that of students who have taken HSKK. Usually students who have taken HSK have also taken HSKK. Their main purpose of taking the exam is to apply for a scholarship to China or for work.

### 4.4 Students' Needs for Learning Environment

a. Chinese teachers don't change their teaching methods often when they review and explain the text. Once they form a pattern, they become fixed, but they often change their practice methods.

b. The students of Confucius Institute are greatly influenced by their peers in learning Chinese. Like or do not like the Chinese class and students get along with the relationship have a direct link. 31.8% of the students would communicate with their classmates in Chinese in private.

c. 63.2% students think that the Chinese textbooks currently used are not very interesting, but 82.5% students believe that the textbooks currently used are very practical and have a strong correlation with the HSK test. 45.6% of the students thought that the current Chinese textbook would be helpful for their future work.

d. 14% students chose to study Chinese regularly on the Internet or mobile phone APP or watch Chinese language learning videos. Of the remaining students, 60% use the internet or mobile phone only occasionally to learn Chinese, while 26% never use these channels to learn Chinese.

e. The students surveyed were generally satisfied with the number of weekly Chinese class hours. At the same time, it is generally believed that the curriculum of Confucius Institute is relatively rich and the current assessment form is basically satisfactory, but 42.1% students can not complete Chinese homework on time.

## 5 Conclusion

1. Chinese characters are generally considered the most difficult to learn, but pronunciation, especially tone, is one of the first difficulties that students may encounter. Beginners can get a certain sense of satisfaction and accomplishment after they have mastered the pronunciation. Therefore, it is easy to satisfy the sense of achievement of the beginners of Chinese. With the passage of time, in addition to grammar, Chinese characters have gradually become difficult in Chinese learning. Through the investigation and analysis, it can be also seen that the Chinese input ability of students is generally higher than the output ability.

Chinese teachers should help students establish good habits and provide effective learning methods at the primary stage. As Indonesian is an alphabetic language, students generally learn pinyin faster, but the tone is unfamiliar to them. Teachers should as early as possible to form a certain stroke structure thinking to students, which will help students' long-term learning. The Chinese course of Confucius Institute is mainly a comprehensive course and the tailored courses can be set up properly to meet students' needs.

2. Students' learning aspirations show that some students' motivation is very strong. They have clear individual needs in learning and could actively overcome the difficulties. Students with low motivation usually have a short duration of interest. Most students who want to study in China prefer a short-term experience. Teachers often play a decisive role in students' motivation and persistence. All these indicate that learners often have difficulty to persist

in long-term learning without clear goals and strong motivation. The relationship between teachers and learners is also one of the keys to learners' willingness in learning. Abundant extra-curricular activities and the frequency of learners' participation both affect learners' learning.

First of all, the teachers should help students update their Chinese learning goals. The encouragement and guidance of teachers are of great significance for students to form long-term and stable learning goals. Secondly, the relationship between teachers and students also affects learners' motivation to a great extent. The students' ability to persist in learning Chinese depends mainly on their own and is closely related to the teacher. If students like the teacher, it will be conducive to students' learning. Indonesian students generally respect teachers, and Chinese teachers have received pre-service training and have certain cross-cultural communication skills. Therefore, the relationship between teachers and students of the Confucius Institute is generally harmonious; it is beneficial to the development of Chinese teaching. Finally, before taking over the old class, new teacher should try to know more about the specific situation of students in advance and carry out teaching in a targeted way.

3. According to the needs of students' learning process, students' actively participate in all kinds of activities. The activities of Confucius Institute are the main and most professional platform for introducing Chinese culture and language. Apart from Chinese language classes and Chinese cultural activities, most students seldom take the initiative to learn Chinese through other channels. Most students have low anxiety and high positive attitude in learning, which is a good sign that students do not feel pressured or nervous during learning. Relaxed and happy mood can make the student study easily. Most of the students have taken HSK or HSKK, and the goal is for studying or working.

The culture and language activities should also be maintained in the future. The activity should mainly base on the experience, through the students' personal participation; it could easily achieve the goal of the activity. In addition, according to the current activities of the Confucius Institute, this article proposes to increase the modern Chinese cultural elements of activities. Teachers should make full use of the Internet, encourage students to learn Chinese

after class, and leave the assignments to watch online Chinese videos to encourage students to make full use of various channels to learn Chinese. At the same time, students should be encouraged to take HSK or HSKK, even if they have no intention of studying or working, as a test of their Chinese learning. Facing the pressure of examination, proper anxiety is helpful also.

4. Judging from the students' needs for learning environment, students are influenced by certain environment, Peer Influence, practical and interesting teaching materials, curriculum arrangement, weekly class hours and so on. Students prefer a variety of teaching methods, which requires teachers in all aspects of classroom teaching, for different classes of students, different learning content for different teaching design. Students are generally susceptible to Peer influence, which also puts forward certain requirements for the teaching management of teachers.

At present, the classroom environment is very good, the cultural atmosphere is thick, and the classroom layout is generally welcomed by the students. Sometimes even if there is no course, students are willing to study or read in the classroom. At present, the Chinese teaching materials used by Confucius Institute can meet the needs of the students, but for some students with strong learning objectives, they need to be supplemented by Chinese teachers. Most of the students who think the teaching materials are not practical enough come from tourism major, they would like to learn Chinese related to tourism. According to the survey, both the curriculum and the weekly classes can meet the students' needs.

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