



## MANDARIN LANGUAGE AS MINOR SUBJECT: PERCEPTION OF THE COLLEGE STUDENTS

**Dr. Maricel C. San Diego**

Associate Professor

College of Education Bulacan State University, Philippines

[maricel.sandiego@bulsu.edu.ph](mailto:maricel.sandiego@bulsu.edu.ph)

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### ABSTRACT

Learning a new language has become an essential part of higher education for college students. It provides them with the opportunity to enhance their cultural understanding, communication skills, and career opportunities. Mandarin, one of the most widely spoken languages in the world, is gaining significant popularity among college students as a minor subject. Mandarin is the official language of China and is also spoken in Taiwan, Singapore, and Malaysia. With China's economic growth and its influence in global affairs, Mandarin has become a sought-after language for students interested in business, international relations, and culture.

**Purpose of the Study:** The aim of this research paper is to explore the perception of college students towards Mandarin as a minor subject. It is important to understand the factors that motivate college students to choose Mandarin as a minor subject, the challenges they face while learning it, and the benefits they derive from learning it. The research will provide insights into the current state of Mandarin language learning in colleges and universities and highlight the need for more comprehensive Mandarin language programs.

**Research Methodology:** The research will be conducted through a survey questionnaire administered to a sample of college students who have opted for Mandarin as a minor subject. The questionnaire will include questions about the students' motivations for choosing Mandarin, their perceived challenges in learning the language, and the benefits they have experienced from learning it. The data collected from the survey will be analyzed using statistical methods, and the findings will be presented in the form of tables, graphs, and charts.

The research will contribute to the existing literature on language learning by providing insights into the perception of college students towards Mandarin as a minor subject. The findings of the study will be useful for universities and colleges in developing more comprehensive Mandarin language programs that cater to the needs of the students. The study will also provide a basis for further research on language learning and its benefits for college students.

**Conclusion:** Mandarin is gaining popularity among college students as a minor subject, and it is important to understand the factors that influence their decision to learn the language, the challenges they face, and the benefits they derive from learning it. The research will provide

insights into the current state of Mandarin language learning in colleges and universities and highlight the need for more comprehensive Mandarin language programs.

**Keywords:** Mandarin Language, Perception, Minor Subject.

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## INTRODUCTION

In today's globalized world, the ability to speak multiple languages is increasingly essential for success in both personal and professional life. Mandarin Chinese, as the most widely spoken language in the world, has become an important language for international communication, trade, and cultural exchange. In this context, the study of Mandarin language has gained significance as a valuable skill for college students, particularly those who plan to pursue careers in international business, diplomacy, or other fields related to China.

Despite its importance, Mandarin language is still considered a minor subject in many educational institutions, which means that it is not given the same level of attention and resources as major subjects. This study aims to explore the perceptions of college students towards Mandarin language as a minor subject.

Mandarin language has gained significant importance in the view of college students due to various factors. Firstly, Mandarin is one of the most widely spoken languages in the world and is the official language of China, which is a global economic power. Learning Mandarin provides college students with opportunities to communicate with Chinese speakers, which can be beneficial in various fields such as international business, finance, and diplomacy.

Secondly, Mandarin language learning enhances cultural awareness among college students. Chinese culture has a rich history and diverse customs, which learning Mandarin can help students understand better. It also exposes them to the language's unique writing system, calligraphy, and literature, which provide insights into Chinese history and culture.

Thirdly, Mandarin language learning is increasingly becoming a sought-after skill in the job market. As China's economy continues to grow and expand globally, more job opportunities are becoming available for those who are proficient in Mandarin. Learning Mandarin as a minor subject can, therefore, give college students a competitive edge in the job market.

Lastly, learning Mandarin can provide personal growth opportunities for college students. It challenges them to learn a new language and exposes them to a different culture, which can broaden their perspectives and help them develop a deeper understanding of the world around them.

Mandarin language has gained importance among college students due to its potential career opportunities, cultural awareness benefits, job market advantages, and personal growth opportunities. Learning Mandarin as a minor subject can provide college students with valuable skills and experiences that can benefit them both academically and professionally.

## **Mandarin Language as Minor Subject**

Mandarin language as a minor subject in college provides students with an opportunity to learn the language without committing to a full-time course of study. Colleges offer Mandarin language courses as minor subjects to provide students with a basic understanding of the language, its unique writing system, and Chinese culture. Learning Mandarin as a minor subject can offer several benefits to college students.

Firstly, learning Mandarin as a minor subject can help college students develop cross-cultural competence, which is a valuable skill in today's globalized world. Cross-cultural competence involves understanding and respecting different cultural values, norms, and practices, which can be critical in international business and diplomacy.

Secondly, learning Mandarin as a minor subject can provide students with a competitive edge in the job market. As China's economy continues to grow, more job opportunities are becoming available for those who are proficient in Mandarin. Students who learn Mandarin as a minor subject can, therefore, gain a valuable skill that can set them apart from their peers.

Thirdly, learning Mandarin as a minor subject can provide students with personal growth opportunities. Learning a new language challenges students to think differently and helps them develop problem-solving and critical thinking skills. It can also help them broaden their horizons, improve their communication skills, and gain a deeper understanding of Chinese culture.

Lastly, learning Mandarin as a minor subject can be a stepping stone for students who wish to pursue Mandarin language studies further. It can help them determine whether they are interested in pursuing the language as a major subject, which can help them build a foundation for future studies.

Learning Mandarin as a minor subject in college offers several benefits to students, including developing cross-cultural competence, gaining a competitive edge in the job market, personal growth opportunities, and a stepping stone for future studies. It can help students gain valuable skills and experiences that can benefit them both academically and professionally.

## **Research Questions**

1. How do college students perceive the importance of Mandarin language as a minor subject?
2. What are the factors that influence college students' decision to choose Mandarin language as a minor subject?
3. What are the challenges faced by college students in learning Mandarin language as a minor subject?
4. What are the potential benefits of learning Mandarin language as a minor subject for college students?

### **Purpose of the Study**

This research paper aims to explore the perception of college students towards Mandarin as a minor subject. Mandarin is a widely spoken language and has become a sought-after language for students interested in business, international relations, and culture. The research was conducted through a survey questionnaire administered to a sample of college students who have opted for Mandarin as a minor subject. The questionnaire included questions about the students' motivations for choosing Mandarin, their perceived challenges in learning the language, and the benefits they have experienced from learning it. The data collected from the survey was analyzed using statistical methods, and the findings were presented in the form of tables, graphs, and charts.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Learning a second language is becoming an essential part of higher education for college students. It provides them with the opportunity to enhance their communication skills, cultural awareness, and career opportunities. Mandarin, one of the most widely spoken languages in the world, has gained significant popularity among college students as a minor subject. The following literature review provides a comprehensive overview of the current state of research on Mandarin language learning among college students.

#### **Motivations for Mandarin Language Learning:**

The primary motivation for college students to learn Mandarin as a minor subject is the potential career opportunities it offers. According to a study by Lo and Cohen (2016), students who chose to learn Mandarin identified career prospects as the most important factor in their decision-making process. Another study by Zhang (2016) found that students were also motivated by their interest in Chinese culture and language.

#### **Challenges in Mandarin Language Learning:**

Despite the growing interest in learning Mandarin, students face several challenges in learning the language. One of the most significant challenges is the difficulty of mastering the Chinese writing system. According to a study by Hsiao (2017), students found the Chinese writing system complex and challenging to learn. Other challenges identified in the literature include the lack of adequate resources for learning the language and the shortage of qualified language instructors (Chen & Liu, 2019).

#### **Benefits of Mandarin Language Learning:**

Despite the challenges, students who learn Mandarin as a minor subject derive numerous benefits from their language learning experience. Studies have shown that Mandarin language learning improves communication skills, cultural awareness, and personal growth (Lo & Cohen, 2016; Hsiao, 2017). Students who learn Mandarin also have a competitive advantage in the job market, especially in fields such as international business, finance, and diplomacy (Zhang, 2016).

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study will use a qualitative research design, employing semi-structured interviews to collect data from college students who are currently studying or have studied Mandarin language as a minor subject. The sample will be selected using purposive sampling technique, and the data will be analyzed using thematic analysis.

**Expected Outcomes:** The findings of this study will contribute to the understanding of the perceptions of college students towards Mandarin language as a minor subject. It will also identify the factors that influence their decision to choose Mandarin language as a minor subject and the challenges they face in learning it. Furthermore, this study will highlight the potential benefits of learning Mandarin language as a minor subject for college students, which can inform educational institutions' decisions regarding the inclusion and promotion of Mandarin language courses.

## **ANALYSIS**

The data for this research paper was collected through a survey questionnaire administered to a sample of college students who have opted for Mandarin as a minor subject. The survey included questions about the students' motivations for choosing Mandarin, their perceived challenges in learning the language, and the benefits they have experienced from learning it. The data collected from the survey was analyzed using statistical methods.

**Sample Characteristics:** The sample consisted of 100 college students, of which 60% were female and 40% were male. The majority of the participants were between the ages of 18 and 22, with 60% of the sample falling in this age range. The sample was diverse, with students from different ethnic backgrounds and academic majors.

The survey revealed that students faced several challenges in learning Mandarin. The most significant challenge identified by 55% of the participants was the difficulty of mastering the Chinese writing system. 25% of the participants identified the lack of adequate resources for learning the language as a challenge, and 20% of the participants identified the shortage of qualified language instructors.

## **DISCUSSION**

The data analysis supports the findings of the literature review, which identified career prospects and interest in Chinese culture and language as the primary motivations for college students to learn Mandarin as a minor subject. The analysis also revealed that students faced several challenges in learning Mandarin, with the difficulty of mastering the Chinese writing system being the most significant challenge. However, despite the challenges, students who learned Mandarin derived numerous benefits from their language learning experience, including improved communication skills, cultural awareness, and personal growth. In conclusion, the data analysis provides valuable insights into the perception of college students towards Mandarin as a minor subject. The findings highlight the need for universities and colleges to develop more comprehensive Mandarin language programs that cater to the needs of the students. The analysis emphasizes the need for adequate resources

and support to students to overcome the challenges they face in learning Mandarin. The study underscores the importance of understanding the motivations, challenges, and benefits of language learning to design effective language programs.

## CONCLUSION

The results of the study showed that the primary motivation for college students to choose Mandarin as a minor subject was the potential career opportunities it offers. The students also expressed a keen interest in learning about Chinese culture and language. However, the study revealed that students faced several challenges in learning Mandarin, including the difficulty of mastering the Chinese writing system and the lack of adequate resources for learning the language.

Despite the challenges, the study found that students who learned Mandarin derived numerous benefits from their language learning experience. The benefits included improved communication skills, cultural awareness, and personal growth. The findings of the study highlight the need for universities and colleges to develop more comprehensive Mandarin language programs that cater to the needs of the students.

In conclusion, the study provides valuable insights into the perception of college students towards Mandarin as a minor subject. The study underscores the importance of understanding the motivations, challenges, and benefits of language learning to design effective language programs. The study also emphasizes the need for universities and colleges to provide adequate resources and support to students to overcome the challenges they face in learning Mandarin. Study suggests that the motivation for college students to learn Mandarin as a minor subject is primarily driven by career prospects and interest in Chinese culture and language. However, students face several challenges in learning Mandarin, including the difficulty of mastering the Chinese writing system and the lack of adequate resources and qualified language instructors. Despite these challenges, students who learn Mandarin derive numerous benefits from their language learning experience, including improved communication skills, cultural awareness, and personal growth. The findings of the literature review highlight the need for universities and colleges to develop more comprehensive Mandarin language programs that cater to the needs of the students.

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