Chapter 12
Every Cloud Has a Silver Lining:
Learning Mandarin During COVID–19

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine students' motivation towards Mandarin learning during COVID-19. Theoretically, motivation is considered a broad concept that aims to define why people decide to do something, how long they sustain the activity, and how much effort they will expend to pursue it. Considering that there is no single theory that can comprehensively cover the possible motives, this study investigates the L2 motivation with the self as its core, which is found closely related to three motivation frameworks: Socio-education theory, self-determination theory, and L2 motivational self-system. This study found that L2 learners of Mandarin were highly driven by intrinsic motivation such as knowledge, culture, language learning stimulation, and accomplishment. They were less likely to be motivated by external pressures such as the ought-to L2 self or introjected opinions and showed a highly self-decisive multilingual profile with a willingness to diversify their knowledge and skills. Finally, Mandarin learning had positively contributed to their overall well-being during COVID-19.

INTRODUCTION

A new coronavirus disease (COVID-19) causing respiratory symptoms was first identified in China in December 2019. The UK confirmed the first two cases of COVID-19 on 31st January 2020 and announced "Lockdown Regulations" on 26th March which came into effect immediately. These regulations significantly restricted people's freedom of movement, with the stipulation that "no person may leave the place where they are living without reasonable excuse" (SI 2020/350), in the hope of slowing the spread of COVID-19, especially among the most vulnerable populations, and ensure a manageable caseload for the country's National Health Service (NHS). Measures were enforced on individual and

population levels, including nationwide school closures, banning of public events and non-essential public gatherings, self-isolation for symptomatic individuals, closure of businesses, educational and public institutions, and stay-at-home orders aside from essential tasks and exercise.

Since then, universities have halted non-essential services and transferred from campus-based teaching to remote online education using online resources and platforms. The school involved in this case study is an international language school established in 1957 located in central London. The school aims to raise the standards of English language teaching and training worldwide and foreign language courses were added in 1989. Currently, there are eleven languages taught by the department of Morden Languages at the school: Arabic, French, German, French, Italian, Mandarin, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish. Every year, more than 8,000 students from over 150 nationalities study here, given the convenience of exploring the local culture in the UK. In the past, the lessons were classroom-based, however, due to the impact of Covid-19, the school closed on 20th March and face-to-face classes were transferred to online on 23rd March, just three days before the imposition of the lockdown in the UK.

In this school, Mandarin was established in 2018 and has been taught at various levels (beginner, elementary, pre-intermediate, intermediate and advance) ever since. When the classes moved online, I, as the Mandarin language teacher at the school, was worried that I may lose some students due to the unpredictable situations. I was also concerned that online lessons would be less effective and enjoyable, causing students to lose interest in learning the language. However, over the subsequent nine months that have passed since March, more students have attended the course compared to last year. What has surprised me the most is that one group of students who had face-to-face lessons before the lockdown are still learning Mandarin with me online. Although they have moved to online learning, these students have made fantastic progress during these past nine months.

I wondered what has been driving these students to learn Mandarin, especially during this challenging time. Thus, this research investigates the learners' motivation towards Mandarin learning and only focuses on those who have been learning Mandarin consistently through the pandemic. Understanding their answers to this question of motivation would presumably help us understand the motivation of Mandarin students better and facilitate students' engagement in the learning process.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Motivation plays a significant role in understanding learners' second language[1] (L2) learning and is generally understood as to why people decide to learn an L2, how long they will sustain their learning and how much effort they will expend to pursue their L2 (Boekaerts, 1995; Dörnyei, 2001).

Two types of the most general and well-known forms of motivation are intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Dörnyei, 2013; Brown, 1994; Dickinson, 1995; Dörnyei, 1994a; Schmidt, Boraie, & Kassabgy, 1996; Williams & Burden, 1997). Intrinsically motivated students are naturally engaged in an activity for its own pleasure and satisfaction and are not under any external pressure to meet any extrinsic requirements (Vallerand, 1997; Vallerand & Ratelle, 2002). Three types of intrinsic motivation have been identified concerning second language acquisition: (1) intrinsic (knowledge), which refers to the satisfaction of students' curiosity in understanding something new or exploring the new language; (2) intrinsic (accomplishment), which relates to the sense of achievement when students cope with challenges or accomplished something; and (3) intrinsic (stimulation), which refers to the enjoyment students experience when learning or using their new language.

On the other hand, extrinsic motivation refers to external driving forces stimulated by the environment. In terms of how external factors influence people and their behaviour, Deci and Ryan (1985) claimed that human beings have an innate predisposition to explore their environment and master new situations in a way that they assimilate the newly acquired knowledge into their existing cognitive structure, including their sense of self. This integration of new knowledge into the self happens throughout one's lifespan (Ryan & Powelson, 1991). During this assimilating and accommodating process, the person develops into a more differentiated and refined individual shaped by their new experiences and a more coordinated and cohesive individual due to this synthetic process (Noels, 2009). Therefore, Deci and Ryan (1985; 2002) suggested that it is better to view extrinsic motivation as a continuum which can best reflect the individual's assimilation of their new experiences into their core self when regulating their behaviour in an activity. Four types of motivated regulation were proposed according to Deci & Ryan's (1985) Self-determination Theory: (1) external regulation; (2) introjected regulation; (3) identified regulation and (4) integrated regulation. External regulation comes entirely from external sources such as teachers' praise, working for monetary incentive, or studying for course credit, which is the least self-determinate form of extrinsic motivation. As long as these external sources are present, one will engage in a language learning activity but once removed, that engagement will no longer exist. Introjected regulation involves some externally imposed rules or standards that students follow to maintain their self-esteem or to not feel guilty. A student often feels they "should" or "ought-to" learn a language to live up to their own or others' expectations. This regulation reflects some degree of personal control from within the self. Identified regulation is more self-regulated in the way that a student highly values learning a language to be important, meaningful and consistent with their personal goals for the future. The most internalised form of external motivation is integrated motivation, where learning and performance are fully assimilated with their personal values, needs, and identities, such as learning Mandarin being important for me being a global citizen. It is assumed that the more people feel the learning activity is consistent with their sense of self, the more they will be motivated to participate in this activity.

Dörnyei (2005) proposed motivation types from the future self-perspective, called the L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS). The L2MSS draws from possible-self theory (Markus & Nurius, 1986) and self-discrepancy theory (Higgin, 1987). Possible selves refer to one's idea of what they may become, what they would like to become and what they are afraid of becoming, which involves one's hopes and wishes and, more importantly, denotes the state of future-self rather than the current-self. Self-discrepancy theory postulates that people have a tendency to narrow down the gap between their idea of the current self and future self by regulating their behaviour, such as setting goals and expectations. The proposal of L2MSS also has empirical support. For example, having conducted a large-scale study in Hungary over 12 years among over 13,000 students in five languages - English, German, French, Italian and Russian - Dörnyei (2005) found that the students' overall disposition actually tapped into their concept of the "ideal L2 self" in psychology.

Therefore, the L2 Motivational Self System consists of three components: (1) the ideal L2 self, which is a powerful motivator as the person desires to reduce the discrepancy between their actual self and their ideal self who can speak an L2; (2) the ought-to L2 self. Driven by this motive, the individual believes they ought to possess certain attributes to meet others' expectations and avoid possible adverse outcomes; and (3) the L2 learning experience, which relates to the learner's learning experiences, such as the curriculum and learning activities. Some learners may not be driven by their future selves, but rather by successful engagement during the learning process. As can been seen from the above, the ideal

L2 self and the ought-to L2 self are based on self-theories, while the L2 learning experience comes from a different level concerning the learners' learning environment.

Another well-known concept in L2 motivation research tapping into the self-concept is integrativeness, proposed by Gardner (1985, 2010) in the Socio-Educational Model (SEM). Gardner (2010) argued that apart from the language itself, its culture and the characteristics of that language's spoken communities are also learnt or adopted by the learner to a certain extent. This means learners have the intent not only to learn that language but also to adopt its values, culture, and even have a willingness to integrate into that community to become a member of the community.

However, some areas of overlap have been identified among these self-related motives. Firstly, arguments have been raised concerning intrinsic motivation and integrated regulation in the SDT framework. Noels (2015) argued that they differ from each other in terms of the motivating force and regulatory guides. To be more specific, integrated regulation is driven by personal importance, values and identity, while intrinsic motivation comes from the attraction to or interest in the activity. However, being interested means a person makes the activity meaningful to themselves. In this case, intrinsic motivation is very similar to integrated regulation. Koestner and Losier (2002) argued that the difference exists in whether the regulatory behaviour is learned by the performance of the activity or genetically inherited in the learner themselves, as some people enjoy learning a language because of internalisation or association (integrated regulation), while others may enjoy linguistic acquisition (intrinsic motivation). Ryan and Deci (2002) further argued that integrated regulation is associated with relatedness while intrinsic motivation is related to competence. Another difference between the two concerns their long-term goals. Integrated regulation is regarded as a stronger predictor than intrinsic motivation for "seeing an activity as interesting may not be sufficient to engage fully and effectively in that activity but rather one must see the activity as personally important" (Noels, 2018, p.309). Therefore, it is always suggested to develop integrated regulation in addition to intrinsic motivation.

Secondly, concerning the concept of integrativeness from SEM, empirical research has found that integrativeness is strongly related to intrinsic motivation (Sugita McEown et al, 2014); while Pae (2008) found that there was no significant similarity between integrativeness and intrinsic motivation. However, Noels (2005) argued that integrativeness predicts cultural and community engagement better than other motives. Discussion of the integrativeness has also made much about the difference between integrativeness and the ideal L2 self since the proposal of L2MSS (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009). According to an empirical study conducted among Korean secondary schools, the ideal L2 self predicted language learners' English proficiency better than integrativeness, and thus the ideal L2 self was suggested to replace integrativeness motivation (Kim, 2012; Kim & Kim 2012). However, in research carried out among secondary schools and universities, Kormos and Csizer (2008) found that the ideal L2 self and integrativeness were not interchangeable as that the ideal L2 self was more likely linked to students' international posture while the integrativeness was more closely related to cultural interest.

Thirdly, there are some similarities and divergences between L2MSS and SDT. Dörnyei (2009) pointed out that introjected regulation and the ought-to L2 self are congruent to a great extent. The ideal L2 self is similar to identified and integrated regulation as they all embody personal values, goals and so on. In Nishida's (2012) study, the ideal L2 self was found to be strongly correlated with integrated regulation. However, Sugita McEown et al. (2014) argued that integrated or identified regulations reflect learners' internalisation that are happening currently and have happened in the past, while the L2MSS is future-directed motivation. The researchers also found that intrinsic motivation, integrative orientation, the ideal

L2 self, identified regulation, and integrated regulation overlap while the ought-to L2 self, introjected regulation and external regulation also overlap.

In this context, this study aims to determine students' motivation and the overlapping theoretical areas concerning the self concept in the context of L2 Mandarin learning. Furthermore, this study illustrates students' motivation by understanding students' opinions and feelings towards L2 Mandarin learning during the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Specifically, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. On the macro level:
   a. what drives students to learn Mandarin during COVID-19 and what is the relationship amongst various motives and intended effort?
   b. how do the self-concepts from all three theories overlap in this context?
2. On the micro level: how do we understand students' motives to learn Mandarin and what is the role of Mandarin learning in students' lives?

METHODS

Instruments and Data

To address the first research question, this study administered questionnaires, and the data were analysed by SPSS. Specifically, the motivation variables were examined and compared. Pearson Correlations and Simple Linear Regression were carried out to find the relations between students' motives and intended effort. Finally, Principle Components Analysis was conducted to find any overlapping areas.

The questionnaires included 30 question items and were distributed and collected online. Question items were adapted from the three theories outlined above and tailored to the specific Mandarin learning context of this study. Ten motivation variables were included: integrativeness, intrinsic motivation (accomplishment), intrinsic motivation (knowledge), intrinsic motivation (stimulation), external regulation, introjected regulation, identified regulation, integrated regulation, the ideal L2 self, and the ought-to L2 self. An additional variable, intended effort, was also included to measure the extent of the effort students would like to exert in Mandarin learning. All of these variables were on a 5-point scale with 1 indicating "Strongly Disagree", and 5 "Strongly Agree". The questionnaire reliability is 0.78, above the threshold level (Cortina, 1993). Table 1 shows these variables and its examples.

To address the second and third research questions, semi-constructed interviews were conducted with three individual participants in order to find out their individual motivation for learning Mandarin. These interviews looked closely into how different types of motives interacted with each other and their impact on the learners' learning experience, especially during the period of the COVID-19 pandemic. The interview questions were derived from the answer from the questionnaires. Other questions were also asked during the interviews for further explanation, such as *you mentioned …., could you elaborate a bit more please*? Interviews were audio-recorded, and the language used for the interviews was English. Data were transcribed and analysed by NVivo 12.

Table 1. Questionnaire variables and its examples

Motivation	Examples:
Integrativeness	I would like to become similar to people who speak Mandarin.
Intrinsic motivation (accomplishment)	For the enjoyment I experience when I understand a difficult construct in Mandarin and the satisfaction I feel when I am in the process of accomplishing difficult exercises in Mandarin.
Intrinsic motivation (knowledge)	Because I enjoy the feeling of acquiring knowledge about the Mandarin community and their way of life.
Intrinsic motivation (stimulation)	Because it's a great feeling to be able to speak and use Mandarin.
External regulation	To gain the benefits which speaking Mandarin will provide me.
Introjected regulation	Because I would feel embarrassed or ashamed if I didn't know the language.
Identified regulation	Because I think it is good for my personal development.
Integrated regulation	Because it is an integral part of my life.
Ideal L2 self	I can imagine myself speaking Mandarin with international friends or colleagues.
Ought-to L2 self	Learning Mandarin is necessary because people surrounding me expect me to do so.
Intended effort	I am prepared to expend a lot of effort in learning Mandarin.

Participants

Questionnaires were collected among ninety adult Mandarin learners who were learning Mandarin at this school. Some of them have moved out of London to other parts of the UK or gone back to their home countries but remained to study Mandarin online. They have been learning Mandarin at this school from elementary level to the time when this research was carried out. Three participants were interviewed. All the participants were pseudonymised.

Details of the three participants interviewed for this research are given below:

Mike is German and in his early 20s. He speaks German, English and French. Mike was studying at university when he started learning Mandarin in 2019. In July 2020, Mike finished his studies and took a job at a company involved in business in China. Therefore, Mandarin learning accompanied him through his studies and the job-hunting stage until he finally landed a job.

Nora is in her early 20s. She is Russian and learnt French and German at school. Nora can also speak English and Spanish. She was doing a master's degree in London when she started to learn Mandarin but moved back to Russia just before the imposition of the lockdown in the UK in March 2020. However, Nora continued to learn Mandarin online at home.

Kate is in her early 20s. As Kate grew up in European countries, she speaks several languages, including French, Spanish and Polish. Kate learnt some basic Mandarin a few years ago and re-joined this course with Mike and Nora. She started a MA in September 2020, not long before this research was carried out.

ANALYSIS

Questionnaires

Figure 1. Means of self-related motives
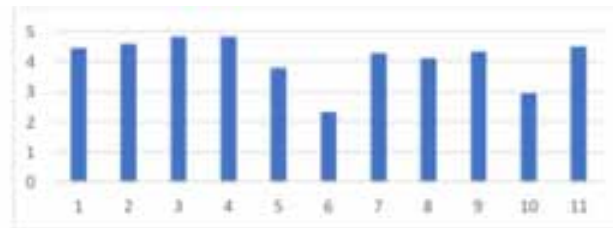
1=integrativeness; 2=intrinsic (accomplishment); 3= intrinsic (knowledge); 4 =intrinsic (stimulation);
5=external Regulation; 6=introjected regulation; 7=identified regulation; 8=integrated regulation;
9=ideal L2 self; 10=ought-to L2 self; 11=intended effort.

Table 2 examines the means of the self-related motives, ranging between 2.33 and 4.83. A closer look at the figures reveals that the means of the intrinsic (knowledge) and intrinsic (stimulation) motivations reach the highest point at 4.83 and the intrinsic (accomplishment) comes the second highest at 4.58. This means that students were generally highly motivated by intrinsic motivation. Following Intrinsic motivation is integrativeness (M=4.44) and the ideal L2 Self (M=4.33). Extrinsic motivation varied between 2.33 and 4.28: identified regulation (M=4.28), integrated regulation (M=4.11), external regulation (M=3.78) and introjected Regulation (M=2.33). The low mean of the introjected regulation is in line with the ought-to L2 self, which is 2.94. In general, the students' intended effort in Mandarin learning is 4.50, suggesting that they would like to invest a great deal of effort in Mandarin learning. Eight out ten motives' means fall between 4.00 and 5.00. Therefore, we can conclude that these students were highly driven in their Mandarin learning. By comparing intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, we can further conclude that these students were driven more by intrinsic motivation and external motives.

Pearson Correlations were conducted to determine the relationship significance between motivation and students' intended effort. Table 2 shows the results of the Pearson Correlations

Table 2. results of the Pearson Correlations

		N1	N2	N3	N4	N5	N6	N7	N8	N9	N10
N11	Pearson Correlation	-.132*	.657**	.529**	.076*	-.096*	-.151*	.352*	.312*	.245*	-.142*

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
1=integrativeness; 2=intrinsic (accomplishment); 3= intrinsic (knowledge); 4 =intrinsic (stimulation); 5=external Regulation; 6=introjected regulation; 7=identified regulation; 8=integrated regulation; 9=ideal L2 self; 10=ought-to L2 self; 11=intended effort.

All motives were found to be significantly correlated with intended effort. Positive significance was found for these motives: intrinsic motivation (accomplishment) (r(90)=.657,p=.00); intrinsic (knowledge) (r(88)=.529, p=.00); intrinsic (stimulation) (r(88)=.076,p=.04); identified regulation (r(90)=.352,p=.02); integrated regulation (r(90)=.312, p=.03); and the ideal L2 self (r(90)=.245, p=.02) The strongest correlation was between intrinsic (accomplishment) and intrinsic (knowledge). Negative significance correlation was found for: integrativeness ((r(90) = -.132, p=.03)); external regulation (r(90)=-.096, p=.03); introjected regulation (r(90)=-.151, p=0.3); ought-to L2 self (r(90)=-.142, p=.02).

While correlations determine whether two variables are linearly related, regression further quantifies relationships by developing an equation predicting and determining how well they can predict a future outcome. Therefore, a simple linear regression was carried out to test whether students' intended effort can be predicted by these motives.

Figure 2. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.984ᵃ	.967	.641	.30859

a. Predictors: (Constant), N10, N8, N4, N1, N3, N5, N9, N2, N6, N7

1=integrativeness; 2=intrinsic (accomplishment); 3= intrinsic (knowledge); 4 =intrinsic (stimulation); 5=external Regulation; 6=introjected regulation; 7= identified regulation; 8=integrated regulation; 9=ideal L2 self; 10=ought-to L2 self; 11=intended effort.

The Model Summary table in Figure 2 shows that the model can predict the intended effort with a 98.4% degree and explains 96.7% of the variance. The big difference between Adjusted R Square (.641) and R Square (.967) may indicate that there were too many predictors or that the sample size was too small in this study. The result from the ANOVA (Sig.=.00) further indicates that this model fits the data well and that there is a statistically significant relationship between the intended effort and a combination of the motives. Intended effort can be predicted with the following equation: Intended Effort=-20.92-0.74*integrativeness+3.35*intrinsic(accomplishment)+7.48*intrinsic(knowledge)+2.51*intrinsic(stimulation)-2.97*introjected regulation+0.81*identified regulation+1.76*integrated regulation+0.32* ideal L2 self-1.14* ought-to L2 self.

Principal components analysis with varimax rotation was conducted to assess how the self-related variables clustered.

Factors

Table 3 yielded a four-factor solution (based on the Kaiser criterion) accounting for 70% of the variance in the correlation matrix and based on the eigenvalues over 1 criterion and the screen plot. The first factor accounted for 71.82% of the variance, as defined by identified regulation, intrinsic motivation (stimulation) and the ideal L2 self. The second factor accounted for 67.11%, as defined by intended effort, intrinsic motivation (accomplishment) and intrinsic motivation (knowledge). The third factor accounted

Table 3. Component Loadings for the Rotated Components

Variables	1	2	3	4
Identified regulation	**.936**			-.102
Intrinsic (stimulation)	**.848**	.110	-.315	-.115
Ideal L2 self	**.756**		.248	.104
Intended effort	-.139	**.871**		
Intrinsic (knowledge)	.462	**.831**		
Intrinsic (accomplishment)		**.764**		-.410
Ought-to L2 self			**.857**	
Introjected regulation		-.277	**.784**	.279
Integrated regulation				**.838**
External Regulation	-.474	-.222		**.665**
Integrativeness			.451	**.595**
Eigenvalues	3.50	2.43	1.61	1.17
% of variance	71.82	67.11	64.63	50.67

for 64.63%, as defined by the ought-to L2 self and introjected regulation. The fourth factor accounted for 50.67%, as defined by integrativeness, integrated regulation and external regulation.

Interviews

This section presents learners' profiles according to the four factors from the principal components analysis (see Table 5) and elaborates students' motivation towards Mandarin learning in the specific context of this study.

The first factor profiles learners as highly stimulated by Mandarin learning; they positively recognise its value and have a strong desire to achieve fluency in Mandarin.

Intrinsic Motivation (stimulation) (M=4.83). Generally, all participants are intrinsically motivated and stimulated by learning Mandarin. As Mike said: "*learning Mandarin is fun, the characters look beautiful, and I enjoy drawing them. It feels nice being able to read Chinese texts*". Kate also agreed that speaking and using Mandarin brought her a great feeling: "*a lot of people will think you are intelligent because you can speak a difficult language*". Nora mentioned that her mother was stunned by her ability to read the Chinese on a product they bought online. This made Nora feel very proud of herself.

Identified Regulation(M=4.28). All participants identify the value of learning Mandarin. Mike finds Mandarin to be very beneficial for his career, especially when the job is set in a Chinese speaking environment or involves Chinese speaking colleagues/clients. Mike also thinks that being able to speak and understand Mandarin can bring the learner many benefits "*because of the size of the Chinese economy, especially if your career in any way involves Asia*". For Mike, Mandarin helped his career and helped him to make friends. He has even thought about moving to China. Although Nora and Kate are not involved in work to do with China or Chinese people, they both agreed that learning Mandarin is beneficial. As Nora studied international relations during her MA, she regards Mandarin as part of her

personal development: "*when you know many languages, the way you think is very different. By under-standing other cultures, you change yourself as well - your personality - it makes your mind more open*".

Idea L2 Self (M=4.33). For their future self, participants have constructed salient Mandarin-using self-images with a strong desire to get to native speaker level: "*Definitely, I really would like to become more confident when talking with natives*" (Nora). As Mike has the desire to live or work in a Mandarin-speaking country in the future, he definitely wants to achieve high-level fluency in Mandarin: "*If I can, then yes, I would like to get to that level at some point*". At the same time, participants are also aware of the difficulty of reaching native-like proficiency. As Kate said: "*I would love that, but realistically, I will never become like a native speaker. I am very aware of that.*"

This shows that participants enjoy learning Mandarin and also have a strong desire to achieve native-like proficiency in Mandarin. They generally find Mandarin an attractive and valuable language for the future.

Factor 2 profiles participants as highly motivated by the nature of Mandarin language and its culture, and shows that they all have a great commitment to Mandarin learning.

Intrinsic Motivation (knowledge) (M=4.83). Participants were initially motivated to learn Mandarin by the novelty of learning a new language. Kate spent her childhood in several European countries, and she can speak various European languages. For her, Mandarin is "*very different,* [it] *confused me sometimes; everything is new, the grammar, structure, it's challenging, motivating…it was almost like a puzzle, putting pieces together, seeing what works and what doesn't…that process is really interesting… It's amazing to be able to find patterns and understand deeper meanings, by looking at the composition of the characters*". Nora is from Russia and she said Mandarin pronunciation is very close to the Russian language: "*It's so soft, we share some similar sounds. I really like the concept in Mandarin, like you can combine characters together*". Apart from the language, participants are also motivated to learn Mandarin by its culture. While Nora was studying her MA in London, she loved playing Mah-jong with her Chinese flatmates: "*I think you need to be very focused and intelligent to play Mah-jong*". Nora also visited Chinatown very frequently when she was in London: "*During Chinese New Year, the first time we tried hotpot, I was very confused about my feelings, but the second time I liked it very much*". As Kate's first degree was History, she is very interested in the Chinese history of buildings, clothing styles and so on. Mike also finds "*the Chinese way of life, architecture, and heritage really interesting*".

Intrinsic Motivation (accomplishment) (M=4.58). Apart from being fascinated by Mandarin and its culture, participants are also highly motivated by the intrinsic accomplishment that learning Mandarin brings to them. All participants started learning Mandarin almost from the elementary level at the same time at this school. After a year of constant learning, which was when this research was carried out, their Mandarin reached the HSK 4^2 level. Recalling his learning experiences, Mike stated: "*Whenever I noticed improvement in my Mandarin capabilities, it gave me a good, rewarding feeling, whether it's being able to understand something or speak my mind comprehensively*". Nora and Kate both found that "*listening is the most difficult thing*" but they both love watching films in Mandarin, using these films as a learning tool. One day, Nora heard her friends speaking Chinese very quickly and suddenly understood what they were saying. She was so surprised: "*When she used slang, I could guess what it meant, which gave me a great sense of accomplishment*". For Kate, watching films brings her fantastic experiences: "*When I watch films, I see the subtitles, oh that's that word, I can identify because I understand the words, that's really interesting*".

Intended Effort (M=4.50). Participants also show strong commitment to investing in Mandarin learning. Mike said that: "*Yes, a lot of time and energy has gone into learning Mandarin, and I would*

like to put even more into it. Ideally, I try to study Mandarin every day, to an extent where I feel I have made sufficient progress by the end of the day. If I haven't made enough progress by the end of the day, it will bother me". For Nora: "*It's not the only topic I study, but it's quite important. Like 7 out of 10*". In terms of how much time Nora would like to spend learning Mandarin, she mentioned that at this stage, she may "*spend less time than before*". This may be due to the fact that students on this course are on a relatively high level of Mandarin (HSK 4), unlike the beginner level, which requires a great commitment for a solid foundation. As Kate is currently doing an MA, Mandarin "*may not be more important than other topics because there are other topics I am interested, and I have my dissertation to focus on*".

This factor tells us that the participants are particularly attracted by the unique characteristics of Mandarin and its culture and that they experience a great sense of achievement during the Mandarin learning process. Generally, participants have a great commitment in Mandarin learning and would like to put more effort into it. As for how much effort, this varies from person to person depending on their current circumstances.

Factor 3 profiles students as free-decision makers with no external pressure for their own interest.

Ought-to L2 Self (M=2.94) and Introjected regulation (M=2.33). Nora strongly rejected the reason that she was learning Mandarin because people thought she should do it: "*when I was at university doing my BA, my mum thought learning Mandarin was very useful and suggested I learn Mandarin, but I was very against it because Mandarin looked like a very difficult language and I didn't see the purpose of learning it*". Although Nora had met some Chinese flatmates before, she didn't think it was necessary to learn Mandarin: "*if I don't know I can just use English*". For her, to learn Mandarin was unexpected but came entirely out of her own interest. Kate also said that "*no one really put me under any pressure* [to learn Mandarin], *it was my own decision*". Even for Mike, who is surrounded by Chinese colleagues, Mandarin was not deemed that necessary: "*there is no real external pressure for me to learn Mandarin*". When he talked about his Chinese colleagues, Mike said that his colleagues would like him to speak English more than Chinese: "*as my Chinese is not as good as their English, sometimes they lose patience in listening to what I am saying, so I think it's better to just speak English*". Even though it is not a problem if he can't speak Mandarin, he has "*previously felt unhappy when going out with Chinese colleagues and being the only one who can't speak Mandarin*".

This factor tells us that these participants are not under any external pressure to learn Mandarin. They chose to learn Mandarin by themselves instead of because of the expectations of others.

Factor 4 shows that participants have integrated Mandarin learning into their daily life but they are not mainly driven by external motives or by integrating with the Chinese community.

Integrativeness (M=4.44). Participants generally like the Chinese personality and would like to communicate with Chinese people in their native language but this was not their primary motivation. They were mainly interested in Chinese way of their life and culture.

External Regulation (M=3.78). When talking about external motivation such as future employment, Nora said: "*That's not my priority, you never know what kind of company you will work for. But I think if you can speak Mandarin, it may be an advantage*". Kate also agreed that being able to speak Mandarin can help you: "*definitely, it's something that has crossed my mind. I want to work in an international sector, so knowing Mandarin not only gives me the opportunity to do so by speaking the language but is also a prestige achievement as it is difficult and different ...you can build bonds and connections in this way and are able to have some deeper relationships, but this was not my main motivation for learning Mandarin*". Mike may have found Mandarin helped his job, but this was not his primary to start learning Mandarin.

Integrated regulation (M=4.11). Over time, participants regard Mandarin as a part of their life: "*Now it is probably a part of my life; every day I learn Mandarin, which was not my initial plan*" (Kate); "*Nowadays I usually listen to podcasts in Mandarin and watch dramas every day*"(Nora); "*Interacting with a lot of China related people and activities, it* [learning Mandarin] *has definitely become a main part of my everyday life, and I would like to keep it this way*" (Mike).

This factor indicates that participants are not motivated by external factors but rather intrinsic ones. Participants may have started learning Mandarin by just trying it but it has now become a part of their daily life.

How did you Manage Mandarin Learning During the COVID-19 Pandemic?

According to the participants, online lessons have helped them and had a positive impact on their overall wellbeing during the period of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Learning Mandarin has been a very big and important help for me to get through months of lockdowns. Learning Mandarin has provided me with a regular schedule of classes and homework deadlines. It has also helped keep my mind occupied with something useful to work towards. I think, from a Mandarin learning perspective, the lockdown may have actually been a very good thing. I'm not certain, but it definitely feels like I would have progressed much slower if I hadn't had all this free time during lockdown. (Mike)

I am so stressed about finding myself but I think that learning Mandarin is helping me to find myself. If I didn't have these classes, I would've gone crazy. Because of the Mandarin lessons online, I have interactions not just with my family during lockdown, it's like, you are in London, you meet other people, they cheer you up, I think that helps, like a therapy. Although we don't see each other (face-to-face), it's like you've moved to another place and nobody can speak Russian. Now I have time to improve myself. Mandarin helps me during this time. (Nora)

It [learning Mandarin] *was really something that has kept me happy, because I was very confused about what I wanted to do in the future. But learning Mandarin has been something I constantly enjoy and am interested in. It is more challenging learning online.* (Kate)

DISCUSSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This research investigated adults' motivation towards Mandarin learning, particularly focusing on those who have been studying Mandarin online consistently during the pandemic. It found that students were highly motivated by intrinsic motivation, including knowledge (M=4.83), stimulation (M=4.83), and accomplishment (M=4.58). They were also inspired by integrativeness (M=4.44), the ideal L2 Self (M=4.33), identified regulation (M=4.28), integrated regulation (M=4.11), and external regulation (M=3.78). Students were least motivated by introjected regulation (M=2.33) and the ought-to L2 self (M=2.94). Their intended effort to learn Mandarin was high at 4.50.

Students' motives were significantly correlated with their intended effort. An equation was found: Intended Effort=-20.92-0.74*integrativeness+3.35*intrinsic(accomplishment)+7.48*intrinsic(knowledge)+2.51*intrinsic(stimulation)-2.97*introjected regulation+0.81*identified regulation+1.76*integrated regulation+0.32* ideal L2 self-1.14* ought-to L2 self.

Among these motivational variables, external regulation cannot predict intended effort. However, introjected regulation and the ought-to L2 self have negative prediction on intended effort. From this equation the most effective variables are the three types of intrinsic motivation. This suggests that, for example, when other variables are held, a one-unit increase in Intrinsic (knowledge) will result in an increase of 7.48 in intended effort; conversely, a one-unit increase in introjected regulation leads to a decrease of 2.97 in intended effort. This research also found four types of overlapping areas in students' self concepts and presented students' profiles by exploring the differences and similarities between theories with the self as its core.

The first factor, which accounted for 71.82% of the variance, is defined by identified regulation, intrinsic motivation (stimulation) and the ideal L2 self. This factor showed students are excited by being able to read and write Mandarin and that they all have a strong desire to achieve native-like proficiency in the language. The students generally identified the value of learning Mandarin. Mike thinks more of the practical value of learning the language which can help his career while Nora's identified value is in line with her internal need for personal growth and self-development. This resonates with Papi & Hiver's (2020) argument that L2 motives do not work individually but complementarily; it is the dynamic interplay between language learners in interaction with the learning environment that determines learners' motivation.

The second factor, which accounted for 67.11% of the variance, is defined by intrinsic motivation (accomplishment), intrinsic motivation (knowledge) and intended effort. This shows leaners as highly motivated by the novelty of learning Mandarin, with a strong appreciation of the cultural values of the language. Students also have a strong commitment to learning Mandarin. This confirmed the cosmopolitan profile of a multilingual participant in the global community (Lanvers, 2017, 2018) as students learn the language for their own interest not because of external pressure, such as course credits, jobs, and salaries.

The third factor, which accounted for 64.63% of the total variance, is defined by the ought-to L2 self and introjected regulation. This factor can be interpreted as students' rejection of the socially ought-to self-images imposed by others, which resonates with the L2 students' rebellious stance of the ought-to self found in Lanvers' research (Lanvers, 2016, 2017) and the anti-ought to self (Liu & Thompson, 2018; Thompson & Liu, 2018; Thompson & Vásquez, 2015). According to the first and second factors, students view themselves as multilingual speakers from the outset and have more desire to diversify their meaning-making repertoire rather than to please someone or under any other external pressure (Ushioda, 2017). This finding is in line with the claim that introjected regulation and the ought-to L2 self are congruent (Dorneyi, 2009).

The fourth factor, which accounted for 50.67% of the total variance, was defined by integrativeness, integrated regulation and external regulation. This further generates the insight into how a multilinguistic person view themselves in other cultural communities and integrate language learning into their lives (Zheng et al., 2020). This research found that learners of Mandarin are not primarily driven by the motivation of engaging with the target-language community, though they have the opportunity and would like to know more about its culture and speak to native speakers. This finding proves that integrativeness in this case is not associated with intrinsic motivation (Pae, 2008), which starkly contradicts the finding that the two motives are strongly related (Sugita McEown et al., 2014). Furthermore, in this research integrativeness has not shown any overlaps with the ideal L2 self and therefore they are not interchangeable (Kormos & Csizer, 2008). However, participants love learning Mandarin and it has become a part of their life. This proves that the students have arrived at a state where they have internalised Mandarin as a part of their multilingual self, an attractor state of the constitutive multilingual self (Henry, 2017;

Henry & Thorsen, 2018). However, as integrated regulation does not overlap with intrinsic motivation, they are different driving forces, which is in line with the findings of some empirical research (Noels, 2015; Koestner & Losier, 2002). As to whether integrated motivation impacted participants due to their intrinsic motivation or long-term goals or other factors (Ryan & Deci, 2002), this needs to be investigated in further research.

Concerning the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, all participants in this study felt that having Mandarin learning every week helped them through this difficult time. This is not only because they had time to learn during lockdown but also because Mandarin learning has been internalised and integrated in their daily lives during the pandemic. This is in line with the research conducted by Li and Diaman-tidaki (2020) concerning L2 Mandarin students' online learning, where teacher-student interactions via online means and students' sense of presence (cognitive, social and teaching presence) have been fully discussed (Li &, 2020).

Based on this study, several suggestions for future research are made, concerning self-concepts in the L2 motivation field.

1. Methodology. This research adopted a mixed method research approach: a quantitative research method was applied to collect data by administrating questionnaires and a qualitative research method was deployed to collect written and verbal responses by interviews. However, all data were collected at one point of time. For future studies, this mixed method can be used for longitudinal research to collect data over time, such as the beginning, the middle and the end of a course, in order to observe the motivational changes among the same group.
2. Learners. This research was conducted among adult learners of Mandarin. Learners' age has been argued as an important factor in motivation research considering that the self-concepts develop differently across one's life (Harter, 2012) and the motivational process can have different impacts on learners at different periods of their life (Dörnyei, 2001). This may suggest that, for future re-search, studies could be conducted among different age groups such as secondary school learners or elementary school learners, as more interesting findings will be generated by comparing the motivation difference among various levels.
3. Context. The macro context of this research was London, which is a city full of diversity of dif-ferent nationalities. Data may have been suggested salient difference depending on the country, considering that counties are potentially different in their cultural systems and how they reflect in motivational processes (Heine, 2010, Sorrentino & Yamaguchi, 2008).

CONCLUSION

This research found that L2 learners of Mandarin were highly driven by intrinsic motivation such as knowledge, culture, language learning stimulation, and accomplishment. They were less likely to be motivated by external pressures such as the ought-to L2 self or introjected opinions. Participants in this study showed a highly self-decisive multilingual profile with a willingness to diversify their knowledge and skills. In general, the most effective variables were the three types of intrinsic motivation, which were found significantly correlated with participants' intended effort. In addition, external regulation cannot predict intended effort while introjected regulation and the ought-to L2 self had a negative prediction on participants' intended effort.

This research also found an overlap between the three motivational theories concerning the self-concept. In this case study of L2 Mandarin learning, four factors emerged from the principle components analysis. The first factor was defined by identified regulation, intrinsic motivation (stimulation) and the ideal L2 self. The second factor was defined by intended effort, intrinsic motivation (accomplishment) and intrinsic motivation (knowledge). The third factor was defined by the ought-to L2 self and introjected regulation. The fourth factor was defined by integrativeness, integrated regulation and external regulation. Each factor depicted students' profile from different perspectives. They are signs that L2 motivation research may benefit from re-examining different theories or perspectives and that new aspects may be discovered. By conducting research among L2 Mandarin students, this study enriches the field of L2 motivation, of which the majority has focused on L2 English. However, more research is needed to clarify the similarities and convergences among L2 motivation theories and diversify the research (Sugita McEown et al., 2014).

Finally, as the saying goes, every cloud has a silver lining. During the COVID-19 pandemic, in this study, it is clear that Mandarin learning has brought participants positive feelings by making them feel fulfilled and has created more online interactions for them with people from different places, which has positively contributed to their overall well-being (Li & Diamantidaki, 2020).

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ENDNOTES

[1]   Second Language: all languages apart from learners' mother language are second languages in this research.

[2]   HSK: Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi, translated as the Chinese Proficiency Test, is the standardised test of Standard Chinese language proficiency of China for non-native speakers such as foreign students and overseas Chinese. It consists of six levels, from HSK 1 to HSK 6.