

Big Five Personality Traits and Motivation in Learning Mandarin as Foreign Language

ABSTRACT

The present study aims to develop a model illuminating the relationship between student personality traits and motivation towards learning Mandarin as a foreign language. A model framework consisting of five exogenous variables and one endogenous variable of motivation are examined in the present study. Sample of 260 undergraduates taking Mandarin language at public university in East Malaysia was used as respondents for the present work. The path analysis revealed that the big five personality traits significantly influence and explained 52% of the variance in students' motivation. The analysis further indicates that extraversion and conscientiousness produce the strongest correlation with students' motivation. The results inferred that student who enjoy social visibility and self-discipline are also who will be motivated to learn the Mandarin language. Findings also demonstrated that agreeableness positively influence motivation, and neuroticism, as expected, produce negative direct relations with motivation towards learning Mandarin as a foreign language. On the contrary, the present study did not find any correlation between openness and motivation. The implications of this study are also discussed and interpreted within the context of what educators could do to encourage students' motivation.