

## **Study of Chinese Culture Learning Preferences for Better Understanding in Chinese as a Foreign Language Class of High School Students in Sarasas Witaed Bangbon School**

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### **Abstract**

The objectives of this research article were to 1) study the high school Chinese students' interest in learning Chinese culture. 2) synthesize the data obtained from the data collection and compile it into a guide for learning management using Chinese cultural design. The populations of this research are 57 students from the senior high school Chinese class of Sarasas Witaed Bangbon School. The Research instrument in this research used a Richter scale to investigate what are the student's interests in teaching and learning cultural content, teaching methods, and teaching aids. Every instrument used in this research was checked with an approved index of item objective congruence (IOC) before they were used. Through the investigation and analysis of "students' favorite cultural content", it is concluded that the cultural content that students are more interested in has certain operability and openness. Through the investigation and analysis of "cultural teaching methods favored by students", it is concluded that students prefer teaching methods that can be personally participated and experienced. Through cultural teaching materials of "students like" the investigation and analysis concluded that the students like colorful content, various forms, and more creative, open teaching aids. And according to the results of the discussion, corresponding suggestions are given to Chinese culture classrooms, schools, and Chinese teachers.

**Keywords:** Chinese culture; Better understanding of Chinese; High school students; learning management approach

### **Introduction**

At present, international education in Chinese is booming, and the Confucius Institute (Confucius Institute is an institution established by the Office of the International Promotion of Chinese to promote Chinese and spread Chinese culture) is spread all over the world. There are 541 Confucius Institutes and 1,170 Confucius classrooms around the world (Official website of the Confucius Institute Headquarters, 2020). According to the Global Language Scale (2017), the world uses about 907 million, about 15% of the global population, attracting language learners and cultural heritage. Especially in some countries in Southeast Asia, international Chinese language education has received the greatest support and warm welcome. "There are 135 Confucius Institutes and 115 Confucius classrooms today." according to the official website of the Confucius Institute Headquarters (2020). Especially in Thailand, it has developed the most rapidly. Due to the increasingly frequent exchanges between Thailand and China in economy, trade, tourism, finance, and culture, Thailand's increasingly urgent demand for Chinese language is also increasingly urgent. Since August 3, 2006, the first Confucius Institute in Thailand -- Confucius Institute at Khon Kaen University was officially established, China and Thailand have jointly built 16 Confucius Institutes and 11 Confucius classrooms. Thailand has become the largest number of Confucius Institutes among ASEAN countries (The

representative office of the Confucius Institute headquarters in the Kingdom of Thailand). This shows the importance of the Chinese language in today's Thailand.

Language is the carrier of culture, and culture is the connotation of language. No language can exist separately from culture and cannot be separated from each other. However, at the present stage, there is no unified Chinese syllabus for Chinese teaching in Thailand (Kong Mengdi 2018). Many schools only pay attention to language teaching, rarely integrate into cultural teaching, only memorize pronunciation and language order, and do not understand the cultural essence contained in it. Moreover, Chinese teaching comes from different sources, which is also one of the factors leading to students' uneven Chinese foundation.

The use of cultural teaching methods and means lacks flexibility and diversity, and it does not fully consider the age and acceptance of learners and other factors, resulting in students' deviation and resistance to the cultural knowledge learned. Previous research on cultural teaching mostly starts from the research and analysis of schools and teachers. Although there are also some research and analysis of students, it is not very comprehensive.

Therefore, the researcher is interested in the study of Chinese culture learning preferences for a better understanding of Chinese as a foreign language class for high school students in Sarasas Witaed Bangbon school.

With the aim of researching Chinese high school student's interest in learning Chinese culture, synthesizing the data obtained from the data collection, and compiling it into a learning management guide designed using Chinese culture, the researcher conducted a high school Chinese class at Sarasas Witaed Bangbon Private Bilingual School in Bangkok, Thailand. The survey and analysis of 57 Chinese students mainly focused on the content of Chinese culture that students are interested in, the teaching methods of Chinese culture that students can accept, and the teaching aids of Chinese culture that students like.

## **Related literature and research**

### **1) Language and culture are mutually reinforcing and inseparable.**

The relationship between language and culture has always been the focus of Chinese as a foreign language. With the closer ties between China and Thailand, teaching Chinese as a foreign language has also received great support in Thailand. While various Chinese teaching methods are constantly updated, we find effective use of appropriate teaching methods to spread Chinese culture in the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language in Thailand. We are conducive to improving learners' interest and better implementation of Chinese teaching. Practice shows that learning Chinese is not only about learning a language but also about learning Chinese culture naturally in learning Chinese. Language is the carrier of culture and culture is the connotation of language. There is no language without culture and culture without language. The researcher read the previous studies to support the point of view of this research and looked for the aspects that previous studies did not find or did not focus on.

Li Xiaoshan (2016) expounded on the key issues from four aspects of teaching consciousness, teacher quality, textbook content, and teaching methods: The process of learning a language is also the process of understanding a culture. Language and culture are inseparable.

Zhang Yongfang (2019) said that "language teaching cannot be divorced from culture" is the consensus of the Chinese teaching community on cultural teaching.

Lv Yuhui (2011) said in the process of cultural teaching, attention should be paid to the cultural additional meaning of words and the teaching of communicative culture. And in the teaching process should focus on teaching current culture.

Su Xuming (2016) said in the article *Exploring the Problems and Countermeasures of Chinese Culture Teaching in 5 High Schools in Surat Thani, Thailand*, that any intercultural

communication and learning were guided by language contact, so Chinese had become a learner and an important bridge to understand Chinese culture.

Yang Yunxi (2013) said there was a natural connection between language and culture, and they were interdependent and carry each other. Therefore, in the process of teaching Chinese as a foreign language, although Chinese language teaching is emphasized, it always reflects the factors and influence of Chinese culture.

Ma Limei (2016) said that language and culture were inseparable. In the process of learning Chinese, foreign students would inevitably have to encounter the deep-rooted Chinese traditional culture which would generate a need for a better understanding of Chinese culture.

Liu Yujia (2021) said that language is an important carrier and component of culture. Language is an important tool for human communication and communication. Culture benefits from the existence of language and can be better spread.

Gao Yanfang (2021) emphasizes in the article *On the Application of Folk Stories in Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language* that teaching Chinese as a foreign language should be a subject with equal emphasis on language and culture education.

Wang Yuexin, Yang Xuanyu (2021) said that learning a language in an artistic way can not only happily master language knowledge and language use skills, but also effectively understand Chinese culture. In particular, the author emphasizes that in the process of using Chinese painting teaching, we should pay attention to the use of appropriate teaching mode, which is in line with the author's research direction.

Wang Wenjie (2021) said that teaching Chinese as a foreign language is an important part of telling Chinese stories well. It not only teaches language, but also teaches culture. Language and culture are an integral whole. Learning a language inevitably requires learning its corresponding culture.

## **2) The culture introduction method in Chinese teaching is closely related to the teaching effect.**

Language, as a unique means of grasping society, is also an important part of culture and a special form of culture. Language is the recorder of culture. Language not only records the connotation of culture, but also the inheritance of civilization.

In the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language, the relationship between language and culture has always been a focus of teaching discussion. How to introduce culture into language learning, when to introduce culture into language learning is the best, in what way, and in the teaching process, what kind of teaching methods are always concerned.

Zhu Hui (2014) It proves that the teaching method integrating traditional Chinese culture is effective in teaching Chinese characters as a foreign language.

Liu Chang and Wang Yingjie (2021) point out that the experience-based teaching mode can help international students not only understand Chinese culture, but also improve their cross-cultural awareness and communicative competence in the process of personal experience.

Jiang Lina (2019) said that we should not be limited to using a certain method, but should combine the actual teaching situation and learners' learning basis, and comprehensively use two or more methods to strengthen the effect of cultural introduction.

Tang Huan (2016) said that language teaching and culture teaching complement each other, and how introducing culture into language teaching plays a decisive role.

Zhou Huixuan (2022) said that the profound connotation of Chinese culture is by no means something foreign students can acquire in a Chinese language class. It is a long way for teachers of Chinese as a foreign language to determine which teaching method is more easily accepted by the learning object.

Mou Huiting (2021) based on the results of the survey, puts forward some suggestions on how to select Chinese cultural content and teaching methods: according to students'

nationality, learning characteristics, and age, cultural content should be selected from various aspects such as practicability, communication, and interest.

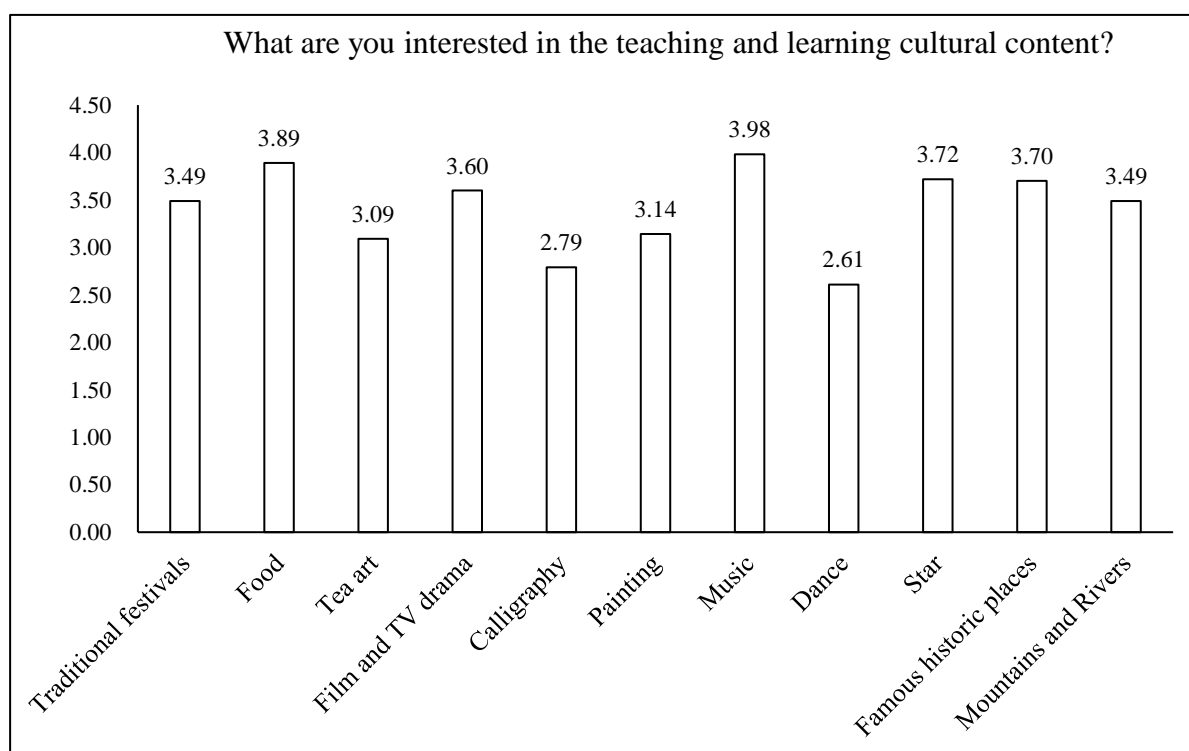
## Methodology

The researchers conducted a survey of 57 high-school Chinese language students at the Sarasas Witaed Bangbon Private Bilingual School in Bangkok, Thailand. It mainly focuses on the contents of Chinese culture that students are interested in, the teaching methods of Chinese culture that students can accept, and the teaching AIDS of Chinese culture that students like, etc. The questionnaire was designed and approved by experts. After that, it was approved by the leaders of universities and participating schools. It took two months to design, revise, review, apply and collect data.

## Results

The researcher investigated and analyzed the relevant information of high school Chinese class students in Sarasas Witaed Bangbon School, and investigated and analyzed the cultural teaching content, cultural teaching methods, and cultural teaching aids favored by students from the perspective of students.

### 1) Investigate and analyze the content of Chinese culture that students like.



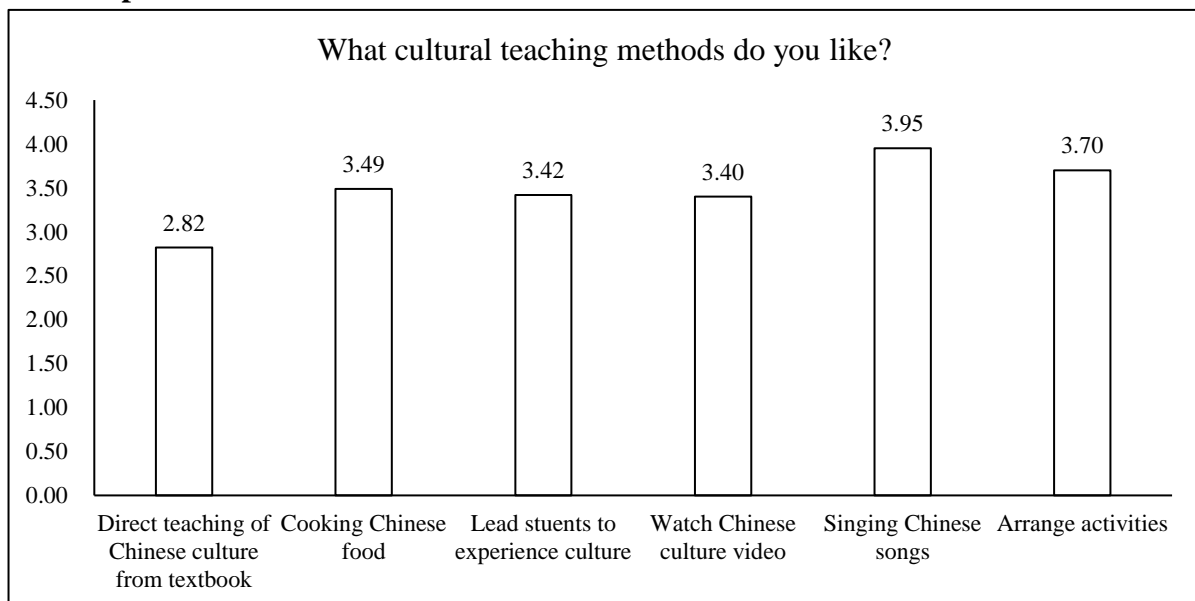
**Figure 1** Average of students' favorite cultural content

As can be seen from Figure 1 and Table 1, students are interested in music, diet, and star, with an average value of ( $\bar{X}=3.98$ ,  $SD=0.91$ ), ( $\bar{X}=3.89$ ,  $SD=0.93$ ), and ( $\bar{X}=3.72$ ,  $SD=1.00$ ) respectively. The cultural contents that students are not interested in include tea art, calligraphy, and dance, with an average value of ( $\bar{X}=3.09$ ,  $SD=1.06$ ), ( $\bar{X}=2.79$ ,  $SD=1.09$ ), and ( $\bar{X}=2.61$ ,  $SD=0.95$ ) respectively.

**Table 1** Average and SD value of students' favorite cultural content

|    | <b>Project</b>         | <b>Mean</b> | <b>SD</b> |
|----|------------------------|-------------|-----------|
| 1  | Traditional festivals  | 3.49        | 0.94      |
| 2  | Food                   | 3.89        | 0.93      |
| 3  | Tea art                | 3.09        | 1.06      |
| 4  | Film and TV drama      | 3.60        | 0.95      |
| 5  | Calligraphy            | 2.79        | 1.09      |
| 6  | Painting               | 3.14        | 1.16      |
| 7  | Music                  | 3.98        | 0.91      |
| 8  | Dance                  | 2.61        | 0.95      |
| 9  | Star                   | 3.72        | 1.00      |
| 10 | Famous historic places | 3.70        | 0.88      |
| 11 | Mountains and Rivers   | 3.49        | 0.90      |

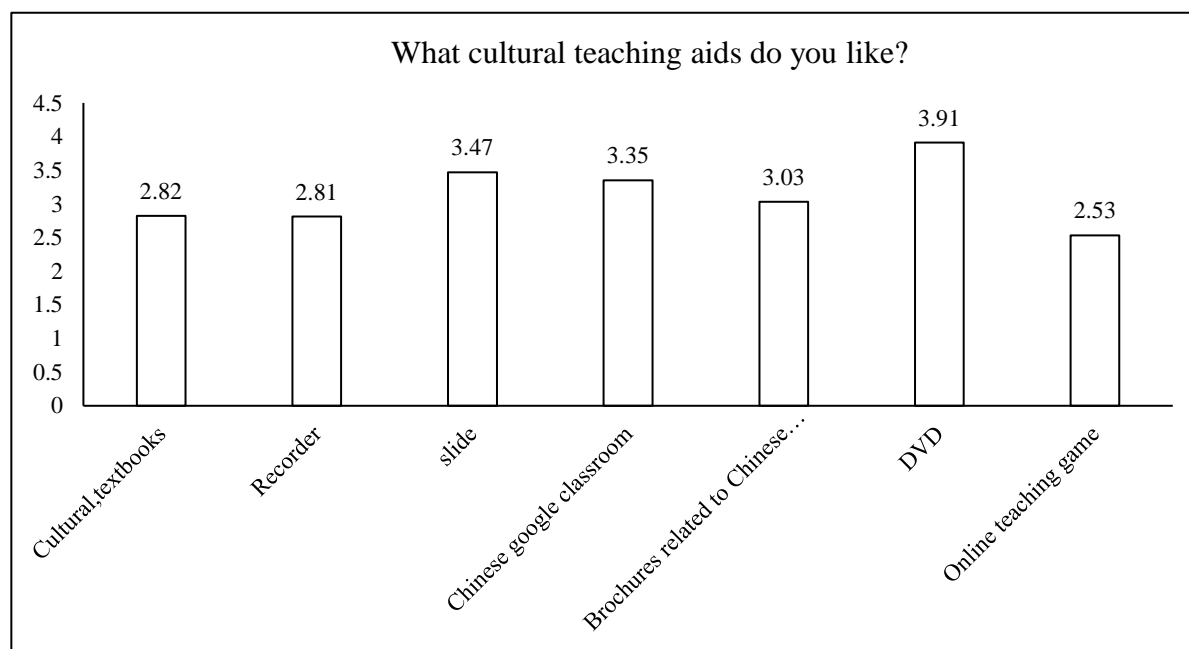
**2) Investigate and analyze the teaching methods of Chinese culture that students can accept.**

**Figure 2** Average of students' favorite cultural teaching methods

As can be seen from Figure 2 and Table 2, the cultural teaching methods accepted by students are as follows: Singing Chinese songs, Arrange activities about Chinese culture, and Cooking Chinese food, the average is ( $\bar{X}=3.95$ ,  $SD=0.83$ ), ( $\bar{X}=3.70$ ,  $SD=0.84$ ), ( $\bar{X}=3.49$ ,  $SD=0.88$ ) respectively. Cultural teaching methods that students don't like very much include: Lead students to experience culture such as performing tea art, Watching Chinese culture Videos, and Direct Teaching of Chinese The mean values of Culture from textbook were ( $\bar{X}=3.42$ ,  $SD=0.92$ ), ( $\bar{X}=3.40$ ,  $SD=0.75$ ) and ( $\bar{X}=2.82$ ,  $SD=0.90$ ) respectively.

**Table 2** Average and SD value of students' favorite cultural teaching methods

|   | <b>Project</b>   | <b>Mean</b> | <b>SD</b> |
|---|--|-------------|-----------|
| 1 | Direct Teaching of Chinese Culture from textbook               | 2.82        | 0.90      |
| 2 | Cooking Chinese food   | 3.49        | 0.88      |
| 3 | Lead students to experience culture such as performing tea art | 3.42        | 0.92      |
| 4 | Watch Chinese Culture Video                                    | 3.40        | 0.75      |
| 5 | Singing Chinese songs  | 3.95        | 0.83      |
| 6 | Arrange activities about Chinese culture                       | 3.70        | 0.84      |

**3) Investigate and analyze the teaching aids of Chinese culture that students like.****Figure 3** Average of students' favorite cultural teaching aids**Table 3** Average and SD value of students' favorite cultural teaching aids

|   | <b>Project</b>                            | <b>Mean</b> | <b>S.D.</b> |
|---|---|-------------|-------------|
| 1 | Cultural textbooks                        | 2.82        | 0.90        |
| 2 | Recorder                                  | 2.81        | 0.63        |
| 3 | Slide                                     | 3.47        | 0.82        |
| 4 | Chinese google classroom                  | 3.35        | 0.76        |
| 5 | Brochures related to Chinese culture      | 3.03        | 0.71        |
| 6 | DVD                                       | 3.91        | 0.86        |
| 7 | Online teaching game (Wordwall Kahoot...) | 2.53        | 0.98        |

As can be seen from the Figure 3 and Table 3, students' favorite cultural teaching includes DVD, Slide, and Chinese Google classroom, with an average value of ( $\bar{X}=3.91$ ,  $SD=0.86$ ),

( $\bar{X}=3.47$ ,  $SD=0.82$ ), and ( $\bar{X}=3.35$ ,  $SD=0.76$ ) respectively. The Cultural teaching that students do not like is as follows: Cultural Textbooks, Recorder, and Online teaching game, with average values of ( $\bar{X}=2.82$ ,  $SD=0.90$ ), ( $\bar{X}=2.81$ ,  $SD=0.63$ ), and ( $\bar{X}=2.53$ ,  $SD=0.98$ ) respectively.

## Summary, Discussion of Results, and Suggestions

As a foreign language, Chinese teaching and cultural teaching are inseparable. Language is the carrier of culture, and culture is the connotation of language. They are interdependent. Therefore, cultural teaching must be integrated into current Chinese teaching. As for the selection of content, teaching methods, and teaching aids, it is also necessary to consider whether they are suitable for students.

Based on the investigation and analysis of high school Chinese class students in Sarasas Witaed Bangbon School, this paper draws corresponding conclusions, hoping to provide help for Chinese teaching in the future.

### Summary of research results

#### 1) Summary of research results on Chinese cultural content that students like.

Through investigation and analysis, students are most interested in music, food, and star.

1. Music is concrete and perceptible cultural content, and there are various ways of communication. Students have more opportunities to contact Chinese music in their daily life.

2. Food can be transmitted in a variety of ways like music. Traditional Chinese food can be found in the streets of Thailand.

3. Star, Thai students' knowledge of Chinese star mainly comes from Chinese movies and TV programs and books about Chinese star.

#### 2) Summary of research results on teaching methods of Chinese culture favored by students.

Through the survey and analysis, the students' favorite cultural teaching methods are singing Chinese songs, holding Chinese cultural activities, and showing moon cakes, dumplings, and other specific materials of culture.

1. Singing Chinese songs. Thai primary and secondary school students are active in thinking and like to absorb and learn cultural knowledge through visual and listening channels. The learning method of "listening and singing" is flexible, vivid, and convenient. Students can cultivate their sentiments, improve their aesthetic ability, and reserve themselves in the context of music rendering, so as to achieve the effect of releasing academic pressure.

2. Holding Chinese cultural activities. Students consult relevant materials and hold Chinese cultural activities by themselves, to feel the connotation of Chinese culture in practice. Through their own experience, to establish sensory memory, to make their memory of Chinese culture more solid and accurate.

3. Cooking Chinese food. This teaching method has higher requirements for teachers' teaching skills. Create activities for students to cook and create the context in the process of activities to increase the authenticity of language communication. The use of physical displays can be an auditory, visual, and kinesthetic combination. Students can use a variety of senses to participate in memory, and input cultural knowledge from a variety of channels, to deepen their interest in Chinese culture.

#### 3) Summary of research results on teaching aids of Chinese culture favored by students.

Through the survey and analysis, students' favorite cultural teaching is DVD, slide show, and Google class.

1. DVD, with this teaching aid, students can watch cartoons they are interested in or watch cultural propaganda films that introduce places of interest. Show Chinese culture to the students in a vivid and three-dimensional way.

2. Slides, the use of slide pictures to introduce cultural content in the teaching process can also play a vivid and three-dimensional sensory display of Chinese culture. Students from the traditional classroom to modern multimedia teaching, to improve their interest in learning.

3. Google Classroom, teachers use Google classroom to show the teaching content to students and can also arrange and collect students' learning results at any time. Students' curiosity and interest in learning have also greatly improved.

### **Discuss the results**

Based on the researcher's own teaching experience and the investigation and analysis of high School Chinese students in Sarasas Witaed Bangbon School, the researcher further discusses the research results.

#### **1) Discuss the research results of Chinese cultural content that students like.**

Through the investigation and analysis of "students' favorite cultural content", the cultural content that students are more interested in has certain operability and openness. Students can obtain their favorite resources through the internet and other multimedia. Students can acquire relevant cultural knowledge according to their interests and preferences, and constantly improve the reserve of relevant cultural knowledge.

On the contrary, the cultural contents that students are less interested in are mostly knowledge rarely used in communication, with high knowledge, high learning difficulty, and low operability. Paying too much attention to knowledge and ignoring communicative ability is not good for students' Chinese learning ability and comprehensive development. Over time, students will lose interest in learning Chinese.

According to the survey results of Kang Yang (2018) in his graduation thesis, the cultural contents that students like include music and food, which are specific and perceptible cultural contents and are spread in various ways. Students have more opportunities to contact Chinese "music" and "food" in their daily life. For example, they can hear Chinese music and taste Chinese food in large shopping malls in Thailand, which can increase their interest in learning and enrich their spare time. Cultural content that students are not very interested in including "poetry" and so on. The Chinese proficiency of primary and secondary school students in Thailand is generally low, and it is difficult to learn and understand "poetry". Because the teaching content such as "poetry" is difficult to learn, it has exceeded the students' Chinese proficiency and comprehension ability, and the students are not very motivated to learn this kind of cultural knowledge. The researcher is consistent with Kang Yang in the discussion of cultural content.

The conclusion of this survey is worth pondering whether the current Chinese teaching content in schools is a bit outdated, paying too much attention to knowledge and ignoring students' interests. Cumbersome grammar knowledge and profound cultural knowledge make students lose interest in learning Chinese and ultimately lead to students losing confidence in learning Chinese.

#### **2) Discuss the research results of the teaching methods of Chinese culture that students like.**

Through the investigation and analysis of "cultural teaching methods favored by students", students prefer teaching methods that can be personally involved and experienced. In this way, Chinese cultural knowledge can be imported in the most intuitive way. They do not like the "armchair" teaching method, which means that they must memorize hard, which increases the psychological burden of students rather than sensory memory, and thus increases the difficulty of learning.



But from the point of view of teaching, no matter which kind of teaching method cannot be used alone. Cultural knowledge in textbooks is more organized and logical. The proper combination of direct teaching method and experiential teaching method is conducive to students' systematic learning of cultural knowledge, obtaining a complete knowledge structure, and the learning process is not boring. As Liu Chang and Wang Yingjie (2021) said, "The experience-based teaching mode can help students not only understand Chinese culture but also improve their cross-cultural awareness and communicative ability in the process of personal experience."

### 5.2.3 Discuss the research results of teaching AIDS in Chinese culture that students like.

Through cultural teaching materials of "students like" after the investigation and analysis of the results can be seen that the students don't like modern relatively old traditional teaching aids, they don't like boring classroom learning, mechanically and passively cultural study way, like colorful contents, various forms, more creative, open teaching aids.

Yang Tao (2017) stated in his graduation thesis that cards have been used as traditional teaching aids in teaching for a long time. In the current classroom where modern teaching aids are frequently used, although the cards are a little outdated, the author designed them according to the specific vocabulary teaching situation and designed them according to the specific vocabulary teaching situation. Introduce the design, production, and use of card teaching in vocabulary teaching through representative cards. The author endowed the card with new life, and applied it to practical teaching, and achieved good results. This also proves the importance of the selection and application of teaching aids in the teaching process.

With the continuous development of science and technology, the teaching aids used in teaching are also advancing with The Times. Many schools in Thailand have installed smart TV, projectors, or computers. Teaching activities using these multimedia teaching aids, to a large extent, promote students' enthusiasm for learning and improve their interest in learning. In daily learning, students can have access to modern and technological teaching aids, which also unknowingly improves their learning ability.

## Suggestions

### 1) Suggestions for this research

1.1 In this research, if want to be more efficient and reliable in terms of research principles, the questionnaire is to be used to find confidence values with a sample other than the sample studied in this first.

1.2 Use the results of this research as a guideline for the design of the learning activities plan at the upper secondary level.

1.3 The results of this research are to be used as a conceptual framework for further development of Chinese language school curricula.

### 2) Suggestions for future research

2.1 The questionnaire shall be applied in questioning learners at other levels such as junior high school or primary school as a guideline for the design of learning activities and curricular structure.

2.2 The conceptual framework in this research should be applied to inquiries in other subjects for the benefit of teaching and learning management for learners who focus on learners.

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