A Correlational Study on Psychological Resilience and L2 Demotivation among Chinese EFL Learners

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Abstract: This paper reports on the results of a study exploring the correlation between second language (L2) demotivation and psychological resilience among 141 Chinese undergraduate students in their English learning. Data were collected through a questionnaire survey and were processed by means of inferential analysis. The factor analysis identified five demotivators encompassing teacher-related factor, non-communicative teaching mode, lack of intrinsic interest, negative peer influence, and undesirable teaching conditions, and three resilience factors including metacogitive adaptation, realistic optimism, and communicative efficacy. The Pearson Correlation analysis showed a significantly positive correlation in L2 demotivation with metacogntive adaptation, and in metacognitive adaptation with teacher-related factors, lack of intrinsic interest, negative peer influence, and undesirable teaching conditions. It also revealed a significantly negative correlation in L2 demotivation with realistic optimism, in realistic optimism with teacher-related factors, lack of intrinsic interest, and undesirable teaching conditions, and in communicative efficacy with teacher-related factors. Implications for sustaining psychological resilience and diminishing demotivation for Chinese EFL learners were discussed.

Keywords: L2 demotivation; resilience; correlation; Chinese EFL learners

1. Introduction

Second language (L2) demotivation has been one of the foci in second language acquisition (SLA) studies. It refers to the decline or weakening of the motivational basis of certain behavioral intentions or persistent behaviors caused by the internal and external factors (Dornyei, 2001; Falout, et al., 2009; Zhou & Wang, 2012). In the past two decades, L2 demotivation has been heatedly explored in the English as a foreign language (EFL) context where English is learned as a compulsory subject. This required subject nature is frequently reported to be a pivotal demotivator causing EFL learners to lose interest in English class and English learning (Kikuchi, 2013; Kim, et al., 2017).

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To maintain the interest in L2 learning and remotivate learners in EFL context thus seems to be a daunting task (Kikuchi, 2015).

Resilience is suggested to be an alternative and effective way of remotivating EFL learners. It is an important quality of the human adaptation system in which learners are able to successfully cope with traumatic experiences despite their difficulties and crises (Luthar, et al., 2000). It involves the ability or traits of learners to deal with negative life events such as stress and adversity. Through protective factors to regulate or reduce these risk factors, the learners' positive adaptation is promoted. English learning in an EFL context is often found to be stricken with hindrance caused by the limited exposure to English use. This would make learners unable to see the immediate benefits of English learning (Kim, et al., 2017). To accommodate these undesirable challenges is thus of paramount importance for the EFL learners in their pursuit of English language proficiency.

Although the importance of L2 demotivation and resilience has been repeatedly acknowledged, existing research mainly explored these two constructs separately. Besides, the dynamic nature of L2 demotivation (Li & Qian, 2018) and resilience suggested a possible correlationship between demotivation and resilience. However, little attention has been paid to the potential relationship between them. In addition, previous studies mainly focus on pre-tertiary students, and little research documents Chinese EFL learners' demotivation and resilience. To investigate L2 demotivation and resilience among Chinese tertiary EFL learners would expand the scope of research on these two constructs. In light of the aforementioned, this study aims to explore the features of L2 demotivation, resilience and the correlation between them among a cohort of Chinese tertiary EFL learners.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Studies on Demotivation to Learn English

Previous studies mainly identify the sources of demotivation in EFL learning. Existing research reveals a multitude of factors causing demotivation. These demotivating factors mainly centre on the following four aspects: socio-cultural, institutional, situational, and learner factors.

Socio-cultural factors are reported to be demotivating EFL learners, such as value of English learning embedded within a particular educational context (Kim & Seo, 2012), socio-political conditions, and family background (Lamb, 2013). Isolation from metropolitan cities, education background and limited financial conditions of family are found to restrict EFL learners from internalizing the value of good English language proficiency for social mobility (Lamb, 2013). Reform of high-stake examination like the National Matriculation English Test is also related to EFL learners' beliefs about the valence of English learning (Li & Liu, 2018).

Institutional factors are discussed as another major demotivator, including large-sized class (Wang, 2014), undesirable facilities and learning environment (Sakai & Kikuchi, 2009), and status of English course at the educational institution (Li & Liu, 2018). The application-oriented position of technological universities is also reported to be responsible for devitalizing English subject and

de-connecting English language courses with learners' practical needs at these universities, which further discourage students' willingness to invest into their English learning (Qiao, 2012).

Situational factors such as the intense teacher-student relationship (i.e., teacher-student interaction and rapport), negative peer influences (i.e., negative influence from the competition atmosphere among peers or from a peer who has a negative attitude towards English learning), exam-oriented and uncommunicative teaching mode have been identified as demotivators among EFL learners (Kikuchi, 2015). An exam-oriented class might lead teachers to mainly focus on drills of language knowledge, and pay less attention to the presentation of language points in a more communicative way. As a result, there would be no genuine interaction in class and students would thus gradually lose interest in the lesson (Kikuchi & Sakai, 2009). Besides, a reluctant peer in learning English within a peer community would to some degree undermine another's attitude and effort to his or her English learning (Dornyei, 2001).

Learner factors have long been identified as pivotal internal demotivators. These factors comprise intrinsic interest (Hu & Cai, 2010), decreasing confidence (Li, 2013), inability to learn English (Li & Zhou, 2017). Unclear goal of English language learning has also been discussed as an important learner factor causing demotivation (Hu & Cai, 2010). Additionally, lack of effective learning strategies has been identified as demotivating factors (Li, 2013).

2.2 Studies on Resilience

Resilience was first proposed by American psychologist Anthony in the 1970s. Since then, much effort has been made to explore the components of the construct. Adversity is considered to be a critical component of resilience, which might project a positive image on the learners when they take difficulty as an opportunity for self-growth (Cicchetti, 2010). Perseverance to maintain engagement into a task (Maddi, 1999) and self-regulation (Martin & Marsh, 2009) are another two elements composing resilience. In addition to these three psychological factors, socio-cultural capacities such as interpersonal relationships are also discussed as an important part of resilience (Olsson, et al., 2003). The good ability to establish and keep positive

relationship with others is conducive in helping learners conquer adversities (Kim, et al., 2017).

Resilience has been recently examined in the field of education (Martin, 2002), but little is reported about the relationship of resilience on second language learning. Level of critical thinking is identified to exert significant influence on the level of resilience, and the level of resilience significantly impacts EFL learners' reading ability (Kamali & Fahim, 2011). Resilient ESL learners were significantly different from their non-resilient counterparts in the perception of competition and of difficulty level in class (Waxman, et al., 2012). Persistence is found to be the most influential factor in explaining and predicting L2 proficiency (Kim & Kim, 2017). In addition, storytelling is discussed as an effective method in nurturing resilience among ESL learners (Geres, 2016).

2.3 Relationship between L2 Demotivation and Resilience

The relationship between L2 demotivation and resilience has recently drawn attention from scholars (Kim, et al., 2017). In their exploration of the association of resilience and L2 demotivation, Kim & Lee (2014) found a possible relationship between resilience and L2 demotivation among Korean EFL learners of secondary school by means of a regression analysis method. Kim, et al. (2017) adopted structural equation modeling (SEM) to explore the relationship among L2 resilience, demotivation and L2 proficiency among Korean undergraduate EFL learners. They identified that resilience both directly and indirectly influences L2 proficiency via demotivation. Kim & Kim (2017) found that perseverance has the strongest explanatory power for motivated behavior of Korean secondary school EFL learners.

Kim, et al. (2018) examined the foreign language resilience of 23 Korean primary and secondary school students by adopting a qualitative method. They found emotional regulation is of particular importance in nurturing resilience, and clearly set temporary learning goal contributes to maintaining resilience. They also found students' level of resilience is related to their language proficiency, and called for confirmatory study to validate these constructs. Kim, et al. (2019) structured the relationship among resilience, L2 demotivation and L2 proficiency Korean elementary

school EFL learners. They found the sub-components of resilience directly affect L2 demotivation and indirectly influence L2 proficiency.

The above review of literature indicates that previous studies mainly focus on the relationships among L2 demotivation, resilience, and L2 proficiency among EFL learners at basic education stage. Little attention is paid to tertiary EFL students. Given the complexity of resilience and demotivation, it is necessary to further explore the correlationship among EFL learners at other education groups (Kim, et al, 2019). Therefore, the current study aims to investigate the correlation between L2 demotivation and resilience among Chinese university EFL students.

3 Research Design

3.1 Research questions

The aim of this study is to explore the relationships between resilience and demotivation to learn English among tertiary Non-English majors. It tries to address the following three questions:

Question 1: How to characterize L2 demotivation among Chinese tertiary EFL learners?

Question 2: How to characterize resilience among Chinese tertiary EFL learners?

Question 3: What is the correlationship between L2 demotivation and resilience among Chinese tertiary EFL learners?

3.2 Research Participants

A total of 141 EFL learners at undergraduate study from a technological university participated in this research. Among these surveyed respondents, 70 of them were freshmen, and 71 sophomores. There were 47 male students and 94 female students. In terms of origin, 30 were from city areas, 60 from towns, and 51 from rural areas. With regard to their English language proficiency as indicated in the participants' English scores in the National English Matriculation Test, the lowest scores were 72 out of 150, the highest 140, and the average scores were 120.5. In addition, in their self-perceived assessment of English language proficiency, only 2 of the surveyed participants scaled themselves to be at a high level, 72 at an intermediate level, and 67 at preliminary level.

3.3 Instrument

The questionnaire utilized for the current study is composed by three sections: The first section is the background information of the participants, including their gender, grade of education, English scores in the National English Matriculation Test, and hometown. The second and the third sections concerned demotivation to learn English and resilience respectively. All the items in these two sections followed a five-point Likert scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The questionnaire was in Chinese for participants to better understand while responding to the item questions.

The second section aimed to measure the participants' demotivation to learn English, which included 35 items adapted from previous studies (Zhou & Wang, 2012; Sakai & Kikuchi, 2009). The Cronbach's Alpha of this section is 0.878, indicating a high internal consistency of these items and a high reliability of this instrumental section. The third section targeted the resilience which is composed of 26 items drawing on previous studies (Kim, et al., 2017). The internal reliability of this part is measured by means of Cronbach's Alpha. The reliability statistics for the resilience section of the instrument is 0.75, which indicates a good internal consistency and reliability.

3.4 Data Collection

The researchers first contact the College English teachers for potential student participants they were teaching. After getting their approval, six enact classes with a total number of 200 non-English undergraduates were randomly recruited. The survey purposes and ways of how to answer the questionnaires were briefed to the participants before the survey was administered. The participants were also guaranteed that their information would be kept confidentially and would pose no threat to their final scores of the English class. The questionnaires were presented in Chinese for the participants to better understand the questionnaire items and thus ensure the reliability of the collected data. 200 copies of the questionnaires were distributed, among which 177 were recollected. After removing the incomplete and wrongly answered ones, finally there were 141 valid copies for further data analysis.

3.5 Data Analysis

Two inferential methods were applied to analyze the collected data for identifying L2 demotivation and resilience, and for exploring the correlationship between the two constructs. Firstly, exploratory factor analysis was performed with the help of SPSS 24.0 to address Research Question 1 regarding the construct of L2 demotivation. This step aimed to understand the features of demotivation to learn English among the participants. The same method was also used to answer Research Question 2 for the purpose of constructing resilience, which would help unveil the characteristics of resilience among the participants. Thirdly, Pearson Correlational Analysis was then run to identify the relationship between L2 demotivation and resilience in relation to Research Question 3.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Demotivation to Learn English among the Participants

In order to seek answers to Research Question 1 with regard to the features of demotivation to learn English among the participants, their responses to the L2 demotivation questionnaire were first subjected to an exploratory factor analysis. The KMO value .749 and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity .000 (< 0.05) showed significant correlations among the variables in the L2 demotivation items and indicated a suitability for factor analysis. Finally, five factors were extracted.

Table 1 presents the loading factors of demotivation to learn English among the participants. The Eigenvalues of all the five extracted factors were higher than one. The explained variances for the five factors were 12.379％, 11.876％, 11.371％, 10.127％, and 9.790％ respectively. The accumulative explained variance was 55.542%. These results indicate that the demotivation questionnaire had a sound construct validity. Besides, the reliability coefficients of these five factors are 0.794, 0.653, 0.689, 0.562 and 0.638 respectively, which indicates that they have good internal consistency.

Table 1. **Loadings and Cummulative Variance of Demotivational Factors**

Factor	Eigenvalue	Explained Variance	Accumulative explained variance	Reliability
1.Teacher-related Factors	2.352	12.379	12.379	0.794
2.Non-communicative Teaching Mode	2.256	11.876	24.254	0.653
3.Lack of Intrinsic Interest	2.161	11.371	35.626	0.689
4.Negative Peer Influence	1.924	10.127	45.753	0.562
5.Undesirable Teaching Conditions	1.860	9.790	55.542	0.638

The matrix of the demotivational factors (Table 2) was conducted to explore the demotivators the participants attributed to their English language learning. According to the content of each item, the three extracted factors were named as follows. Factor 1 included 3 items (Item 38, 39, 40) regarding the influence of teacher personality, teaching style and competence on learners' demotivation. It was thus named Teacher-related Factor (TRF). Factor 2 had five items (Item 28, 29, 30, 31, 32) concerning the impact of grammar-translation method, exam-oriented teaching, and rote learning on learners' demotivation. This factor was termed Non-communicative Teaching Mode (NTM). Factor 3 was composed of two items (Item 59, 60) pertaining to learners' interest in English learning. It was thus called Lack of Intrinsic Interest (LII). Factor 4 consisted of three items (Item 54, 55, 56) associated with the competition and unfavorable attitudes among peers. It is therefore named Negative Peer Influence (NPI). Factor 5, having 3 items (Item 48, 49, 50), was related to the influence of facilities and conditions on learners' demotivation. This factor was thus named Undesirable Teaching Conditions (UTC).

According to Table 1, Factor 1 has the largest explained variance (12.379%) among the five factors yielded. This finding reveals that Factor 1 (Teacher-related Factors) is the most influential factor in the participants' demotivation to learn English. The participants mainly attributed teachers' personality (being critical with students' mistakes) to their demotivation to learn English. Teachers' teaching style (such as teachers' one-way explanation in class with interacting with the students) and their competence in teaching (like inability to make their explanation easy to understand in class to the students) are also influential teacher-related demotivators.

Non-communicative Teaching Mode is the second important demotivator. According to Table 2, the participants mainly assumed that the traditional translation-grammar teaching and exam-oriented teaching mode is most discouraging. A grammar-focused and exam-oriented class paid much attention to the teaching of grammar, drills and recitation, which seemed to be demotivating the students. A third demotivator is related to Lack of Intrinsic Interest in English. The students mainly considered that their no interest in English language and in becoming a proficient English speaker were important reasons for their demotivation to learn English.

The fourth demotivator is related to the Negative Peer Influence. The participants considered that the inharmonious relationship with some classmates would negatively affect their investment into English learning. Likewise, a friend who does not like English tends to exert negative influence upon the student in his or her English learning. More importantly, being compared with other students in English achievement is reported to be most discouraging. With reference to learning environment, Undesirable Teaching Conditions such as no utilization of visual materials and language lab as well as no access to internet were influential demotivators in the participants' demotivation to learn English.

4.2 Resilience among the Participants

In order to seek answers to Research Question 2 as regards the features of resilience among the participants, their responses to resilience section of the questionnaire were first subjected to an exploratory factor analysis. The KMO value .646 and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity .000 (< 0.05) suggested significant correlations among the variables in the resilience items and a suitability for factor analysis. The factor analysis yielded three factors.

Table 2. **Matrix of Factor Loadings of Demotivation to Learn English**

	Item	TRF	NTM	LII	NPI	UTC
38	My English teacher makes fun of students' mistakes.	0.768				
39	Teachers only care about their own explanations.	0.776				
40	Teachers' lecture in class is difficult to understand.	0.788				
28	Most English class is translation-based.		0.731			
29	English classes often focus on grammatical points in class.		0.767			
30	Most English classes are exam-oriented.		0.574			
31	I am expected to memorize grammatical points.		0.494			
32	I am always asked to recite sentences.		0.620			
59	I lost interest in English.			0.792		
60	I lost my dream of becoming a good English speaker.			0.809		
54	I dislike some of my classmates in English class.				0.621	
55	My friends dislike English.				0.540	
56	My English study is often compared with my friends.				0.806	
48	No visual materials are used in English classes.					0.488
49	There is no use of network in English class.					0.731
50	There is no use of language lab in English class.					0.488

* TRF = Teacher-related Factors, NTM = Non-communicative Teaching Mode, LII = Lack of Intrinsic Interest, NPI = Negative Peer Influence, and UTC = Undesirable Teaching Conditions.

Table 3. **Loadings and Cumulative Variance of Resilience Factors**

Factor	Sum	Percentage of Variance	Accumulation %	Reliability
1. Metacognitive Adaptation	2.215	22.152	22.152	0.705
2. Realistic Optimism	1.950	19.498	41.650	0.656
3. Communicative Efficacy	1.422	14.215	55.866	0.520

Table 3 presents the loading factors of resilience among the participants. The Eigenvalues of all the three extracted factors were higher than one. The explained variances for the three factors were 22.152％, 19.498％, and 14.215％ respectively. The accumulative explained variance was 55.866%. These results indicate that the resilience questionnaire had a sound construct validity. Besides, the reliability coefficients of these 3 factors are 0.705, 0.656, and 0.520 respectively, which shows that they have good internal consistency.

The matrix of the resilience factors (Table 4) was conducted to explore the features of resilience in the participants' English language learning. According to the content of each item of each factor,

the three extracted factors were named as follows. The first factor included 3 items (Item 7, 15, 24) regarding learners' adaptation to situations when they found themselves no friend to like, to help, and to communicate. It was thus named Metacognitive Adaptation (MA). The second factor had five items (Item 5, 12, 13, 14, 23) concerning the learners' satisfaction with life, and life conditions when in difficult situations. This factor was then termed Realistic Optimism (RO). The third factor consisted of two items (Item 8, 17) pertinent to the learners' self-perceived ability to communicate with others. This factor was thus named Communicative Efficacy (CE).

Table 4. **Matrix of Factor Loadings of Resilience**

	Item	MA	RO	CE
7	I hold that most people I often meet will dislike me.	0.609		
15	I hardly have friends to communicate.	0.854		
24	I have few friends who are able to help each other.	0.822		
5	I am satisfied with my life condition.		0.781	
12	If I am asked to write down things that I am grateful for, I can list a long list.		0.601	
13	I am satisfied with my life.		0.733	
14	I think it is a good attitude to believe that I can solve any problem.		0.412	
23	I believe everything will be better even if I am in difficult situation.		0.483	
8	I can judge their feelings through the facial expression of people.			0.835
17	When people feel sad, angry or embarrassed, I can understand what they are thinking about.			0.751

MA = Metacognitive Adaptation, RO = Realistic Optimism, CE = Communicative Efficacy.

The first resilience factor is associated with the students' metacognitive adaptation when feeling about dislike from most of others, having no friends to communicate, and having few to seek help from each other. The second resilience factor is about the participants' realistic optimism. They tended to be satisfied with their present life conditions. They held a positive attitude that hardship would be gone. They were also rational about the things for which they were grateful. With regard to the third factor, the participants demonstrated a good communicative efficacy. They could tell others' feelings through their facial expressions. They could also sense others' emotions and tell what these people were thinking about.

4.3 Relationship between Resilience and Demotivation

To seek answers to Research Question 3 which was aimed to examine the correlation between L2 demotivation and resilience, Pearson correlation was conducted (Table 5). Table 5 shows that L2 demotivation did not have a correlation with resilience as a whole, but the two constructs did correlate with each other in certain components of them. Specifically, L2 demotivation was significantly positively correlated with Metacognitive Adaptation (P = .000 ⩽ .01), but negatively with Realistic Optimism (P = .007 ⩽ .01). That is, the stronger the participants' Metacognitive Adaptation, the stronger their psychological demotivational intensity would be. The stronger their Realistic Optimism, the weaker their demotivational intensity would be.

Table 5. **Pearson Correlation between Demotivation and Resilience (N= 141)**

Pearson Correlation		TRF	NTM	LII	NPI	UTC	Demotivation
MA	Correlation	.344**	0.002	.277**	.212*	.273**	.370**
	Sig.(2-tailed)	0.000	0.980	0.001	0.011	0.001	0.000
RO	Correlation	-.298**	0.147	-.171*	-0.145	-.177*	-.225**
	Sig.(2-tailed)	0.000	0.083	0.042	0.086	0.036	0.007
CE	correlation	-.185*	0.146	-0.113	-0.085	-0.140	-0.136
	Sig.(2-tailed)	0.028	0.083	0.183	0.316	0.099	0.108
Resilience	correlation	-0.035	0.164	0.028	0.015	0.007	0.048
	Sig.(2-tailed)	0.680	0.052	0.738	0.856	0.935	0.570

* TRF = Teacher-related Factors, NTM = Non-communicative Teaching Mode, LII = Lack of Intrinsic Interest, NPI = Negative Peer Influence, and UTC = Undesirable Teaching Conditions, MA = Metacognitive Adaptation, RO = Realistic Optimism, CE = Communicative Efficacy; **≤0.01; *≤0.05

Significantly positive correlation was identified between Metacognitive Adaptation and four out of the five demotivation factors, namely, Teacher-related factors (P = .000 ≤ .01), Lack of Intrinsic Interest (P = .001 ≤ .01), Negative Peer Influence (P = .011 ≤ .05), Undesirable Teaching Conditions (P = .001 ≤ .01). In other words, the stronger the participants' Metacognitive Adaptation, the stronger their demotivation intensity would be.

By contrast, significantly negative correlation was found between Realistic Optimism and three out of the five demotivation factors, namely, Teacher-related factors (P = .000 ≤ .01), Lack of Intrinsic Interest (P = .042 ≤ .05), and Undesirable Teaching Conditions (P = .036 ≤ .05). This result suggests that the stronger the participants' Realistic Optimism, the weaker their demotivation intensity would be. In addition, Communicative Efficacy was also found to be significantly negatively correlated with Teacher-related Factors (P = .028 ≤ .05), which means that the stronger the participants' Communicative Efficacy, the weaker their demotivation would be.

5. Discussion

This study aims to investigate the psychological constructs of L2 demotivation and resilience among Chinese tertiary EFL learners by following a quantitative approach. To this end, a questionnaire was designed against the Chinese EFL context. It was tested that the instrument had sound validity and reliability.

The first research question examined the features of demotivation to learn English among the participants. The results show that L2 demotivation was a psychological phenomenon existing among tertiary Chinese EFL learners. Their lack of motivation to learn English was reported to be mainly caused by Teacher-related Factors, Non-communicative Teaching Mode, Lack of Intrinsic Interest, Negative Peer Influence, and Undesirable Teaching Conditions. These results suggest that demotivation is a multi-sourced construct, including both external and internal sources of influencing factors (Shan, 2015). These findings are congruent

with previous studies (Kikuchi, 2015; Sakai & Kikuchi, 2009). It identified certain similarities but differences from previous studies documented in other similar EFL contexts, which provide insight for Chinese EFL teachers into their classroom teaching practice.

It is noteworthy that teacher-related factor was found to be the most influential demotivator among the participants surveyed. This result was also reported in some international studies (Kikuchi, 2015; Kikuchi & Sakai, 2009). Teacher-related factors such as teacher personality, teaching style and teaching competence were discussed as major demotivators in L2 class (Wang & Guan, 2020). This finding might indicate that teachers still play a critical role in the Chinese EFL context. The teachers as important agents in the EFL learning process might be further explained by the teacher-centered mode in the Chinese EFL context. The non-communicative teaching mode was reported as an important demotivator by the participants. The non-communicative teaching mode is often exam-oriented and grammar-focused. Such a class would provide little opportunity for classroom interaction, but often teacher-dominated (Li, 2014; Rao, 2006). Therefore, it is probable for students to be bothered and thus lose interest in the EFL class and in the learning of English.

It is interesting to note that lack of intrinsic interest is reported to be a demotivator among the participants. Although the average score of the participants in the NMET is over 120, few of them self-scaled to be proficient learners of English. This may be due to the following reasons. Apart from the above discussed non-communicative mode which is being exam-oriented, grammar-focused, and teacher-dominated, the College English class is criticized for ignoring the cultivation of students' competence in using English for communicative purposes (Wen, 2015). The separation of English teaching from English communication makes students less and less motivated in English (Cai, 2017).

Negative peer influence is another demotivator reported by the participants. This may be due to the participants' immature cognition to deal with interpersonal relationship in EFL learning (Li, 2013). When lack of self control and regulation in dealing with outside influence, they tend to be distracted from their own study, and thus need reliance on their teachers. This result partly

confirmed the participants' attribution of teachers to be the most influential factor.

One more demotivator from the quantitative data is the undesirable teaching conditions. This agrees with previous studies (Falout, et al., 2009). Considering the participants were from a local technological university in Mainland China, it is understandable that local universities received limited English language education resources from government. Universities of such usually position themselves to be application-oriented higher institutions which claim to demand less English proficiency in their graduates, but more application competence. They thus paid less attention to English language education in their curriculum system, compared to those key universities. Therefore, limited resources and marginal status of English course in institutional curriculum system might result in limited investment into English language learning and teaching facilities, and thus discourage the participants in their English learning.

The second research question explored the construct of resilience. The present study found that resilience is composed of three factors, namely, metacognitive adaptation, realistic optimism and communicative efficacy. These findings imply that metacognitive adaptation plays a critical role in the participants' resilience. This echoes what Kim & Kim (2017) reported. Sociability, that is, the ability to analyze a given challenging situation is of paramount importance in the resilience system (Kim, et al., 2018). Another component of resilience is realistic optimism, namely, the participants' life satisfaction and positive thinking during difficulties (Kim, et al., 2017). This suggests that learners' perceived happiness is a salient feature of their resilience (Kim & Kim, 2017). Communicative efficacy is the third component identified in this study. This result is also discussed to be empathy (Kim & Kim, 2017). It indicates the importance of the capability of leading appropriate conversations and communication with others (Kim, et al., 2017).

With regard to the relationship between resilience and L2 demotivation as assigned in the third research question, the two constructs did not significantly correlate to each other as a whole. However, they were indeed significantly correlated with each other in certain subcomponents of them. There were a significant positive correlation between metacognitive adaptation and L2 demotivation, and four out of the five L2 demotivation components, namely, teacher-related factor, lack of intrinsic interest, peer influence, and teaching facility. These results imply that the participants did not have a good capability of handling interpersonal relationship with others. That is, they displayed a limited sociability, which might further bring about demotivation in their English learning (Kim & Kim, 2017). On the other hand, the demotivators relating to teachers, peers, learning environment, and peers might constrain the learners from enhancing their resilience in face of adversities.

A significant negative correlation was also identified between resilience and L2 demotivation as well as three demotivators, that is, teacher-related factor, lack of intrinsic interest, and teaching facilities. These findings also suggest that the participants displayed a satisfactory attitude towards their life. This well perceived happiness was helpful for them to counter the negative influence from teachers and peers. A perceived happy learning experience would help to have a rational attitude towards the undesirable learning conditions and English learning when having no interest. These results confirm the possible relation between L2 demotivation and such components of resilience, namely, perseverance and persistence (Zimmerman & Shunk, 2011). In addition, communicative efficacy was negatively correlated with teacher-related factor. This is suggestive that a good empathy would be conducive for learners to establish and maintain harmonious relationship with teachers (Kim & Kim, 2017). Thus, realistic optimism and communicative efficacy would benefit learners from tackling demotivation and maintaining motivation in English learning. These results also prove that resilience exerts influence upon L2 demotivation (Kim, et al., 2017).

6. Conclusion

This study, adopting a quantitative approach, explored the correlation between resilience and demotivation to learn English among Chinese tertiary non-English majors. It has identified five demotivators including teacher-related factors, traditional teaching methods, and lack of intrinsic interest, peer influence, and teaching conditions. It has found that resilience among the participants was constructed by three components, namely, metacognitive adaptation, realistic optimism and communicative efficacy. Regarding the correlation

between the two constructs, it is found that the two constructs significantly correlated with each other in some of their sub-components. L2 demotivation was significantly positively correlated with metacognitive adaptation, but negatively significantly with realistic optimism. Significant positive correlation was identified between metacognition adaptation and such demotivators as teacher-related factor, lack of intrinsic interest, peer influence, and teaching facilities. Significant negative correlation was confirmed between realistic optimism and teacher-related factor, lack of intrinsic interest, and teaching facilities. A significant negative relation between communicative efficacy and teacher-related factor was also found.

The above findings generate several implications. Firstly, English teachers should consolidate their pedagogical knowledge so as to improve their teaching competence. It is also essential for teachers to enrich their teaching strategies, in particular, to update their teaching beliefs from a communicative perspective. They are further suggested to help the EFL learners sensitize themselves with the individual differences among the peers. Teachers are also advised to develop students' interest in English learning. Besides, communicative approach is suggested for EFL class for the purpose of improving students' perceived happiness and communicative efficacy. Psychological counseling is also necessary in class to help students deal with frustrations in EFL learning and hindrances in interacting with others. Thirdly, considering the critical role of resilience in helping learners maintaining mental stamina when confronted with adversities (Luthar et al., 2000), to strengthen the level of resilience among EFL learners is an effective method for countering demotivation. Thus, it is important for EFL teachers to think about ways to improve the level of resilience in their teaching practice.

This study suffered some limitations. First of all, the future replicated studies might be conducted with larger sample population of participants in similar contexts. Other individual variables such as motivation and L2 proficiency may also be included when further generalizing the findings of the present study. Furthermore, alternative techniques like semi-structured interviews, classroom observation are suggested to formulate a mixed-methods approach so as to provide triangulation for the validity and reliability of research of such kind.

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