



Title of Project

Investigating the Impact of the National Matriculation English Test (NMET) in China: A Mixed-Methods Approach

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TIRF Research Topic Investigated

Language Assessment

Project Summary

The study seeks to investigate the impact of the National Matriculation English Test (NMET), a high-stakes English language test in China used to make admissions decisions into university. Impact, a test's influence on the educational system and society as well as on the individuals involved (Bachman & Palmer, 1996), has been drawing significant research attention. However, while existing literature has revealed how language tests exert influence on teaching and learning, there remains the exigency to understand the factors that influence how test takers perceive and react to tests, and how these factors interact in a particular testing context. This study will be undertaken in the context of English learning and assessment in China where tens of millions of people take English tests every year, and where English tests have a significant impact on stakeholders and society at large.

Regarding test impact as an important aspect of test validity, this project will explore students' perceptions in testing process. In test impact studies to date that focus on students' perceptions, learner agency, or the ability to actively pursue learning opportunities and goals, has not been researched much. This study, through the lens of both validity and agency theories, aims to elucidate relationships between students' perceptions, the actions that they take in preparation for the NMET along with test and policy consequences. The findings of this mixed-methods study will have important implications for test developers and policymakers of the NMET and for improving English language testing practices in China and beyond.