

Research on Student Motivation of Higher Vocational College in Guangdong Province of China

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Abstract

Student motivation is the direct cause and internal motivation that directly motivates students to learn, which dominates students' learning behavior, indicating whether students want to learn, what they are willing to learn, and the level of students' learning efforts. As the supporting force of China's higher education, the comprehensive ability and literacy of students in higher vocational colleges is the necessary driving force for the country's future development. With the continuous expansion of the scale of higher vocational education in our country, the expansion of higher vocational education allows more students to enjoy higher vocational education, but also brings questions from the society about the quality of it. Student performance is an evaluation of students' academic performance, and it is also a comprehensive reflection of their ability and literacy acquired during their college years. The purpose of this paper is to investigate the influence and role of these five aspects on students motivation from the perspectives of self-efficacy, teacher-student relationship, teaching strategies, learning environment and academic performance.

Key words: Higher vocational education; Student motivation; Self-determination theory

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1. INTRODUCTION

According to the statistics from the National Bureau of Statistics, China has 11,300 vocational schools with 30.88 million students. In 2021, the National Conference on Vocational Education was held in Beijing, which emphasized the need to focus on improving the quality of talent training. The enrollment of higher vocational colleges in China has been made a great reform since the year 2017. The students from secondary vocational schools and senior high schools can enter the higher vocational colleges in several different ways, like "3+skills certificate" Examination, Independent University Entrance Examination, Academic Proficiency Test, The National College Entrance Examination (Gaokao). It can be inferred that the learning levels of higher vocational college students will have significant differences. The formation and maintenance of the learning motivation of vocational students are affected by the interaction of many factors, such as changes in the students' own mental state and way of thinking, changes in the relationship between teachers and students, learning environment, etc.

By the end of 2020, there are 87 higher vocational colleges in Guangdong. The number of full-time higher vocational students is 1.178 million; nearly 800,000 high-quality technical and technical talents were cultivated every year, making an important contribution to Guangdong's economic aggregate ranking first in the country for thirty consecutive years. Zhu, Zhao and Gu (2019) demonstrated that after entering the higher vocational colleges, compared with the courses in high school, the university curriculum has become more diversified. They can freely choose basic courses, compulsory courses and optional courses. They are accustomed to the learning guidance methods of high school teachers and the educational arrangements of their parents around them. The motivation of students

in higher vocational colleges is affected by various internal and external factors. Dong (2019) showed that learner motivation is the process of maintaining the state of learning by completing learning goals, including phased needs and expectations of achievement, that is, the process of inspiring students from they don't want to learn to want to learn. Filgona, Sakiyo, Gwany and Okoronka (2020) concluded that the notion of motivation as an individual condition that is impacted by numerous variables such as beliefs, interests, objectives, and aspirations that require an effort from students. Xue (2021) concluded that teachers in higher vocational colleges, influenced by traditional teaching methods, continue to focus on assessing students' grades based on their learning performance; nevertheless, they have not adopted reasonable teaching strategies for students' learning motivation. Tokan and Imakulata (2019) demonstrated that student's competency is one of the standards that directly corresponds to the needs of society and the employer. Additional factors affecting graduation criteria include students' learning motivations and learning behaviors. In the past, previous studies have examined the relationship between different variables and learning motivation of different types of students, while less attention has been paid to the students of higher vocational colleges, and the overall relationship of variables like self-efficacy, teacher-student relationships, teaching strategies, learning environments and academic performances.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Student Motivation

To learn knowledge and skills well, students must have the corresponding learning motivation. Gopalan, Bakar, Zulkifli, Alwi and Mat (2017) concluded that learning motivation is defined as a persuasion sensation that encourages students to complete a task or activity to completion and success, regardless of how difficult or tough it is. Learning motivation is a constant, stimulating, and positive inducing force in the entire learning process. A good way to motivate students to learn is to stimulate them. It is a natural desire to study, to guide and motivate students to take the initiative in order to motivate them to learn independently and efficiently (Wang, 2020). Ju and Zhou (2021) demonstrated that learning motivation refers to an internal process or internal mental state that motivates individuals to perform learning activities, maintains the learning activities that have been caused, and engages in learning behaviors toward a certain goal. Tian (2021) uses the CiteSpace visual analysis tool to examine the research dynamics of learning motivation in China from 1998 to 2019 based on 300 learning motivation documents collected in the CSSCI database. The main themes of domestic learning motivation research include: research on the influencing

factors of learning motivation, research on the learning motivation of specific learning groups such as college students and elementary school students, specific research methods such as the study of learning motivation using discriminative analysis, and specific learning platforms such as the research on learning motivation of network platforms, etc. The research found that the influencing factors of learning motivation have received extensive attention from domestic scholars. The research is mainly based on quantitative research based on questionnaire surveys. The research fields mainly cover linguistics, pedagogy and psychology; the results of domestic learning motivation research are concluded from the keyword cluster analysis, the factors affected the learning motivation include students' characteristics, teacher-student relationships, online learning environment, college and family environment, life value orientation, teaching and learning strategies, academic self-efficacy and academic performance.

2.2 Self-efficacy

Li (2020) concluded that academic self-efficacy is actually an extension of self-efficacy in the field of learning, which refers to an individual's subjective judgment on whether learning tasks and plans can be successfully completed. The research of Zhong (2020) believed that the definitions of learning efficacy by domestic and foreign researchers are basically the same, basically referring to Bandura's self-efficacy theory and extending it in the field of learning. A subjective judgment of how well a learning objective can be achieved. Based on the viewpoints of scholars at home and abroad, Zhong's study defines English learning efficacy as follows: English learners' subjective judgments of their ability to complete English learning tasks in the learning process, which includes four dimensions: ability, effort, frustration, and challenge. There is a positive correlation between student motivation and learning self-efficacy. Teachers should encourage each student to actively use the existing knowledge and skills in learning activities to complete the activity tasks, and give corresponding rewards. Doing so not only allows students' abilities to be practiced and recognized, but also enhances their sense of self-efficacy.

Self-efficacy is the gap between people's judgment of what they want to achieve and their own ability, and it is also an evaluation of their own ability. Higher self-efficacy promotes learning to generate learning motivation, active learning, shaping their psychological quality and learning self-confidence to solve learning difficulties, and gradually forming good learning habits, which is a virtuous circle. On the contrary, students with low self-efficacy are often passive in the face of learning difficulties, make less effort, and cannot effectively solve difficulties, thereby further reducing self-efficacy, reducing motivation to pursue success, and forming a vicious circle. Especially for high school students, having

a high sense of efficacy is a useful boost to the pursuit of success and achievement of goals. Learning knowledge in the learning and living environment, cultivating their love of life and love of learning, and helping students to improve and develop their self-efficacy (Jin, 2021).

2.3 Teacher-Student Relationships

Yan's study made online surveys and multi-person conversation to evaluate the learning motivation of vocational students using random sample methods. According to the findings of the questionnaire analysis, contemporary higher vocational students' learning motivation is low, with 69.37 percent of students believing that their instructor need to concern about their learning condition and teacher-student relationships influence their learning motivation. The development of a positive teacher-student connection can provide students with a sense of security and belonging, therefore increasing their motivation to study (Yan, 2019). Teachers should have a thorough understanding of students' prior knowledge and learning abilities, respect students' individual differences, teach students according to their aptitudes, learn by morality and teach by morality; teachers should be close friends with students, and encourage students to take the initiative to learn. Yang, Liu, Zhang, Yu and Pi (2020) examines the gaze patterns of 11 experienced university teachers who focus on creating teacher-student interactions in the classroom, as well as the impact of these patterns on the learning motivation of 293 students, using the Tobii Glasses 2.0 eye tracker. according to the independent sample *t*-test, students have stronger learning motivation and input in the classroom of teachers who pay attention to the balance between students and teaching topic. Henry and Thorsen (2021) found that teacher-student interactions are essential to students' drive to study. Teacher-student relationships are the subject of this research, it is via interpersonal connection that teacher-student relationships are formed, and they also have an influence on contextual interaction. Along with the relational setting, language, and psychological background, interaction takes place. Students' intimate personal contact with teachers in the classroom has been demonstrated to have context and long-term influence, and the moment of touch has served as a building block, it is the beginning of improving learning motivation. Positive teacher-student relationships stimulate learning motivation.

2.4 Teaching Strategies

Shen and Yin (2019) reported that the reform of teaching strategies can enhance learning motivation. Teachers establish the teaching link of the new course at the start of the teaching of the new course to encourage students to comprehend the learning objectives and knowledge structure of the course and to increase learning motivation. Tremblay-Wragg, Raby, Ménard and Plante (2021) conducted a study to explain the employment of

various teaching strategies in university courses and to investigate the impact of these strategies and their context on students' learning motivation. Classroom observations and interviews with four teachers utilizing various strategies were done for this purpose. These findings emphasize the necessity of diversifying teaching strategies in higher education, as well as taking into account the context in which they are used, in order to maximize their positive impact. Students' motivation can be improved by diversifying teaching strategies, giving a good learning context, and creating a positive teaching environment.

2.6 Learning Environments

According to Zhang and Shen (2019), we frequently see students studying together, creating a positive learning environment; however, some students are unable to raise the spirit of their own learning, lack motivation to learn, and as a result, there will be inattention in class, as well as the phenomenon of all time being spent on recreational activities other than studying. In a study investigating learning environment and learning motivation, Kang and Zhang (2020) created and administered a questionnaire survey to 100 students who were chosen at random from the freshmen and sophomore classes, reported that with the emergence of the Corona Virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), online learning is becoming more popular around the world. However, it is still unclear whether the online teaching method is effective in terms of student learning motivation. Creating the online learning environment also produced moderate degrees of peer pressure and rivalry and improved the learning motivation, which were widely accepted by the students. Online teaching might be seen as a beneficial adjunct to traditional classroom instruction, and teachers contact more regularly with students through forums, which also promoted the learning motivation.

A small scale study by Randi and Corno (2021) reached the similar conclusions, finding students and instructors face distinct challenges and opportunities when it comes to motivating students to learn in online contexts. Teachers at universities frequently pay attention to student' learning motivation by offering relevant content that piques their interest or urging them to master course contents in order to prepare for long-term goals such as careers.

2.7 Academic Performances

According to Tokan and Imakulata (2019), intrinsic learning motivation, such as interests, goals, and abilities, as well as extrinsic incentive, such as parental encouragement, lecturer competence, infrastructure, and social communication, can all influence academic performance. Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation have a direct effect on academic performance; intrinsic and extrinsic motivation have an indirect effect on academic performance through learned behavior; and intrinsic

and extrinsic motivation and learning behavior have an influence on academic performance. Teng, Ni, Zhou and Wang (2020) believe that, according to Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, learning motivation is generated on the basis of needs, and once a person's needs at a certain level are met, motivation will not arise. Different students need different levels of external rewards. When students have strong internal motivation for learning, strengthening external rewards will weaken the overall motivation level. When students' internal motivation is weak, external rewards should be provided in a targeted manner to improve the overall motivation level. Teachers can correctly evaluate students' learning behavior. Li (2020) conducted a research on the relationship between learning motivation and academic performance based on the Reinforcement Theory of motivation proposed by Skinner. Learning motivation is considered to be one of the motivations, which can have an impact on an individual's behavior and activities, and it is the driving force that can continuously make the individual have the enthusiasm for learning. Academic performance includes not only the academic achievement of college students, but also the overall quality of college students. This study mainly collected data through the questionnaire survey method designed from learning motivation scale.

CONCLUSION

This paper reviews the relevant literature on the influencing factors of student motivation from a theoretical point of view. This chapter provides the basic theory for the research and finally forms a theoretical framework. In addition, the reviewed literature reflects the under-researched phenomenon of student motivation in higher vocational colleges.

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