

Factors of Curriculum Model that Influence Students' Study Motivation in Undergraduate Vocational Universities in Jiangxi Province

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Motivation, defined as the desire to act in pursuit of a goal, plays a vital role in learning. As China shifts towards high-quality development, the government encourages practical undergraduate universities to develop Undergraduate Vocational Education and Training (UVET) programs. The curriculum model, a central component of UVET, has a significant influence on students' motivation to study. However, existing research on how the curriculum model in UVET impacts student motivation remains insufficient. This paper aims to explore the existing challenge in UVET in Jiangxi province and the factors within the curriculum model that influence students' study motivation in undergraduate vocational universities in Jiangxi Province. A qualitative method was employed, with a sample of 10 undergraduate vocational students and teachers selected through purposeful sampling. The analysis revealed that clear educational objectives, engaging teaching content, interactive teaching methods, balanced assessment strategies, and a supportive learning environment can significantly enhance students' motivation to study. This study benefits both students and teachers in UVET by providing insights that can help refine the curriculum model to boost student motivation and improve teaching effectiveness.

1. Introduction

The Chinese government has published a series of policies aimed at developing UVET to cultivate advanced skills. However, as a relatively new initiative, research on UVET in China remains limited, particularly in understanding how the curriculum model impacts students' study motivation which is a crucial factor in their academic success. Furthermore, a report published by China Education Daily (2022) highlighted that students in higher vocational education often exhibit negative learning attitudes. Given the various factors that influence students' study motivation, the curriculum model is a key element. This research aims to

explore what the existing challenge in UVET in Jiangxi province and how different aspects of the UVET curriculum model affect students' motivation to learn in UVET programs.

2. Literature Review

Based on the discourse of theory of curriculum by Coşkun and Aslan in 2021, curriculum theory contains four fundamental dimensions, namely: objectives, content, methods, and assessment. As a new policy, the research on UVET is not so much, especially in the field of curriculum model of UVET influence students' study motivation. Jiaoqing Luo and Xihui Li (2021) said some teachers do not fully understand the high starting point, high standards and high quality of UVET. Jiahe Yuan (2023) said the primary characters of the UVET are insufficiently defined, the standard of staff training is ambiguous, and the educational adaptability is weak. Liegang Zou (2022) indicated the teachers possess an inadequate understanding of the UVET, they occasionally encounter difficulties in delivering coherent instructional content and employing effective teaching methods. As a result, some students experience a loss of interest in their vocational studies.

Motivation is a desire to act for one target, study motivation matters the students' initiative of learning, matters the success of a education(Esra & Sevilen 2021; Beymer & Robinson 2022; Irkinovich 2021). Self-determination is a macro theory of human motivation and personality, Self-determination refers to the ability of individuals to make choices and determine their own actions(Deci & Ryan 2012). This paper base on Self-determination theory and use a qualitative study through interview method to explore the factors of curriculum model influence students' study motivation.

3. Research Method

Qualitative case study enables a complex phenomenon to be explored through the identification of different factors interacting with each other(Nassaji 2020; Sjoberg, Orum & Feagin 2016; Goodrick 2020). This research choose qualitative study through interview method to collect data. The researcher picked 10 students of different programs study in undergraduate practical universities of Jiangxi province, the sample are picked by purposeful sampling, they must be willing to learn, study hard and class managers. In-person interview is used to collect the data from the participants. The interview protocol was designed based on the previous study findings(Mäenpää, Järvenoja, Peltonen & Pyhältö2020; Li, Deng,& Zhang, 2019; Choi, Wang, Zhu & Lai 2021) and has been tested by two experts in field of UVET. The semi-structured interview was held between 30 to 40 minutes, It was audio-recorded, and the responses were literally transcribed and translated from Chinese to English. The questions in the interview concerns the importance of study motivation, the challenge existing in curriculum model of UVET, and the factors of curriculum model of UVET influence students' study motivation. The data was evaluated using the descriptive analysis technique after the interviews were transcribed. The themes used in the analysis of the data were formed by the curriculum standard document and based on the questions asked to the informants. After that, the data evaluated by using the content analysis technique which gathers similar data around certain concepts and themes.

4. Result and Discussion

A. The importance of study motivation in UVET

This study aligns with previous research by Esra and Sevilen (2021), Beymer and Robinson (2022), and Irkinovich (2021), which emphasized the importance of study motivation. However, as a relatively new policy, research on study motivation within UVET remains insufficient. The results from the interviews conducted in this study confirm that study motivation is indeed crucial for students in undergraduate vocational universities, consistent with findings from prior researchers such as Smirnova, Slazhevich, Nikitina, and Rodionova (2020), Tentama and Arridha (2020), and Sudjimat and Permadi (2021).

Informant 2 Yes, that is absolute, if there is no study motivation, it almost have no improving in study.

Informant 3 I think the study motivation is most important for students, it matters the success of students' study career.

Informant 6 I benefit from the study motivation a lot, the study motivation help to step by step on the learning road.

B. The challenge existing in curriculum model of UVET.

Subsequently, the result of analysis found the challenge existing in curriculum model of UVET contain ambiguous learning objectives, unengaging teaching content, teacher-center teaching methods, over-reliance on final exams. "I am grade 2 now, but even now I am not clear of my learning objectives." (Informant 1). Otherwise Informant 4 stated that "the teaching content is boring, the teachers overemphasize the theoretical knowledge, and we have so much lecture, I just passively receiver abundant theoretical knowledge, I don't know how to balance the theoretical knowledge and skills training". Meanwhile Informant 5 said that "there is some problems in our assessment methods, I think, the teachers over-reliance on final exams."

According to the informants, all ten participants strongly emphasized the issues with unengaging teaching content and teacher-centered methods. They noted that teachers overemphasized theoretical knowledge while providing insufficient skills training, and the theoretical knowledge was often superficial and not fully understood. The informants expressed that they had numerous lectures where the teacher was the focal point, leaving them with no sense of involvement and making them passive recipients of information.

Eight informants mentioned the issue of ambiguous learning objectives, stating that they often lacked clear goals and sometimes studied hard only to pass exams and graduate successfully. Seven informants highlighted the over-reliance on final exams, believing that this approach led some students to feel there was no need to study consistently, as they could simply review theoretical knowledge at the end of the semester to pass the exams.

C. The factors of curriculum model of UVET influence students' study motivation.

Curriculum model can strongly influence students' study motivation, according to the informants' response, the Clear Educational Objectives, the Relevant and Engaging Teaching Content, the Interactive and Student-Centered Teaching Methods, Balanced and Continuous Assessment Methods, these factors of curriculum model can enhance students' study

motivation. informant 8 stated “ as a student of UVET, I think I first should have a clear learning objective, clear learning objective can like a beacon, lead me to study”. furthermore, informant 9 mentioned “ I think the teaching content and teaching methods can influence my study motivation, if the teaching content was engaging, and the teachers adopted a interactive and student-center teaching method teach us, I am pleased to study...”. Meanwhile informant 7 expressed “ not only the teaching content, teaching methods, but the assessment methods have effects on our study motivation, we need a balance and continuous assessment methods”. Otherwise informant 7 pointed out “the learning environment have a effect on our study motivation, we need a supportive learning environment.”

All ten informants emphasized that clear educational objectives strongly influence their study motivation. They agreed that both students and teachers should maintain clear educational goals throughout the educational journey, and educators should assist students in achieving these objectives. Additionally, all ten informants highlighted that engaging teaching content and interactive teaching methods significantly impact students' motivation to learn. They suggested that teaching content should be up-to-date, practical, and delivered using interactive methods. Nine informants expressed the need for teachers to reduce their reliance on final exams for student evaluation. Instead, they recommended adopting balanced assessment methods, such as daily performance tracking and project reports, to provide a more comprehensive evaluation of students. Eight informants also mentioned the importance of a supportive learning environment in enhancing their study motivation.

5. CONCLUSION

This study found that student motivation is crucial in UVET. However, as the informants in this research highlighted, the current curriculum model in Jiangxi Province faces several challenges. These include ambiguous learning objectives, an overemphasis on theoretical knowledge, a lack of practical skills training, superficial teaching of theoretical concepts, an over-reliance on lectures and teacher-centered methods, and a heavy focus on final exams. These issues can negatively impact students' motivation to learn. To address these challenges, this research proposes the need for clear educational objectives, engaging teaching content, interactive teaching methods, balanced assessment strategies, and a supportive learning environment. The insights provided by the informants can guide educators in refining the UVET curriculum model to boost student motivation and better cultivate the highly skilled talents needed to meet societal demands and economic development.

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