



# Exploring the Motivation and Satisfaction of Students International Organization Talent Cultivation A Case Study of Global Engagement Program in Zhejiang University

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**Abstract.** Compared to Western nations, China's involvement in international organizations is still lacking due to a scarcity of international organization talent. This study examines the motivation and satisfaction levels of students aspiring to work in an international organization, utilizing the Global Engagement Program (GEP) at Zhejiang University as an exemplar. Drawing on the Uses and Gratifications (U&G) theory, this study explores the motives and satisfaction of GEP students using both qualitative and quantitative methods. The research reveals that factors such as training programs, curriculum design, and a sense of accomplishment are crucial for GEP students. Additionally, the course content, overseas exchange, and extracurricular activities were particularly well-received by students. Consequently, this article recommends granting more autonomy to students interested in pursuing careers in international organizations, enabling them to manage their work independently and enhance their satisfaction and performance in talent development programs.

**Keywords:** International Organization · Motivation · Satisfaction · Higher Education

## 1 Introduction

China's rise as a major player in global economic growth is accompanied by an increasing role in various international organizations. As a result, these organizations have become more critical to the Chinese government [1]. In order to engage with the international community and participate in global governance on a larger scale, developing and nurturing talent for international organizations has become essential for enhancing China's international image. However, China's participation in international organizations is still limited, and only a small number of Chinese employees serve in these organizations when compared to Western countries [2]. This can be attributed to the fact that China-recommended candidates often lack competitiveness. Universities, therefore, play a crucial role in training talented youth who aspire to work in international organizations by establishing programs or courses to meet national and social needs. Top

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universities in China, such as Tsinghua University, Peking University, and Zhejiang University, have developed models and systems to cultivate international organization talent. However, there is still room for improvement in these existing models. The Global Engagement Program (GEP) at Zhejiang University, launched in September 2015, selects 30 undergraduates from the School of International Studies. Since 2017, the program has recruited students from across the university, and in 2018, a new minor program titled International Organization and International Development was introduced for all students. Therefore, the GEP at Zhejiang University serves as an appropriate research sample.

#### Theoretical Framework.

Uses and Gratifications (U&G) theory is a needs-based motivation theory. Blumler [3] proposed that cognitive motivation facilitated information gain. The primary strength of U&G theory is its ability to permit researchers to investigate mediated communication situations via a single or multiple sets of psychological needs, psychological motives, communication channels, communication content, and psychological gratifications [4]. Compared with the traditional effects, the U&G researcher uses the audience as a point of departure [5]. Recent studies have applied the framework to education. It provides a research framework for understanding students' learning process connecting with their learning motivations and gratifications [6]. For example, Mondri [6] combined the U&G theory and Expectancy-value Theory to explain students' perceived e-learning experience, and Can [7] explores how faculty members use Web tools in instructional processes in a global higher education context based on the uses and gratifications approach. Therefore, this study regards the U&G theory as the theory foundation. By measuring the motivation and satisfaction of students of GEPs, this study aims to explore the influential factor of the quality of international organization talent cultivation programs in universities and provides meaningful insights for improvements and modification of future programs.

Motivation is a complex concept. According to Harlen & Deakin Crick's definition [8], students' motivation "closely aligned with 'the will to learn', and encompassing self-esteem, self-efficacy, effort, self-regulation, locus of control and goal orientation." Thus, in this study, the motivation part of the questionnaire was designed under the guideline of this definition.

Students' satisfaction can be defined as an attitude resulting from an assessment of students' educational experience, services and facilities provided by the institution [9]. Many studies have examined the reasons for students' satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their higher educational experience [10]. Based on Lola C. [11]'s research, students' satisfaction was influenced by the educational quality, administrative quality and cognitive learning outcomes. This paper reviews the major attributes that most influence students' perceptions of overall satisfaction. Thus, this study designs the third part of the questionnaire to explore the GEP students' satisfaction in the light of the previous research framework and regard educational quality, administrative quality and cognitive learning outcomes as the three dimensions of the satisfaction survey.

Cognitive testing is an applied approach to identifying problems in survey questionnaires and related materials [12]. Typically, members of the selected participants are

often recruited once a preliminary version of the questionnaire is created, and then one-on-one interviews are typically done in a face-to-face setting. Some scholars believed that cognitive testing should be a standard part of the development process of any survey instrument [13]. Thus, this study will refer to the cognitive test theories in the research process and develop the pre-survey as an important step.

## 2 Data and Method

This study employed a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods. To test the effectiveness of the survey questions, cognitive testing was used, and semi-structured interviews were conducted with several GEP students from different majors and grades. This was done before distributing the online questionnaire to the targeted group. The online questionnaire was distributed through an online crowdsourcing platform similar to Amazon Mechanical Turk. A total of 83 useful questionnaires were collected and analyzed for this study.

The questionnaire was divided into sections covering learning motivation, learning satisfaction, and socio-demographic information. The first section asked socio-demographic questions such as gender, major, and education level. The second and third sections used the uses and gratifications (U&G) theory to measure students' game motivation and gratifications. Participants rated their motivation and gratification on a Likert 5-point scale, commonly used in social science research.

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS 25 software and involved three stages. First, Cronbach's alpha was used to determine the internal reliability of the student's motivation and satisfaction scales. Second, Test Statistics and Descriptive Statistics were used to compute the motivation scores and satisfaction scores, respectively.

## 3 Results and Discussion

### 3.1 Basic Information of Participants

Among 83 GEP students in our study, 35 (42.2%) were male, and 48 (57.8%) were female. Participants who majored in Liberal Arts ( $n = 39$ ) accounted for 47.0%; Engineering ( $n = 15$ ) 18.0%; Science ( $n = 11$ ) 13%; Business ( $n = 8$ ) 10%; Agronomy ( $n = 10$ ) 12.0%. (see Table 1.)

### 3.2 The Reliability of Measurement

Prior to conducting the final regression analysis, this study undertook testing for the reliability and validity of the motivation and satisfaction scales. The assessment of scale reliability was based on the Cronbach's alpha coefficient and corrected item-to-total correlations. The motivation scale initially consisted of 13 items, while the satisfaction scale comprised 24 items. To ensure the accuracy of the scales, item-to-total correlation was applied to identify and remove any items that did not show strong correlation with the overall scale score. All items were retained after the analysis. The results demonstrated strong internal consistency for the measurements, with all questions on the motivation

**Table 1.** The Socio-demographic Characteristic of GEP students

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	35	42.2
Female	48	57.8
<b>Major</b>		
Liberal Arts	39	47.0
Engineering	15	18.0
Science	11	13.0
Business	8	10.0
Agronomy	10	12.0

and satisfaction scales having Cronbach's alpha coefficients greater than the acceptable threshold of 0.7. Therefore, this study exhibited robust scale internal consistency and homogeneity.

### 3.3 The Motivation for Becoming a Student of GEP

The results of regression estimates were presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Regression Analysis for Motivation

Model	Beta	t	Sig.
<b>Constant</b>		.009	.993
<b>M1</b>	.094	18830377.627	.000
<b>M2</b>	.120	33424718.130	.000
<b>M3</b>	.100	18095618.659	.000
<b>M4</b>	.093	18404920.019	.000
<b>M5</b>	.097	18310536.734	.000
<b>M6</b>	.102	19859279.948	.000
<b>M7</b>	.088	14778118.621	.000
<b>M8</b>	.091	16224757.447	.000
<b>M9</b>	.107	22262829.359	.000
<b>M10</b>	.114	23884549.751	.000
<b>M11</b>	.098	22498065.369	.000
<b>M12</b>	.094	21653868.330	.000
<b>M13</b>	<b>.117</b>	<b>29424674.951</b>	<b>.000</b>

In this study’s linear regression analysis, the independent variable was set as the student’s motivation to join the GEP, while the dependent variable was the scale score. The resulting equation was a primary linear regression equation, with the beta value of a specific regression coefficient indicating the degree of influence of that motivation. The variance inflation factor (VIF) was found to be less than 10, suggesting no significant collinearity issues between the questions. Therefore, all results were deemed valid. Upon comparing the data, Q2, Q10, and Q14 emerged as having the highest beta values, indicating that a training program, curriculum design, and sense of accomplishment were the most important motivations for students to join the GEP.

*Q2: I am willing to join the GEP because I took part in a training program related to international organizations.*

*Q10: I believe that the curriculum design of GEP is very attractive.*

*Q14: Joining the GEP will bring me a sense of accomplishment.*

### 3.4 The Satisfaction for Becoming a Student of GEP

#### 1) Hypothesis Test Summary.

To assess the satisfaction of GEP students, this study utilized a questionnaire comprising three dimensions: educational quality, administrative quality, and cognitive learning outcomes, based on Lola C’s research framework. For the educational quality dimension, nine questions were designed to gauge student satisfaction with the curriculum and teachers. In the administrative quality dimension, eight questions assessed satisfaction with services, facilities, and internship activities. Finally, seven questions were formulated to measure satisfaction with cognitive learning outcomes. After data collection, this study performed a hypothesis test (see Table 3).

The sign value of the three dimensions was 0.417, which was greater than 0.05, so there was no significant difference between the three dimensions and their data were available.

#### 2) Friedman Test.

The friedman test is the non-parametric alternative to the one-way ANOVA with repeated measures. It is used to test for differences between groups when the dependent variable being measured is ordinal.

In Table 4, three models denote educational quality, administrative quality and cognitive learning outcomes. After the Friedman test, the Asymp Sig for the three models is 0.000, less than 0.05. So there are significant differences between the measurements of questions in the three models.

#### 3) Descriptive Statistics of Three Dimensions in Satisfaction of GEP Students.

**Table 3.** Hypothesis Test Summary

Test	Sig.	Decision
Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.417	Retain the null hypothesis

**Table 4.** Friedman test of three models in measuring the satisfaction

Model	Educational Quality (Model 1)	Administrative Quality (Model 2)	Cognitive learning outcomes (Model 3)
N	83	83	83
Chi-Square	71.36	42.184	60.872
df	7	8	6
Asymp. Sig	0.000	0.000	0.000

Table 5 presents the descriptive statistics of the three dimensions of satisfaction: educational quality, administrative quality, and cognitive learning outcomes. A higher total score indicates a higher level of satisfaction. In the first dimension, GEP students showed the highest satisfaction with S1, “I think that the course content of GEP can help me gain a work opportunity in international organizations.” This suggests that the course content of GEP aligns with students’ ambitions to work in international organizations. However, S2 (“I believe that the number of courses is reasonable”) and S3 (“I believe that the difficulty of the course is reasonable”) received lower scores, indicating the need for improvement in course design.

Regarding the second dimension of Administrative Quality, students were most satisfied with the overseas exchange opportunities (S16) and the content of extracurricular activities (S11) provided by GEP. However, the first variable (S9) of this dimension, “I think the schedule of extracurricular activities is reasonable,” received a lower score, indicating that students are dissatisfied with the extracurricular activity schedule.

In the last dimension of Cognitive Learning Outcomes, the satisfaction of class cohesion was the lowest, with a mean value of less than 3. This highlights the need for GEP to develop a class culture, which is essential for setting the tone while communicating and maintaining clear expectations. To improve student satisfaction and raise the program’s reputation, GEP can give students more autonomy to manage their work and set up corresponding clubs and “self-governance” organizations.

In summary, these findings provide valuable insights for improving the satisfaction of GEP students and enhancing the quality of the program. By addressing the areas of improvement, GEP can attract more talented students interested in the program and ultimately contribute to the cultivation of international organization talent in China.

In the Table 6, The mean values of the three dimensions were measured as: Educational Quality: 3.49, Administrative Quality: 3.64, and Cognitive learning outcomes:3.47. Therefore, students are more satisfied with Administrative Quality, followed by Educational Quality, and the least satisfied with the dimension of Cognitive learning outcomes.

**Table 5.** Descriptive Statistics of Three dimension in Satisfaction

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
<b>Education Quality</b>					
S1	83	1.00	5.00	3.7763	.99437
S2	83	1.00	5.00	3.2763	.94060
S3	83	1.00	5.00	3.2763	.92906
S4	83	1.00	5.00	3.3026	.94998
S5	83	1.00	5.00	3.5789	.98221
S6	83	1.00	5.00	3.6579	1.08733
S7	83	1.00	5.00	3.5526	.96355
S8	83	1.00	5.00	3.4737	.84687
<b>Administrative Quality</b>					
S9	83	1.00	5.00	3.3947	.99437
S10	83	1.00	5.00	3.5921	.94060
S11	83	1.00	5.00	3.7368	.92906
S12	83	1.00	5.00	3.6316	.94998
S13	83	1.00	5.00	3.5921	.98221
S14	83	1.00	5.00	3.5658	1.08733
S15	83	1.00	5.00	3.7105	.96355
S16	83	1.00	5.00	3.9474	.84687
S17	83	1.00	5.00	3.6053	1.09641
<b>Cognitive Learning Outcomes</b>					
S18	83	1.00	5.00	2.9342	1.11158
S19	83	1.00	5.00	3.0263	1.17727
S20	83	1.00	5.00	3.4211	1.15774
S21	83	1.00	5.00	3.1974	1.05855
S22	83	1.00	5.00	3.2500	1.07238
S23	83	1.00	5.00	3.5658	1.04990
S24	83	1.00	5.00	3.2368	1.05664

**Table 6.** Mean value of three dimension

Model	Educational Quality	Administrative Quality	Cognitive learning outcomes
Mean value	3.49	3.64	3.47

## 4 Conclusion

This study focuses on exploring the motivation and satisfaction of students in international organization talent programs, using the Global Education Program (GEP) at Zhejiang University as a case study. As per the previous findings and discussion, factors such as training programs, curriculum design, and the sense of accomplishment are crucial for students seeking to join international organization programs. Improving student satisfaction can further enhance academic achievement and retention in the program [14]. Thus, this study uses three dimensions to design the questionnaires to measure GEP members' satisfaction, finding that students are more satisfied with Administrative Quality than the other two dimensions. Scores of course content, overseas exchange, and types of extracurricular activities also rank high on the list.

This study contributes not only theoretically but also practically, as the number of international talents in China is increasing, making it crucial for Chinese universities to improve satisfaction levels in the cultivation process. With students' autonomy expanding due to taking charge of their learning, practical applications for improving satisfaction levels would be highly intriguing.

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