

Comparative Study on College Students' Learning Expectation and Learning Habits Based on Theory of Zimmerman's Self-regulated Learning*

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Abstract—Expectation is a kind of individual's subjective estimation of future situation and pre-set goals and the estimation of completion of pre-set target. Learning expectation of contemporary college students has changed a lot under the situation of verified learning environment and learning media at present. College students' current learning objectives and learning habits were investigated in this study on the basis of theory of Zimmerman's self-regulated learning. As a result, it is found that the students have diversified learning objectives, poor independent learning capability, and certain dependency and lag in solving learning problems and formulating learning plan. Learning expectation and individual's learning habits are uncoordinated and inconsistent.

Keywords—theory of Zimmerman's self-regulated learning; learning expectation; learning objectives; learning habits

I. INTRODUCTION

The national conference on undergraduate education in colleges and universities in the new era was held on June 21, 2018 in Chengdu. Chen Baosheng, the Minister of Education, said at the meeting that the phenomenon of "hard middle school life and cheerful college life" in Chinese education should be reversed; we should alleviate burdens on primary and secondary students effectively, and increase burden on college students reasonably to enhance the academic challenge of them. We should also stimulate students' learning motivation and their interests in the major, and change the "boring class" into "interesting class" with profundity, difficulty and challenges. Easy graduation should be changed to reflect connotation construction and quality improvement in the learning achievements of each student in true sense. Wu Yan, Director of Higher Education Division, Ministry of

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Education, also indicated that, teaching management reform should be deepened further against lack of learning motivation and insufficient potential mining of some students, so as to stimulate their learning interest and develop their potential.

Higher education has experienced huge change in educational method, content and even objectives with the development of network information age. The learning habits of college students also change under the influence of network information carriers, such as computer, mobile phone. We can find from the achievements that have been obtained from researches that, the investigations on college students' learning situation pay more attention to learning style, learning objectives, learning motivation and other factors. For the college students themselves, learning expectation determines their learning habits on campus directly, and influences their learning during the four years. In this paper, the problems of college students in learning expectation and learning habits are summarized, comparative analysis is made and feasible suggestions and methods are proposed through sampling survey, data analysis and logical analysis based on "why should I learn", "how to learn" of the Theory of Zimmerman's Self-regulated Learning.

II. RESEARCH OBJECTS AND RESEARCH METHODS

A. Research Objects

The sophomore students of a college are selected at random as the research objects. Considering that there are differences in learning habits of students in each grade, the research objects of this research are mainly the sophomore students, which has neglected freshmen's unstable learning habits and avoided the diversity of learning habits of senior students, so as to eliminate the influence of sample diversity on the result of this investigation.

B. Research Methods

1) *Literature review method*: Collect the literature information relating to this research by consulting China National Knowledge Infrastructure, Wanfang Database and relevant literature in the school library.

2) *Logical and mathematical statistic analysis*: Perform logical analysis of the collected data.

3) *Questionnaire*: Questionnaire is adopted as main method in this paper. The questionnaire of college students' learning expectation and learning habits is designed after interviewing with relevant experts according to knowledge of statistics. A total of 900 questionnaires are given out by e-mail and field distribution. 860 are taken back with recovery rate of 95.56%, 845 effective questionnaires, and effective rate of 98.26%.

III. RESEARCH CONTENT

A. Analysis of Current Situation of Students' College Development Goals

With one year of entrance education and professional education, college students should have clear target and development direction. It can be discovered from the analysis of investigated objects that, 39.53% of students aim to realize higher ideal (see "Table I") and complete the sublimation of life; those who take employment as development goal rank the second, accounting for 35.98%; 20.95% of students go to college just for the diploma, 3.55% of students haven't considered the college objectives.

It can be analyzed from the investigated data that college students have diversified targets. There is certain difference in each one's selection although they have experienced one year of professional education and entrance education. Especially, a small part of students haven't considered their goals in college, which is worthy of our deep consideration and attention. This requires us to strengthen professional education and humanistic education for the freshmen.

TABLE I. SUMMARY OF COLLEGE STUDENTS' OBJECTIVES

College Objectives	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Making all-round improvement of self-quality to prepare for the realization of ideal	334	39.53%	1
Mastering a professional skill to lay foundation for employment	304	35.98%	2
Obtaining the diploma	177	20.95%	3
Never thought about it	30	3.55%	4
Total	845	100%	—

The diversity of college objectives is caused by different information accepted by each student during university, but the question that whether such diversity is consistent with parents' expectation before entering school also represents the instability of contemporary college students' objectives.

It can be seen from "Table II" that only 15.74% of students have the objectives coinciding with their parents' expectation,

and 70.89% of college students think that their objectives are different from their parents' expectation to certain extent. Moreover, 13.37% of students have the objectives running in the opposite position of their parents' expectation. The proportion indicates that their college objectives will change along with then influence by environment, education and other factors after entering school to a large extent. It can be seen from data comparison that college students' diversified objectives are caused by their parents' expectation.

TABLE II. CONSISTENCY COLLEGE STUDENTS' OBJECTIVES WITH PARENTS' EXPECTATIONS

Meeting Parents' Expectations or Not	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Completely met	133	15.74%	2
Having some shortages, needing to keep trying	599	70.89%	1
Disappointing them	113	13.37%	3
Total	845	100%	—

B. Analysis of College Students' Learning Situation

The expectation on academic achievement reflects a college student's requirement of himself/herself, and also indicates this student's learning orientation during the academic year. It can be found that through investigation (see "Table III"), less than half of the students (44.14%) expect to be excellent; 34.91% of students expect to reach an average; 8.76% of students do not concern about it. This group of data reflects that college students have quite high expectations of their academic achievement. They cherish the opportunity to accept college education and are worthy to be affirmed as for enthusiasm in learning.

However, those students who do not concern about academic record are short of clear learning expectation during college days, and it will result in lack of learning initiative in learning and academic difficulties.

TABLE III. COLLEGE STUDENTS' EXPECTATION ON ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Academic Achievement Expectation	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Excellent	373	44.14%	1
Average	295	34.91%	2
Pass	103	12.19%	3
Doesn't matter	74	8.76%	4
Total	845	100%	—

Students' expectation on academic achievement can reflect the endeavor they have made. Students with academic achievement above average account for less than 80% (sum of proportions ranking the first two) under ideal condition. Through the real investigation (see "Table IV"), it is found that the students with academic achievement above average (sum

of proportions ranking the first three) account for 86.62%, which is higher than the academic achievement under ideal condition in "Table III". It shows that most students will improve their understanding of learning and strengthen learning and mastering of professional knowledge along with the professional knowledge education and the influence of learning atmosphere on campus; 13.38% of college students choose below average and very poor for their academic achievement, indicating that they did not take chance to learn in daily study and life, and the option of "Doesn't matter" in "Table III" is reasonable.

TABLE IV. ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS OF COLLEGE STUDENTS

Achievements	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Superior	157	18.58%	3
Above average	251	29.70%	2
Average	324	38.34%	1
Below average	98	11.60%	4
Very poor	15	1.78%	5
Total	845	100%	—

C. Comparative Analysis of College Students' Learning Habits

Learning habit is a fixed learning pattern formed in daily study, which can reflect the college students' learning attitude and mentality. The diversity and difference of college students' learning habits will be analyzed systematically in the following from four aspects, namely students' status in the class, after-class assignment completion, methods in solving learning problems, having learning plan or not.

1) *Analysis of college students' status in the class:* College education advocates self-learning. The ability and efficiency of accepting knowledge in the class are different from people to people. According to the result of sampling survey (see "Table V"), students who can focus their attention to learn account for 39.53%, ranking the first; students who learn earnestly account for 33.73%, ranking the second; the remaining 26.75% of students are absent-minded or skip classes, which is the large proportion. We discover in the investigation that, some of the students who rank the third or fourth are engaged in student work or the work in associations, improving their other comprehensive ability and quality while sacrificing the time for normal class, for example, organizing student activities, working on social part-time jobs, participating in scientific research competition or other recreational and sports activities. They will make up after class to improve the academic achievements by consulting classmates or teachers. These students have high self-management skills, holding the positions of class committee, leader of student union and so on during the period of college education, and becoming the powerful assistants for student management in colleges and universities.

Furthermore, we can also find in the interview that some students are not interested in their major or are weary of studying. They cannot accept knowledge from teacher, nor can they take full advantage of time in the class. Such students often become the vulnerable ones have difficulties in learning

in colleges, and they are facing extension of their status as students or dropping out.

TABLE V. STATISTICAL TABLE OF STUDENTS' STATUS IN THE CLASS

Status in the Class	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Listening earnestly	285	33.73%	2
Being able to focus attention basically	334	39.53%	1
Absent-minded	172	20.36%	3
Doing other thinking in the class or skipping class	54	6.39%	4
Total	845	100%	—

2) *Analysis of after-class assignment completion by college students:* The quality of after-class assignment completion is verification of understanding of classroom knowledge. It can be seen from the data of sampling survey (see "Table VI"), students who complete independently account for 48.76%, and 8.76% of the investigated objects indicate that they choose to copy others' if they cannot complete, while 5.21% cannot complete. Generally, colleges have policies about honesty education, but copying of others' assignments by so many students also reflects they are lazy and trust to luck. By regarding assignment as a kind of burden or task, they deviate the understanding of after-class assignments. If such mentality forms a habit, it will hurt others after taking the job or stepping into society.

It is necessary for the teacher to make the after-class assignments diversified to avoid copying, and stress the punitive measures for copying others' achievements. As for the students who cannot complete the assignment smoothly, ideological work of them should be done.

TABLE VI. STATISTICAL TABLE OF COLLEGE STUDENTS' COMPLETION OF ASSIGNMENTS

Condition of Completion	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Completing independently	412	48.76%	1
Asking classmates or teacher for help	315	37.28%	2
Copying	74	8.76%	3
Being unable to complete	44	5.21%	4
Total	845	100%	—

3) *Analysis of college students' ability in solving problems in learning:* The method for solving problems in learning process is an index to verify a student's learning ability. As can be found in this sampling (see "Table VII"), only 40.12% of students are capable of solving the problems in learning independently, those who seek advice from classmates account for 30.77%, those who seek advice from teacher account for 18.58%, and the remaining 10.53% of students will skip these problems or do not solve them.

Analyzing from this group of data, we conclude that college students' ability of solving problems independently needs to be improved.

Students seeking advice from teacher account for a small proportion, indicating that they have less communication with teachers in their learning process; skipping the problems directly or copying others' achievements reflects the lack of learning initiative.

TABLE VII. STATISTICAL TABLE OF METHODS IN SOLVING LEARNING PROBLEMS

Methods	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Solving independently	339	40.12%	1
Seeking advice from classmates	260	30.77%	2
Seeking advice from teacher	157	18.58%	3
Skipping	89	10.53%	4
Total	172	100%	—

4) *Analysis of formulation of learning plan*: "Any success depends upon previous preparation". The first step should be making a reasonable and clear learning plan to achieve the learning objectives. We can discover through the investigation that, students who have clear learning plan only account for 30.18% of the investigated objects (see "Table VIII"), those who have no plan account for 22.13%, and those who formulate learning plan occasionally account for 47.69%.

It can be seen from data analysis that college students are short of clear learning plan in their learning. Most students make the plan against examinations and certificate examinations, while having no specific plan for the four years and even each academic year. They are short of stability in their own learning objectives. This is identical to the data distribution when we analyze the diversified college objectives, and also proves the consistency of data selection.

TABLE VIII. STATISTICAL TABLE OF COLLEGE STUDENTS' LEARNING PLAN

Having Plan or Not	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Occasionally, e.g. before the exam	403	47.69%	1
No	187	22.13%	3
Yes, very clear	255	30.18%	2
Total	845	100%	—

IV. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

A. Conclusion

Theory of Zimmerman's Self-regulated Learning believes that, if the learning motivation of students is stimulated by themselves, the content is selected by themselves, the learning methods are planned or reach automatic after training, the learning time is fixed and effective, students are able to make

self-monitoring while learning, to create the material and social environment which are conducive to studying, and be able to conclude and evaluate the result of learning, then his learning is sufficiently independent when all the above conditions are met.

We discover in the investigation that contemporary college students have diversified objectives, and some students are short of clear learning objectives during university; lagging far behind their parents' expectations; students' learning expectation is greatly different from the actual achievement.

It can be discovered in the investigation and analysis of learning habits that college students' independent learning ability needs to be improved, there is certain problem in learning plan and problem solving ability, and it still lags far behind the requirement of Theory of Zimmerman's Self-regulated Learning.

B. Suggestions

First, it is suggested to strengthen the education of college students to establish the ideal goal of their life, so that college students can make a good plan of their college life, and establish clear college objectives and the goal of their life.

Second, it is suggested to intensify the information feedback mechanism among course teacher, head teacher and counselor, and conduct the management of students with warning about studying.

Third, the course construction in aspects of college students' independent personality, self-regulated learning and self-sustaining life should be emphasized in college students' quality education courses.

Fourth, it is suggested to encourage and guide students to improve learning initiative, formulate reasonable learning plan, and guide them to cultivate good capability of solving problems independently in the course of teaching.

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