

The Influence of Family and Teacher Relationships on College Students' Learning Motivation in Shandong, China

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Abstract

This study investigates the relationship between family-student and teacher-student dynamics on learning motivation among college students in Shandong, China. Learning motivation, a crucial factor influencing academic performance, has been found to vary across different grade levels and is often influenced by family and teacher interactions. Despite Shandong's historical emphasis on education, contemporary college students face challenges in maintaining learning motivation, particularly under the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The study employs a correlational research design using validated questionnaires to measure learning motivation and its associated factors, including family-student and teacher-student relationships. A total of 385 students from various academic years participated in the survey, with data analyzed using ANOVA, t-tests, and regression models. Findings highlight significant disparities in motivation levels across academic years, emphasizing a downward trend in higher years. Furthermore, strong family-student relationships, characterized by communication, emotional support, and academic guidance, positively correlate with higher motivation levels. Similarly, teacher-student relationships, marked by support, fairness, and emotional bonds, significantly influence students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Low motivation was found to directly correlate with suboptimal academic performance, underscoring the critical role of fostering effective interpersonal dynamics. This research contributes to the understanding of motivational factors and their implications for educational practices in Shandong's colleges. The findings suggest actionable insights for educators and policymakers to enhance family and teacher engagement in students' academic journeys, fostering a supportive environment to sustain motivation and improve academic outcomes.

Keywords: Learning Motivation, Family-Student Relationship, Teacher-Student Relationship, Academic Performance, Shandong Colleges

Introduction

The first problem statement is learning motivation is low among Shandong college students. Shandong has a long history of education in ancient times and a high rate of college entrance examination in modern times. Students in Shandong have a strong ability to passively accept knowledge. Motivation is a process of change, and quantitative research is not enough to fully illustrate the process of developing change in learners' motivation. Learning motivation contains rich psychological and emotional information. Motivation research should observe the learning behavior and learning process, that is, to describe the process of motivation change through qualitative methods (Jingyan, 2023).

According to Shenlong (2023), the college education is an important part of higher education in our country. Due to the particularity and diversity of higher vocational education and the expansion of higher vocational education, students' knowledge level and quality are uneven, which leads to many problems in teaching activities. Among them, the lack of learning motivation is a common and prominent problem of higher vocational colleges in Shandong, China. Students' learning psychology has also undergone subtle changes, especially under the normalization of COVID-19 prevention and control. Learning motivation is the most direct inner motivation to promote students' learning, and it plays an enlightening and guiding role in students' learning activities. Learning is the primary task of higher vocational students, and the difference of learning motivation will directly affect the learning effect. Therefore, this study investigates the learning motivation and learning attitude of the current vocational college students in Shandong, China. Meanwhile, the research data can provide theoretical basis for the follow-up research. As such, there is a need to identify the level of learning motivation among the college students of different grades in Shandong Province, China.

The second problem statement is academic performance among the students in colleges is low because of the low motivation. Yin (2023) stated that learning motivation is a key element to maintain learning. Some scholars believe that people are born to love learning, which does not need to rely on the cultivation of the environment, so the learning content itself is enough to stimulate students' interest. External learning motivation refers to a kind of motivation that is generated by external environment stimulation and does not completely coincide with learners' internal needs. The internal factor has two elements: learners' desire for knowledge and whether the learning content can fully meet their learning needs, while external motivation does not. The external environment includes some students learn to get good grades, and some students learn to get encouragement and praise from parents and teachers. This external motivation belongs to the appreciation motivation, or the motivation generated by avoiding punishment. Learners may not pay attention to the learning content itself, nor to whether the learning process is happy. Agustina (2021), mentioned that Motivation and learning behaviour are two very important factors in determining students' learning achievement. Learning motivation, both from the students themselves, as well as from outside, will determine students' learning behaviour. Tokan (2019), stated that one of the standards that relates directly to the needs of society and the world of work is the competency standard. According to this, graduates are expected to have sufficient competence in accordance with the needs of society and the work market. To develop the quality of graduates in terms of attitudes, skills and knowledge, support in terms of content, processes, educators and staff, infrastructure, financing and assessment standards are required. In addition, aspects of student motivation and learning behaviour constitute a key

factor in the achievement of graduation standards. Students with high motivation to learn and with good learning behaviour tend to achieve the required competency standards. As can be seen from the results of relevant researchers, low learning motivation is difficult to produce high academic performance. So, there is a need to explain low learning motivation leads to low academic performance of college students.

The third problem statement is that the learning motivation differs between the level of years in the program among (1st. Year to 4th. Year). Limin (2023), mentioned in her research that college students of different grades have differences in the attribution of physical education academic achievement, which are mainly reflected in the aspects of ability, effort, task difficulty, luck, and physical and mental status. There are different factors affecting college students' physical education achievement in different positions, which are mainly reflected in ability, hard work, task difficulty, luck and external environment. Korea (2022) mentioned that with the increase of grade, freshman to junior year medical students learning motivation in the six factors scored an average of all showed a trend of rise, and the self-efficacy, intrinsic goals and learning control, the study significance and learning anxiety has significant difference five factors. The average scores of the five factors of learning strategy (general method, learning help, learning plan, learning summary and learning evaluation) showed an upward trend, and there were significant differences in general method, learning help, learning plan and learning summary. The first-year medical students had the highest average score of learning management factor, and the second-year medical students had the lowest average score of learning management factor, and the difference was significant.

The fourth problem statement is that the family-student relationship is significant on students' learning motivation. Some reports show that parents in Shandong, China, have less communication with their children. Students who are in the rebellious period or have just emerged from the rebellious period are not so keen on establishing a good relationship with their parents, even though their parents assume financial responsibility for their children. Liu Chunhui, CAI He, Li Mian (2023) stated that through systematic analysis of family factor design in large-scale international education quality monitoring projects PISA, TIMSS, PIRLS and NAEP, it is found that the design of family factor in the index framework of each monitoring project is basically similar, which can be summarized into three indicators: basic family information, early education experience and parental education involvement. Some studies have pointed out that Chinese parents' participation in students' learning is often different from that of European and American parents, and the difference stems from the belief support that is constantly shaped by cultural and social background. Mengli (2022), mentioned that factors such as family rearing style, learning motivation, self-efficacy, proactive personality and organizational identity were significantly related to college students. Self-efficacy, proactive personality and organizational identity may play a partial mediating role in the influence of reasonable parenting style on active learning motivation. A good family upbringing is conducive to the improvement of college students' proactive personality, self-efficacy and organizational identity, which is conducive to the cultivation of college students' learning motivation. Family-student relationship will include seven domains, namely communication, emotional support, parental involvement, parental expectations, academic support, parental involvement in decision-making, family-school collaboration. In this study, there is a need to investigate the relationship of the family-student on the learning motivation of college students.

The fifth problem statement is the relationship between teachers and students in college classroom is plain, communication is reduced, and the tendency of alienation is obvious. The relationship teacher-student on learning motivation plays an important role in the cultivation of students' learning motivation. Xingyuan (2023), in her study using student questionnaire survey, asking the question - "Does your teacher take the initiative to communicate with the class during breaks?" found that the students who chose Never or Rarely accounted for 32.10%. For the question - "Do you take the initiative to ask the teacher questions after class?", the students answered occasionally or rarely accounted for 52.32%. The other question - "Who do you turn to when you have a problem or difficulty?", about 12.3% of students chose teachers. This shows that there is and to investigate these influences.

The teacher-student relationship has an important influence on the process and result of teaching activities. Good teacher-student relationship has a positive impact on academic performance, in which the support of teachers can promote the improvement of students' academic performance, while the conflict between teachers and students can reduce students' academic performance (Chao, Wenjing, Yuzhu, 2022).

At present, most teachers and students in colleges and universities get along well with each other, but there are some problems, so it is necessary to study them. "Teachers and friends" are not only the embodiment of the harmonious relationship between teachers and students, but also the existence of the common expectation of teachers and students. Therefore, based on the investigation of the current situation of teacher-student relationship in colleges and universities, the establishment of teacher-student relationship between teachers and friends is discussed to be beneficial to the development of teachers and students (Xingyuan, 2023).

For teachers and students, the teacher-student relationship is not only a simple interpersonal relationship, but also contains multiple relationships. Students and teachers establish a good emotional bond, so that students have respect for teachers, prompting students to generalize this respect to the subject taught by teachers. When students pay enough attention to a subject, the learning performance of this subject has become a very important indicator for students. This study will investigate the teacher-student relationship on the learning motivation of college students in Shandong, China.

The objectives of this study are:

RO1: To identify the level of learning motivation among the college students of different grades in Shandong Province, China.

RO2: To examine low learning motivation leads to low academic performance of college students.

RO3: To compare the learning motivation of students from different years (1st. year to 4th. Year) among the college students.

RO4: To investigate the relationship of the family-student on learning motivation among the college students in Shandong, China.

RO5: To investigate the relationship of teacher-student on learning motivation among college students in Shandong, China.

Literature Review

Education has consistently been regarded as a means for individuals to improve their social status (Abrassart, Wolter, 2020) and a foundation for standing out in the competitive labor market (Nejati et al., 2020). Whether in developing or developed countries, there is no sign of a halt in research on education, especially in the exploration of student learning motivation (Dörnyei, 2020; Borah, 2021). Past studies have confirmed that establishing and enhancing students' learning motivation contribute to improved academic performance, enhanced learning efficiency, seizing learning opportunities, awakening a sense of continuous learning, more attentive class participation, and fostering a better overall learning atmosphere (Davey, 2022).

Therefore, a thorough exploration of learning motivation is beneficial. The following content extensively describes the necessity for teachers to pay attention to students' learning motivation.

Desimone et al. (2018) suggest that parental involvement in homework support has been found to contribute to better academic achievement. A study by Desimone et al. (2018) showed that parental involvement in homework, including monitoring, assistance, and provision of resources, was associated with improved academic performance.

Pearlin and Aneshensel (2018) suggest that family can be defined as a supportive network of individuals who provide emotional, practical, and social support to one another. This definition emphasizes the importance of familial relationships and the sense of belonging, care, and connection within the family unit.

Hernández-Sellés et al. (2019) suggest that in order to model cognitive presence, social presence and teaching presence during CSCL it is necessary to promote a fluent and satisfactory interaction, rooted on the learning process and on emotional support as well as on effective management of the online tools facilitating collaboration. Results also suggest the convenience of further research on other types of interaction in the context of CSCL.

Mental Health Education in Primary and secondary Schools, No. 31(2019) suggests that (1) Most senior high school students have some problems and troubles in learning motivation. (2) The scores of problems solving, communication, family role, emotional response, emotional intervention, behavior control and total family function in the high motivation distress group were lower than those in the low motivation distress group, and the difference was statistically significant. (3) Communication, family role, emotional response, emotional involvement, behavioral control, and total family function are significantly positively correlated with total learning motivation. (4) The regression equation using family role, emotional involvement and behavioral control to predict learning motivation reached a significant level and had statistical significance.

Brown and Greenfield (2021) suggest that people use technologically mediated communication to maintain contact with their close friends and family when in-person contact is not possible, and that this form of contact, when in-person interaction is unavailable, is associated with positive outcomes.

In terms of family education, there are two indicators, namely, the total cost of family education and the deviation degree of family education. Parents should establish a sense of responsibility that the family is the first classroom and parents are the first teachers. Family education intervenes in the child's development earlier, promotes the child's early observation, thinking, expression and other learning character, has a greater foundation for the child's growth, decisive role (Gangcheng,2023).

Family is the most important factor affecting college students' study. A good family environment can enable college students to get the encouragement and support of family members, thus enhancing their learning enthusiasm and enthusiasm. Family is also an important place to transfer knowledge and guide life. Parents' tireless teaching and example have a profound impact on college students' moral character, emotion and cultivation (Xiangwei, Na, Tao, 2024).

Theoretical Framework

Social learning theory (SLT) is often described as an intermediate between behaviorism (traditional learning theory) and cognitive theory. Behaviorism focuses on one particular view of learning: a change in external behavior achieved through the use of reinforcement and repetition to shape behavior which relates to rote learning.

Cognitive learning theory advocates that the different processes concerning learning can be explained by analyzing the mental processes. Thus, SLT is a bridge between behaviorism and cognitive approach(Rumjaun, Narod, 2020). Watson's stimulus-response theory emphasizes that without stimulus, there is no response, and attaches importance to the study of stimulus source. Skinner's behavioral reinforcement theory holds that no stimulus also responds, and that the stimulus is just a means of reinforcement. Compared with traditional behaviorism, Bandura's social learning theory emphasizes the mutual influence of subject, behavior and environment, and pays attention to people's subjective initiative and cognitive factors (Siping, Xiaobing, 2022).

This hypothesis reflects that college students are mutually influenced by the subject, behavior and environment in their study.

Learning investment is the key to affect the learning quality and learning effect of learners. How to enhance students' learning investment and promote learners to actively invest in learning activities is an important part of education and teaching, and an urgent problem to be solved in contemporary education. Quote class Dura social learning theory, analysis and explore the factors affecting learners learning, finally from the learners 'own factors, learning environment factors, learning peer factors and interaction with teachers and curriculum, targeted and purposeful to how to improve learners' learning strategy, in order to improve the level of learners' learning input, improve the curriculum and teaching quality (Baoyuan, Shu, 2024).

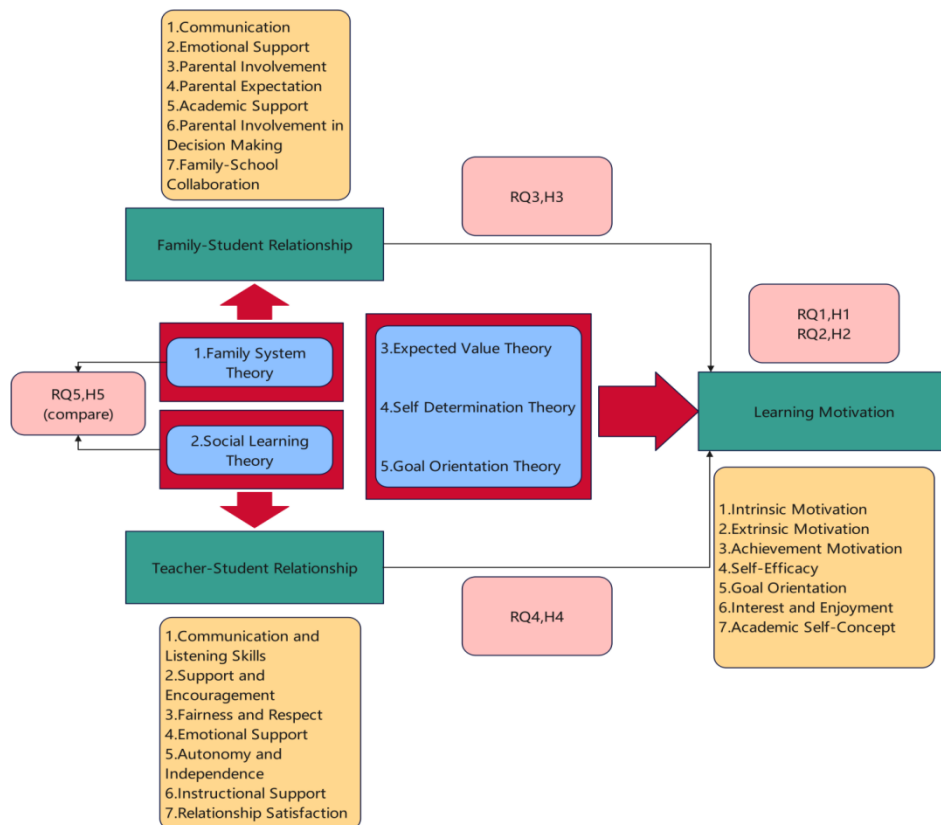


Figure 1: Theoretical Framework

Conceptual Framework

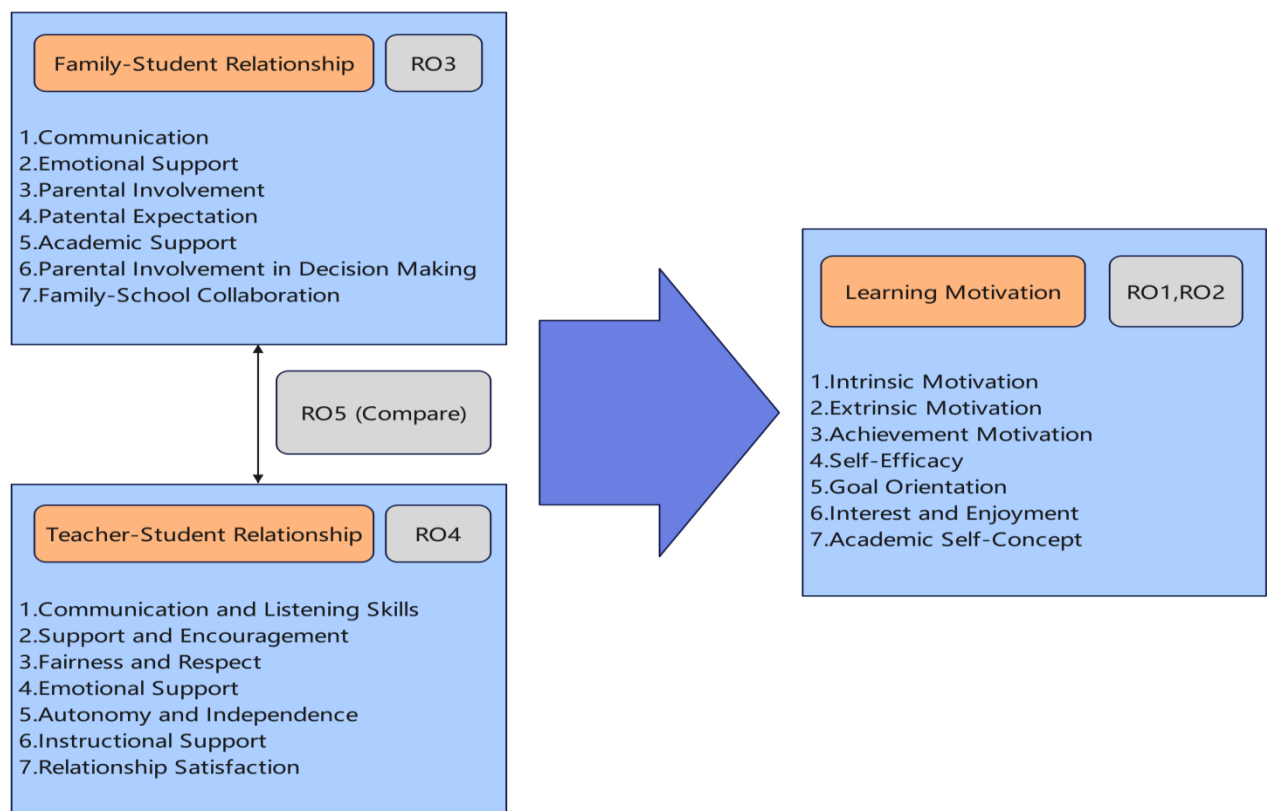


Figure 2: Conceptual Framework

Methodology

In this study, the research is applying a correlational research approach. Firstly, the data is collected through a questionnaire survey, then the data is processed and analyzed through statistical analysis, the research results are analyzed and discussed, and finally, the suggestions, revelations, and conclusions are drawn.

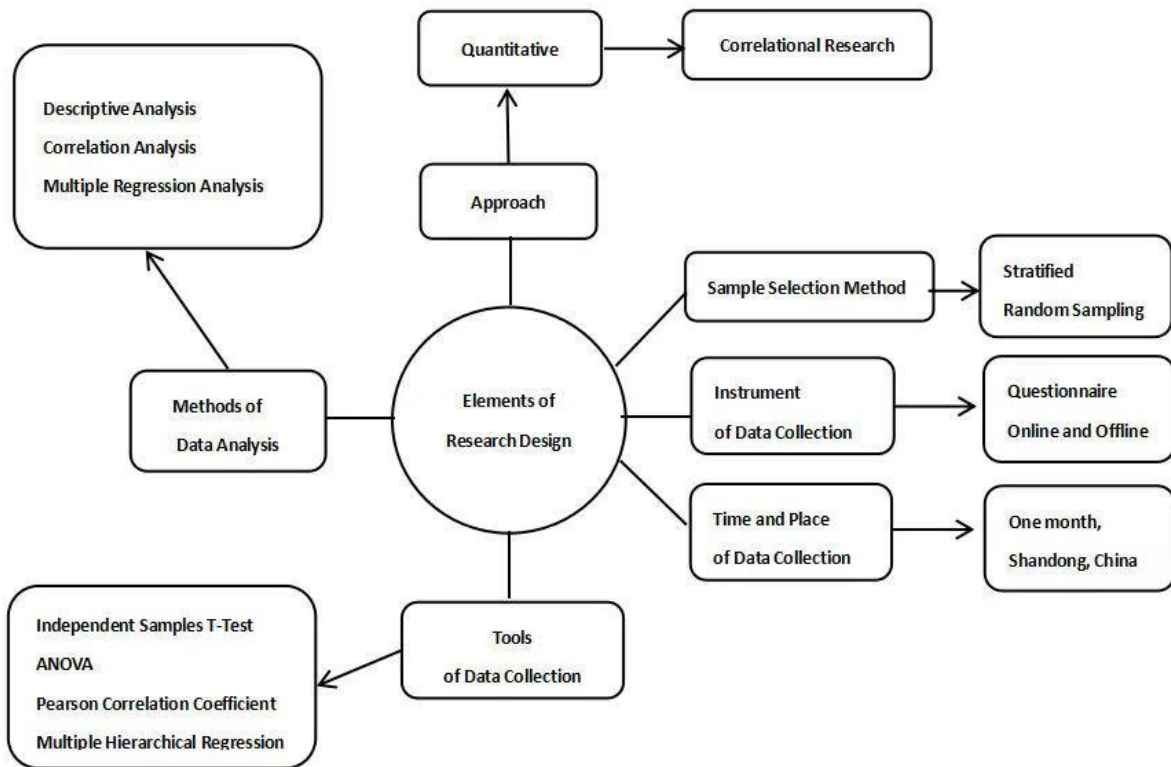


Figure 3: Research Design

This study selects Shandong as the target region, with the respondents/subjects being students, including undergraduates. Some studies suggest that research targeting extremely large populations lacks representativeness, and the results may not be effectively applicable as references (Worldometer, 2023).



Figure 4: Population

The sample size for this study will be calculated using the sample size rules of Krejcie and Morgan (1970) in conjunction with the sample calculator provided by Calculator.Net (2023). A sample size of 384 was chosen for this study and researchers chose to divide individuals by grade.

The motivation for using a sample instead of collecting data from the entire population is evident, such as reduced time costs and increased likelihood of completing data collection. Krejcie and Morgan (1970) provide an effective sample calculation rule that is still widely used today. According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970), for a target population of over 1,000,000, the sample size should be greater than 384. Public data indicates that the student population at Shandong college is as high as 2.01 million and is in a state of annual growth (Gotohui, 2022). The total sample for this study 385.

This study will not be limited by the form of the questionnaire, using electronic questionnaire form, the investigator distributed the questionnaire in electronic form. In the digital era, online questionnaire surveys are experiencing the stage of integrated development of many emerging means such as from online sample group to big data research.

The questionnaire selected for this study is not an original questionnaire but is based on the outstanding achievements of other researchers in partially relevant fields, which have already been confirmed to have good structural validity and internal consistency. Researchers made minor deletions and adjustments to the questionnaire content to adapt it to Chinese cultural styles and align it with the current research perspective.

a. Learning Motivation Questionnaire

Intrinsic Motivation	4	Ryan and Deci (2000)
Extrinsic Motivation	4	Vallerand et al. (1992)
Achievement Motivation	4	Gjesme and Nygard (1970)
Self-efficacy	4	Schwarzer and Jerusalem (1995)
Goal Orientation	4	Midgley et al. (2000)
Interest and Enjoyment	4	Hidi and Harackiewicz (2000)
Academic Self-Concept	4	Marsh(1990)

The questionnaire, developed by seven researchers, comprises a total of 28 questions and assesses the learning motivation of students pursuing Qingdao across seven dimensions.

b. Family-Student Relationship Questionnaire

Communication	4	Davis (1971)
Emotional Support	4	Arnold and Hughes (1994).
Parental Involvement	4	Bates and Pettit (2004)
Parental Expectations	4	Chao (1994)
Academic Support	4	Davis (1971)
Parental Involvement in Decision-Making	4	Christenson and Sheridan (2001)
Family-School Collaboration	4	Epstein (1995)

The questionnaire, developed by six researchers, comprises a total of 28 questions and assesses the learning motivation of students pursuing Qingdao across seven dimensions.

c. Teacher-Student Relationship Questionnaire

Communication and Listening Skills	4	Kong and Johnston (2011)
Support and Encouragement	4	Wang and Eccles (2012)
Fairness and Respect	4	Hughes et al. (2007)
Emotional Support	4	Pianta et al. (2003)
Autonomy and Independence	4	Reeve and Jang (2006)
Instructional Support	4	Pianta et al. (2008)
Relationship Satisfaction	4	Pianta (2001)

The questionnaire, developed by seven researchers, comprises a total of 28 questions and assesses the Teacher-Student Relationship of students pursuing Qingdao across seven dimensions.

Table 3

Statistical Methods

Research Questions	Instruments	Methods of Data Analysis
H01: The learning motivation of college students in Shandong, China is relatively low.	Learning Motivation Questionnaire	Independent Samples T-Test
H02: The low learning motivation leads to low academic performance of college students.	Learning Motivation Questionnaire	Independent Samples T-Test
H03: There is a significant difference in learning motivation of different years.	Learning Motivation Questionnaire	ANOVA
H04: Family-student relationship is significantly positive on students' learning motivation.	Family-Student Relationship Questionnaire	Multiple Hierarchical Regression Pearson Correlation Coefficient
H05: Teacher-student relationship is significantly positive on students' learning motivation.	Teacher-Student Relationship Questionnaire	Multiple Hierarchical Regression Pearson Correlation Coefficient

Discussion

This study's results highlight the importance of student-teacher and family-student interactions in shaping college students' willingness to learn in Shandong, China. Research has shown that students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are positively affected by strong family-student interactions. These relationships are defined by effective communication, emotional support, and academic supervision. Learners who come from homes where they feel supported are more likely to have a positive academic self-concept, better levels of goal orientation, and higher levels of self-efficacy. Consistent with the theoretical framework, our results highlight the significance of family participation in creating a supportive atmosphere that is favorable to academic achievement.

In a similar vein, the study demonstrated how important it is for teachers to have strong relationships with their pupils in order to motivate them. According to the findings, students' intrinsic motivation and engagement in learning are greatly affected by instructors who exhibit fairness, respect, emotional support, and instructional direction. Students put in more

effort in school when they feel respected and valued, which is brought about by teachers and students having a strong emotional connection and engaging in helpful interactions. Having said that, the results also imply that students' motivation may decrease, especially in the later years of school, due to less communication and less proactive involvement from teachers.

In addition, the study found that students' levels of enthusiasm to learn varied throughout academic years, with first-years showing more motivation than seniors. Several factors may be contributing to this declining tendency, such as mounting academic expectations, a lack of excitement in the classroom, and difficulties in sustaining positive connections with instructors and family members. These findings highlight the need of educators and policymakers developing individualised strategies to keep students motivated all the way through their academic careers. To combat the demotivation and encourage stable academic achievement, it is important to develop favorable teacher-student relations and continuous family participation.

Conclusion

The study concludes that college students in Shandong, China, are highly motivated to learn because of the strong effects of teacher-student and family-student interactions. According to the results, students do better in classrooms when teachers and parents work together in an engaging and supportive setting. Sustaining students' motivation and improving their academic performance can be achieved by strengthening these interpersonal dynamics. Educators and policymakers should work together to create a comprehensive learning environment that encourages students to stay motivated and thrive academically by putting measures in place that value family engagement, good communication between teachers and students, and consistent emotional support.

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