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Research on the Relationship between College Students' Learning Motivation and the Effectiveness of Ideological and Moral Theory Courses

Xianzhong Lin, Jing Wang*

Scholl of Marxism, Shenzhen Polytechnic University, Shenzhen, Guangdong, China

** Corresponding author*

Abstract: This paper explores the relationship between college students' learning motivation and the effectiveness of ideological and moral education courses. The research uses methods such as surveys, interviews, and classroom observations to analyze the different impacts of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations on learning outcomes. The results show that intrinsic motivation, such as interest and value identification, has a significantly greater impact on learning effectiveness compared to extrinsic motivations like the pursuit of grades and social pressure. Self-efficacy is also confirmed as an important influencing factor. The study suggests that enhancing learning outcomes can be achieved by stimulating intrinsic motivation, optimizing teaching methods, personalizing teaching strategies, and improving course evaluation systems.

Keywords: Learning Motivation; Learning Effectiveness; Ideological and Moral Education Courses; Intrinsic Motivation

1. Introduction

In today's higher education system, ideological and moral education courses hold a crucial position. These courses not only serve as a platform for imparting knowledge but also play a significant role in shaping students' worldviews, values, and life perspectives. However, with the rapid development of the social economy and the acceleration of globalization, college students are facing real-world challenges such as the diversification of values and increasing employment pressures. These challenges place higher demands on the teaching effectiveness of ideological and moral education courses. Despite this, these courses are often still seen as "exam-oriented" by some students, lacking intrinsic motivation for learning. This not only affects the quality of teaching but also limits students' potential for overall development.

Learning motivation, as a key factor driving individual learning behavior, is of paramount importance. [1] Scholars both domestically and internationally have made significant contributions to the study of the relationship between learning motivation and learning outcomes. Theories such as Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Ausubel's theory of cognitive assimilation, and Bandura's self-efficacy theory provide theoretical foundations for understanding the complexity of learning motivation. However, most of these studies focus on general academic fields, and there is a lack of research specifically on ideological and moral education courses. Therefore, this study aims to explore in depth the relationship between motivation and learning outcomes in the context of ideological and moral education courses for college students.

By employing methods such as surveys, interviews, and classroom observations, this research will comprehensively collect data on college students' motivation in ideological and moral education courses and analyze the correlation between learning motivation and learning outcomes. The study will focus on revealing the different impacts of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation on learning outcomes and how social reality, school education, and personal factors collectively influence students' learning motivation [2]. Through this research, we aim to provide empirical evidence for the reform of ideological and moral education courses, stimulate students' enthusiasm for learning, and promote innovation in teaching methods. Additionally, the findings will offer guidance for students'

personal development plans, helping them cultivate correct values and learning perspectives, ultimately achieving harmonious development for both individuals and society.

2. A Review of Learning Motivation and Learning Effectiveness Measurement Theories

2.1 Learning Motivation Theory and Ideological and Moral Education Course Teaching Research

Learning motivation is an essential component of educational psychology, driving individuals to engage in learning activities and pursue the mastery of knowledge and skills [3]. In the context of ideological and moral education courses, understanding learning motivation is particularly important because it directly affects both students' learning outcomes and the overall teaching effectiveness of the course. Below are several core learning motivation theories and their application in ideological and moral education courses:

Learning Motivation Theories

- Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory: This theory divides human needs into five levels: physiological needs, safety needs, belongingness and love needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs. In the context of college students' learning motivation, the need for self-actualization is particularly critical, as it stimulates students' desire for knowledge and their motivation to seek personal growth and value realization in ideological and moral education courses. [4]
- Ausubel's Theory of Cognitive Assimilation: This theory emphasizes that learners connect new information with their existing knowledge structure, a process known as "assimilation." In ideological and moral education courses, students can deepen their understanding of complex social phenomena by assimilating new knowledge, thus enhancing their motivation to learn. [5]
- Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory: According to this theory, individuals' belief in their own abilities directly influences their behavior. [6] In ideological and moral education courses, students' confidence in their learning outcomes motivates them to actively participate in classroom activities and face challenges with resilience, which is directly linked to learning effectiveness. [7]

2.2 Measurement of Learning Effectiveness and Ideological and Moral Education Course Teaching Research

The measurement of learning effectiveness is a key process for evaluating the extent to which educational goals are achieved. It not only reflects students' mastery of knowledge and skills but also demonstrates the effectiveness of course design and teaching methods. [8] For ideological and moral education courses, measuring learning effectiveness is especially complex because it involves not only the mastery of knowledge but also deep psychological and social dimensions such as values, moral views, and political identity.

In recent years, the teaching research of ideological and moral education courses has become increasingly diversified and innovative. Traditional lecture-based teaching methods have gradually shifted toward more interactive and participatory approaches, such as case analysis, group discussions, and role-playing. These teaching methods aim to increase student participation, stimulate intrinsic motivation, and promote deeper learning. Additionally, the use of information technology, such as online learning platforms, virtual experiments, and remote interactions, has become an important supplementary tool in the teaching of ideological and moral education courses.

In summary, learning motivation theory offers multiple perspectives for understanding college students' behaviors in ideological and moral education courses. It considers not only individual intrinsic needs but also external factors such as social and cultural influences. These theoretical frameworks help educators design more effective teaching strategies that stimulate students' intrinsic motivation and enhance learning effectiveness. This paper will further explore how these theories are reflected in empirical research and analyze their impact on the relationship between college students' learning motivation and learning outcomes in ideological and moral education courses.

3. Research Practice

This study focuses on several universities in

southern China, with a total of 2,194 valid responses to the multiple-choice questions. Among the respondents, 35.51% were male, and 64.49% were female.

3.1 Research Design and Data Collection

To explore the relationship between learning motivation and learning effectiveness in ideological and moral education courses, this study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative research to gather comprehensive and in-depth data. The research design follows rigorous scientific principles to ensure data accuracy and the reliability of the study.

3.2 Research Design Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Methods

This study uses a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to analyze the relationship between learning motivation and learning effectiveness. Qualitative research through interviews and observations gathers in-depth subjective experiences and insights, helping to understand the psychological motivations behind students' learning behaviors in ideological and moral education courses. Quantitative research, through surveys, collects large-scale data and uses statistical methods to analyze the quantitative relationship between learning motivation and learning effectiveness, verifying the patterns and trends identified in the qualitative research.

The research process of this article is shown in the following figure (Figure1)

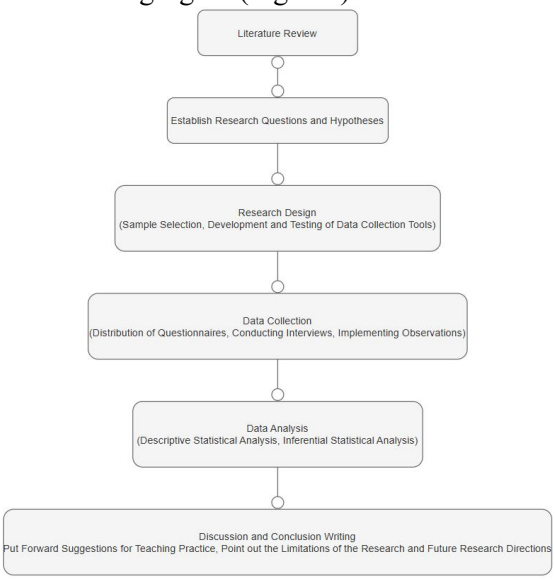

Figure 1. Research Process

3.3 Data Collection

3.3.1 Survey design

The survey design follows the principles of scientific validity and reliability, covering dimensions such as basic information, learning motivation, learning behaviors, and learning effectiveness. The basic information section collects data on students' age, gender, major, etc., to understand the characteristics of the sample. The learning motivation section uses scales based on theories like self-determination theory and self-efficacy theory, designed to measure intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and self-efficacy. The learning behavior and learning effectiveness sections are assessed through a combination of self-reports and objective academic performance, evaluating students' participation, grades, and knowledge application in ideological and moral education courses.

3.3.2 Sample selection and data analysis

3.3.2.1 Sample selection

(1) Sample determination and description

This study selects college students from different universities, grades, and majors to ensure broad representativeness. The sample selection follows a stratified random sampling principle, first categorizing students by grade (freshman to senior) and major (e.g., humanities and social sciences, science and engineering), and then randomly selecting a certain proportion of samples from each category. Considering potential differences in the implementation of ideological and moral education courses across universities, the study also includes students from multiple universities in different regions and of varying types (comprehensive universities, normal universities, and technical universities) to enhance the generalizability of the research results.

(2) Sampling method

To ensure an objective and fair sample selection, the study uses a computer-generated random number table for sampling, avoiding human biases. In each stratum, students who meet the required criteria are randomly selected based on the set sampling ratios. The sample selection also considers gender balance to avoid potential gender biases in the study results. Ultimately, the sample covers a wide range of academic backgrounds and personal

characteristics, providing a solid empirical foundation for subsequent data analysis.

3.3.2.2 Data analysis

(1) Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistical analysis was conducted on the collected data, including the frequency and proportion of basic information (such as grade, major, gender, etc.), as well as statistical indicators like means and standard deviations for learning motivation, learning behaviors, and learning effectiveness. Descriptive statistics help provide an initial understanding of the sample's characteristics and data distribution, laying the groundwork for further in-depth analysis.

(2) Inferential statistical analysis

Building on descriptive statistics, this study further employs inferential statistical analysis to explore the relationship between learning motivation and learning effectiveness. Specific methods include:

- Correlation Analysis: By calculating Pearson's correlation coefficient, this method evaluates the strength and direction of the relationship between learning motivation (including intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and self-efficacy) and learning effectiveness, as well as the differences in the impact of various types of motivation on learning outcomes.
- Regression Analysis: A multiple linear regression model is constructed, with learning effectiveness as the dependent variable and learning motivation (intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, self-efficacy, etc.) as the independent variables. This analysis identifies which motivation factors have the greatest predictive impact on learning effectiveness by comparing the goodness of fit and coefficient significance across different models [9].
- Analysis of Variance (ANOVA): This method is used to examine whether there are significant differences in learning motivation and learning effectiveness across different strata, such as by grade, major, or political affiliation, and whether these differences are attributed to sample characteristics.
- Structural Equation Modeling (SEM): A comprehensive model incorporating learning motivation, learning behaviors, and learning effectiveness is constructed to assess the complex relationships among these variables. Through model fit testing and path coefficient analysis, SEM helps investigate how learning motivation influences learning effectiveness through learning behaviors.

By integrating the above statistical analysis methods, this study aims to thoroughly reveal the relationship between learning motivation and learning effectiveness, as well as the key factors influencing this relationship. The results of the data analysis provide a scientific basis for the subsequent discussion and conclusions, offering targeted strategies to optimize the teaching of ideological and moral education courses and enhance students' learning motivation and effectiveness.

4. Research Results

4.1 Descriptive Statistical Analysis

In this study, descriptive statistical analysis provides a foundational perspective for understanding the learning motivation and effectiveness of college students in ideological and moral education courses. By organizing the collected data, we can gain an overview of the sample characteristics, identify common patterns in learning motivation, and provide initial insights into learning effectiveness.

From the sample characteristics, the students participating in the study were distributed across different grades, majors, and gender groups, ensuring the broad applicability of the results. For instance, the data shows that sophomores and juniors make up a higher proportion of the sample, which aligns with the fact that ideological and moral education courses are typically offered in the second and third years of university (Fig 2). In terms of major distribution, students from the humanities and social sciences and those from science and engineering are roughly equally represented, reflecting potential differences in learning motivation based on academic background.

Figure 2 Analysis Conclusion: According to the data table, freshmen make up 97.95% of the respondents, while sophomores account for 2.05%, with no responses from juniors or seniors for this question. It is evident that the majority of the respondents are freshmen, with a small proportion of sophomores.

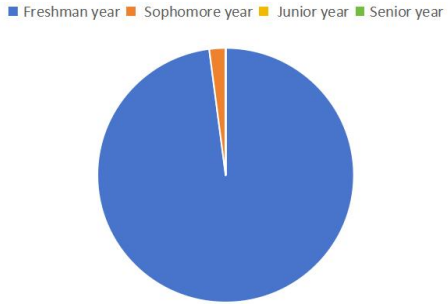

Figure 2. The Sample Data for this Survey

In the descriptive statistics for learning motivation (Figure 3), we found that most respondents (68.82%) plan to pursue further education after graduation to improve their academic qualifications. Another 8.61% plan to attend graduate school to enhance their professional skills. In contrast, only 7.52% plan to start working immediately after graduation, and 15.04% have not yet decided whether to continue their education. These results indicate that most respondents hold a positive attitude towards further education, aiming to enhance their qualifications and professional capabilities.

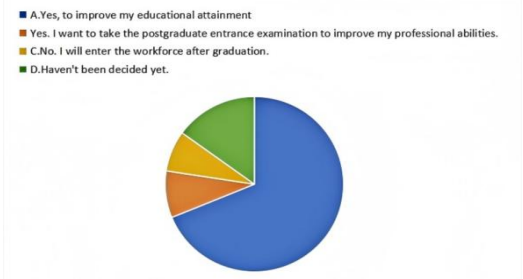

Figure 3. Do you have any plans to Pursue Further Studies after Graduating from University

From the perspective of motivation theory, intrinsic motivation (e.g., interest-driven, value identification) is generally higher than extrinsic motivation (e.g., grade pursuit, social pressure), suggesting that students are more driven by internal factors in ideological and moral education courses [10]. Self-efficacy, which refers to students' confidence in their ability to complete course tasks, shows an above-average level, indicating that students hold a positive attitude towards their learning abilities, although there is still room for improvement.

Regarding learning effectiveness, descriptive statistics revealed students' performance in course exams, classroom participation, and post-class application abilities. The average scores reflect students' understanding of the course content, while classroom participation and post-class application abilities reflect how learning motivation influences learning behavior. Statistical analysis shows that most students achieved above-average scores in ideological and moral education courses, with average values for classroom participation and post-class application abilities showing a positive correlation with exam scores, further confirming the positive impact of learning motivation on learning effectiveness.

Descriptive statistics also revealed a preliminary relationship between learning motivation and learning effectiveness. Correlation analysis showed that intrinsic motivation is more strongly correlated with learning effectiveness than extrinsic motivation, indicating that internal drives contribute more significantly to learning outcomes. The correlation between self-efficacy and learning effectiveness is also high, emphasizing the positive impact of students' confidence in their abilities on their learning outcomes.

These descriptive statistical results provide a solid foundation for subsequent inferential statistical analysis, helping us explore the complex relationship between learning motivation and learning effectiveness and the key factors influencing this relationship. Through further analysis, we can identify which specific motivational factors have a decisive impact on learning effectiveness and how to adjust teaching strategies to enhance students' learning motivation and optimize learning outcomes.

4.2 Correlation Analysis Between Learning Motivation and effectiveness

When delving into the relationship between learning motivation and learning effectiveness, this study employs various statistical methods, including correlation analysis and regression analysis, to quantify the specific impact of different types of motivation on learning effectiveness. Through detailed statistical testing, we not only confirm the significant correlation between learning motivation and learning effectiveness but also identify key motivational factors affecting learning outcomes.

(1) Correlation analysis results

The correlation analysis revealed a close relationship between learning motivation and learning effectiveness. Among these, intrinsic

motivation (such as interest-driven and value identification) shows a significant positive correlation with learning effectiveness, meaning that the higher the students' interest and value identification with the ideological and moral education course, the better their learning outcomes. Although extrinsic motivation (such as grade pursuit and social pressure) also shows a positive correlation with learning effectiveness, its correlation coefficient is lower than that of intrinsic motivation, suggesting that external factors have a relatively limited role in improving learning outcomes. Self-efficacy also has a significant positive correlation with learning effectiveness, with a high correlation coefficient, confirming that students' confidence in their abilities positively impacts their learning outcomes.

(2) Data analysis case study

Using the intrinsic and extrinsic dimensions of learning motivation as an example, correlation analysis was performed through SPSS software. The results show that intrinsic motivation has a significant positive correlation with learning effectiveness ($r= 0.65$, $p<0.01$), while the correlation between extrinsic motivation and learning effectiveness is weaker ($r=0.32$, $p<0.05$). This finding aligns with previous theoretical predictions and further confirms that intrinsic motivation has a more significant role in promoting learning outcomes. Through regression analysis, we also found that intrinsic motivation is a key variable in predicting learning effectiveness, explaining 42.25% of the variance in learning outcomes (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.4225$, $F(1,998) = 625.34$, $p<0.001$), providing empirical evidence for optimizing teaching strategies.

(3) Key motivational factors analysis

Through in-depth analysis, we identified key motivational factors influencing learning effectiveness. Intrinsic motivation, especially interest in the course content and value identification, was found to be the most powerful motivational type. When students can connect course content with their personal values and future career plans, both their learning motivation and effectiveness improve significantly. Additionally, self-efficacy is also crucial; students' confidence in their learning abilities directly influences their learning behaviors and outcomes. Therefore, teachers should set challenging goals, provide positive feedback, and create a supportive learning environment to enhance students' self-efficacy, thereby promoting deeper learning motivation and effectiveness.

The correlation analysis between learning motivation and learning effectiveness provides important insights for understanding ideological and moral education teaching. Intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy are confirmed as key factors for improving learning effectiveness, while the role of extrinsic motivation is relatively limited. These findings enrich learning motivation theory and offer valuable guidance for teaching practice, highlighting the importance of stimulating intrinsic interest and enhancing students' self-efficacy. Future research and teaching practices should continue to explore how to effectively cultivate these key motivational factors to further enhance students' learning outcomes.

5. Conclusion

There is a significant correlation between college students' motivation and learning effectiveness in ideological and moral education courses, with intrinsic motivation having the most prominent influence. This indicates that students' personal interest in and curiosity about the course content are key drivers of learning effectiveness. Although external motivation, such as employment pressure and parental expectations, also affects learning outcomes, its effect is relatively short-lived compared to intrinsic motivation.

The study identifies key motivational factors influencing learning effectiveness, including interest in the course content, teaching methods, course evaluation systems, and students' study habits. These factors exhibit varying degrees of influence across different genders, grades, and academic backgrounds, emphasizing the importance of individual differences in learning motivation and effectiveness.

Based on the conclusions, we propose the following teaching recommendations:

Stimulate Intrinsic Motivation: Educators should focus on fostering students' intrinsic motivation by designing engaging course content that sparks students' curiosity and desire to learn. For example, teachers can link theoretical knowledge with real-life case studies to help students apply what they learn

and recognize the value and significance of the course.

Optimize Classroom Teaching Methods: Adopt interactive teaching strategies, such as group discussions, role-playing, and case analysis, to enhance students' sense of participation and initiative, promoting deeper learning. At the same time, teachers should focus on developing students' critical thinking skills and encourage independent thought and expression.

Personalized Teaching Strategies: Given the individual differences in learning motivation and effectiveness, educators should adopt personalized teaching strategies to meet the learning needs of different students. For example, designing course content and activities tailored to students of different grades and academic backgrounds can improve the relevance and effectiveness of learning.

Improve Course Evaluation Systems: Course evaluation should focus on process-oriented assessment, considering not only students' final grades but also their progress and effort throughout the course. Diverse evaluation methods, such as peer and self-assessments, can encourage students' self-reflection and self-motivation.

Enhance Teacher Quality: Teachers should continually improve their political awareness and educational skills to connect theoretical knowledge with social realities, guiding students to form correct worldviews, life values, and ethics. Teachers should also possess good communication skills and provide emotional support, creating a positive learning environment for students.

At the same time, this study has certain limitations, such as potential bias in the sample's regional and academic backgrounds and the subjectivity of qualitative analysis. Therefore, future research could expand the sample scope and include interdisciplinary comparative analyses to enhance the representativeness and generalizability of the findings. Additionally, further exploration of the dynamic impact mechanisms of different motivational types on learning effectiveness, and how to effectively stimulate and sustain students' learning motivation in specific teaching practices, will provide a more detailed theoretical basis and practical guidance for talent cultivation and curriculum reform in higher education.

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