

SWOT Analysis on the Problem of Students' Learning Engagement

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Abstract: Student engagement serves as a key indicator for evaluating teaching quality and the effectiveness of talent cultivation in higher vocational education. Amid the rapid advancement of vocational education in China, challenges such as insufficient motivation, limited self-directed learning abilities, low self-efficacy, and passive classroom participation are common among higher vocational students, posing significant obstacles to their growth and development. This study focuses on the School of Economics and Management at Beijing Polytechnic. Through semi-structured interviews with teachers and students, qualitative coding analysis using NVivo, and SWOT analysis, this study systematically investigates the current status and influencing factors of student engagement in higher vocational education. Based on the results of the SWOT analysis, the study proposes targeted optimization strategies to enhance student engagement levels.

Keywords: Student engagement; Vocational education; SWOT analysis

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1. Introduction

The cultivation and development of new quality productive forces are becoming a powerful driving force in promoting the reform of vocational education in China, guiding it toward a high-quality and modernized development path ^[1]. Increasingly, both educational administrators and academic researchers recognize that the degree of student engagement not only exerts a significant impact on students' academic achievement and future career trajectories, but also serves as a salient indicator of institutional governance and the overall caliber of educational provision ^[2]. Numerous practices have demonstrated that the level of student participation in the teaching process directly affects teaching effectiveness. The higher the learning engagement, the relatively greater the learning outcomes achieved ^[3].

However, students in vocational colleges in China have a big learning problem, and you can often hear teachers in vocational colleges mentioning that "poor student source, unable to teach" in vocational colleges and universities. Students with learning difficulties in higher vocational colleges often have vague learning plans and random learning methods, lacking a holistic understanding of "how to learn" in self-directed

learning ^[4]. Higher vocational college students are confronted with problems including poor self-control, a tendency to indulge in the online world, and a lack of sound learning habits ^[5]. These students suffer from low learning enthusiasm, vague learning goals, passive classroom participation, and inadequate independent learning ability, which severely hinder the improvement of educational quality.

Accordingly, analyzing the current status and contributing factors of student engagement among higher vocational college students is of great significance for boosting student engagement and enhancing the quality and effectiveness of higher vocational education.

2. School of Economics and Management of Beijing Polytechnic

The group of economic management majors was founded in 1983, with a history of nearly 40 years. Now the enrolled five majors are international finance, accounting, e-commerce, international business, and business English.

The School of Economics and Management has 64 teaching staff, with an average age of 42.3 years old, all of whom have a master’s degree or above, one National Excellent Teacher, two Beijing Famous Teaching Teachers, 18 Beijing Backbone Teachers, more than 90% of the teachers have experience of foreign training and learning. 80% of the teachers have senior industry vocational qualification certificates, and more than half of the teachers have practical experience in the enterprise, all of whom are dual-teachers. All of them are dual-teacher teachers.

3. Research design

In order to diagnose the status of student engagement in the School of Economics and Management (SME), the study used semi-structured interviews with five faculty members and five students in the SME. The five faculty members were from five different majors, and the five students were from freshmen to juniors with good, fair, and poor academic performance. The survey was conducted using telephone interviews, face-to-face interviews, and a semi-structured interview questionnaire. For teachers and students, the interview questions are shown in **Table 1** below.

Table 1. Interview questions

No.	Questions
1.	What are the strengths of the SEM?
2.	What are the weaknesses of the SEM?
3.	What do you find problematic in the teaching/learning process?
4.	What do you think are the causes of these problems?
5.	What do you think could be changed to solve these problems?
6.	What advice would you like to give to the dean of the SME?
7.	Do you have any other ideas to share beyond these questions from the interview?

After data collection, the researcher analyzed 10 interview texts qualitatively through NVivo, and in the response about problems encountered in teaching and learning, the interviewees mentioned several times about low autonomy in learning, lack of self-confidence, poor engagement/unmotivated in class, low

competence, and poor attitudes, etc., towards learning. The frequency of references is shown in **Table 2**.

Table 2. Words with a high frequency of mentions about learning issues

No.	Code	Frequency
1.	Low engagement	9
2.	Low competence /relatedness	8
3.	Low self-efficacy	5
4.	Low competence /relatedness	3

4. SWOT analysis of the organization

SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats ^[6]. The first two are primarily used to assess internal conditions, while the last two are primarily used to assess external conditions.

Strengths:

According to the interviews with teachers and students, it is known that the School of Economics and Management has well-equipped smart classrooms and training rooms, where students can learn independently, self-assess, and communicate with each other with the help of smart devices, while teachers can carry out precise teaching and personalized tutoring through digital technology.

Weaknesses:

According to the researcher's many years of teaching experience and observation, students lack independent learning ability, have poor ability, a lack of self-confidence, and seldom seek help from the teacher for problems they do not know, thus failing to complete the learning task. When the teacher asks questions in class, students are silent and don't know what to do, and few students take the initiative to think and answer the questions.

In addition, students suggested that the equipment in some of the training rooms was old and difficult to use, and that it was sometimes impossible to complete the classroom tasks assigned by teachers.

Opportunities:

Professional skills competitions are frequently held in SEM, and a number of businesses have also partnered with the college to hold industry-specific competitions so that students with exceptional professional skills can demonstrate their abilities and advance through competitions. Besides, BP has created a mobile app to replace the traditional teaching model in this context.

Threats:

There are risks for teachers to use the Internet for teaching because not all of the content covered by the vast information resources is of high quality, and there are potential hazards for students, such as incorrect information. Besides, Students vary greatly in their foundational quality, learning ability, learning goals, and other aspects. Learning resources assigned by teachers, such as books, articles, and videos, yield different learning outcomes due to students' varying learning abilities ^[7].

5. Discussion and conclusion

Student participation serves as an important indicator for measuring the quality of higher vocational education and the effectiveness of talent cultivation. This study identifies several common challenges faced

by higher vocational students in the learning process: low participation, low self-efficacy, insufficient learning autonomy, and passive behavior in class. Collectively, these phenomena point to a core issue: students' inadequate learning motivation and self-regulation abilities, which affect learning engagement and the translation of learning outcomes. Teachers are one of the most important factors that can make or break a student's learning. Teachers can change their teaching methods to increase students' motivation and improve their academic performance. In order to achieve teachers' educational goals, they need to be innovative in their application of models and strategies to increase students' motivation and to be able to create new learning dynamics and achieve significantly higher learning outcomes^[8]. Emphasizing effective learning in the classroom plays a vital role in student retention. Teachers need to adapt to changing classrooms and student needs so that students enjoy the course and set goals^[9]. In future teaching, teachers should focus on the evaluation of the teaching process and stimulate students' awareness of participation^[10]. Teaching arrangements should fully consider the learning characteristics and cognitive rules of higher vocational students, reasonably control the duration of theoretical teaching, increase the proportion of practical teaching, and create more opportunities for students to practice hands-on operations and participate in experiences^[11].

For students with low autonomy and self-efficacy, hierarchical learning tasks should be designed, visual learning pathways provided, and short-term achievable learning goals set up. Through guided questioning and timely feedback from teachers, students can be encouraged to build confidence and a sense of self-efficacy.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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