

## **A STUDY ON EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES BASED ON THE ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' MOTIVATION FOR ADMISSION IN CHANGSHA XIANGDU SECONDARY VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS**

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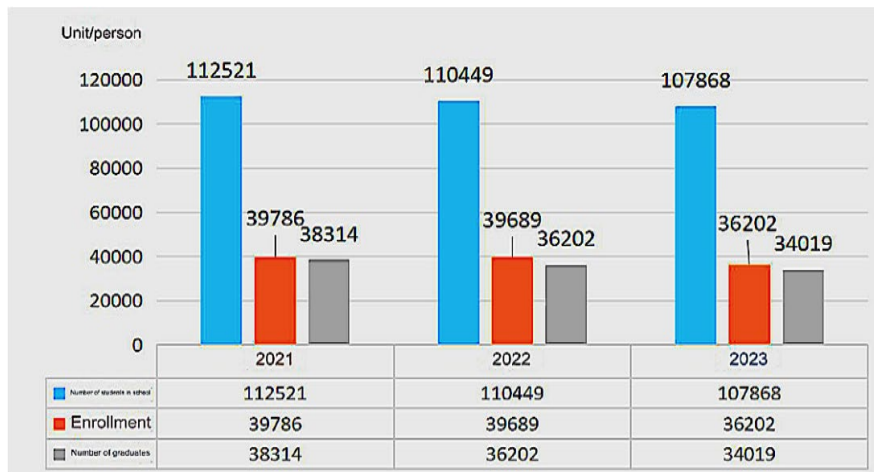
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**Abstract:** The rapid development of China's economy has resulted in a significant demand for high-quality and highly skilled vocational and technical personnel, necessitating a robust secondary vocational education system to provide adequate support. Nevertheless, in recent years, with the gradual expansion of the enrollment scale of Chinese universities and the influence of traditional concepts, China's secondary vocational schools have encountered a number of challenges, including insufficient enrollment, poor student quality, students' negative and passive attitude towards enrollment, and unclear career development goals. Currently, the quality of China's secondary vocational education still requires further improvement. The investigation of the motivation for enrolment at Changsha Xiangdu Secondary Vocational School revealed the various types of motivation for enrolment among students at this institution. The factors influencing the decision to enrol in a secondary vocational programme were also identified, with the aim of developing an educational management strategy for the advancement of secondary vocational education in Hunan Province. The objective of this study was to: 1) To comprehend the primary motivations of students enrolling in Changsha Xiangdu Secondary Vocational School. 2) To examine the factors that influence the motivation of students enrolling in Changsha Xiangdu Secondary Vocational School. This study employs quantitative research methods. The research subjects are students of Changsha Xiangdu Secondary Vocational School. A total of 240 questionnaires were distributed and 219 were returned, representing an efficiency of 91.25%. The investigation of Changsha Xiangdu Secondary Vocational School reveals that the primary factors influencing students' decisions to pursue secondary vocational education are personal preferences, school competitiveness, social needs, and other factors. In addition, the family education environment, parents' education level and economic conditions of students will also influence their motivation to enroll.

**Keywords:** Secondary vocational schools, Enrollment motivation, Education management

### Introduction

The number of secondary vocational schools in China decreased by 30% from 10,100 in 2019 to 7,085 in 2023, raising widespread concerns about the future of this educational sector (Source: Statistical Communiqué on the Development of China's Education). Many secondary vocational schools have been found lacking in educational quality and employment rates, leading most Chinese students and parents to prefer ordinary high schools or other educational pathways. In 2023, Changsha had 48 secondary vocational schools (excluding technical schools), with 28 being private. These schools enrolled 36,202 students, a decrease of 3,487 from the previous year. There were 107,868 full-time students, down by 2,581 from the previous year. The average school size was 2,247, an increase of 38 from the previous year. The number of graduates was 34,019, a decrease of 2,183 from the previous year (see Figure 1).



**Picture 1:** The number of students, enrollments and graduates in secondary vocational schools in Changsha from 2021 to 2023

Source: (Changsha Municipal Education Bureau)

### Research Objectives

- (1) To comprehend the primary motivations of students enrolling in Changsha Xiangdu Secondary Vocational School.
- (2) To examine the factors that influence the motivation of students enrolling in Changsha Xiangdu Secondary Vocational School.

### Literature Review

#### *Motivation Theory*

Motivation in psychology refers to an internal state that prompts goal-oriented behavior, involving the initiation, direction, intensity, and persistence of actions. In organizational behavior,

motivation is the psychological process that stimulates individuals towards desired goals, often fluctuating in intensity (Denhardt et al.,1998). Motivation theory explores the origins, mechanisms, needs, behaviors, and goal relationships of motivation. It is an internal arousal state that drives and maintains behavior, manifesting as a conscious desire to achieve specific goals. Motivation arises from needs, which, when intense enough and met with suitable objects, transform into motivation (Xiao, 1995).

Behaviorism, a school of psychology that emerged in the early 20th century in the United States, advocates for the study of observable and measurable behaviors, rejecting the study of consciousness without a scientific basis (Wu et al.,2023). It systematically understands human and animal behavior as responses to environmental stimuli, shaped by life history, including the effects of punishment, incentives, and reinforcement. While acknowledging the role of genetic factors, behaviorists emphasize environmental influences. They often view free will as an illusion, believing that behavior is determined by the combination of genetic and environmental factors, shaped by associations or reinforcements experienced throughout life.

Humanistic theory advocates studying complex human psychology from a human-centered perspective, opposing behaviorist approaches that focus solely on observable behavior and neglect human nature. Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1943) categorizes human needs from low to high: physiological needs, safety needs, social needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs. According to Maslow, individuals pursue higher-level needs only after satisfying lower-level ones.

#### *Personal preference*

In order to gain insight into the underlying motives that drive human behaviour, it is essential to consider the intrinsic psychological needs for competence, autonomy and relatedness. These needs are driven by personal preferences that increase engagement and commitment. This conceptualization of needs has led to the assumption that different regulatory processes underlying goal pursuit are differentially associated with effective functioning and well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Qiu et al. (2024) studied the 2022 five-year freshmen at Wuxi Open University using a self-compiled questionnaire to understand their information sources, interests, learning goals, school life, and development expectations. The results indicated that students primarily choose schools and majors based on their interests, with external influences such as parents playing a secondary role.

Zhu et al. (2024) surveyed the family background, enrollment motivation, and duty willingness of 2032 targeted normal school students in Anhui Province in 2021. The study found that the main motivation for enrollment is the love of education and job security, while secondary school entrance examination scores and family economic reasons have little impact, and personal preferences have a positive impact on students' motivation for enrollment.

### *Family education background*

The family education background exerts a positive influence on students' motivation to attend school. Programs that actively involve parents in their children's educational planning have been shown to have a positive impact. For instance, the Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE) project in the United States has been successful in increasing student enrollment rates in higher education by increasing parental involvement and awareness (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001).

A child's cognitive development and learning motivation can both be significantly enhanced through access to a rich educational background, provided by the family. Students pursuing vocational studies in an environment where educational resources are plentiful are more likely to be interested in pursuing further education and vocational training (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). Sun et al. (2016) examined the impact of family income on higher vocational students' enrollment motivation. They found that most students come from low- and middle-income families and have clear learning and employment motivations. Students from these income brackets are more aware of their employment disadvantages compared to those from high-income families.

Liao (2022) investigated the mediating role of enrollment motivation between family social capital and learning investment among master's students. The study found that students with highly educated parents and high maternal occupational class exhibit higher internal motivation. Family education background significantly influences graduate student motivation. Zheng (2022) studied the enrollment motivation of graduate students in double first-class universities, identifying "survival rationality" and "economic rationality" factors such as employment opportunities, network resources, salary, influence of others, and family environment as key determinants of motivation.

### *School competitiveness*

The competitive nature of educational institutions is a significant factor influencing students' motivation to enroll. The perceived quality and reputation of a school have a significant impact on students' decisions regarding their enrollment. It can be reasonably assumed that schools with excellent reputations and high academic performance are more likely to attract students who are motivated to enroll (Chen & Jardins, 2010). Students are more likely to attend institutions with higher school competitiveness, which provides them with access to a broader range of academic and extracurricular programs. Such opportunities are frequently perceived as potential routes to future success, which serves to enhance motivation to attend (Eccles & Roeser, 2011).

Xiao (2022) analyzed the marketing strategy of adult education enrollment at Southern Talent Vocational Training School, focusing on enrollment motivation. Although education is not a tangible commodity, adult education involves choosing a school and its programs. As consumers, students demand high-quality, distinctive, and reputable education services. School competitiveness significantly influences enrollment motivation. Han Xue (2020) studied the enrollment motivation of

interdisciplinary master's students in educational economics and management. The choice to pursue this field results from multiple enrollment motivations, with school competitiveness being a core influencing factor.

#### *Social Needs*

Social needs, particularly those derived from family and peers, play a pivotal role in enhancing career decision-making self-efficacy, which in turn has a positive influence on students' motivation to pursue vocational education (Ali, McWhirter, & Chronister, 2005).

Liu (2022) found that public-funded primary education students' enrollment motivations are primarily influenced by external factors such as social needs and economy, leading to reduced learning motivation, autonomy, and professional identity. Wang (2022) identified a significant correlation between motivation, learning interest, and learning status in public-funded normal students, with learning interest mediating the relationship between motivation and learning status. It is recommended to transform external incentives into internal motivations, stimulate learning interest, and implement policies to enhance teachers' welfare and professional belonging. Wu et al. (2024) investigated postgraduate students' motivations at a military medical university, revealing that 44.2% had work-oriented motivations, with social demand being the primary influencing factor, indicating a pragmatic approach to postgraduate study.

#### *Attribution Theory*

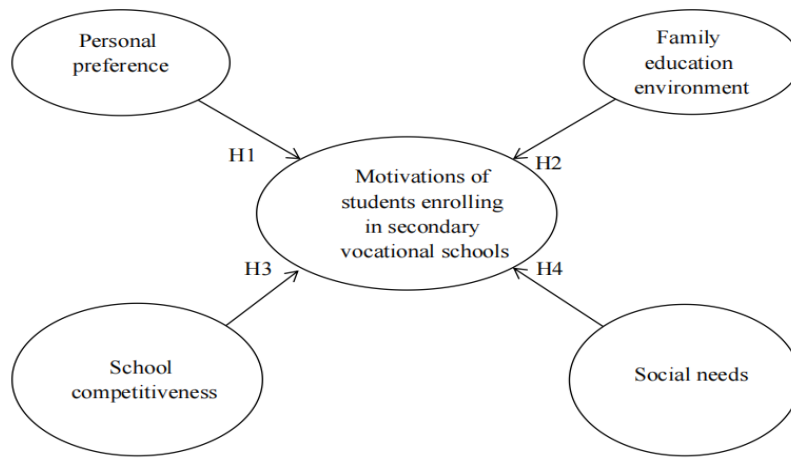
Attribution refers to inferring the cause of another person's behavior. Attribution theory explores how and why people make these inferences differently across situations, based on the idea that individuals seek cognitive balance. Heider (1958) first proposed attribution theory, with Harold Kelley (1967, 1973) expanding it through the "covariation model." According to Kelley, people gather personal and situational information, comparing how behavior covaries with time, place, role, participants, and other situational factors.

#### *Comprehensive motivation theory*

Motivation, a psychological concept, refers to stimulating individuals' enthusiasm, often seen in management as mobilizing engagement (Liu, 2017). Motivation theory aims to meet individuals' needs and achieve goals by encouraging behavior through need satisfaction and objective attainment. Since the 1920s, scholars have developed behavioral, cognitive, and comprehensive motivation theories based on modern management research (Li et al., 2004).

Robbins (1997) synthesized these theories into a contemporary motivation model. This model posits that individuals will increase their efforts if they believe their efforts lead to performance, performance will be rewarded, and these rewards will help achieve personal goals. This requires individuals to have the necessary capabilities, an objective performance evaluation system, organizational reinforcement, a fair competitive environment, and attention to personal leadership needs.

### Conceptual Framework



**Picture 2:** Conceptual Framework

### Methodology

This study employed a quantitative research method to investigate the enrollment motivations and influencing factors among students in Changsha. The data collected were quantitatively organized and analyzed to discern students' genuine thoughts and needs regarding admission. The analysis elucidates the actual role and potential impact of various factors on student motivation within the institution. The questionnaire was divided into four sections: demographic information, reasons for choosing the school and specialty, learning enthusiasm and course recognition, and a Likert scale assessment of admission motivation. All of them were measured using a five-point Likert scale, with scales 1 to 5 indicating "very dissatisfied", "dissatisfied", "average", "satisfied" and "very satisfied", respectively. This study was mainly conducted by distributing questionnaires online. The distribution time is from September to November 2023. with 240 questionnaires distributed and 219 valid responses received, yielding an effective response rate of 91.25%. Research hypotheses are proposed based on the analysis:

H1: Personal Reference (PP) has an positive impact on the motivation of secondary vocational students to enrol (EN).

H2: Family educational environment (FEE) has an positive impact on the motivation of secondary vocational students to enrol (EN).

H3: School competitiveness (SC) has an positive impact on the motivation of secondary vocational students to enrol (EN).

H4: Social needs (SN) have an positive impact on the motivation of secondary vocational students to enrol (EN).

## Results

The reliability of the questionnaire is crucial for data analysis. In this study, SPSS was utilized to analyze data from 219 students at Changsha Xiangdu Secondary Vocational School. The reliability coefficient, Cronbach's Alpha, was calculated for each factor, as presented in Table 1. The results indicate a high degree of internal consistency among the variables. The overall Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for the questionnaire was 0.965, exceeding the threshold of 0.8, thereby demonstrating high reliability.

**Table 1:** Reliability analysis

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Personal preferences (PP)	0.868	3
Family educational environment (FEE)	0.845	3
School competitiveness (Sc)	0.888	3
Social needs (SN)	0.932	3
Motivations of students to enrol (EN)	0.904	3
Total	0.965	15

The KMO test and Bartlett's spherical test are essential prerequisites for factor analysis to determine the scale's suitability and validity. The results indicate that the KMO value is 0.955, exceeding the threshold of 0.7, and the Bartlett's spherical test yielded a significance value (sig) of 0.000, which is less than 0.05, indicating significance at the desired level. These results, shown in Table 2, confirm that the questionnaire meets the requirements for exploratory factor analysis. Consequently, the study suggests a correlation between various variables, enabling further correlation and regression analyses.

**Table 2:** Validity test result

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.955
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3146.461
	df	105
	Sig.	0.000

In this study, SPSS was used to analyze the relationship between various factors and students' motivation in Changsha. The correlation analysis revealed positive correlations among personal preference, family education environment, school competitiveness, social needs, and school motivation. Specifically, the Pearson correlation coefficient between the personal preferences and motivations to enrol is 0.875,  $p=0.000<0.001$ , and it indicates that these two variables have significantly positive correlations. The Pearson correlation coefficient between the family educational environment and motivations to enrol is 0.775,  $p=0.000<0.001$ , and it indicates that family educational environment and motivations of students to enrol have significantly positive correlation.



The Pearson correlation coefficient between the school competitiveness and motivations to enrol is 0.802,  $p=0.000<0.001$ , and it indicates that school competitiveness and motivations of students to enrol have significantly positive correlation. The Pearson correlation coefficient between the social needs and motivations to enrol is 0.796,  $p=0.000<0.001$ , and it indicates that social needs and motivations of students to enrol have significantly positive correlation. Thus, the study concludes that there are significant positive relationships between personal preference, family education environment, school competitiveness, social needs, and motivation for school admission.

The F value of model 1 is significant and  $F=163.198$ , which is 0.748 of adjusted  $R^2$ , indicating that the interpretation degree of model 1 is 74.8%. The Durbin-Watson test value was 1.939, which is between 1.8 and 2.2. the data were analyzed for the relationship between the dependent and independent variables. The regression coefficient of Personal preferences (PP) on students' motivation to enrol (EN) was significant at  $p < 0.01$ . The influence coefficient  $\beta$  is 0.249, indicating that Personal preferences (PP) has a significant positive impact on students' motivation to enrol (EN). Hypothesis 1 is proved. The regression coefficient of Family educational environment (FEE) on students' motivation to enrol (EN) was significant at the level of  $p < 0.01$ , and the influence coefficient  $\beta$  is 0.209. This indicates that family educational environment (FEE) has a significant positive impact on students' motivation to enrol (EN), and hypothesis 2 can be proved. The regression coefficient of school competitiveness (SC) on students' motivation to enrol (EN) was significant at the level of  $p < 0.01$ , and the influence coefficient  $\beta$  is 0.206. This indicates that school competitiveness (SC) has a significant positive impact on students' motivation to enrol (EN), and hypothesis 3 can be proved. The regression coefficient of social needs (SN) on students' motivation to enrol (EN) was significant at the level of  $p < 0.01$ , and the influence coefficient  $\beta$  is 0.298. This indicates that social needs (SN) have a significant positive impact on students' motivation to enroll (EN), and hypothesis 4 can be proved.

**Table 3:** Multiple regression

Item	Unstd. B	Std. Beta	t	Sig.	VIF	F	Durbin-Watson
C	.350	.513	.683	.495	1.528	163.198***	1.939
Personal preferences (PP)	.249	.068	3.679	.000	1.735		
Family educational environment (FEE)	.209	.070	2.983	.003	2.368		
School competitiveness (Sc)	.206	.071	2.896	.004	1.289		
Social needs (SN)	.298	.058	5.141	.000	1.528		
R Square	0.753						
Adjusted R Square	0.748						

NOTE: \* $P<0.05$ , \*\* $P<0.01$ , \*\*\* $P<0.001$



## Discussion

It is concluded from this research that significant relationships among personal preferences, family educational environment, school competitiveness, social needs and students' motivations to enroll secondary vocational schools. The results on the enroll motivations of students of Changsha Xiangdu Secondary Vocational School to explore influential factors on their motivations to enroll secondary vocational schools. The main reasons for students to choose secondary vocational education are affected by school, society and students' own needs. In addition, students' family environment, parents' educational background and economic status will also affect students' motivation to enroll. In practice of secondary vocational development, these results have importance. Tailoring enrollment strategies to diverse student motivations to attract a broader student base and meet societal labor demands (Han, 2020). Motivations for secondary vocational education are influenced by personal and environmental factors. For personal factors, personal preferences and family education environment have significantly positive influences on students enroll. In terms of the internal factors of enrollment motivation, students' choice of vocational schools is based on their own preferences, and they pay more attention to the improvement of their own ability and the transfer of knowledge and skills during the study period (Ali, McWhirter & Chronister, 2005).

Effective management models must accommodate these diverse motivations by offering varied educational pathways and support mechanisms. The competitiveness of the school is mainly reflected in the promotion of students' employment. In order to attract more students to have higher motivations to enroll, it is necessary to conduct systematic career planning and employment guidance. For students, the school can provide effective information services to help graduates enter the job search state in a timely manner, increase employment opportunities, and smooth employment. Key factors influencing enrollment decisions include school reputation, societal expectations, individual aspirations, familial environments, parental educational backgrounds, and economic circumstances. The social needs of students are significant, so it is necessary to create a good public opinion atmosphere, improve the sense of social identity, and distinguish between small and medium-sized vocational training institutions in the market. It guides to treat vocational education equally, make it equal to general education, and promote vocational education in society is also the education needed by society.

In the secondary vocational schools, which the state vigorously supports secondary vocational education, it is necessary to earnestly implement specific policies, improve the conditions for running schools, and provide a good environment for personnel training for students (Liu, 2022). Secondly, it is necessary to create a good public opinion atmosphere, improve social identity, and distinguish between small and medium-sized vocational training institutions in the market. It is to guide to treat vocational education equally, make it equal to general education, and promote vocational education in

society is also the education needed by society, which is to change the social deviation of vocational education (Ali, McWhirter & Chronister, 2005; Liu, 2017).

Finally, it is necessary to reform the education enrollment system, break the system of different periods of admission, achieve the same batch of admission opportunities, and achieve fair competition (Qiu & Yuan, 2024). In addition, it can also establish a security system for school-enterprise cooperation, and implement talent training models, which can not only provide high-quality talents to society and enterprises, but also allow students to have practical experience (Han, 2020).

## **Conclusions**

The results on the students' motivations to enroll secondary vocational schools of Changsha Xiangdu Secondary Vocational School show that the personal preferences have a significant positive impact on students' motivations to enroll secondary vocational schools, as shown by the standard regression coefficient of 0.249 and the significant level of this variable is less than 0.001. Based on motivation theory, personal preference is important factor that influencing people's motivation, and in the field of enroll secondary vocational schools, personal preferences contain students' preferences for particular professions and specific learning contents (Liu, 2022).

The results on the students' motivations to enroll secondary vocational schools of Changsha Xiangdu Secondary Vocational School show that the family educational environment has a significant positive impact on students' motivations to enroll secondary vocational schools, as shown by the standard regression coefficient of 0.209 and the significant level of this variable is less than 0.001. Family is the starting point and settling point of people's psychology and behavior. In many aspects of people's lives, families carry out many kinds of work that society needs. Family education can easily transmit social and cultural values and norms, and it also affects students' choice of secondary vocational schools (Maslow, 1934).

The results on the students' motivations to enroll secondary vocational schools of Changsha Xiangdu Secondary Vocational School show that the school competitiveness has a significant positive impact on students' motivations to enroll secondary vocational schools, as shown by the standard regression coefficient of 0.206 and the significant level of this variable is less than 0.001. The competitiveness of the school is embodied in the excellent teaching staff, practical training venues and high employment rate. In addition, it has maintained good cooperation with enterprises for a long time and has a high employment rate, which directly attracts a large number of parents and students to choose to enroll. This has also become the school's future efforts to improve the enrollment rate (Sun, Wang & Yan, 2016; Liao, 2022).

The results on the students' motivations to enroll secondary vocational schools of Changsha Xiangdu Secondary Vocational School show that the social needs have a significant positive impact

on students' motivations to enroll secondary vocational schools, as shown by the standard regression coefficient of 0.298 and the significant level of this variable is less than 0.001. Students' emphasis on social factors shows that they attach importance to the job prospects of secondary vocational schools. Schools should fully realize that the key to improving the quality of secondary vocational education is to deeply involve enterprises in teaching (Eccles & Roeser, 2011). From the perspective of the school, through the cooperation with enterprises, the school not only obtains the equipment and information provided by enterprises to serve the teaching, but also can better solve the problem of students' employment (Wang, 2022). This can not only increase students' professional quality but also improve their vocational skills.

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